

# Serving Glasgow

## A Voluntary Sector Manifesto for Glasgow (Work in Progress)

Being compiled by : Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector



A Voluntary Sector Manifesto for Glasgow is an opportunity to present information on the work of the sector to and, as a result of its impact, make requests of politicians in the city. The advent of STV (single transferable vote) or proportional representation welcomes in a new era of local government.

For the first time, new opportunities are emerging for multi-member wards to make an impact and to involve voluntary and community sector in the decision-making processes at neighbourhood level. STV will make it possible for Glaswegians to expect increased accountability about their public services. It will also ensure that services are retained and developed by the service users. Essentially, this election could be the start of a new era of team-working between politicians and the people.

The voluntary sector can use this opportunity to raise the profile of some of their daily concerns to council level. **What would you want to see in your manifesto?**

### Recognition of the role the sector plays in the city - what we offer to the city.

The issues that the voluntary sector works with daily are those of concern to the whole city: lifetime and enduring poverty; health inequalities; worklessness and addictions; violence against women. As a sector we can offer expertise, innovation, advocacy and reach into those communities that other agencies often find hard to reach. Our organisations release the potential of an army of an estimated 10, 000 volunteers (to be confirmed) in the city and create the networks and links for making change that build strong communities.

### What else can we boast about in the voluntary sector? What else would you include?

The Voluntary Sector Manifesto will cover the size and scale of the sector and will link the range of its involvement across the five themes of the community plan: working; learning; healthy; safe and vibrant.

### Some key areas for action

GCVS contacted representatives from the Voluntary Sector in July 2006 about what they would like to see included in a Voluntary Sector Manifesto for Glasgow. The material we have received so far has highlighted the following key areas in which organisations want to see more action from our local politicians.

#### ■ Healthy

Really address poverty in the city - a Commission on poverty for Glasgow?  
Commit to a more comprehensive community health agenda.

#### ■ Working

Ensure that the employability agenda does not increase poverty for disabled people

#### ■ Learning

Help build confident, learning communities through literacies and confidence building programmes .

## ■ Safe

Bring equality and diversity needs higher up the agenda so that they appear on the political radar. Work to create safe communities.

## ■ Vibrant

Pay greater attention to environment and sustainability issues such as: public transport; improved provision for cycling; high quality public and green spaces; and increased energy efficiency and recycling programmes.

**Do these reflect the priorities of your organisation? Are there other key areas that you would want to see included?**

## Support that works effectively

In order for Glasgow's Voluntary Sector to deliver across this range of issues and to operate to its full potential, there are some key areas of support for the sector required, including:

1. A commitment to build a strong, dynamic, diverse voluntary and community sector in the city;
2. Partnership as of right. Better and supported partnership working;
3. Real involvement in planning and decision making;
4. Fair and transparent funding that works for organisations.

### 1. A commitment to build a strong, dynamic, diverse voluntary and community sector in the city

The starting point for this commitment to build a strong, dynamic, diverse voluntary and community sector in the city is recognition of the crucial role the sector plays in the city, independent of the public and private sectors. Glasgow's Voluntary Sector requires a commitment to create the conditions that will enable it to flourish.

These conditions include - a voluntary sector compact, a volunteer strategy for the city, ongoing infrastructure support, development support for volunteer management board members, and support for workforce development in the sector.

**What other steps could politicians take to ensure a stronger commitment to the voluntary sector?**

### 2. Partnership as of right. Better and supported partnership working

Glasgow's Voluntary Sector needs a commitment to improve both the extent and the quality of partnership working in the city. As a sector we have much to bring to partnership structures in the city but there are some key conditions that need to be met for this to work.

- We need to be there as of right and not by invitation.
- We need to be able to contribute as an equal partner.
- Our involvement needs to be resourced to ensure that we can keep pace with the work of the particular partnership.
- Public agency partners need to recognise our independence.
- We need more opportunities for joint learning and development.

**Are there other issues that you would want to include on partnership working?**

### 3. Real involvement in planning and decision making

The experience of Glasgow's Voluntary Sector of involvement in planning is that we are consulted only after ideas have already been formulated.

As a sector we are looking to make a contribution throughout the whole planning process from ideas generation to decision-making, implementation and evaluation. We can also bring some of Glasgow's most excluded citizens to enrich this process. We are looking for support to develop the capability to make this level of contribution.

**How else could Glasgow's Voluntary Sector be better engaged in planning and decision-making?**

### 4. Fair and transparent funding that works for organisations

As expected, funding is a major concern expressed in responses. Clear, simple, stable, transparent are some of the words used.

*'Funding regimes must be transparent in process and developed through meaningful consultation with the sector if they are to truly serve the needs of the sector in a flexible way, avoid waste, cut bureaucracy and result in the maximum intended impact on communities and individuals.'*

The following key issues have been identified:

- The need to reduce bureaucracy and simplify funding streams;
- The creation of a single council applications process for all funding and simplified monitoring procedures;
- Clearer joint funding mechanisms between health and social work;
- A level playing field between small and larger organisations;
- Recognition of the need for organisations to build reserves;
- Access to joint tendering arrangements;
- A move to full cost recovery over an agreed period of time.

**Are there any other ways that funding could be made fairer and more transparent?**

## Your response

The Voluntary Sector Manifesto for Glasgow is very much work in progress and we want to ensure that as many organisations as possible have the opportunity to contribute. Do please let us know if there are key areas that have not been covered to date. We would also like to hear if there are issues in the Manifesto that you do not agree with.

There are two ways to respond.

**Either you can write to us at [manifesto@gcvs.org.uk](mailto:manifesto@gcvs.org.uk) or you can fill in the following survey: XXXX.**

The next stage will be to use the material from this survey to produce a draft manifesto that will be sent out for discussion in your organisations and at the GCVS AGM on September 27th.

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