

THE STANDING ORDERS OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL

PURPOSE OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL

1. The Voluntary Sector Partnership Council shall:

- advise on the implementation, monitoring and review of the Voluntary Sector Scheme including establishing indicators by which the Scheme shall be evaluated;
- facilitate consultation with relevant voluntary sector organisations and public bodies on the Scheme's implementation, operation and review;
- advise on the implementation and operation of the Scheme and prepare an annual report for consideration by the Assembly;
- propose arrangements for reviewing the Scheme after each ordinary election of the Assembly and assist in the review process;
- consider issues that relate to the implementation of the Scheme that affect, or are of concern to, the voluntary sector and make recommendations;
- consider issues that relate to the functions and responsibilities of the Assembly that effect, or are of concern to, the voluntary sector

MEMBERSHIP OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL

General

2. The Voluntary Sector Partnership Council shall consist of Assembly Members and representatives from the voluntary sector. A designated Assembly Secretary shall chair the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council. The Wales Council for Voluntary Action will act as co-ordinator for the voluntary sector members.

Assembly Membership

3. The Assembly shall appoint eleven representatives, reflecting party balance, to be members of the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council.

Voluntary Sector Membership

4. The voluntary sector representatives shall comprise three representatives of the Wales

Council for Voluntary Action and up to twenty one sectoral representatives.

5. The Wales Council for Voluntary Action will facilitate the selection of the voluntary sector representatives and ensure that, as far as possible, they reflect a cross section of voluntary sector interests and activities.

MEETINGS OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL

6 The Voluntary Sector Partnership Council will meet at least twice in every calendar year.

7. The Voluntary Sector Partnership Council will agree a forward work plan and meeting programme at its first meeting and will review it at least once every calendar year.

8. The Voluntary Sector Partnership Council may conduct its business by video link.

9. Meetings of the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council shall be in public and broadcasting and other media access shall be permitted in accordance with such arrangements as the Assembly shall from time to time agree.

10. The Voluntary Sector Partnership Council may resolve to exclude the public from a meeting, or any part of a meeting where:-

i. a particular item of business cannot be discussed without disclosing personal information relating to specific identified or identifiable individuals which ought not to be disclosed;

ii. discussion in public of a particular item of business would be likely to cause harm to commercial or economic interests;

iii. discussion in public of a particular item of business would be likely to cause harm to the health or safety of an individual, the public or the environment;

iv. a particular item of business cannot be discussed without reference to material which would be considered defamatory of any persons;

v. there are deliberations on the conclusions or recommendations of a report that it is proposed to publish, or preparations are underway to take evidence from any person;

vi. the particular item of business cannot be discussed without disclosing legal advice or information supplied in confidence;

vii. the particular item of business cannot be discussed without reference to a document or documents which would be excluded or exempted from disclosure under legislation or under a code of practice adopted by the Assembly; or

viii. the investigation of alleged illegality or the effectiveness of law enforcement requires the proceedings to be held in private.

11. A motion proposed under paragraph 10 of this Standing Order shall identify the grounds which the member proposing it believes should give rise to the exclusion of the public.

12. Proceedings of the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council may be in English and Welsh, and simultaneous translation facilities shall be available for proceedings in Welsh. Any persons may address the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council in other languages by prior agreement with the chair.

Establishment working groups

13. The Voluntary Sector Partnership Council may set up working groups to examine specific issues.

14. The Voluntary Sector Partnership Council shall select the chairs of its working groups.

15. The members of any working group established by the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council can include persons who are not members of the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council.

16. The Voluntary Sector Partnership Council or its working groups may call upon expert advisers and may invite any other person to: attend; submit evidence; produce documents and, speak at Voluntary Sector Partnership Council meetings.

17. The Voluntary Sector Partnership Council may hold joint meetings with other Partnership Councils and may provide such Councils with information or documents.

18. Unless otherwise agreed by the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council, members of the working groups shall select the Chairs of their working groups.

19. Members of the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council's working groups sit on the groups in a personal capacity. Reports prepared by the working groups will not commit either the National Assembly or the voluntary sector to particular positions.

Quorum

20. The quorum for any meeting of the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council shall be five of the membership of the Assembly representatives plus the chair and half the membership of the voluntary sector representation. The quorum for any working group shall be determined at the same time as its terms of reference.

21. A meeting of the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council and its working groups shall be declared inquorate if, at the beginning of the meeting, there are insufficient members present in accordance with paragraph 20 or the members present represent either only the Assembly or the voluntary sector. On declaring a meeting inquorate, the Chair shall suspend the meeting until a quorum is present. If a quorum is not present within 20 minutes of the suspension, the chair shall adjourn the meeting to a date and time to be agreed between the Chair and the Chair of WCVA.

Agendas

22. The Chair in consultation with nominated representatives of the Wales Council for Voluntary Action shall determine the agendas for meetings of the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council.

23. Officials of the National Assembly will consult Assembly Members for possible agenda items. The officers of the Wales Council for Voluntary Action will consult the Voluntary Sector representatives for suggested agenda items.

24. Each working group of the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council shall agree the agendas of their meetings. The Voluntary Sector Partnership Council may require specified items to be discussed at any meeting of the committees and working groups.

Decisions

25. The decisions of the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council, its committees and working groups will be taken on the basis of consensus. Decisions will not be made by voting.. Disagreements over matters of policy or procedure will be recorded in the minutes. Individual

dissent on matters of general agreement shall be recorded at the request of any member.

26. The Chair of the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council shall be responsible for conveying the Council's views and decisions to the appropriate authority and for ensuring that the Council subsequently receives a report on the outcome.

Recordings of proceedings

27. Minutes of the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council meetings will be taken and will be placed in the Assembly's Library and on the Assembly's web site.

Secretariat

28. Officials of the Assembly will provide the secretariat for the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council and officers of the Wales Council for Voluntary Action will facilitate links with the voluntary sector representatives.

29. Officials of the Assembly and the Wales Council for Voluntary Action will share the secretariat duties for working groups as appropriate.

30. Officials of the Assembly and officers of the Wales Council for Voluntary Action will provide necessary support to the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council and any of its working groups.

Liaison with other Partnership Councils

31 The Voluntary Sector Partnership Council may make appropriate arrangements for liaison and joint working with the Business Partnership Council and Local Government Partnership Council.

Changes to the Standing Orders

31. These Standing Orders may be amended from time to time by agreement within the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council.

PROTOCOL FOR THE HANDLING OF VOLUNTARY SECTOR PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL BUSINESS BY THE SECRETARIAT

1. This protocol outlines how officials of the National Assembly for Wales and officers of the Wales Council for Voluntary Action will collaborate in the administration of the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council's business. The protocol sets out a series of actions for the management of the Council's agenda setting and the preparation of papers, follow up action and arrangement of meetings.

Secretariat

2. The official secretariat for the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council will be based in the Assembly. The secretariat will liaise with appointed contacts at the Wales Council for Voluntary Action who will be responsible for co-ordinating voluntary sector input to the Council. For any additional working groups which the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council may agree to set up, secretariat arrangements will be shared between officials of the Assembly and the Wales Council for Voluntary Action by agreement.

Preparation of Voluntary Sector Partnership Council Agendas

3. At least six weeks before a meeting of the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council the secretariat, in conjunction with Wales Council for Voluntary Action, shall prepare a draft agenda having consulted their respective members. The draft agenda will then be approved by the Chair. Once the agenda has been agreed, the secretariat will circulate advance copies of the agenda to all Council members and commission any papers which are not already being prepared. Voluntary sector contributions will be co-ordinated by Wales Council for Voluntary Action.

Preparation of Papers for Voluntary Sector Partnership Council

4. Unless agreed otherwise, it will be the responsibility of the voluntary sector (via Wales Council for Voluntary Action) to arrange for the initial drafting of a paper where it is the voluntary sector that has suggested the item should be put on the agenda; and the same principle will apply for items proposed by the Assembly.

5. Papers should be accompanied by a covering page which states the purpose of the paper and what action and/or decisions are required of the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council. Where necessary annexes may be used to provide additional essential information.

6. All papers will be provided electronically and bilingually to the secretariat not less than three weeks prior to the meeting
7. Additional items may be included on agendas in exceptional circumstances, provided notice is given to the Secretariat no later than two weeks prior to meetings of the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council, and subject to the approval of the Chair who may consult the Chair of the Wales Council for Voluntary Action. Any additional items proposed by the voluntary sector will in the first instance be submitted to the Wales Council for Voluntary Action which will forward them to the secretariat at the Assembly. Similarly, all additional items submitted by the Assembly will be brought to the attention of the Wales Council for Voluntary Action.
8. Agendas and papers shall normally be issued by the Secretariat two weeks before meetings of the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council. If exceptionally not all papers are ready for issue at this time, the bulk of papers shall be issued with a note of any papers to follow.
9. As soon as is practicable after the meeting, arrangements will be made for Voluntary Sector Partnership Council papers to appear on the National Assembly's web site. The Wales Council for Voluntary Action may decide to also publish copies of such papers and documents on its website and in its publications.

Preparation of Minutes of the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council

10. Following agreement by the Chair, the Secretariat will circulate draft minutes to Voluntary Sector Partnership Council members within three weeks of a meeting. The draft minutes will be subject to ratification or correction at the following meeting of the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council.
11. Agreed minutes of the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council meeting shall be placed in the Library of the National Assembly and will appear on the National Assembly web site as soon as is practicable.

The Administration of the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council's Working Groups

12. It will be for the Chair of any committee or working group to determine the protocol for that working group.

The arranging of meetings of the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council, Committees and Working Groups

13. The Secretariat will be responsible for making arrangements for meetings. At least one meeting in each calendar year will be held at a venue which is not in Cardiff.

14. Responsibility for organising working groups, will be agreed between Assembly officials and officials of the Wales Council for Voluntary Action officials on a case by case basis.

Expenses

14. The Assembly will maintain a budget to meet appropriate expenses. Claim forms will be provided by the Secretariat.