



# Policy Statement

on the Council's Relationship with the Voluntary Sector



# Introduction

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In February 1997 a Policy Statement on the Council's Relationship with the Voluntary Sector was approved. Since 1997 there have been a number of significant developments and it was recognised that these should be reflected in the Policy Statement.

Following a wide consultation exercise, Angus Council approved this revised Policy Statement on its Relationship with the Voluntary Sector in March 2004.

Angus Council recognises that the voluntary sector has made and will continue to make a valuable contribution to the development of the Angus community, and that the Policy Statement should not be read as a static position but as a commitment to strengthen and develop this relationship.

# 1. General Statement of Principle

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The statement of principle about the Authority's relationship with the voluntary sector has been updated to read:

"As part of its commitment to customer/citizen focus, Angus Council will work with the voluntary sector in Angus and, in pursuing its corporate and/or departmental objectives and priorities, will consult, encourage and support the voluntary sector in Angus".

The voluntary sector policy:

- defines what the voluntary sector is;
- provides a code of practice between Angus Council and the voluntary sector;  
and
- outlines how the partnership will be developed.

## 2. Definition of the Voluntary Sector

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The definition of the “voluntary sector” is accepted by Angus Council as being:-

“A voluntary organisation is an organisation which generally does not depend for its existence on statute, which determines its own aims and objectives, and whose primary function is not the generation of profit. Voluntary organisations are very diverse bodies. Some focus on single issues, others have a more general focus. Some are self-help groups, others deliver services and others campaign for improvements in services of society ”.

This is consistent with the definition contained in the Scottish Compact that was approved in October 1998.

Voluntary organisations range from national bodies, with budgets of many tens of £millions and hundreds of employees, to neighbourhood groups and associations of a few like-minded individuals with no public funding. They determine their own aims and objectives. They may or may not have charitable status. They may employ staff and volunteer help. (The Scottish Compact, October 1998).

In light of this Angus Council recognises that it will have dealings with, and should recognise the difference between the following:

- a Voluntary organisations (National) - This includes organisations such as National Children’s Homes, Barnardos, The Aberlour Child Care Trust, Scottish Voluntary Youth Organisations, Volunteer Development Scotland etc.
- b Angus wide voluntary organisations - This includes representative bodies for the voluntary sector in Angus, such as Angus Association of Voluntary Organisations, or organisations who have a particular interests across Angus such as Angus Mental Health Association, Angus Independent Advocacy, Angus Care and Repair and local Citizens Advice Bureaux.
- c Local Community Organisations - This includes housing/tenants associations, village hall management groups, local action groups, local sport and arts groups and local youth groups within particular areas.
- d Voluntary organisations that provide services across Tayside, may be based anywhere in Tayside and with whom Angus Council continue to contract, such as Tayside Association for the Deaf.

### 3. Role of Angus Council and the Voluntary Sector

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The Council recognises the need for mutual respect and a realistic understanding of each other's roles, therefore:

- a Both the Council and the voluntary sector must be clear about each other's role and aims.
- b Both the Council and the voluntary sector must have realistic expectations of the levels of performance and support that they expect of each other.
- c Both the Council and the voluntary sector must positively support each other and establish close and constructive relations with each other, elected members and other organisations.

**Angus Council wish the voluntary sector to:**

- i Support the Council's commitment to active participation by promoting volunteering and voluntary activity.
- ii Work with the Council to provide quality public services.
- iii Represent or enable representation of the voluntary sector's views and needs to the Council.
- iv Offer opportunities which improve the quality of life for individuals and enrich the communities in Angus.
- v Provide a range of resources in response to local needs, for example volunteers, buildings, equipment, etc.
- vi Provide specialist expertise and advice on issues which are of joint interest to both the Council and the voluntary sector.
- vii Contribute to debate on Council policy and where appropriate be accountable to users within the voluntary sector.
- viii Act as campaigning bodies.

More specifically the roles and responsibilities in relation to good practice for consultation and involvement, resources and support, and partnership working are outlined in the next section.

## 4. Consultation and Involvement

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Effective arrangements for consultation and involvement between the Council and the voluntary sector are essential to successful partnership working.

Angus Council recognises the importance of consultation and involvement and introduced its Consultation and Involvement Strategy in October 2001. This outlines good practice in relation to planning and co-ordinating consultation, information and communication, who to consult, feedback and evaluation.

### **Angus Council will:**

- i Consult with appropriate interests on issues.
- ii Consult as early as possible in the process.
- iii Allow as much time as possible for consultation.
- iv Consult widely with a range of interested bodies.
- v Consult groups directly, and with intermediary bodies, as appropriate.
- vi Use a flexible and varied approach in publicising consultation meetings, and involving people in the consultation process.
- vii Acknowledge involvement and contribution to consultation, and where possible give information about the end result of the process.
- viii Respond in time to requests for views and opinions.
- ix Recognise the need for ongoing dialogue with the voluntary sector to enable its involvement in the development of policies and the planning for services.
- x Recognise both the role that AAVO, the local Council for Voluntary Service, has in representing the voluntary organisations, and the right of individual organisations to represent their own views.
- xi Recognise that volunteering and the voluntary sector can be mutually supporting and so acknowledge the benefits of the involvement of volunteers and the Volunteer Centre Angus, the local volunteer centre, and establish recognised mechanisms to ensure that volunteers are consulted on the wide range of issues that affect the voluntary sector.

- xii Be aware that effective voluntary sector participation may involve costs.
- xiii Respect confidentiality, making sure that organisations know when information is being shared on a confidential basis, or that ideas are being shared at a pre-commitment stage.
- xiv Develop and maintain a corporate information bank of all voluntary and community organisations within Angus.
- xv Develop a Voluntary Sector Liaison Forum to discuss matters of interest to both the Council and voluntary organisations.

**Angus Council wish the voluntary sector, within resources available, to:**

- i Respond to requests for their views and comments within the timescales set by the Council.
- ii Consult widely with their members, services users and management committees on matters for consultation.
- iii Co-operate with the Council to ensure effective consultation.
- iv Consult with the Council, as early as possible, over matters which affect the Council.
- v Respect confidentiality, recognising that information may be shared on a confidential basis, or that ideas may be shared at a pre-commitment stage.
- vi Ensure that the Council is kept up-to-date of the existence of each voluntary organisation, and its key contacts.
- vii Support the development of a Voluntary Sector Liaison Forum to discuss matters of interest to both the Council and voluntary organisations.

## 5. Resources and Support

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Angus Council recognises that adequate resources and support are essential to promoting a healthy voluntary sector throughout Angus.

### **Angus Council will, within resources available:**

- i Provide advice.
- ii Provide advice and support in terms of securing external funding, through, for example, the External Funding Section or the Community Education Service.
- iii Offer professional support, and support in kind.
- iv Support and develop appropriate training for the voluntary sector.
- v Maintain and/or develop support for minority groups or causes, including black and minority ethnic groups.

With regard to the above, Council staff should also refer to the Employee Code of Conduct, and the section relating to Assistance to Voluntary or Charitable Organisations.

### **In relation to Grant Aid, the following applies to Angus Council:**

- i A practical guide to the Council's Grant Aid arrangements has been produced and includes application and assessment processes.
- ii One application form will be used.
- iii Preference to be given to funding organisations which contribute to community development, within the context of corporate and departmental priorities.
- iv Grant Aid will only normally be awarded to a voluntary organisation that has been properly constituted.
- v Details of all grants awarded, or committed, will be held on a database along with other information related to type of grant, the benefiting group etc.



- vi Where appropriate, a lead department and officer will be nominated if a grant is made.
- vii Where a Capital Grant is awarded, the Council will wish to inspect receipted invoices to ensure works and equipment have been purchased.
- viii Where a Revenue Grant is awarded, the Council reserves the right to ensure that revenue grants, of a more significant nature, have been used for the purpose for which they were intended.
- ix At any time during the life of a project - and at short notice - the Council's Internal Audit Section can examine a project's financial statement and procedures.
- x Whilst as a general principle voluntary organisations should be properly constituted, it should be noted that funding for groups and organisations early in their development (steering groups etc) will be available. For example, to assist with mailings and publicity to raise membership, costs of holding a public meeting to adopt a constitution, etc.

**In relation to Grant Aid, the voluntary sector will:**

- i Publicly acknowledge Angus Council's grant aid award.
- ii Produce an annual statement of audited accounts, which will be monitored by the lead department.

## 6. Partnership Working

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Partnership working has the benefit of maximising the opportunities for voluntary sector members to contribute their experience and ideas to the development and implementation of public policy, and thereby making public policy more sensitive to the needs of communities.

### **With regard to Angus Council:**

- i Departments may develop service level agreements with voluntary/community groups, and, where appropriate, use the standard service level agreement contained in the Following the Public Pound Guidelines.
- ii Angus Council has committed itself to strive for high quality, including wherever possible quality assurance. Equally, in relationship to the Council's arrangements with the voluntary sector, the highest quality of service provision will be expected, and in this regard, the resource allocation from the Council, particularly on a contractual basis, will reflect this search for quality.
- iii Angus Council has already committed itself to input from the voluntary sector through the Angus Community Planning Partnership arrangements, and Angus Council's Decentralisation arrangements.
- iv Angus Council will continue to support the Three-Way Agreement with Angus Council, AAVO and the Community Fund which aims to improve the strategic overview of the Community Fund and to improve the uptake of funding from that source for the Angus area.
- v Angus Council recognises the benefits of working in partnership with Angus Association of Voluntary Organisations.
- vi Angus Council has developed a Volunteering Strategy and Action Plan, which recognises the benefits of working in partnership with the Volunteer Centre Angus.

**Angus Council wish the voluntary sector to:**

- i Support and encourage partnership working between the voluntary sector and the Council in the interests of members, users and the wider community.
- ii Recognise that partnership working brings responsibilities to participate in joint meetings, and necessitates the use of representatives to convey views of individual organisations.
- iii Recognise that joint monitoring arrangements, appropriate to the size of the contract/grant aid, will be put in place.
- iv Meet service standards set by the appropriate department(s) in service level agreements/contracts, and recognise that there will be an ongoing monitoring and negotiating role in relationship to the contract/service agreement.
- v In relation to the Three-Way Agreement, work in partnership with Angus Council and AAVO to secure maximum funding from the Community Fund for the Angus area.
- vi Work in partnership with the Volunteer Centre Angus, where appropriate.

**Angus Council, and its community planning partners, wish the voluntary sector to:**

- i Be actively involved in the local community planning process.
- ii Act as a sounding board for the Council and its community planning partners in the planning and decision making processes.
- iii Act as a sounding board for the Council and its community planning partners in relation to service provision.

## 7. Monitoring and Review

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As a best value service provider, Angus Council is committed to continuous improvement, which will also assist the Council to develop strategies that achieve clear benefits for all Angus citizens.

### **Angus Council will:**

- i Report, on an annual basis, the total financial and human resource support given to the voluntary sector.
- ii Monitor and evaluate the types and levels of funding to the voluntary sector.
- iii Monitor the Policy Statement and Action Plan, and report on a regular basis.
- iv Review the Voluntary Sector Policy Statement on a 4-yearly basis, or as appropriate.

### **Angus Council wish the Voluntary Sector to:**

Provide monitoring information to the Council. This may include the level and quality of service provided, the achievement of targets, income expenditure and other financial information and future plans.

**Policy Statement on the Council's Relationship with the Voluntary Sector**  
**Action Plan 2004/05**

	Action	Timescale	Responsibility
1	Submit final Policy Statement and Action Plan to Strategic Policy Committee	16 March 2004	Policy & Performance Unit
2	Implementation of Policy Statement and Action Plan	April 2004 onwards	All Council Departments/ Voluntary Sector
3	To agree specific action to ensure the greater involvement of the External Funding Section in corporate grant aid matters and, in particular, the provision of more direct support to the Corporate Grant Aid Working Group.	March 2004	Head of Policy & Performance Unit/ Economic Development Manager
4	Develop a specification for a corporate information bank of all voluntary organisations within Angus for both internal and external use	May 2004	Cultural Services
5	Organise a Voluntary Sector event	October 2004	Community Planning Team/AAVO
6	Develop a Voluntary Sector Liaison Forum to discuss matters of interest to the both Council and voluntary organisations	December 2004	Policy & Performance Unit/AAVO
7	Report, on an annual basis, the total financial and human resource support given to the voluntary sector	Commence March 2005	Policy & Performance Unit
8	Consider the development of a partnership Voluntary Sector Policy/Compact and Action Plan	March 2005	Community Planning Team
9	Monitor and evaluate the types and levels of funding to the voluntary sector	Commence March 2005	Policy & Performance Unit
10	Monitor the Policy Statement and Action Plan, and report on a regular basis	Commence March 2005	Policy & Performance Unit
11	Review Policy Statement on a 4-yearly basis	Commence April 2007	Policy & Performance Unit

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