**Supporting Scotland’s Voluntary Sector to Achieve its Ambitions SCVO’s Strategy for 2019-22**

**Introduction**

Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) is the national membership organisation for Scotland’s voluntary sector, with over 2,000 member organisations from charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups across the country.

For over 75 years, SCVO has worked alongside Scotland’s voluntary sector as it has grown and evolved to meet the changing needs of individuals and communities. Today the sector is diverse, thriving and making a huge impact on people and places. It also faces the challenges of uncertainty and the impact of rapid political, economic, social and technological change.

We are evolving what we do and how we do it to be as relevant and responsive to the needs of the sector as we can.

The next three years at SCVO will be a time of consolidation and modernisation of what works well, combined with development of new areas of activity. We have a clear purpose, are refreshing our membership offer and sharpening up our role for the wider voluntary sector as whole.

The challenges the voluntary sector is experiencing are unprecedented and constantly changing. Need is growing while resources are reducing, and the political context is more volatile than ever, with no signs of settling. Scotland’s relationship with the UK, the UK and Scotland’s relationship with Europe and indeed the relationship between local and national Government are all fluid and all impact on the voluntary sector. Scotland’s National Performance Framework, based on the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals, sets out a shared set of outcomes and values to which the sector has a huge contribution to make. SCVO plays a vital part in supporting the sector to do that and to tell the story of its impact. We have an important leadership and influencing role both on behalf of and within the sector.

Our engagement across the sector and with other partners demonstrates that people engage with SCVO for a variety of reasons and value different parts of what we do. We would like more people and organisations to engage with the totality of SCVO’s offer. That diversity is something we embrace and we will work collectively across the organisation to raise awareness externally and internally of the diversity of our offer.

Our sector is diverse, and there are many ways to describe it. No one term is universally recognised (or even liked) but the closest terminology to our ethos is the voluntary sector, because we rely on the voluntary effort of individual citizens in the governance of our organisations. We recognise that there is work to be done (not just by SCVO) to debunk some myths about what that means in reality, building on our ‘I Love Charity’ campaign to create a better picture of what the modern third sector looks like in Scotland.

It is our ambition to support Scotland’s voluntary sector to achieve its ambitions, and this strategic plan outlines how we will do that.

**Our mission**

**SCVO’s Strategic Objectives 2019-22**

A thriving and effective voluntary sector is vital to Scotland’s economy and society. We support the sector to achieve its ambitions through delivering services, by giving the sector a voice at a national level and promoting and supporting innovation and improvement.

Our purpose, therefore, is to **support, promote and develop** a confident, sustainable voluntary sector in Scotland.

**What we do - at a glance**

**In 2018/19, SCVO…**

* Welcomed over 2,500 visitors to The Gathering
* Hosted the prestigious Scottish Charity Awards
* Ran 80 training courses
* Launched the new Third Force News monthly magazine
* Provided payroll services to over 400 organisations
* Provided managed IT services to 67 organisations across 35 sites
* Hosted over 4,000 job ads on Goodmoves
* Helped create over 700 jobs through Community Jobs Scotland
* Engaged in ongoing dialogue with over 250 policy colleagues across Scotland
* Worked on over 53 policy areas that affect our sector
* Supported 4,400 people to gain essential digital skills through the Digital Participation Charter Fund
* Responded to 1,500 enquiries to SCVO’s Information Service
* Provided over 20,000 registered users with access to funding sources through Funding Scotland
* Provided shared office space for 58 organisations and 300 staff across our 5 offices

**What we’re going to do**

**SCVO’s Strategic Objectives 2019-22**

These objectives set out what we will do to deliver SCVO’s ambitions for the sector, the organisation itself and our staff. What we do and how we do it is guided by broad-ranging engagement across the sector and with other stakeholders. The priorities identified against the objectives are not exhaustive, and are likely to evolve as the context changes.

1. **To SUPPORT a confident, sustainable voluntary sector in Scotland**

* We will continue to develop and roll out our digital capacity-building work across the sector, and we will continue to grow our IT service offer to external customers in the voluntary sector.
* We will modernise our offer on Payroll Services, Goodmoves recruitment portal, shared office and meeting space, and information and advice.
* We will review and modernise our offer on employability, training, events, networks and funding.
* We will look at new offers, such a supporting the sector to work together, supporting the sector with lobbying, influencing and engagement in local and national policy and legislation, and HR, volunteer recruitment, marketing, digital and other potential shared services.

1. **To PROMOTE a confident, sustainable voluntary sector in Scotland**

* We will champion the role of the voluntary sector in delivering Scotland’s National Outcomes, lobbying for a more sustainable, empowered sector.
* We will influence the sector’s operating environment, providing constructive challenge to politicians, and facilitate engagement with policy-makers.
* We will campaign on issues that matter to the sector.
* We will promote the image and value of the sector.
* We will influence Scottish Government and others on key financial, legislative and policy developments for the benefit of the sector.
* We will engage with funders to help them understand how to develop processes which maximise outcomes and minimise administrative burdens.
* Through Third Force News and other communication channels, we will highlight successes, good practice, challenges and areas for improvement.

1. **To DEVELOP a confident, sustainable voluntary sector in Scotland**

* We will develop and host funding and capacity-building resources, being creative and constructive, with a focus on solutions and empowerment. Where appropriate, we will develop shared infrastructure and resources for the sector, promoting collaboration wherever possible.
* We will support innovation in the sector, including digital, collaboration and funding approaches.
* We will curate communities of interest, supporting networks and facilitating relationships.
* We will work with other infrastructure organisations such as third sector interfaces, intermediaries and community development bodies to maximise the power of collective action, minimise duplication and competition and provide clarity to voluntary organisations about sources of support.
* We will provide opportunities for voluntary sector organisations to influence and act on their own or in partnership.
* We will champion the principles of service design with organisations and funders to ensure services are funded, developed and delivered in a way that is fit for purpose now and in the future.
* We will work with the sector to enable wide-scale societal change, promote transparency and demonstrate the difference it makes to people’s lives.
* We will identify and highlight future trends and issues that may have implications for the sector

**How we’re going to do it**

1. **Follow our principles**

What we do to deliver on our purpose may change over the lifetime of this strategy, but the foundation must be a consistent approach to how we do it. Our work will therefore be underpinned by a set of ten guiding principles that define how we go about our business. SCVO will:

* be transparent and easy to understand in everything we do
* base our offer on the needs and ambitions of the sector
* have a clear rationale for how our activities deliver our mission and strategic objectives
* demonstrate that we listen to the sector and the actions we take as a result
* be clear about when and why we choose to work independently, collectively or in partnership
* be clear about what we are trying to achieve and for whom
* demonstrate the impact of our work
* be clear about our role and how it interacts with other organisations in the sector
* challenge on behalf of the sector when we can demonstrate a good reason for doing so
* model the behaviour internally that we promote to the sector; we will be respected for how we do things, as well as what we do.

1. **Live our values**

Our values are the foundations of how we act individually and collectively as SCVO staff members.

* **Accountable and committed**

We are committed to Scotland’s voluntary sector, to SCVO and to each other as colleagues. This commitment guides how we operate, invest and collaborate.

* **Responsive**

Engagement is at the heart of what we do. We take action and respond quickly and effectively to what people tell us.

* **Supportive**

We are focused on empowering people and organisations to succeed. We are knowledgeable, trusted and recognised for providing quality services and support.

* **Progressive**

We are a learning organisation that strives for continual improvement. We are open to new ideas and ways of working. We embrace change. We reflect on failure as well as success.

* **Bold**

We are confident in standing up for what we believe is right. We are not afraid to challenge the status quo. We take risks.

1. **Value and grow our membership**

SCVO is a membership organisation. Members should join us first and foremost because they believe in our purpose and want to work with us to achieve their own ambitions as well as those of the wider sector.

People have also told us that there is a need for a strong, authentic, national voice for the voluntary sector and that we are best placed to deliver that.

We therefore cannot solely exist to serve our members. Membership must instead be a key tool to demonstrate a collective commitment and belief in the power of the voluntary sector to change lives and communities.

Of course, we must also offer unique value to members. This value must be beyond financial and transactional benefits that traditional membership organisations provide. Engagement and influence is at the heart of this.

We are therefore committed to growing our membership and to reviewing the value membership offers. This will recognise the diversity of the sector, not only in terms of size, remit and location, but also in terms of priorities and beliefs.

SCVO is about membership and more:

* 2,000+ current members
* 8,000+ organisations that interact with use every year
* Hundreds of thousands of volunteers and staff that use our services
* Wider stakeholders also believe in our purpose and want to support the sector
* 45,000+ charities and voluntary organisations in Scotland

**Conclusion**

Throughout the life of this strategy, SCVO will be forward-thinking and ambitious for the voluntary sector and what it can achieve.

We will be accountable to, and directed by, our members and the wider sector.

We will be a positive organisation, working constructively with as broad as possible a range of people and organisations interested in demonstrating the sector’s value and impact.

We will be clear about what we want to achieve and demonstrate the difference we are making.

And we will be proactive, listening, engaging and improving.

**Find out more/get involved**

We want to make it as easy as possible for people to engage with us, support our work and offer constructive challenge. You can do this in a number of ways:

* [facebook.com/scvo1939](https://www.facebook.com/SCVO1939/)
* [twitter.com/scvotweet](https://twitter.com/scvotweet)
* [linkedin.com/company/scvo](https://www.linkedin.com/company/scvo)
* [youtube.com/user/scvotv](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmn-E6H1X6CXXsfc1WiK2BQ)
* [scvo.org.uk](https://scvo.org.uk/)

**Appendix 1**

**SCVO’s governance**

Our board of trustees comprises six people elected from our membership and five people co-opted for particular expertise.

We are a SCIO, registered with OSCR (SC003558). Our charitable objects are:

* To promote the voluntary sector, and the effectiveness and efficiency of charities
* To advance education, and particularly in relation to (a) matters connected with the establishment, operation and governance of voluntary organisations, (b) the impact of voluntary sector organisations in promoting economic and social wellbeing and (c) issues which are of particular concern to voluntary organisations in each case, with a particular focus on voluntary organisations operating in Scotland.

Our charitable purposes are:

* The advancement of education
* The advancement of citizenship or community development.

Our board of trustees can be found here <https://scvo.org/about/board-of-trustees>

Our staff team can be found here <https://scvo.org/about/staff-team>

**Appendix 2**

**Diversity and Inclusion**

SCVO is committed to embedding and promoting diversity and inclusion in the organisation and in the sector. We want an open culture that promotes equality of opportunity and respects difference. We want all staff to feel valued and to be treated fairly, and our work will support our members to do the same.

We will measure our success through:

* Board diversity
* Staff diversity
* Diversity of engagement across our functions, eg membership of networks and working groups, participants in training and events
* Diversity and inclusion visible in our publications

**Sustainability**

Financial sustainability is reflected elsewhere in the plan. This section focuses on environmental and social sustainability.

* **The environment**

We are committed to minimising any adverse impact on the environment, and maximising our contribution to fighting climate change. Therefore we will:

* Offer recycling facilities in all our buildings
* Seek to use green energy and find energy-efficient solutions wherever we can
* Always use public transport unless there is no other option
* Minimise use of air travel
* Raise awareness amongst staff and tenants of environmental sustainability.
* **Social sustainability**

We are committed to maximising our contribution to the local economy at all our locations. Therefore, we will:

* Look to support local voluntary, community or social enterprise organisations wherever possible
* Ensure our supply chains are ethical
* Promote volunteering by our staff
* Look to recruit and develop young people from socially disadvantaged groups through apprenticeships and other options such as CJS
* When awarding contracts, ensure third parties comply with the Fair Work Principles and have ethical supply chains.

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