

Recommendations of the Independent Commission to review the Voluntary Sector Scheme - Implementation by the Welsh Assembly Government, Social Justice and Regeneration Department: Implementation Pan – progress summary

Rec' no	Recommendation	Lead responsibility	Action taken / milestones
Rec 3 and Rec 4	In full consultation with the sector through the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council (VSPC), develop and publish a new strategic action plan, setting out the next steps in implementing the Scheme in the light of the Commission's recommendations. It should assign responsibilities, set deadlines, and identify milestones and indicators for monitoring and evaluation. Report at each meeting of the VSPC and annually at relevant Ministerial meetings on progress against the strategic action plan, and use the indicators in the strategic action plan as the basis for the next full review of the Scheme in 2007.	Joint working group	Paper on approach to 'preparing the Strategic Action Plan' endorsed by June 13 VSPC. Scoping paper, outlining possible key themes and objectives, also drafted. October VSPC will consider draft timetable for producing the draft Plan, which will then be subject to full consultation. (Jun 06)
Rec 5	Actively promote consistent application of the Scheme and the Code of Practice for Funding the Voluntary Sector by the Assembly Government, ASPBs and health bodies. This should be taken forward through the strategic action plan.	SJR Dept	Now under discussion by the VSPC's 'Funding & Compliance Sub-committee (Feb 06)
Rec 6	Promote the application of the principles of the Scheme and the Code at the local level. This should be taken forward through the strategic action plan.	Joint working group	Completed - WCVA communications strategy in place – for consideration/sign-off by VSPC on 21.10.05. (Oct 2005)
Rec 7	Map the policy areas and funding that are not devolved but impact on the voluntary sector in Wales, and enter into discussions with the relevant Whitehall Departments to establish concordats bringing their practice into line with the Scheme and Code.	SJR Dept.	Research on identifying the action required to improve sector's awareness of UK-wide funding opportunities has been included in SJR Research Plan for 2005-7. (Mar 06).
Rec 8	Ensure that the sector and the relevant parts of the Assembly Government have the capacity and resources to implement and benefit from the Scheme and the Code, for instance by developing training for officials working in the voluntary sector, located in centres easily accessible across Wales.	SJR Dept.	Discussions in progress with the Assembly's training provider to develop this programme (Dec 2005)

Rec 9	Ensure that the implementation of the Scheme and the Code, especially the provision of funding, acts as a driver for appropriate practice in the sector.	SJR Dept.	Work in progress on strengthening standard Terms and Condition of grant. New 'Disadvantaged Groups Fund' being developed for 2006/7.
Rec13	Develop and publish a forward plan of consultations.	SJR Dept.	This is being taken forward by the Cymru Ar Lein Unit, through a working group with input from the sector (Nov 05)
Rec 14 and Rec 15	Develop, promote and monitor observance of a guide for officials on good practice in policy development and consultation. The guide should be linked to the Policy Gateway, and should reflect the requirements of the Scheme (see Annex M for further detail). Improve its use of IT in consultations (see Annex M for further detail).	SJR Dept	Revised Guidance / Policy Gateway now in place, which reflects the requirements of the Scheme. IT issue –second meeting with sector reps' in October 2005 to revise consultation portal, to be located on Cymru ar Lein pages of Assembly's website. (Jan 06)
Rec 21	Review the Code as scheduled, in Summer 2004, taking into account the amendments already agreed by the VSPC and reflecting the Commission's recommendations, and consulting on any changes. The Code should be updated annually thereafter.	SJR Dept	Initial revisions drafted; Code being reviewed by Funding & Compliance Sub-committee. (Jan 06)
Rec 23	Strengthen the requirements in the Code: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To consider granting core funding to organisations where a strategic role is envisaged or capacity building is an objective; ● To include core costs in project funding where core funding is not otherwise provided; ● For robust exit or continuation strategies to be agreed where long term funding is not envisaged. 	SJR Dept	As above –implications of this are being discussed with the relevant Assembly Departments (Jan 06)
Rec 25	Develop, promote and monitor the use of an updated Manual of Guidance for Assembly officials to assist them in following the Code consistently. Make the Manual available to ASPBs and third party funders. The Manual should provide templates for standard arrangements for all stages of the bidding, assessment, award, payment, monitoring, and evaluation processes.	SJR Dept	To ensure its total effectiveness, this will be linked to the training for staff working with the voluntary sector. An internal working group has been formed to take this forward. (Feb' 06)
Rec 26	Introduce training on the Code and Manual of Guidance, for managers of grant schemes offering funding to voluntary organisations.	SJR Dept	This will be arranged once the Guidance is revised. (Apr 06)

Rec 27	Regularly update the Guide to Voluntary Sector Grants. Include in the Guide ASPB and third party intermediary schemes, and consider feasibility of including schemes operated by Whitehall Departments but available to organisations in Wales.	SJR Dept	An updated Guide is now available on the Assembly's website. Plans drawn up to issue Extended Guide (ASPBs & UK schemes – March 2006)
Rec 28	Review the outcome of the pilots on eligibility 'passports' in England with a view to introducing 'passporting' in Wales.	SJR Dept	A project to develop a pilot within the Social Justice and Regeneration Department is in progress. (Feb 06)
Rec 29	Continue with more urgency the work on identifying and quantifying all grants paid to voluntary organisations by the Assembly Government, and its ASPBs, to establish a baseline of funding.	SJR Dept	Vol' Sector Unit, Finance Divisions and WCVA are working on providing a more accurate diversity breakdown. (Dec 05).
Rec 30	Continue to use third party organisations in the voluntary sector as a channel for its money to local organisations, and require them to provide better communication, information and support for smaller organisations.	SJR Dept	Completed - for consideration/sign-off by VSPC on 21.10.05. Partnership Agreement between the Assembly and WCVA, which incorporates this, was signed on 7.9.05.
Rec 31	Consider the mechanisms and approaches to funding set out in the Treasury Cross-cutting review and Futurebuilders programme and their appropriateness in Wales.	SJR Dept	This is being included in the joint working group's discussions on the draft strategic action plan (Jun 06)
Rec 47	Work with partners, including further and higher education sectors, and through the strategic action plan to ensure that comprehensive suitable training at all levels is available for Trustees, non-executive directors and other volunteers and their managers, throughout Wales, through delivery methods accessible to volunteers.	Joint working group	The group has assessed existing provision. Proposal for WCVA & CVC-led task & finish group to devise detailed proposals to fill identified training gaps will be put to next VSPC. New arrangements when finalised will be linked to the Partnership Agreement between Assembly Govt & WCVA. (Feb 06)
Rec 48	Consider the use of national media to promote volunteering.	Joint working group	A media campaign is in progress as part of 'the Year of the Volunteer'. The Volunteering Policy Forum and Wales Association of Volunteer Bureaux have been asked for ideas to promote volunteering in the longer-term. (Dec 06)

<p>Rec 49 and Rec 50</p>	<p>Continue to develop its frameworks for funding and supporting community development in full consultation with grass roots community groups and others.</p> <p>Give consideration to the impact of geographically focused community development programmes on adjacent areas experiencing similar problems but not similarly qualifying for assistance.</p>	<p>SJR Dept</p>	<p>Proposals are being developed by Communities Directorate</p>
<p>Recs' 51 –54</p>	<p>Review the level of staff resources within the Communities Directorate and the structure of the directorate.</p> <p>Explore ways of maximising community participation and consultation at the grass roots level in the implementation of Communities First.</p> <p>Establish and fund a community development monitoring and evaluation unit within a community development ethos, with officials undertaking appropriate levels of financial monitoring and the voluntary/community sector providing quality assurance, with joint assessment of outcomes.</p> <p>Develop a comprehensive programme of training in community development principles and practice for all agents involved in delivering Communities First and other initiatives related to community development at the national and local levels, including staff of ASPBs.</p>	<p>SJR Dept</p>	<p>Complete – restructure now complete. For consideration / sign off at Oct VSPC.</p> <p>Proposals are being developed by Communities Directorate (Dec 05)</p> <p>Research post now established within SJR to manage evaluation of Communities First (CF) and other community development initiatives – also steering group in place which conducts an ongoing evaluation of CF</p> <p>Proposals being developed by Communities Directorate (Feb 06)</p>
<p>Rec 55</p>	<p>Commission research into practical and realistic ways in which Assembly Government working practices across the board can be made more conducive to genuine community involvement.</p>	<p>SJR Dept</p>	<p>Proposals being developed by Communities Directorate (CD); discussions in progress involving CD and Training & Education Dept. (Dec 05)</p>
<p>Rec 56</p>	<p>Ensure that the strategic action plan specifically address the need to implement the vision and principles set out in the community development chapter of the Scheme.</p>	<p>SJR Dept</p>	<p>Communities Directorate will address this once the detailed work on the Strategic Action Plan is in progress. (Jun 06)</p>
<p>Rec 58</p>	<p>Follow the precedent of independence set by the first review.</p>	<p>SJR Dept</p>	<p>For a future Government</p>
<p>Rec 59</p>	<p>Ensure that future reviews do not create undue uncertainty within the sector about future funding, or to lead to unnecessarily short-term funding decisions.</p>	<p>SJR Dept</p>	<p>For a future Government</p>
<p>WCVA</p>			

Rec 17	Review the arrangements for cascading consultation papers, including the information provided to County Voluntary Councils (CVCs), the use of events to produce informed sector wide responses, and the effectiveness of the sectoral networks in this regard.	SJR Dept	Completed – separate WCVA and Voluntary Sector Unit Communications Strategies now in place to address this. For consideration/ sign-off by VSPC on 21.10.05. (Oct 2005)
Rec 20	Advise the Assembly Government on the compilation of the "who to consult" list and the central database of contact details.	SJR Dept	Meeting between officials and sector reps' to discuss this set for October – see also rec' 20. (Jan 06)
Rec 40	Work with VSPC sectoral representatives, in consultation with each sub-sector, to improve the reliability and comprehensiveness of the systems for dissemination of information and seeking and representing the views of the sub-sector, with particular emphasis on inclusion of views from local groups and the grass roots.	Joint working group	Complete - for consideration/sign-off by VSPC on 21.10.05.
Rec 43	Review and consult on the "Ministerial map" and arrangements for Ministerial meetings, to ensure that a range of sizes and types of voluntary organisations is represented at meetings, that views presented are representative of the whole sub-sector, and that information about Ministerial meetings is cascaded to interested parties.	Joint working group	The WCVA is close to concluding its review of the 'map'. The Group proposes to extend information about Ministerial meetings to local networks, to enable them to ask a national network to raise an issue, or to attend a planning meeting. Items will be expected to have a wider applicability beyond the locality concerned and to not be single-organisation issues. (Dec 05)
Assembly & WCVA			
Rec 10	Develop a strategy for raising awareness of and promoting the Scheme, the Code, the VSPC and Ministerial meetings at the national and local levels, including to organisations not currently on WCVA and CVC databases.	Joint working group	Completed – new WCVA & Vol Sector Unit Communications Strategies now in place. For consideration/sign-off by VSPC on 21.10.05.
Rec 42	Encourage greater participation by AMs in the VSPC, for instance by writing to all AM VSPC members and party leaders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reporting the disappointment felt by the sector at the low levels of attendance; ● asking whether any practical changes might address this (e. g. linking with regional committee dates, or holding meetings on a Friday); ● clarifying the procedure for raising items at the VSPC. 	SJR Dept	For further discussion by VSPC. (Oct 2005)

Rec 44	Arrange for the adoption, following consultation, of new protocols for Ministerial meetings, based on the drafts agreed in 2003. The new protocols should also reflect the detailed points made in the Annexes to the Commission's Report.	Joint Working Group	Revised protocols have been drafted – for consideration/ sign-off by VSPC on 21.10.05. (Oct 2005)
VSPC			
Rec 11	Take responsibility for taking equality of access to funding, recognising the cultural, rural and urban diversity of Wales, through its strategic action plan and, if established, its monitoring and evaluation sub-committee.	SJR Dept	Funding & Compliance Sub-committee now in place. Strategic Action Plan in early stages of preparation– see recs' 3 & 4 (Jun 06)
Rec 33	Agree a schedule of key issues and map out its agendas well in advance, with no more than three major items on any one agenda.	Joint Working Group	Proposals being put to next VSPC on Oct 21.
Rec 35	Note the minutes of Ministerial meetings and take responsibility for identifying and progressing any common issues or themes, monitoring the success of the meetings, and making proposals to the Assembly Government for issues to be tabled at Ministerial meetings or ways of improving meetings.	SJR Dept	Minutes of all Ministerial meetings are now being presented to the VSPC. Further work needed on second part of recommendation (Nov 05)
Rec 36	Amend the VSPC protocols to reflect the Commission's recommendations - to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	Joint working group	Completed – for consideration/sign-off by VSPC on 21.10.05. Revised Protocols have been drafted
Rec 38	Ensure that the Policy Gateway reflects the requirements of the Scheme.	SJR Dept	Completed – for consideration/sign-off by VSPC on 21.10.05. (Oct 2005)
Rec 39	Consider potential value in developing links with other Partnership Councils.	Joint working group	Minister has written to First Minister and Finance & Local Govt' Minister requesting that Business and Local Govt Councils consider closer links.

Recommendations 1, 2, 12, 16, 18, 19, 22, 24, 32, 34, 37, 41, 45, 46 and 57 no longer feature on this Plan as they have been signed-off as completed.