

REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 8 JANUARY 2001
REPORT ON: DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL'S VOLUNTARY SECTOR POLICY
REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT
REPORT NO: 29-2001

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report seeks approval to proceed with the adoption of the Voluntary Sector Policy for Dundee City Council.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

2.1 approves the adoption of the voluntary sector policy "Developing and Strengthening the Partnership" which has been prepared in line with guidance issued by Convention Of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) and the Scottish Executive;

2.2 endorses the "Policy Guidance on Funding of Voluntary Organisations" produced by COSLA which reinforces the principles set out in Dundee's Voluntary Sector Policy.

2.3 welcomes the allocation of £60,000 from the Scottish Executive to Dundee Voluntary Action (DVA) to support the development of the voluntary sector infrastructure in Dundee.

2.4 agrees the setting up of a Dundee City Council/Voluntary Sector Liaison Group to establish communication frameworks and define areas of common interest as well as address issues identified by the City Council or the voluntary sector.

2.5 instructs the Director of Neighbourhood Resources and Development to progress development, with the voluntary sector, of a "Dundee Compact".

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 This Policy Statement brings together the existing best practice of different Council departments and provides a framework against which the Council will take forward its support and commitment to the voluntary sector. There are no direct financial implications arising out of the Policy itself.

3.2 Prior to publication of the Policy, the Director of Finance will produce an updated version of Appendix 1 which will detail grants paid to Voluntary Organisations in Dundee during 1999/2000.

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The voluntary sector is well placed to assist the Council in achieving sustainable development. Voluntary organisations provide the opportunity to undertake satisfying work in a diverse economy.

4.2 Developing and strengthening the partnership with the voluntary sector will assist the Council to extend its commitment to broaden the base of participation and decision-making, and to extend the range of opportunities for participation in the cultural, leisure and civic life of the city.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The voluntary sector has a proud tradition of advocacy on behalf of minorities. Many of the organisations in this sector have charitable status and exist to promote objectives which are charitable. The Council's Policy Statement seeks to ensure that best practice is strengthened, and that the Council supports voluntary organisations to address issues of equality in their own practice.

6.0 BACKGROUND

6.1 The Voluntary Sector Policy has been drafted by an Inter-departmental Officer Group and has been the subject of extensive consultation between departments of the Council.

6.2 Copies of the Voluntary Sector Policy "Developing and Strengthening the Partnership" have been provided to group secretaries and are available within the Councillors' Lounge.

6.3 The purpose of this Policy Statement is -

- to inform members, officers and voluntary sector partners of the current position;
- to identify issues that need to be addressed in order that the relationship between the Council and the voluntary sector in Dundee is clearly set out and better understood;
- to provide a framework within which this relationship can be further developed.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 Consultation has taken place with the Chief Executive, Director of Finance, Director of Support Services and departmental voluntary sector lead officers.

7.2 Extensive consultation has taken place with the voluntary sector. Following requests from the key voluntary sector umbrella organisations Dundee Voluntary Action and the Community and Voluntary Alliance the initial consultation period was extended from the end of March 2000 to the end of October 2000. The original draft policy has been amended to take into account comments and representations received during the consultation period.

8.0 KEY ISSUES ARISING FROM THE CONSULTATION

8.1 The consultation process has highlighted a number of issues which need to be addressed. These include:

- lack of resources and capacity within the voluntary sector to support and maintain strong sector networks. This issue has been recognised by the Scottish Executive which has allocated additional resources to support voluntary sector infrastructure. £60,000 has been allocated to Dundee Voluntary Action.
- Lack of a formal Dundee City Council/Voluntary Sector liaison structure.
- Need for the development of a "Dundee Compact" which would at a City Council/local voluntary sector level mirror the Scottish Compact agreed between the Scottish Executive and the Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations.

8.2 Development of a Dundee Compact would address concerns expressed by both the Council and voluntary sector organisations relating to communication and support as well as roles and responsibilities

9.0 FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

9.1 The nature and role of the voluntary sector is undergoing major change. Both the UK government and the Scottish Executive are emphasising the role of the sector in service delivery. The clear trend is towards greater interdependence between local authorities and voluntary sector agencies. It is essential that communication between the Council and the voluntary sector is improved and that roles/responsibilities and relationships are clarified, negotiated and agreed in a spirit of partnership.

9.2 Specific proposals to progress development include:

- setting up a Dundee City Council/Voluntary Sector Liaison Group to establish communication frameworks and define areas of common interest as well as address Council or voluntary sector issues.
- Inviting representatives of the voluntary sector in Dundee to work with the Council through the establishment of a joint voluntary sector. Dundee City Council Liaison Group to develop a "Dundee Compact".

10.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above Report).

- 10.1 Scottish Office Circular 14/1995, "Guidance to New Authorities on relationships with Voluntary Organisations".
- 10.2 COSLA/SCVO Guidance Note on "Voluntary Sector Policy Statements", October 1998.
- 10.3 "Policy Guidance on Funding Voluntary Organisations", COSLA (April 1999).
- 10.4 The Scottish Compact - Scottish Office, October 1998.
- 10.5 The Scottish Compact Good Practice Guides – Advice on the Scottish Executives relations with the voluntary sector – Scottish Executive, June 2000
- 10.6 Dundee City Council's Scheme of Decentralisation (adopted May 1997).
- 10.7 Dundee City Council's Plan 1999-2002
- 10.8 The Accounts Commission and COSLA "Funding External Bodies and Following the Public Pound" (May 1996).
- 10.9 Dundee City Council, NRDD Committee Report 168/1996 (June 1996).
- 10.10 "The Voluntary Sector in Dundee" SCVO Research Unit April 2000.
- 10.11 Dundee City Council Volunteer Policy Statement - Policy & Resources Committee, June 1998.
- 10.12 Voluntary Sector Task Force Report, Published by Better Regulations Task Force of the Cabinet Office (July 1998).
- 10.13 The Third Report of the Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life (Vol.1 CN3072-1, July 1997).
- 10.14 "Are you sitting comfortably?" – NCVO/The Charities Commission.
- 10.15 "Promoting the role of Voluntary Organisations and Foundations in Europe" – The European Commission (1987).
- 10.16 Dundee City Council Finance Committee 14.6.99. Report No 384/1999 "Follow The Public Pound".

Director of Neighbourhood Resources and Development _____

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