

The National Assembly for Wales

Voluntary Sector Scheme

First Annual Report

to 31 March 2001

Foreword

In July 2000 the National Assembly broke new ground by approving the first ever Voluntary Sector Scheme. At that time I described the challenge ahead as ensuring that the Scheme was implemented fully and effectively.

This first Annual Report on the Scheme, sets out what we have been doing to do just that. It covers the period up to 31 March 2001, less than 9 months since the introduction of the Scheme. During that time some key developments have taken place:

- The Voluntary Sector Partnership Council is chaired by Jane Hutt, the Minister for Health and Social Services, and is now fully established with elected voluntary sector representatives. It met three times during the period of the report.
- There have been two rounds of meetings between subject Ministers and voluntary sector representatives. These meetings are important in enabling Ministers and voluntary sector representatives to discuss strategic issues of joint interest. It has been suggested that the agendas for the early meetings were driven more by the statutory requirement for meetings to take place than by the opportunity for real engagement. These meetings are now an integral part of our dialogue with the sector and we all have a part to play in ensuring we make the best use of them to meet the needs of the Assembly, the voluntary sector and the people we serve.
- A strategic review of funding the voluntary sector has been undertaken by a working group on behalf of the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council. It has made a number of recommendations geared toward ensuring greater clarity and consistency in the Assembly's funding for the voluntary sector.

We could not have made the progress we have this year without the co-operation of the voluntary sector, in particular members of the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council and Wales Council for Voluntary Action. Tom Jones, Chair of Wales Council for Voluntary Action, and leader of the voluntary sector representation on the Council wrote to me recently about the sector's view of the first year of the Scheme. With his permission I am publishing his letter in full.

Like Tom, I am pleased with the progress made this year while recognising the uphill tasks that still lie ahead. We need to continue to work together to ensure that the Scheme is implemented in a practical, effective and understandable way. The Voluntary Sector's clients and volunteers are the same people as

the Assembly's electorate. That is why we have a common interest in a better Wales.

First Minister

Introduction

1. This is the first report on the Assembly's Voluntary Sector Scheme. It covers the period up to 31 March 2001
2. This document reports on the making of the Voluntary Sector Scheme, the key developments resulting from it, progress against the implementation action plan, work in hand and looks forward to the year ahead.

The making of the Scheme

3. Section 114 of the Government of Wales Act 1998 requires the Assembly to make a scheme setting out how it proposes, in the exercise of its functions, to promote the interests of relevant voluntary sector organisations as follows:

"114 – (1) The Assembly shall make a scheme setting out how it proposes, in the exercise of its functions, to promote the interests of relevant voluntary organisations.

(2) In this section "relevant voluntary organisations" means bodies (other than local authorities or other public bodies) whose activities –

(a) are carried on otherwise than for profit, and

(b) directly or indirectly benefit the whole or any part of Wales (whether or not they also benefit any other area)

(3) In determining the provision to be included in the Scheme the Assembly shall consider how it intends to exercise such of its functions as relate to matters affecting, or of concern to, relevant voluntary organisations.

1. *The Scheme shall specify –*

- a. *how the Assembly proposes to provide assistance to relevant voluntary organisations (whether by grants, loans, guarantees or by other means),*

- b. *how the Assembly proposes to monitor the use made of any assistance provided by it to relevant voluntary organisations, and*
- c. *how the Assembly proposes to consult relevant organisations about the exercise of such of its functions as relate to matters affecting, or of concern to, such organisations.*

(5) The Assembly shall keep the scheme under review and in the year following each ordinary election (after the first) shall consider whether it should be remade or revised.

(6) The Assembly may not delegate the function of making, or remaking or revising, the scheme.

(7) The Assembly shall publish the scheme when first made and whenever subsequently remade and, if the scheme is revised without being remade, shall publish either the revisions or the scheme as revised (as it considers appropriate).

(8) The Assembly shall consult such relevant voluntary organisations as it considers appropriate before making, remaking or revising the scheme.

(9) After each financial year the Assembly shall publish a report of how its proposals as set out in the scheme were implemented in that financial year.

4. The Scheme is unique to Wales. There is no other such statutory Scheme elsewhere in the UK. It represents a major step in the way in which the Assembly works with the voluntary sector in Wales.

5. In developing the Scheme, the Assembly worked closely with the voluntary sector, drawing upon the work and negotiation which had informed the Compact between the Government and the voluntary sector in Wales, pre-dating the Assembly. Nevertheless the Scheme was a new development. It put the Assembly's commitments onto a statutory footing and proposed a number of innovations, such as the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council and twice yearly meetings with Ministers, which are intended to improve and mainstream dialogue between the voluntary sector and the policy makers and thus ensure that the views of the sector are considered at all levels of policy development and implementation.

6. The draft Scheme was subject to extensive consultation between 1 March and 24 May 2000 culminating in an Assembly plenary debate on 5 July 2000 when the National Assembly for Wales's Voluntary Sector Scheme was made with the full support of all political parties.

Laying the Foundations

7. Much has been made of the uniqueness of the Assembly's Voluntary Sector Scheme. There is no other such statutory scheme in the UK. It is a major step for government/voluntary sector relations. As such there is considerable interest in seeing how it works. Therefore it was essential that we established solid foundations on which to base the future. This is where the emphasis has been placed during the nine months since the Scheme was made.

8. The voluntary sector in Wales is made up of some 25,000+ organisations - from small, self-help, groups to large national organisations employing significant numbers of staff. Volunteers are estimated to number some 1.8 million. It is a well established and dynamic sector with its roots in Wales's history of community.

9. The sector is extensive and diverse. In the past government at all levels has been criticised for being reluctant to engage. While this may have been true, this perceived reluctance can often be more accurately ascribed to a lack of understanding of the sector and the difficulties of communicating with such a large and independent sector. A vital element of the Scheme therefore is the building blocks it puts in place to develop that understanding and communication.

10. The sector itself has been very pro-active in this area. It recognises that it is not practical for the Assembly to even try to work directly with each of the 25,000+ voluntary organisations in Wales. It has therefore sought, with the help of Wales Council for Voluntary Action, to identify categories of interest to which organisations can align themselves then develop networks to ensure that all organisations, whatever their size, are able to have a voice. There are currently 21 categories and while some organisations may relate to more than one, this provides a structure to which they can all identify without surrendering their independence.

11. This has been a crucial factor in enabling the Assembly to engage with the sector, for example in establishing the membership of the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council.

Voluntary Sector Partnership Council

12. The Scheme makes provision for the establishment of a Voluntary Sector Partnership Council. In practice, a 'shadow' council operated prior to the making of the Scheme and helped in the development of and consultation on the draft Scheme. The Voluntary Sector Partnership Council was formalised in July 2000 and Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) facilitated elections for the members to represent the 21 voluntary sector categories. WCVA also has 3 places on the Council in its own right. Assembly Political Groups nominated the eleven Assembly Members, reflecting the party balance. A full list of current membership of the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council is at annex A.

13. The first formal meeting of the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council was held on 13 October 2000 in Llandrindod Wells. Two further meetings have been held within the reporting period - on 15 December 2000 and 16 March 2001

14. The Voluntary Sector Partnership Council was, among other things, instrumental in developing the implementation action plan (see para 21) and, in its shadow format, for instigating the Strategic Review of Funding the Voluntary Sector (see para 23).

Twice Yearly Meetings With Ministers

15. The Scheme introduced a requirement that each Minister shall meet with representatives of the relevant networks of voluntary organisations covering their areas of responsibility at least twice in any one calendar year. The first round of these meetings was held in September/October 2000.

16. The first round of meetings was recognised by the voluntary sector as a very significant step forward. Nevertheless all involved agreed that it had been a new and learning experience and as a result, a framework for future meetings was agreed by the voluntary sector and by the Assembly Cabinet.

17. The second round of meetings took place in March 2001, although intervening Ministerial changes meant that for some this was their first such meeting. The meeting with the Minister for Rural Affairs was postponed due to foot and mouth pressures.

18. In general the second round of meetings was considered positive by all concerned. The meetings benefited from planning beginning earlier and being better co-ordinated. However to improve inclusiveness further attention should be given to the location and timing of meetings. Timing within the planning cycle should also be reviewed to allow a greater level of financial information to be made available. On the agendas for the meetings, the voluntary sector consider that the Ministerial input is currently responsive and that Ministers should be more proactive in proposing items for the Agenda.

19. A full record of the Ministerial meetings is available at www.....

20. The Scheme also requires subject committees to debate the reports of the Ministerial meetings at least annually. At the time of writing this report, these discussions have not yet taken place. However plans are in hand for them to do so during the Summer term.

Action Plan

21. An Action Plan for implementing the Voluntary Sector Scheme was developed and is being monitored by the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council. The Action Plan is divided into five main sections and progress against each section is shown below :

SECTION 1: Annual Report and Monitoring

COMMITMENT	ACTION/TARGET DATE (LEAD)	PROGRESS
<p>To fulfil the requirements of paragraphs 1.1, 2.4, 2.5, 3.7 and 3.8 of the Voluntary Sector Scheme by developing clear and effectual mechanisms by which performance against the Scheme can be monitored and reported on, and the operation of the Scheme in practice can be reviewed and the Scheme revised if necessary.</p>	<p>Voluntary Sector Partnership Council receives regular reports on how the Scheme is working. March 2001 and six monthly thereafter</p> <p>(WCVA/NAW)</p> <p>Report by Voluntary Sector Partnership Council. The report will cover the period up to 31/03/01. (VSPC)</p> <p>National Assembly to produce Annual Report on Scheme. 31/03/01. (NAW)</p>	<p>The draft of this report formed the March 2001 report to the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council (VSPC). The next report to the VSPC will seek to address how the more detailed requirements of the Scheme are being reflected in the work of the Assembly.</p> <p>This report was finalised in June and will be discussed in Plenary on in July</p>

SECTION 2: Funding

COMMITMENT	ACTION/TARGET DATE (LEAD)	PROGRESS
<p>To fulfil the requirements of paragraphs 1.1, 2.12, 2.13 and 2.15 of the Voluntary Sector Scheme by establishing effective arrangements for providing financial assistance to relevant voluntary organisations and monitoring the use made of that assistance.</p>	<p>Develop a Code of Practice for funding the Voluntary Sector</p> <p>Consultation - Spring 2001</p> <p>Publish – Summer 2001</p> <p>(NAW)</p> <p>Widespread distribution of Code of Practice to all relevant bodies including voluntary organisations, funders and partners. Summer 2001. (NAW)</p> <p>Code of Practice to be reviewed after three years to ensure it remains relevant.</p> <p>Summer 2004. (NAW/WCVA)</p>	<p>Timetable has slipped slightly due to restyling of the Code. Consultation to be underway in June 2001. Code expected to be available Autumn 2001.</p>

SECTION 3: Policy Engagement

(Includes Consultation and Participation, Policy Appraisal and Partnership Working)

COMMITMENT	ACTION/TARGET DATE (LEAD)	PROGRESS

To fulfil the requirements of paragraphs 2.6, 2.11, 3.2, 3.6-3.24 and 4.1-4.7 of the Scheme, by:

-Developing and implementing procedures that allow voluntary organisations sufficient time and resources to participate in consultation exercises affecting, or of concern to, those voluntary organisations;

- Establishing a clear locus for the sector in new processes for policy development and evaluation; and

- Effecting a common fresh basis for partnerships, consultation and participation.

To enable the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council to discharge its role in relation to the Scheme
First formal meeting in Oct. 2000.
(NAW/WCVA)

Each Minister with subject responsibility to meet representatives of the relevant networks of voluntary organisations covering their areas of responsibility at least twice in any one calendar year

First meetings in Sept. 2000

Second round March 2001

(NAW/WCVA)

Reports of these meetings to be presented to Assembly Committees who shall debate the reports at least annually.

Spring/Summer 2001(NAW)

The Voluntary Sector Partnership Council met in October 2000 and a total of three times within the reporting period.

A first round of meetings between Ministers and voluntary sector representatives took place in September/October 2000; lessons from that round informed the second round of meetings which took place in March 2001

Notes of the meetings held in September/October 2000 were published and sent to all Assembly Members. Subject Committees are building discussion of these reports into their timetables for 2001

Section 4: Volunteering

COMMITMENT	ACTION/TARGET DATE (LEAD)	PROGRESS
<p>To fulfil the requirements of paragraph 5.2 of the Scheme by stimulating greater, sustainable, volunteering activity in Wales.</p>	<p>Voluntary Sector Partnership Council receive report on progress with Wales: The Active Community 03/01 (NAW/WCVA)</p> <p>Ensure appropriate National Assembly support for International Year of Volunteering. 31/12/01 (NAW)</p> <p>Identify and utilise the best means of ensuring that diversity of volunteers and volunteering issues are fully reflected in Assembly policy and the considerations of the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council (VSPC)</p>	<p>A report on <i>Wales: the Active Community</i> was submitted to the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council on 16 March together with information on other key volunteering issues.</p> <p>Assembly officials have been working with the VSPC's volunteering representative to identify the best means of engaging the views of the wider volunteering population and those who engage with them</p>

SECTION 5: Community Development

OBJECTIVE	ACTION/TARGET DATE (LEAD)	PROGRESS
To fulfil the requirements of Chapter 6 of the Scheme by implementing policies that will promote community regeneration, combat social deprivation, build sustainable communities and contribute to a culture of lifelong learning across Wales.	To target Wales's most deprived communities to ensure regeneration and community renewal meets the needs and priorities determined by the communities themselves (Communities First) Programme to start April 2001 (NAW).	An overwhelming response to the first consultation phase meant a delay of 4 months in beginning consultation on the implementation framework. The Programme is now scheduled to start later in 2001

Funding

22. The Scheme refers to the Code of Practice for funding the Voluntary Sector. The implementation action plan proposed that this should be consulted upon during the Spring of 2001 and published in Summer 2001. The timing has slipped to Summer and Autumn . However it is worthwhile noting some of the other prominent funding issues during the reporting period.

23. Funding is a crucial factor underpinning the Voluntary Sector Scheme. It is important however to recognise that this is not just a bid from the sector for more money. A working group was established to undertake a Strategic Review of Funding the Voluntary Sector. Its terms of reference were:

- to map the current position of funding for the voluntary sector by the Assembly;
- to review this pattern against the draft objectives for the Assembly as set out in "Better Wales";
- to look at the present context of voluntary sector engagement including legislation; accountability, funding systems and time scales;
- in the light of the above:
- to recommend procedures/principles for proofing what delivery and funding routes are most appropriate when the Assembly or its agents and partners are working up proposals for new programmes or structures;
- to identify any specific policy/programme areas for further exploration;
- to consider what monitoring, review, evaluation and decision taking arrangements are appropriate to the funding of the sector; and
- to identify mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of the recommendations arising from this review.

24. The group also identified a second, linked strand concerned with the voluntary sector's contribution to the Assembly's objectives.

25. The working group which undertook the Strategic Review on Funding the Voluntary Sector reported on its recommendations and the action being taken to implement them at the first formal meeting of the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council in October 2000. Annex B sets out the 25 recommendations. At that time recommendations 1, 2, 4, and 8 had already been completed. The remaining recommendations are being taken forward four streams:

- Code of Practice on Funding the Voluntary Sector & the Budget Planning Round (recommendations 11, 12, 17, 13, 14, 18, 19, 22)
- Tracking of Funding (recommendations 5, 6, 7)
- Policy and evaluation (recommendations 3, 9, 10, 20)
- Partnership and participation (recommendations 15, 16, 21, 23,24,25)

Other work in hand

26. In addition to the major changes taking place in the funding arena, this year has also seen the instigation of a number of other projects, often following issues raised by the voluntary sector.

Capacity Building

27. In November 2000, Jane Hutt acknowledged the additional pressures which partnership working can place on the voluntary sector. To begin to address this she announced her intention to earmark some resources during 2001-02 and following years to address the issue of partnership capacity building within the sector and invited views on where these should be targeted initially.

28. The outcome is two-fold:

- an increase in the funding available to County Voluntary Councils through the Local Voluntary Services Scheme to assist them to engage at the local level
- Support for the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council in recognition of the role of voluntary sector members in representing their networks.

29. It is hoped to build upon this modest beginning within the wider policy context including proposed research on evaluating partnership and dependent upon resources available.

Evaluation of Partnerships / Community Participation

30. The Wales Office of Research and Development is about to commission research on how to evaluate the effectiveness of partnerships at all levels. The outcome of this research is expected to identify best practice in partnership working and should help those wishing to undertake a partnership approach to target resources most effectively. A second review on participation is currently underway within the health field. The intention is to assess what lessons can be learned from the work on the NHS public participation strategy and see if any good practice guidance can be extended to other statutory bodies. More will be known by Summer 2001.

Consultation and Participation

31. On 18 January the Assembly approved "Engaging Wales - Consultation and Participation" which sets

out broad actions and principles . Within this an ongoing review by the Assembly's Policy Unit, in consultation with other organisations including Wales Council for Voluntary Action and the equalities commissions, has identified actions including a suite of IT tools to aid consultation. These include:

- A web-based consultation template which will make consultation documents more user-friendly and consistent and will include a clear statement of principles/vision for each proposed scheme and related questions. Responses via the web will be facilitated;
- A central database of potential consultees, which will be regularly updated and can be interrogated by Assembly staff. There is a potential role for partners in information/database sharing and updating.
- Push technology. The Assembly's internet page will allow personalisation, so that organisations or individuals can select information in which they are interested and have new and relevant items 'pushed' to their desktops.

Taking Stock

32. Much positive progress has been made in the nine months since the Scheme was made.

33. The Scheme and its implications have been widely disseminated to Assembly Members and staff. Developments such as the twice yearly meetings between Ministers and voluntary sector representatives, engagement with the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council and expansion of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Officers network have also ensured that staff at all levels in all policy areas engage with the voluntary sector.

34. In some policy areas, where historically contact with the voluntary sector was minimal, the Scheme has been the catalyst for developing a recognition that the voluntary sector has an important part to play in the future of Wales. The significance of this should not be underestimated nor should the steps which have been taken to raise awareness and improve internal and external infrastructures which are essential to ensuring that Wales can pride itself on both the innovation and the implementation of the Scheme long term.

35. Activity during the reporting period has concentrated on ensuring that Assembly Ministers, Members and staff understand and have in place the mechanisms and infrastructure to implement the Voluntary Sector Scheme effectively.

The Future

36. This report details how the basic building blocks of the scheme have been put in place, but the challenge for all those involved in the scheme for the next year will be twofold.

37. First, the scheme, and the Partnership Council, have identified the key overarching issues concerning the development of the sector in Wales. These can be summarised as relationships with local and Assembly sponsored bodies, funding, policy and planning, consultation, participation, volunteering, and community development. The scheme and subsequent papers and proposals have identified ways forward in all these areas. But all are 'work in progress' and it will be important that clear, progressive, tangible and measurable action is achieved.

38. Second, it will be vital that such debate, action, and achievement is influenced by and communicated to

a much wider range of actors both within and outside the Assembly and the voluntary sector.

39. We must now look to the future and to the detailed working of the Scheme. The next report to the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council will seek to provide greater detail on the Scheme's implementation across all policy areas.

Voluntary Sector Partnership Council Membership

Voluntary Sector Representatives

<i>Main Representative</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Deputy</i>
Fran Targett	<i>Advice and advocacy</i>	
Claire Bryant	<i>Animal welfare</i>	
Roger Fox	<i>Art, culture and heritage</i>	
Catriona Williams	<i>Children and families</i>	
Gordon Wilson	<i>Community</i>	
Keith Towler	<i>Criminal justice</i>	
Howard John	<i>Disability</i>	Vanessa Webb
Graham Price	<i>Education and training</i>	
Janet Owen-Williams	<i>Employment</i>	James Oxford Hill
Marc Welsh	<i>Environment</i>	Dr Madeleine Havard
Patsy Rawle	<i>Ethnic minorities</i>	Siobhan Haywood
Audrey Jones	<i>Gender</i>	
James Crowe	<i>Health and social care</i>	
John Puzey	<i>Housing</i>	Wendy Bourton
Dave Maggs	<i>Intermediaries</i>	Ruth Hopkins
Keith Roberts	<i>International aid and emergency relief</i>	Stephen Thomas
Aled Edwards	<i>Religion</i>	
Wendy Williams	<i>Sport and recreation</i>	
Catrin Fletcher	<i>Volunteering</i>	Chris Hopkins
Veronica Wilson	<i>Youth</i>	

Tom Jones WCVA

Margaret Jervis WCVA

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Assembly Members

Lorraine Barrett AM	Labour
Jane Davidson AM	Labour
Jane Hutt AM (Chair)	Labour
Brian Gibbons AM	Labour
Lynne Neagle AM	Labour
Pauline Jarman AM	Plaid Cymru
Helen Mary Jones AM	Plaid Cymru
Owen John Thomas AM	Plaid Cymru
William Graham AM	Conservative
David Melding AM	Conservative
Mick Bates AM	Liberal Democrat

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STRATEGIC FUNDING REVIEW

1: The working group proposes that this paper, amended in the light of discussion, should be made available to the other partnerships and should form part of the papers which will be issued to Committees for the Planning and Budgeting Round.

2: The working group proposes that a further report should be submitted to the October meeting of the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council.

3: That representatives of the different parts of the voluntary sector should be enabled to engage fully with the Assembly's new Planning and Budgeting round to assist in identifying

options for contributing to meeting the Assembly's targets in Better Wales with particular regard to the areas identified in paragraphs 13 and 14 above ; and

any specific proposals for new, increased or alternative services and the planned outcome of these

To allow this to take place for this round, the voluntary sector and the Assembly should identify respectively lead voluntary organisations and Assembly officials

4: That a report on progress on this recommendation should be made to the October meeting of the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council

5: That better mechanisms be developed to track assistance to the voluntary sector building on the work that is already in hand.

6: A central Assembly database should be developed to identify which voluntary bodies are receiving Assembly funding and for what purposes

7: That the working group should look at the scope for the systematic collection of data from other bodies supported by the Assembly on their assistance to the voluntary sector

8: Paragraph 3.7 of the (draft) Voluntary Sector Scheme should be amended to require that funding issues feature on the agenda of one of the meetings each year between relevant voluntary sector networks and Assembly Secretaries.

9: In policy development policy reviews and evaluations, the Assembly should routinely examine the means of programme delivery as well as its achievements and other issues. Whether the voluntary sector could be the key delivery agent or a delivery agent should be specifically addressed as part of the standard analysis.

10: The forward programmes of reviews should be published and subject to as wide a consultation as possible and there should be clear opportunities for the voluntary sector to engage in the review and evaluation process

11: The Assembly's budget timetable should be adjusted with the aim of allowing much earlier decisions on funding to the voluntary sector. Preparations should be made so that funding decisions for individual organisations can be made soon after the Assembly adopts its final budget for the approaching financial year.

12: That clear criteria should be drawn up, with references to examples and the findings of the Efficiency Scrutiny, as to when start up, core, project and contract funding are appropriate and that, following consideration by the VSPC, the criteria should be included in the revised version of the Manual of Guidance on Voluntary Sector Grants.

13: All temporary-funding arrangements should have a clear exit strategy, which addresses viability where there is a need for the activity to continue

14: Indicative forward funding lines (normally for 3 years) should be given to voluntary bodies in receipt of core funding, subject to periodic review

- 15: The Assembly should examine the scope for simplifying its funding relationship with the voluntary sector
- 16: The Assembly should adopt common procedures between schemes in line with best practice by other funders
- 17: Where individual voluntary bodies are in receipt of more than one source of Assembly funding the rationale for this should be clearly stated in the funding proposal/application
- 18: Further work should establish the extent to which in practice the absence of primary powers is a real constraint to direct funding of the voluntary sector in those areas where the voluntary sector might become more involved .
- 19: In considering its interests in new legislation, the Assembly should take a critical look at delivery mechanisms, seeking flexibility in the choice of agents wherever feasible.
- 20: The Assembly should facilitate periodic meetings between representatives of the voluntary sector and the Best Value and other statutory inspectorates to review how the voluntary sector has featured in the Best Value process.
- 21: Opportunities for dialogue between the partnerships should be developed. This paper should be circulated to all of the partnerships as a basis for discussion.
- 22: New initiatives in any field with extensive community involvement should be required to consider whether a voluntary sector lead is appropriate
- 23: That in reviewing the structure of existing partnerships or instituting new ones, the Assembly should promote the third/third/third model
- 24: When establishing partnerships, the Assembly should consider the resource implications for national and local voluntary organisations.
- 25: The Assembly should examine and bring forward recommendations on practical ways to make the process of participating in partnerships more manageable

Our Ref TJ/JB

4 June 2001

The Rt. Hon. Rhodri Morgan, MP, AM

First Minister

The National Assembly for Wales

Cardiff Bay

Cardiff

Voluntary Sector Scheme

It is now nearly a year since the Scheme was launched at the Assembly. In that time much has been achieved in establishing the process of implementing the Scheme.

The Voluntary Sector Partnership Council and the twice yearly meetings with Ministers have been innovations which are the envy of the rest of the UK, and far beyond. These meetings have identified the key issues concerning the development of the sector, and its relationships with the Assembly, and other public agencies.

Positive ways forward have been identified, but many are still 'work in progress', and it will be important that clear, tangible, and measurable outcomes are achieved.

The next year will, thus, be a considerable challenge which will require commitment from across all parts of the Assembly if the Scheme is to be implemented.

In the voluntary sector, we will do all we can to ensure that the promise of the Scheme is fulfilled.

Yours sincerely

Tom Jones

Chair