

Social Justice and Regeneration Committee

SJR-11-05 (p.2) Annex 1

RECOMMENDATION 1; page 36

The Voluntary Sector Scheme should not be remade

Action taken. The Independent Commission recommended that the scheme should not be remade. The Minister has agreed that the scheme should not be remade and has agreed to implement this recommendation.

Reporting line

1. Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration, Ms Edwina Hart.

The Minister has agreed the action taken meets fully with the Independent Commission recommendations and has agreed to report this to the following bodies to endorse the action.

2. Voluntary Sector Partnership Council – The Minister will report the action taken to the meeting on 29 November 2004.

3. Social Justice and Regeneration Committee – The Minister will in her report to the SJR Committee inform the committee of the action taken and the response of the VSPC.

4. Assembly Plenary session – The Minister will report to the Plenary session the implementation of this recommendation at a time to be decided.

Signed off by Sanjiv Vedi, Head of Voluntary Sector and Inclusion Division

Date 20 October 2004.

RECOMMENDATION 2; page 36

Make minor revisions to the Scheme to bring it up to date with developments since 2000

Annex M states

- Amend "Assembly" to "National Assembly" or "Assembly Government" as appropriate throughout;
- Amend "Assembly Secretary" to "Assembly Government Minister" throughout;
- 2.7 - amend "offers equality of opportunity" to "has a duty to promote equality of opportunity";
- 3.9 - amend "establish" to "maintain";
- 3.12 - 21 sectoral reps – might need to be amended by the VSPC in light of the outcome of the discussions with the VSPC (Rec 40);
- 4.2 - amend "the Handbook" to "guidance";
- 5.2.5 - amend "health authorities" to "Local Health Boards";
- 6.9 - delete section on brackets referring to specific grant schemes.

Action taken. The Minister has agreed that minor revision should be made to the scheme and that a revised version be made available on the Internet thereafter. The amendments have been made to the scheme and a revised version is now available on the Internet

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Date 20 October 2004

RECOMMENDATION 12; page 54

Move to a minimum standard of 12 weeks for all consultations affecting the voluntary sector and amend the Scheme accordingly.

Action taken. The Minister wrote to Cabinet members to inform and consult them on implementing this recommendation. Cabinet members have agreed to support the implementation of 12 weeks for all Welsh Assembly Government Consultations.

The Assembly Government however has little control over UK Government consultations and secondary legislation, which may not provide the 12 weeks recommended by the Independent Commission. In these circumstances the Assembly will endeavour to provide as much notice as is possible on matter that effect the voluntary sector in Wales to be able to contribute.

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Date 20 October 2004.

RECOMMENDATION Rec 22; page 67

Adopt a minimum 3-year period for grant awards, with wherever possible an assumption of continued funding, conditional on performance against agreed indicators and periodic review of policy priorities.

Action taken. The Minister has consulted with Cabinet colleagues who have supported that all Assembly Grants will adopt a minimum three-year period. Continued funding will be conditional on performance against agreed indicators and a periodic review of policy priorities.

Minister do wish to draw attention to funding for short term projects and activity, though which are not essentially from grants budgets, there is a need to ensure that such short term funding is provided for. Examples of these include studies and research, and short term bridge funding or funding to meet emergency, unplanned and unforeseen events.

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Date 20 October 2004.

RECOMMENDATION 24; page 67

Move to a 6-year review cycle for grant schemes, with reviews starting in year 4.

Action taken. The Minister has consulted cabinet colleagues and who have agreed that grant schemes will be reviewed over a six-year cycle, with reviews starting in year four.

However some schemes are already planned for a review over the next year or two years and these plans will remain. Those grants schemes where the Assembly is duty bound to provide as a result of a statutory requirement may not need a review but a full evaluation of their impact. The Assembly undertakes to evaluate these schemes within the confines of its statutory duty.

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Signed off by Sanjiv Vedi, Head of Voluntary Sector and Inclusion Division

Date 20 October 2004

RECOMMENDATION 45; page 86

Make a commitment to providing long-term core-funding through a dedicated funding stream to local volunteer bureaux, subject to performance against agreed indicators.

Action taken. The Minister has agreed to provide long –terms core-funding for Volunteer bureaux subject to performance against agreed indicators. The Minister is considering the funding structure within the Voluntary Sector and Inclusion Division and will make provision for direct funding of Voluntary Bureaux through Service Level agreements.

The Minister recently agreed to continue funding the recipients of grant aid from Active Communities, that includes the Volunteer Bureaux, for 2005 –06. She will continue to fund voluntary Bureaux via this route for 2005-06 during which time agreements can be reached on service level agreements and core funding identified. Volunteer bureaux will receive core funding from 2006-07.

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Date 20 October 2004

RECOMMENDATION 46; page 86

Continue to fund the Active Communities, Volunteering in Wales and Millennium Volunteers schemes.

Action taken. Active Communities Initiative, Volunteering in Wales and Millennium Volunteers schemes will continue, and as with recommendation 24 will be subject to a review in the near future. These reviews have been planned for Volunteering in Wales and Millennium Volunteers and will take in to account the recommendations of the Russell commission.

Active Communities Initiative review was conducted two years ago by Cardiff university and received a favourable response. This fund will continue.

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Date

RECOMMENDATION 57; page 95

Ensure that, for future reviews, sufficient time and resources are made available to maximise participation and thoroughness. Arrangements for the review should be set in motion within 4 weeks of each election.

Action taken. The Government of Wales Act provides for a review of the Voluntary Sector Scheme following each election of the Welsh Assembly Government. The recommendation effects the new Government following an election and the Minister cannot tie the hands of a future government or its elected representatives.

Given that there is cross party support for this recommendation (and others) the minister gives an undertaking that she will arise this matter with whoever is responsible for the portfolio following an election.

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Signed off by Sanjiv VEDI, Head of Voluntary Sector and Inclusion Division

Date 20 October 2004.

RECOMMENDATION 16; page 54

The Assembly Government should work with the sector to promote more vigorously the use of secondments between the Assembly Government and the voluntary and community sectors, as set out in the Scheme.

Action taken. The Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration has agreed to meet the costs of recruiting a secondee from the voluntary sector to the Assembly, from within the ‘Support for the Voluntary Sector’ Budget.

Part of the secondee’s role will be to promote more secondments between the Assembly and the sector. The success of the post will be reviewed after one year. There is scope to extend the secondment for up to five years, subject to the availability of funding.

Under the terms of the job description, the postholder will be required to:

- Advise on the Assembly’s policy and procedures for secondments
- Develop a range of inward and outward secondment opportunities between the Assembly and the sector. These may include short-term secondment and shadowing opportunities (e.g. blocks of 5 days, or 6-10 days spread over a year), and ‘continuous’ secondments (e.g. one year)
- Develop and maintain close links with WCVA, CVCs and appropriate voluntary organisations, to identify the kind of secondments to and from the Assembly that would be of benefit to the sector.
- Negotiate and agree specific inward and outward secondments.

Reporting line

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2. Voluntary Sector Partnership Council – The Minister will report the action taken to the meeting on 11 March 2005.
3. Social Justice and Regeneration Committee – The Minister will in her report to the SJR Committee inform the committee of the action taken and the response of the VSPC.
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Signed off by: Sanjiv Vedi, Head of Voluntary Sector Unit

Date: 16 February 2005.

RECOMMENDATION 32; page 75

The VSPC should take collective responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the Scheme, the new strategic action plan, and the Code, developing indicators and systems, and consider establishing a funding and compliance sub-committee for the purpose.

Action taken. The creation of the VSPC's Funding and Compliance Sub-Committee, and its Terms of Reference, were agreed by the VSPC at its meeting on 29 November 2004.

The Funding and Compliance Sub Committee will be holding its first meeting on 11 March, after the VSPC meeting. The chair will be elected at the first meeting. The initial membership of the Sub-Committee is as follows:

Ann Jones AM Aled Edwards

Helen Mary Jones AM Ruth Hopkins

Lydia Bassett Clive Sefia

Veronica Wilson (deputy)

Reporting line

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Signed off by: Sanjiv Vedi, Head of Voluntary Sector Unit

Date: 16 February 2005.

RECOMMENDATION 37; page 76

The VSPC should investigate individual cases of non-compliance with the provisions of the Scheme or the Code (by Assembly, ASPB, or third party schemes).

Action taken. Completed – this function has been included within the terms of reference for the new ‘Funding & Compliance Sub-committee’. These have been agreed by the Minister and were endorsed by the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council on 29 November 2004.

One of the responsibilities of the sub-committee will be to provide ‘a standard framework in order to receive information from Assembly Government divisions, ASPBs and from organisations administering third party grant schemes about their compliance with the Scheme and the Code of Practice for Funding the Voluntary Sector’.

The Sub-Committee will be holding its first meeting on 11 March.

Reporting line

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Signed off by Sanjiv Vedi, Head of Voluntary Sector Unit

Date 16 February 2005.

RECOMMENDATION 18; page 54

The WCVA should take steps to encourage every voluntary organisation operating in Wales to belong to a formal consultative network.

Action taken. Completed – this has been addressed by the WCVA's new Communications Strategy, which includes a range of measures to encourage all voluntary organisations to join a consultative network.

For example the WCVA:

- Will write periodically to all organisations on the All Wales Database to inform them of the Scheme and the potential to participate in the consultative networks
- Is agreeing communication standards with the networks, and will promote best practice around communications.

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3. Social Justice and Regeneration Committee – The Minister will in her report to the SJR Committee inform the committee of the action taken and the response of the VSPC.

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Signed off by Sanjiv VEDI, Head of Voluntary Sector Unit

Date 17 May 2005.

RECOMMENDATION 19; page 54

The WCVA should develop a system for ensuring that national, UK wide voluntary organisations operating in Wales are aware of the Scheme and Code.

Action taken. Completed – this issue is incorporated within the WCVA's new Communications Strategy. The strategy includes the provision of:

- Comprehensive and up-to-date information on the WCVA website
- Updates on the Scheme and Code at quarterly regional policy events
- Regular information in publications including *Network Wales / E-briefing*

It also includes joint work with the VSPC sector networks to...

- Review VSPC members' use of the Partnership Capacity Building Fund and agree job descriptions and performance indicators
- New communication standards with the networks that participate in Ministerial meetings

...and joint work with the Assembly Government to:

- Produce information leaflets on the Scheme and on the standards that organisations can expect when dealing with the Assembly, local government and ASPBs, and how to raise issues of non-compliance

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Date 17 May 2005.

RECOMMENDATION 34; page 76

The VSPC should improve the tracking of decisions made by ensuring that agreed decisions and action points are clearly recorded, with clarity about who will do what and by when. There should be a report back to the VSPC by the Minister at each meeting on progress of decisions made at previous meetings.

Action taken. Completed – new reporting arrangements are now in place. A letter from the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration regarding all 'action arising' from the VSPC is circulated shortly after each meeting.

A further letter, updating members on progress with these items is circulated shortly before the next meeting. These matters are then open for discussion at the meeting under a standard Agenda item entitled 'Minister's Update'.

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Date 17 May 2005.

RECOMMENDATION 36; page 76

The Assembly Government should amend the VSPC protocols to reflect the Commission’s recommendations, to include:

- In setting agendas and circulating papers, allow sufficient time for consultation with networks;
- hold 3 meetings a year, on dates agreed 12 months ahead, at venues across Wales.

Action taken: Completed - revised VSPC Protocols have been drafted and discussed by the joint working group. At their meeting on 5 May, members of the group agreed that the new protocols should be put forward for approval to the Minister, and to the VSPC meeting on 13 June.

The revised protocols include :

- a requirement for agendas and papers for VSPC meetings to be submitted to the Secretariat not less than four weeks before meetings, and then to be issued by the Secretariat at least three weeks before meetings.
- A requirement for 3 meetings a year, with dates agreed 12 months ahead.
- A requirement for at least one meeting per calendar year to be held at a venue which is not in Cardiff (this reflects the suggestion made by the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration in her letter to VSPC members dated 6 April 2005).

Reporting line

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Date: 17 May 2005.

RECOMMENDATION 41; page 76

The Assembly Government and the WCVA should ensure that sufficient resources are available to facilitate the efficient and effective operation of the sectoral networks.

Action taken. Completed – for consideration/sign-off by VSPC on 13.6.05. The Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration has agreed that the networks will continue to be funded via the Partnership Capacity Building Fund.

For 2005/6, the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration has allocated £110,000 to the 22 voluntary sector networks (£5,000 each), to assist them to perform their representative role on the VSPC.

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