

**CVS Network:
delivering the goods
for Scotland's
voluntary sector**

Strategic Business Plan

2005-2008

CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction and context	3
Background To The CVS Network	4
Background to SCVO	5
Delivering the goods to Scotland's voluntary sector	6
Advancing Scottish Executive policy objectives	7
Delivering the goods for Scotland's voluntary sector	14
The role of SCVO	26
Budget and resources	31
Further information	35

Introduction and context

The CVS network has been the subject of several in-depth reviews in recent years, the most recent of which was the *Review of the Roles of Councils for Voluntary Service and CVS Scotland* undertaken by Avanté Consulting in 2003 (hereafter referred to as the Avanté report).

This strategic plan builds on the conclusions and recommendations contained in the Avanté report, the views of delegates to the annual CVS conferences in 2003 and 2004, and the experience and perspectives of members of the Network Liaison Group to provide a new operational and strategic focus for the CVS network and clarity on the range of ways in which it delivers the goods for Scotland's voluntary sector.

Background to the CVS network

The Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS) network consists of 58 independent organisations that provide support to voluntary organisations in communities across Scotland. All areas with more than one CVS work together across their local authority area. Three umbrella bodies – in Dumfries and Galloway, Highland and Scottish Borders – have a separate constitution and provide a co-ordinating and strategic support role for the CVS in their area.

CVS use briefings, events, newsletters and websites to communicate with voluntary organisations across the country, keeping them up to date with new legislation and policy developments and offering opportunities for local groups to share best practice. The activity of CVS supports a wide range of Scottish Executive policy objectives and enhances the ability of local voluntary organisations to make a difference to quality of life in the communities they serve.

The CVS network represents the interests of voluntary organisations on a wide range of forums, including Community Planning Partnerships, Rural Partnerships and thematic groups covering issues as diverse as community learning and development, community safety and the social economy.

Growth of the sector is promoted through the provision of start-up support, including advice on legal structures, governance and recruitment – as well as on securing much needed funding. One-to-one support and training courses build the capacity of voluntary organisations to deliver high quality services to the communities across Scotland.

The network covers every local authority area in Scotland, providing services in urban, rural and island environments. The Scottish Executive currently provides the network with annual funding of £2.5m. Other income – totalling almost £12m in the 2003/2004 financial year - is secured from a range of sources, including local authorities, charitable/voluntary sector funders, European funding and trading activity.

CVS work with voluntary organisations around their common needs and interests, helping them to become more effective and efficient. They represent the interests of the sector, enabling local voluntary organisations to pursue their agenda with government, private and public agencies and the public.

The CVS network employs over 400 staff, benefits from the experience and skills of over 600 board members and is in touch with 26,000 voluntary organisations across Scotland.

The past year has been one of significant change, with the CVS network agreeing a new set of core activities to enhance the support they provide to voluntary organisations and local communities.

Background to SCVO

The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) is the umbrella organisation for the voluntary sector in Scotland. It has over 1,300 organisations in membership, including local and national voluntary organisations, Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS), registered social landlords (RSLs) and key intermediary organisations e.g. Youthlink Scotland, Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, Scottish Environment Link, Black and Ethnic Minority Infrastructure Scotland, Community Care Providers Scotland, Voluntary Health Scotland etc.

SCVO's Mission is to advance the values and interests shared by voluntary organisations by fostering co-operation, promoting best practice and through the delivery of sustainable common services. As an organisation we have 5 strategic themes:

- Promoting equality
- Developing active communities
- Growing the social economy
- Highlighting the rural dimension
- Building sustainability

SCVO currently employs around 160 staff based in offices in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Inverness, Paisley, Ayr, Dundee, Perth, Motherwell, Hamilton, Aberdeen, Elgin and Wick.

We provide a wide range of services to strengthen, support and grow the community and voluntary sector in Scotland.

From 1st April 2004, SCVO has had direct responsibility for the development and co-ordination of Scotland's CVS network.

Delivering the goods to Scotland's voluntary sector

Clear and consistent CVS services

The Avanté report recommended a consistent national profile for CVS, as well as consistency in the core services provided across the CVS network.

The Network Liaison Group (NLG), a short-life working group comprised of CVS representatives and SCVO staff, has responded to Avanté's recommendations and the views of the 2003 CVS annual conference by developing a *Core Activities Framework*, which aims to promote consistency of service across Scotland's CVS network and:

- ensure voluntary and community organisations have a clear understanding of the services they can expect from their local CVS;
- ensure the role of CVS is clear to funders, partner agencies and members of the public;
- enable an accurate assessment of the cumulative impact of CVS activity across Scotland.

The *Core Activities Framework* is included at Appendix One.

The six core activities, which apply to all CVS, are as follows:

Understanding the voluntary sector

The CVS holds up to date information on the profile of the voluntary sector in their area, is familiar with the sector's main concerns and needs, understands the policy context in relation to the sector and identifies the economic value of the voluntary sector locally.

Communicating with the voluntary sector

The CVS provides relevant and up-to-date information to the voluntary sector locally, facilitates networking between organisations and promotes opportunities for them to respond to emerging issues and consultations.

Representing the interests of the local voluntary sector

The CVS works to ensure its representation at the strategic level of its local Community Planning Partnership and facilitates voluntary sector participation in thematic Community Planning forums, as well as providing or facilitating voluntary sector representation on Rural Partnerships and Social Economy Partnerships as appropriate.

The CVS works with other intermediary organisations and the public and private sectors to ensure the views and interests of the voluntary sector locally are represented.

Providing support services

The CVS provides support services to the voluntary sector locally on business planning, legal frameworks, management and monitoring and evaluation and supports the generation of additional income for the sector.

Promoting good practice

The CVS develops the skills and knowledge of those operating at all levels of the voluntary sector locally, seeking to improve standards in management, policy implementation and service delivery through training events for staff and volunteers and a range of resource materials to promote good practice.

Growing the sector

The CVS supports the emergence of new groups in response to local issues and needs, and strengthens the capacity of existing organisations through training and support.

The depth and range of activity undertaken by individual CVS will be determined in part by the human and financial resources available to them and the environment in which they operate, while some CVS may deliver core activities in partnership or by offering a signposting service to other appropriate providers. However it is anticipated that the framework will promote clarity and consistency in CVS service to meet the needs of customers and stakeholders and enhance the profile of network at national level.

The *Core Activities Framework* will require every CVS to demonstrate the difference their activities make to the local voluntary sector. As well as providing clear evidence of outcomes, CVS will assess and report on customer satisfaction with the services they provide. SCVO will work with the CVS network to develop common methods of evidence-based reporting, as well as consistent and user-friendly methods of measuring customer satisfaction.

While the framework recognises the need for CVS to deliver services in ways which best meet requirements of the voluntary sector in their area, it requires *all* CVS to undertake a range of key priority tasks. As well as promoting a more co-ordinated approach to the development of the network, it is anticipated that the key priority tasks will encourage CVS to share experiences and examples of best practice.

<i>Key action points (short-term)</i>	<i>Timescale</i>
Final agreement on <i>Core Activities Framework</i>	November 2004
Launch of <i>Core Activities Framework</i>	February 2005
Development of reporting & customer satisfaction toolkits	March 2005

Advancing Scottish Executive policy objectives

The CVS *Core Activities Framework* includes a range of activities and services which support key Scottish Executive policy objectives, including:

Better Communities in Scotland: Closing the Gap

The community regeneration statement *Better Communities in Scotland: Closing the Gap*, includes the following commitment:

We will work to make sure people and communities have the **social capital** — the skills, confidence, support networks and resources — that they need to take advantage of, and to increase, the opportunities open to them. To do this, we need to build the confidence of our communities to do more for themselves and to ask for the services they need, develop systems that get people involved and let them have a say in their communities, and provide support and advice to individuals.

The CVS network is well placed to build social capital at local level – principally through providing support services, promoting good practice and supporting growth in the voluntary organisations which meet the needs of disadvantaged communities across Scotland. In addition, the network’s role in Community Planning and its commitment to representing the interests of the voluntary sector provides a practical and tested vehicle for encouraging local people to get involved in and influence the future of their communities.

The Big Lottery Fund

The Chief Executive of The Big Lottery fund, Dharmenda Kanani, has stated his intention to work with CVS to ensure that lottery funding reaches its intended targets in the community. CVS participated in three-way agreements at local level with the Community Fund and local authorities, and as well as assisting voluntary organisations to develop funding bids, they support unsuccessful applicants to review their bid for funding. It is anticipated that there will be opportunities to further develop this role with The Big Lottery Fund.

Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Bill

The increasingly high profile of charities and charity regulation means that at local level there is a clear role for CVS in working with current and emerging community and voluntary organisations to provide them with up to date information on a range of issues relevant to the forthcoming Act, including the charity test, the Scottish Charity Register, the supervision of charities and the power of OSCR. The activity of CVS in this emerging and expanding area of work has the potential to play an important role in ensuring public confidence in charities and the regulations which govern their activity.

The proposal to establish Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisations (SCIOs), a new legal form for charities to take on corporate status and limit liability for their members, will extend CVS activity in providing support services and growing the sector.

Closing the Opportunity Gap

The activity of the CVS network supports many of the *Closing the Opportunity Gap* priorities, including:

- increasing the chances of sustained employment for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups – for example, via CVS' role in New Deal provision;
- improving the confidence and skills of the most disadvantaged children and young people – for example, via CVS' general community capacity building activity and specific development activity with voluntary organisations working with children and young people;
- reducing the vulnerability of low income families to financial exclusion and multiple debt – for example, several CVS host advice services in areas with no CVS, while a number of CVS support and promote credit union activity in their area;
- regenerating the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods – for example, via CVS' role in supporting communities to develop and grow new local services;
- reducing the gap between the health status of people living in affluent and disadvantaged communities – for example, via CVS' general community capacity building activity and specific development activity with voluntary organisations engaged in health-related activity and their emerging role in Community Health Partnerships;
- improving access to high quality services for the most disadvantaged individuals in rural communities – for example, via CVS' role in supporting rural communities to develop and grow new local services, and accessing resources through various regeneration programmes, for example, *On the Edge*.

Developing the Social Economy

The *Review of the Scottish Executive's Policies to promote the Social Economy*, in relation to support networks for social economy organisations that, concluded that:

... currently the roles of the various players are not in all cases clearly defined. There is potential for confusion and unhelpful overlap and, of course, the risk of the organisations which actually need support falling between the cracks. Furthermore, different social economy organisations will require different types of support and also different support at different stages in their organisational life cycle.

The *Core Activities Framework* provides a new clarity for CVS activity and illustrates in clear terms the benefits which the network can deliver to social economy organisations locally. The activity and experience of CVS at strategic and thematic levels of Community Planning Partnerships means that the network is well positioned to bring a community perspective to the new Social Economy Partnerships. CVS understanding of the voluntary sector

locally and the policy priorities in their area of operation has the potential to make an important contribution to making the most of the opportunities which accompany Futurebuilders Scotland. SCVO will work to develop stronger working relationships between CVS, local offices of Communities Scotland, and Local Enterprise Companies.

Local Government in Scotland Act 2003

The Community Planning Advice Notes which support the *Local Government in Scotland Act 2003* set out principles of effective community engagement, noting in the following terms the need to recognise the diversity and independence of communities and community interests:

- **Recognising diversity:** Acknowledging the wide range and diverse nature of communities. Working - at both formal and informal levels - with a wide range of community and voluntary groups, including umbrella bodies, such as councils of voluntary service, community forums, and associations of community councils, local Sports Councils and sports trusts, and voluntary arts bodies.
- **Independence:** Recognising that the most effective representation of community interests is likely to be via community bodies which are independent and accountable to their communities.

As well as being able to represent the interest of the voluntary sector at partnership, implementation and thematic levels of Community Planning Partnerships, CVS' understanding of the voluntary sector enables them to facilitate voluntary sector and community participation in the Community Planning process.

The activity of the CVS network is also relevant to the new power of well being set out in the Act. The Power to Advance Well-Being Guidance sets out examples of some of the key factors which contribute to the promotion or improvement of well-being, including:

- the encouragement of the voluntary sector;
- measures to encourage local small business (growing the sector);
- lifelong learning (representing the interests of the sector/providing support services);
- training and skills development (promoting good practice).

The Guidance sets out a range of possible uses of the power of well being, a number of which are relevant to the CVS network, including:

- enhancing local service delivery – for example, by working with CVS to identify voluntary sector providers with the ability to provide alternative services or augment the services of public sector providers;
- tackling poverty and deprivation – the CVS links with community and voluntary groups at grass roots level mean they are well situated to articulate and challenge some of the factors which have an adverse

impact in the quality of life in Scotland's most disadvantaged communities;

- reducing inequalities and promoting equalities – the voluntary sector has traditionally played a lead role in advancing the equalities agenda, while CVS core activities include a commitment to promoting good practice;
- encouraging participation and community capacity building – CVS have a track record of organising activities and events which attract a wide range of participants, including individuals and groups from disadvantaged communities (including communities of interest). Community capacity building is a well-established area of CVS work – see providing support services and promoting good practice in the *Core Activities Framework*.

Wider Role

SCVO and the CVS network work with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to sustain and develop partnerships within the RSL sector and across other sectors.

Communities Scotland's Wider Role budget will continue to be focused exclusively on RSLs or on voluntary organisations specifically supporting an RSL's Wider Role activity. There are a number of ways in which an RSL can be involved in Wider Role activity:

- RSL as a direct provider of a service
- RSL creates 'arms length' organisation to deliver service
- RSL 'employs' another voluntary organisation to provide the service
- RSL supports another voluntary organisation to provide the service.

CVS are working with RSLs in several areas. One example of good practice is Melville Housing's Young People's Project, where Midlothian Voluntary Action was one of the partner agencies. Local young people produced a video which explored reasons for disaffection in their age group.

Integrated Children's Services Fund

CVS have worked in partnership with local agencies to develop local plans and to support local childcare bodies to participate in decisions on how this fund would be used. For example, CVS Fife brought all organisations with an interest in children's issues together and supported them to form a network which nominated community representatives to help decide on use of the fund as well as informing the wider children's services agenda.

Partnership for Care: The Health White Paper

The Health White Paper paved the way for the development of Community Health Partnerships (CHPs), an initiative designed to benefit patients by reducing bureaucracy and devolving responsibility and decision making as far as possible to front line organisations that are close to patients.

The statutory guidance on Community Health Partnerships notes that they should include “a member of the voluntary sector carrying out services similar or related to the Health Board.” CVS are likely to have a role either as a member of CHPs or as the organisation which facilitates voluntary sector involvement in them.

Strategic Funding Review

The activity of the steering group and working groups charged with advancing the Strategic Funding Review has concentrated on three strategic areas:

- Funding public service delivery and promoting best value;
- Identifying measures to enable growth and sustainability and to develop the capacity of the sector;
- Improving the availability of, effectiveness of and access to funding support to the sector.

The steering group has received the reports of the working groups and developed recommendations on 6 themes:

- Changing the funding culture;
- Making full cost recovery work;
- Joining up policies and promoting partnership;
- Better support services;
- Joining up funding;
- Improving funding policies and practice

There is potential for CVS to play a significant role in advancing the steering group’s recommendations. While some recommendations are relevant to core CVS activity, others – for example, making full cost recovery work – are new areas of business.

Unlocking the Potential – An Action Plan for the Credit Union Movement in Scotland

The aim of *Unlocking the Potential* is:

to remove barriers to credit union growth in Scotland and to ensure that all credit unions have access to the support and development services they require to enable them to flourish throughout Scotland.

The CVS network supports this aim in a range of ways, including providing start-up and ongoing advice, through skills transfer, training and mentoring, the provision of premises and making connections between credit unions and voluntary organisations in their common bond area. Given that CVS are active in every local authority area in Scotland and are in regular contact with around 20,000 voluntary organisations, the network will play a continuing supporting role in achieving the credit union growth targeted in the action plan.

Volunteering strategy

The aim of the Volunteering Strategy is described in the following terms:

Volunteering is a fundamental building block of civil society. The Scottish Executive aims to enable leaders within the volunteering and other sectors throughout Scotland to unite as partners to promote and support successful volunteering, accessible to all.

CVS work with the national network of Volunteer Centres, while some Volunteer Centres are an integrated part of CVS, and activity includes hold joint events and training programmes, as well as the joint planning of services. CVS role in supporting and growing the voluntary sector enhances the quality of the volunteering experience and provides new and varied volunteering opportunities.

Delivering the goods for Scotland's voluntary sector

The CVS network is committed to maximising its impact on voluntary organisations and communities across Scotland within the customer-focused context of the *Core Activities Framework*.

The areas of activity undertaken by SCVO, accompanied by benchmarking data, 2005/08 targets, voluntary sector and community impacts and success measures, are set out below.

Each of the core activity areas is illustrated by examples of current good practice in the CVS network, as well as areas where development or additional resources are required.

Understanding the voluntary sector

Activity	CVS hold up to date information on the voluntary sector in their area
2004/05 benchmark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75% of CVS collect data on all voluntary organisations in their area
2005/08 target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of CVS collect data on all voluntary organisations in their area, using a standard set of data fields
Voluntary sector impact	The nature and extent of voluntary sector activity is mapped accurately across Scotland. CVS use customer intelligence to assess needs, target resources, consult, etc
Success measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant and up-to-date voluntary sector data available in every local authority area in Scotland Customer satisfaction
Community impact	The nature and extent of voluntary sector activity is mapped accurately locally. Communities have improved access to intelligence on voluntary sector activity and the services they require. Community Planning Partnerships benefit from access to data held by CVS

Activity	CVS are familiar with the main concerns and needs of the voluntary sector in their area
2004/05 benchmarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50% of CVS undertake activities which enable them to establish the main concerns and needs of the voluntary sector in their area 100% of CVS use day-to-day contacts and <i>ad hoc</i> consultations to establish the main concerns and needs of the sector
2005/08 target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of CVS undertake activities which enable them to establish the main concerns and needs of the voluntary sector in their area 100% of CVS use day-to-day contacts and <i>ad hoc</i> consultations to establish the main concerns and needs of the sector

Voluntary sector impact	Voluntary organisations have confidence that their concerns are noted and acted upon Voluntary organisations benefit from CVS services which are shaped to address their concerns and needs
Success measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVS services are shaped to address the concerns and needs of voluntary organisations in their area • Customer satisfaction
Community impact	Communities raise concerns and needs with voluntary organisations in their area and with CVS, providing opportunities for community engagement and local ownership of the planning and delivery of services

Activity	CVS understand the policy context in relation to the voluntary sector locally
2004/05 benchmark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90% of CVS hold information on key local and national policies
2005/08 target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of CVS hold information on key local and national policies
Voluntary sector impact	Voluntary organisations have access to advice and information on the key areas of policy relevant to their activity
Success measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved voluntary sector understanding of relevant policy • Customer satisfaction
Community impact	Communities benefit from improved general awareness of key local and national policies, while policy makers benefit from the distribution and interpretation of policy in communities and the voluntary sector locally

Activity	CVS identify the economic value of the voluntary sector locally
2004/05 benchmark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75% of CVS collect data on all voluntary organisations in their area
2005/08 target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of CVS collect data on all voluntary organisations in their area, including information on their annual income
Voluntary sector impact	Voluntary organisations recognise the economic value of the sector's activity in their area and benefit from increased credibility with funders and stakeholders
Success measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate assessment of the economic value of the voluntary sector locally • Customer satisfaction
Community impact	Communities benefit from transparent information on the economic value of the voluntary sector locally

Good practice and areas for development¹

¹ Additional, time-limited resources are required to support data collection activity across the CVS network and to ensure consistency of approach. Investment in ICT is also required to improve standards and ensure a level playing field in this area of CVS activity.

CVS Falkirk & District produced a report, *The Hidden Giant*, on the results of a comprehensive survey of the voluntary sector locally. The CVS identified more than 700 organisations in their area, employing over 1300 staff, and with total annual income of over £25m.

CVS North Ayrshire, in common with a number of other CVS, has limited resources and is unable to map comprehensively the voluntary sector in its area of operation, despite an identified need for this information.

Communicating with the voluntary sector

Activity	CVS provide relevant and up-to-date information to the voluntary sector locally
2004/05 benchmarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 85% of CVS provide voluntary organisations in their area with regular newsletters, briefing papers, e-bulletins, etc • Many CVS have a website which provides information for voluntary organisations in their area
2005/08 targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of CVS provide voluntary organisations in their area with regular newsletters, briefing papers, e-bulletins, etc • 100% of CVS have a website which provides information for voluntary organisations in their area
Voluntary sector impact	Voluntary organisations locally are informed of the opportunities, policy and practical developments which are relevant to their needs and those of their customers
Success measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better informed voluntary sector locally • Customer satisfaction
Community impact	Communities benefit from information on opportunities, policy & practical developments relevant to their aspirations and needs

Activity	CVS facilitate networking between voluntary organisations
2004/05 benchmark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of CVS provide a range of networking opportunities
2005/08 target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of CVS provide a range of networking opportunities
Voluntary sector impact	Voluntary organisations locally are better connected, with increased opportunities to exchange information, learn from others' experience, promote good practice and share resources
Success measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better connected voluntary sector locally • Increased range of networking opportunities • Customer satisfaction
Community impact	Communities benefit from joined-up activities and services from the voluntary sector locally

Activity	CVS promote opportunities for voluntary organisations to respond to emerging issues and consultations
2004/05 benchmark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75% of CVS promote opportunities to respond to emerging issues and consultations on an <i>ad hoc</i> basis
2005/08 targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of CVS promote opportunities to respond to emerging issues and consultations on a routine basis, making appropriate use of e-communication and web technology
Voluntary sector impact	Voluntary organisations are better equipped to make informed responses to emerging issues and consultations
Success measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved ability to respond to emerging issues and consultations • Customer satisfaction

Community impact	Communities benefit from improved opportunities to respond to emerging issues and consultations
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Good practice and areas for development

CVS Stirling produces a newsletter which contains articles on local issues, national developments and funding and training opportunities. Conferences, specialist network meetings and day-to-day contact are used to augment this regular method of communication.

A number of organisations, including Aberdeen CVO and CVS Inverclyde, produce regular e-bulletins which contain links to further information on websites.

Caithness Voluntary Group does not have the staff resource to produce a regular newsletter.

Representing the interests of the voluntary sector locally

Activity	CVS work to ensure their representation at the strategic level of Community Planning Partnerships, Rural Partnerships and Social Economy Partnerships
2004/05 benchmarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 91% of CVS are represented at the strategic level of Community Planning Partnerships • 95% of rural CVS are represented on Rural Partnerships
2005/08 targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of CVS are represented at the strategic level of Community Planning Partnerships • 100% of rural CVS are represented on Rural Partnerships • 100% of CVS are represented on Social Economy Partnerships
Voluntary sector impact	Voluntary organisations have a local voice which works to ensure that Partnerships recognise the interests of the voluntary sector and its ability to advance and support the delivery of strategic objectives
Success measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased voluntary sector involvement and influence in Partnerships • Customer satisfaction
Community impact	Communities benefit from improved opportunities to make their aspirations, needs and views known via voluntary organisations locally

Activity	CVS facilitate voluntary sector participation in thematic Community Planning forums
2004/05 benchmarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 95% of CVS facilitate voluntary sector participation in thematic Community Planning forums
2005/08 target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of CVS facilitate voluntary sector participation in thematic Community Planning forums
Voluntary sector impact	Voluntary organisations are supported to engage in thematic Community Planning forums, ensuring that the interests of the voluntary sector and its ability to advance strategic and operational objectives are recognised
Success measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased voluntary sector engagement in thematic Community Planning forums • Customer satisfaction
Community impact	Communities benefit from improved opportunities to make their aspirations, needs and views known via voluntary organisations locally

Activity	CVS work with intermediary organisations and the public and private sectors to ensure the views and interests of the voluntary sector locally are represented
2004/05 benchmark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of CVS work to bring a voluntary sector perspective to a diverse range of issues, including anti-poverty work, community safety, equality and diversity, regeneration and the social economy
2005/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of CVS work in partnership with intermediary,

target	public and private sector organisations to bring a voluntary sector perspective to a diverse range of issues, including anti-poverty work, community safety, equality and diversity, regeneration and the social economy
Voluntary sector impact	Voluntary organisations' views and interests are represented through CVS engagement with other intermediary organisations and with the public and private sectors
Success measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved understanding locally of the views and interests of the voluntary sector • Customer satisfaction
Community impact	Communities' views and interests are represented through the engagement of voluntary organisations locally with CVS

Good practice and areas for development²

Voluntary Action West Lothian supports a voluntary sector forum which has taken on a wider role in the context of Community Planning. The forum now identifies and supports representatives from the voluntary sector locally to engage in thematic groups, while the Community Planning Partnership recognises the forum as the way to reach voluntary organisations and through them, communities.

In order to set out the principles and actions which achieve better working relationships and closer collaborative working, Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations Council supported the development of *In Equal Respect: A Shared Vision*, a partnership agreement between the city's public agencies. This local compact is the first of its kind in Scotland.

However CVS Inverclyde and Glasgow CVS are among a small group of organisations which are experiencing problems in relation to Community Planning representation, either because of partners' reluctance to recognise their role or slow progress in ensuring that voices from the voluntary sector are heard appropriately.

² Investment in ICT is required to improve standards and ensure a level playing field in this area of CVS activity.

Providing support services

Activity	CVS provide support services to the voluntary sector locally on business planning, legal frameworks, management and monitoring and evaluation
2004/05 benchmarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of CVS provide support services to the voluntary sector locally
2005/08 target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of CVS provide support services to the voluntary sector locally and consult customers to identify ways of improving services
Voluntary sector impact	Voluntary organisations have access to a range of support services which meet their operational and strategic development needs
Success measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary organisations operational and strategic development needs are supported by CVS • Customer satisfaction
Community impact	Communities benefit from an informed, sustainable and vibrant voluntary sector locally

Activity	CVS support the generation of additional income for the voluntary sector locally
2004/05 benchmark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of CVS support the generation of additional income for the voluntary sector locally
2005/08 target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of CVS support the generation of additional income for the voluntary sector locally and use a standard methodology to capture the economic impact of their activity
Voluntary sector impact	Voluntary organisations have access to advice and support on funding and income generation opportunities
Success measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary organisations attract additional income with the support of CVS • Customer satisfaction
Community impact	Communities benefit from funding and income generation which meets or supports their aspirations or needs

Good practice and areas for development

Voluntary Action Lewis manages a voluntary sector hub which organisations locally use as a focal point for information, advice and support, as well as a source of accommodation and meeting space. This approach is replicated by a number of CVS in other areas.

Berwickshire AVS, in common with other CVS, has developed an effective programme of support for voluntary organisations seeking funding. The programme includes bringing funding bodies and potential applicants together, providing one-to-one support in developing business plans and applications, and establishing systems to ensure the successful delivery of projects post-award.

There is a need to improve the ways in which CVS share resources. Two initiatives – the *Building Blocks Skills Bank* and *Raising the Game CVS Skills Project* – will improve the use of human resources, while opportunities to share equipment and premises will be promoted via the new CVS website.

Promoting good practice

Activity	CVS develop the skills and knowledge of those operating at all levels of the voluntary sector locally
2004/05 benchmark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of CVS develop the skills and knowledge of the voluntary sector locally
2005/08 target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of CVS develop the skills and knowledge of those operating at all levels of the voluntary sector locally, including intermediary organisations and national organisations which provide services at local level
Voluntary sector impact	Voluntary organisations have access to services which develop the skills and knowledge of staff and volunteers
Success measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary organisations benefit from the improved skills and knowledge of staff and volunteers • Customer satisfaction
Community impact	Communities benefit from a voluntary sector which is supported to best meet needs locally. Community activists and volunteers benefit from opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge

Activity	CVS seek to improve standards in management, policy implementation and service delivery through training events for staff and volunteers
2004/05 benchmarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 34% of CVS deliver training events for staff and volunteers from the voluntary sector locally • 100% of CVS signpost staff and volunteers from the voluntary sector locally to appropriate training events
2005/08 targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40% of CVS deliver training events for staff and volunteers from the voluntary sector locally • 100% of CVS signpost staff and volunteers from the voluntary sector locally to appropriate training events and work with SCVO to access short course training opportunities
Voluntary sector impact	Voluntary organisations have access to training events which improve standards in management, policy implementation and service delivery
Success measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary organisations benefit from improved standards in management, policy implementation and service delivery • Customer satisfaction
Community impact	Communities benefit from a voluntary sector which is supported to best meet needs locally. Community activists and volunteers benefit from opportunities to develop their capacity in management, policy implementation and service delivery

Good practice and areas for development

CVS Fife has accessed European funding to deliver a project which provides intensive support in developing the effectiveness of voluntary organisations

locally, while the three CVS in Aberdeenshire provide a shared training resource. Glasgow CVS provides training needs analysis, as well as delivering a short course programme three times per year.

A number of CVS do not have the resources to deliver training in their area of operation. The CVS network and SCVO will work together to ensure that voluntary organisations locally have access to the training and resource materials they need to raise standards and improve effectiveness. Current options include sharing CVS skills across the network and increasing local access to SCVO's short course training programme.

Growing the sector

Activity	CVS support the emergence of new groups in response to local issues and needs
2004/05 benchmark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of CVS support the emergence of new groups in response to local issues and needs
2005/08 target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of CVS support the emergence of new groups in response to local issues and needs and use a standard methodology to capture the economic and social impact of their activity
Voluntary sector impact	New voluntary organisations established in response to local issues and needs
Success measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new voluntary organisations established • Customer satisfaction
Community impact	Communities benefit from new voluntary sector activity and services which address local issues and needs

Activity	CVS strengthen the capacity of existing organisations through training and support
2004/05 benchmarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 34% of CVS deliver training events for staff and volunteers from the voluntary sector locally • 100% of CVS share their knowledge with organisations through one-to-one support and good practice materials
2005/08 target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40% of CVS deliver training events for staff and volunteers from the voluntary sector locally • 100% of CVS share their knowledge with organisations through one-to-one support and good practice materials and work with SCVO to access short course training opportunities
Voluntary sector impact	Voluntary organisations develop new or extended services
Success measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of voluntary organisations developing new or extended services • Customer satisfaction
Community impact	Communities benefit from new or extended services from the voluntary sector locally

Good practice and areas for development

Perth and Kinross CVS has dedicated staff who support voluntary organisations locally to identify potential areas for growth, while East Lothian Voluntary Organisations Network and East Ayrshire CVO support the development and growth of organisations in rural communities.

Re-branding and improved promotion of the CVS network will ensure that current and potential customers are aware of the start-up support which is available.

The role of SCVO

SCVO took on direct responsibility for the development and co-ordination of Scotland's CVS network on 1st April 2004. SCVO's role in relation to the CVS network is to:

- to provide leadership and a sense of common purpose;
- to build CVS capacity;
- to attract funding and resources;
- to strengthen the provision of information and advice to the voluntary sector;
- to support networking and the exchange of good practice;
- to improve performance and the quality of services;
- to develop skills, training and learning;
- to explore early opportunities for re-branding the CVS network.

Leadership and a sense of common purpose

SCVO has worked with the Network Liaison Group to lead an ambitious change programme for the CVS network. As well as generating a new spirit of optimism across the network, this partnership approach to meeting the needs of voluntary organisations locally has resulted in agreement on the new *Core Activities Framework*. SCVO is taking a lead role in developing a range of initiatives which will benefit CVS and their customers in voluntary organisations and communities across Scotland.

Building CVS capacity

The Avanté report noted the variable ability of CVS to fulfil their role in relation to the changing policy environment - particularly at strategic level - due to a range of factors, including access to appropriate skills, knowledge and resources. A range of initiatives to build the capacity of the CVS network is currently in place, while new opportunities will be investigated and developed over time.

Funding & resources

The Avanté report noted that the majority of CVS struggle to secure adequate resources to fulfil the demands on their service. While the Scottish Executive's funding plays a significant role in the sustainability of the majority of CVS, core funding from local authorities is low and the level of support from Health Boards is minimal.

While it is anticipated that the *Core Activities Framework* and targeted promotion will improve understanding of CVS' role and their contribution to Scotland's voluntary organisations and the communities they serve, further work is required to achieve increased buy-in on the part of local authorities, Community Planning Partnerships, health boards, etc.

Recognising that it will take time to achieve the change required at local level, SCVO has already worked in partnership with CVS to develop current and prospective funding bids to build the capacity of the network. These include:

- a successful £50,000 bid to Scottish Enterprise to develop the broadband capacity of CVS in the east of Scotland;
- a £1.5m ESF bid to support the Highlands and Islands CVS group to develop active communities;
- prospective European funding bids to develop information services and to increase the ability of CVS to participate in the employability agenda.

A pro-active approach will be taken in identifying and making the most of funding opportunities which develop the capacity of the CVS network.

Information and advice

A thematic working group has been established to improve the consistency, quality and co-ordination of information and advice provision across the CVS network. The working group comprises representatives from 15 CVS, as well as SCVO's Information Services team and proposals currently under consideration include:

- The development of a common suite of information materials and common website platform for use by information staff and others regularly providing information to the voluntary sector;
- The establishment of a national helpline service that will respond to basic information enquiries and refer more detailed enquiries onto local CVS;
- Network-wide training, support and quality control;
- The facility for local branding of all common materials developed to ensure high local profile for CVS;
- Further development of the weekly e-CVS bulletin for use as a template for production of locally branded information bulletins

It is intended to draw on existing good practice materials and specialist expertise developed by individual CVS to develop common high service standards and readily accessible information and advice across Scotland, regardless of location. Findings from the Avanté survey and research commissioned by Communities Scotland into the voluntary sector support infrastructure specifically highlighted problems of lack of consistency and accessibility. Our proposals are designed to address these concerns.

To support this development, funding bids are being developed for submission to Future builders and the East of Scotland European Partnership (ESEP) in early 2005.

Good IT capacity will be an essential prerequisite for the development of these services and funding is also being sought to ensure all CVS have the necessary equipment and ongoing support. Funding has already been secured from Scottish Enterprise to expand the availability of broadband access and other funding sources are being investigated to upgrade hardware, software and support.

Networking and sharing good practice

A weekly electronic newsletter, e-CVS, is circulated to the CVS network with the aim of:

- highlighting examples of current activity and good practice across the CVS network;
- promoting the exchange of ideas and intelligence;
- sharing current information on practical and policy developments;
- promoting relevant events and opportunities.

In addition to e-CVS, plans to develop a CVS web-presence within SCVO's own site are at an advanced stage. As well as presenting a public face for CVS, the website will play a key role in providing support and information for the network.

The site will be accessible to CVS member organisations and the general public and will provide users with a range of relevant resources and information. A members' section accessed through a secure logon page will provide users and groups with the facility to exchange information and documents, using discussion boards, forums and consultation exercises.

While electronic methods will play an important ongoing role in promoting networking and the sharing of good practice between CVS, the network has identified a need for regular networking events avoid duplication of effort, exchange experiences and information and promote ongoing quality contact between network members. As well as building on the success of existing networks in the south and west of Scotland, new networks will be supported and developed in the east of the country and in the Highlands and Islands.

It is anticipated that local network events will be held twice yearly, with at least one of the meetings a residential event. Where possible, networking events will be arranged to coincide with Volunteer Centre network meetings to reduce costs and travel time for CVS with an interest in both areas of business. The aims of the local network events are to:

- promote peer discussion on a range of issues relevant to the CVS network;
- promote the exchange of information and best practice;
- provide formal and informal opportunities for learning and training;
- provide opportunities for partner agencies and stakeholders to engage with a group of CVS at local level;
- develop a sense of "belonging" and shared identity across the CVS network.

Performance measures and quality management

The Avanté report noted the need for a consistent model of monitoring and evaluation across CVS and this requirement has been heightened with the development of the *Core Activities Framework*.

The Network Liaison Group is well placed to develop a model capable of capturing key performance information on the difference CVS make to the local voluntary sector and to local communities across Scotland. This model will require to be supported by the development of consistent systems for gathering, managing and interpreting quantitative and qualitative data.

In addition to developing appropriate performance measures and ensuring quality management, there is a need to achieve a greater network-wide level of consistency and effectiveness on business planning, with particular reference to the *Core Activities Framework*. Training and support on effective business planning will be an early priority for the local CVS network events.

Skills, training and learning

Rather than look out with the CVS network for appropriate skills, two current CVS/SCVO initiatives – the *Building Blocks Skills Bank* and *Raising the Game CVS Skills Project* – are mapping the skills of staff and volunteers across the network, as well as the extent to which they are willing to share these skills with others. The results of the mapping exercise will be used to produce a database, hosted on the new CVS website, which will promote the exchange of skills across the network on an exchange, fee-paying or free basis.

CVS and SCVO are also working in partnership to facilitate the provision of more training in the rural and remoter areas of Scotland by extending SCVO's existing national training programme. This programme has traditionally been delivered in central belt locations due to funding constraints, but the use of local CVS marketing channels, venues and trainers/consultants is providing new opportunities – both for CVS and their members – in other parts of the country. Discussions are also underway on the development of regional CVS training consortia to maximise the impact achieved from the resources available at local level.

The workwithus portal team has developed an e-learning facility and discussions are underway on the development of a common suite of e-learning tools and materials for use across the CVS network. A local branding facility would be incorporated within this approach.

CVS branding

The Avanté report recommended that the name of CVS be reviewed to identify and agree a consistent name that would be implemented across the network and noted that the “Council” part of the name is confusing and dated.

Although an in-depth review has not been conducted, there is a reasonable consensus across the network that re-branding is required. An informal consultation exercise at the 2004 CVS conference illustrated a level of support for retention of the CVS acronym, accompanied by a change in the wording “Council for Voluntary Service” to more accurately reflect the network’s role in 21st century Scotland.

<i>Key action points (short-term)</i>	<i>Timescale</i>
<i>Survey CVS to assess level of support for re-branding</i>	December 2004

<i>Identify range of options for CVS re-branding</i>	January 2005
<i>Recommend preferred re-branding option to CVS network</i>	February 2005

Managing the funding of the CVS network

While the Voluntary Issues Unit has expressed interest in SCVO taking on overall responsibility for managing the funding of the CVS network, SCVO's position is that such a change will require:

- the agreement of the CVS network and SCVO board;
- an increase in Scottish Executive funding which allows the CVS network to build on the progress made to date and meet the challenges of the new *Core Activities Framework*.

Budget and resources

The Scottish Executive has made a significant commitment to supporting the activity of Scotland's CVS network in recent years, with funding in 2004/2005 amounting to a total of £2,503,408. It is accepted that the funds provided by the Scottish Executive are intended to support the core activity of CVS, rather than meet the costs of this activity in its entirety.

The CVS network recognises the need to augment their core support with funding from a range of other resources, including local authorities, charitable/voluntary sector funders, European funding and trading activity. In 2003/2004, the network generated additional income of £12m to support their activity – and this figure does not include the funding CVS helped voluntary organisations locally to secure.

However, the level of funding which the Scottish Executive provides to support CVS activity has been static for four years. Without additional investment, the CVS network will be operating with reduced resources and the gains achieved by the adoption of a new *Core Activities Framework* and the new relationship with SCVO will be compromised.

The table below sets out the level of funding increase required to allow the CVS network simply to keep pace with inflation.

	2002	2003	2004	Cumulative
Retail Price Index (October figure)	2.10%	2.60%	3.30%	8.21%
Average earnings				
UK as a whole	3.60%	3.80%	4.10%	11.95%
Public administration	3.70%	5.50%	5.50%	15.42%
Current CVS funding				£2,503,408
<i>Uplifted for:</i>				
Retail Price Index (October figure)				£2,708,975
Average earnings				
UK as a whole				£2,802,460
Public administration				£2,889,451

The core funding which CVS receive is used in the main to cover salary and staffing costs. Assuming a spend of 80% on staffing costs, it is reasonable to apply the public administration inflation rate to an equivalent proportion of total CVS funding, with the RPI applying to the remaining 20%. Using this approach, the total level of funding to CVS needs to increase to £2,853,354 to allow organisations simply to stand still.

This represents an increase of £349,946 or 13.98% on the current level of funding. Across the three years covered by this plan, the increase amounts to £1,049,844.

The impact on the budgets for individual CVS and local federations/forums is noted below.

Local Authority	Name of CVS		2004-2005	2005-2008
Aberdeenshire	BRIDGE		£37,429	£42,662
Aberdeenshire	Gordon Rural Action		£37,429	£42,662
Aberdeenshire	K & D VOICE		£40,664	£46,349
Angus	Angus AVO		£60,000	£68,388
Argyll & Bute	Argyll CVS		£41,000	£46,732
Argyll & Bute	Bute Community Links		£28,000	£31,914
Argyll & Bute	Fed of Argyll and the Islands		£8,000	£9,118
Argyll & Bute	Islay & Jura CVS		£32,791	£37,375
City of Aberdeen	Aberdeen CVO		£60,000	£68,388
City of Dundee	Dundee VA		£60,000	£68,388
City of Edinburgh	Edinburgh VOC		£60,000	£68,388
City of Glasgow	Glasgow CVS		£60,000	£68,388
Clackmannanshire	Clackmannanshire		£60,000	£68,388
D & Galloway	Annandale & Eskdale CVS		£27,753	£31,633
D & Galloway	Dumfries & Galloway Federation		£30,000	£34,194
D & Galloway	Nithsdale CVS		£20,500	£23,366
D & Galloway	Stewartry CVS		£26,000	£29,635
D & Galloway	Wigtown CVS		£25,600	£29,179
East Ayrshire	East Ayrshire CVO		£60,000	£68,388
East Dunbartonshire	East Dunbartonshire		£60,000	£68,388
East Lothian	East Lothian VON		£60,000	£68,388
East Renfrewshire	East Renfrewshire CVS		£60,000	£68,388
Falkirk	CVS Falkirk & District		£60,000	£68,388
Fife	CVS Fife		£30,000	£34,194
Fife	VONEF		£35,000	£39,893
Highland	Caithness VG		£27,607	£31,466
Highland	CVS Nairn		£25,000	£28,495
Highland	CVS North		£25,000	£28,495
Highland	Ross-shire Voluntary Action		£26,500	£30,205
Highland	Skye & Lochalsh CVO		£26,000	£29,635
Highland	VA Badenoch & Strathspey		£26,635	£30,359
Highland	VA Inverness/SCVO		£25,000	£28,495
Highland	VA Lochaber		£26,000	£29,635
Highland	Vol Groups East Sutherland		£25,000	£28,495
Highland	Voluntary Action Highland		£60,000	£68,388

Local Authority	Name of CVS		2004-2005	2005-2008
Inverclyde	CVS Inverclyde		£60,000	£68,388
Midlothian	Midlothian VA		£60,000	£68,388
Moray	Moray VSO		£60,000	£68,388
North Ayrshire	Arran CVS		£25,000	£28,495
North Ayrshire	CVS North Ayrshire		£25,000	£28,495
North Ayrshire	Communities Linking		£30,000	£34,194
North L/shire	CAVOC		£20,000	£22,796
North L/shire	Monklands AVS		£20,000	£22,796
North L/shire	North Lanarkshire North CVS		£20,000	£22,796
Orkney	VA Orkney		£66,000	£75,227
Perth & Kinross	CVS Perth & Kinross		£60,000	£68,388
Renfrewshire	Renfrewshire CVS		£60,000	£68,388
Scottish Borders	Berwickshire AVS		£26,000	£29,635
Scottish Borders	Borders Forum		£30,000	£34,194
Scottish Borders	Central Borders AVS		£20,600	£23,480
Scottish Borders	Roxburgh AVS		£24,000	£27,355
Scottish Borders	Tweeddale AVS		£22,500	£25,646
Shetland	Shetland CSS		£61,800	£70,440
South Ayrshire	CVO in Kyle & Carrick		£60,000	£68,388
South L/shire	ALVO		£34,500	£39,323
South L/shire	CREATE KTD		£8,500	£9,688
South L/shire	CVS Hamilton/East Kilbride		£17,000	£19,377
Stirling	CVS Stirling		£60,000	£68,388
West Dunbartonshire	West Dunbartonshire		£60,000	£68,388
West Lothian	VA West Lothian		£60,000	£68,388
Western Isles	Harris Voluntary Service		£31,500	£35,904
Western Isles	Uist CVO		£32,500	£37,044
Western Isles	VA Barra & Vatersay		£33,200	£37,841
Western Isles	VA Lewis		£42,400	£48,328
Total			£2,503,408	£2,853,384

SCVO's has committed increased resources to work with CVS since taking on direct responsibility for the development and co-ordination of the network. At present, SCVO receives Scottish Executive support of £50,000 - formerly committed to CVS Scotland - to support staff and administrative costs incurred in pursuing the aims, objectives and targets contained in the CVS Scotland development plan. This level of support is committed until the end of the current financial year.

An additional £100,000 of Scottish Executive funding is received by SCVO to build the capacity of the CVS network. This level of support is committed until the end of the 2005-2006 financial year.

Given the nature and range of SCVO activity in leading the development of the CVS network, an increase of £50,000 per annum is required to support ongoing activity with CVS and contribute to greater staffing, administrative and other costs associated with SCVO's new role.

The minimum budget required to allow CVS and SCVO to advance the new *Core Activities Framework* and deliver the goods for Scotland's voluntary sector is as follows:

	Per annum	2005-2008
CVS network	£2,853,384	£8,560,152
SCVO development & co-ordination	£200,000	£600,000
Total	£3,053,384	£9,160,152

Developing CVS role

The funding proposal outlined above, linked to the delivery of the new *Core Activities Framework*, will support the delivery of a customer-focused, outcome-oriented approach to CVS activity. However, with additional resources, the CVS network can advance several strategic objectives, including:

- developing the outcomes of the Strategic Funding Review. CVS are well-placed to monitor changes in the funding culture locally, to assess the extent to which full cost recovery is working in practice, to work with partners to ensure joined-up policy, to develop customer-friendly support services and improve funding policy and practice;
- promoting the Scottish Compact and developing compacts in their area of operation. Recent research has indicated that while awareness of the Compact is reasonable within public agencies, it has a limited profile – and therefore limited positive impact – with the voluntary sector locally;
- supporting the development of Local Social Economy Partnerships, with area offices of Communities Scotland, to ensure joined-up development of the social economy at local level, the expansion of procurement opportunities and the exploration of new ways of delivering public services.

Given the particular strategic nature of these activities, one new post per local authority area, at a cost of £30,000 per annum, will deliver significant positive change in line with key Scottish Executive objectives.

	Per annum	2005-2008
CVS development posts (x 32)	£960,000	£2,880,000
SCVO co-ordination post	£50,000	£150,000
Total	£1,010,000	£3,030,000

Further discussion on the merit of this proposal is welcome.

Further information

For further information on the strategic business plan for Scotland's CVS network, please contact:

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