

National Council Steering Group

Options for the Formation of a National Body

Interim Report

September 2008

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National Council Steering Group

c/o Voluntary Action Lochaber, An Drochaid, Claggan Road, Fort William PH33 6PH
E-mail: national.council@valochaber.org

September 2008

Dear Chairs / Chief Officers

I hope that you will take the time to thoroughly read the Interim Report we have prepared for you for discussion at conference on the options for a National Body for the CVS Network.

Since we were tasked with this job at the last conference the landscape has started to change and therefore what we present to you is slightly different, we have included a partnership model for you to consider.

This report is not complete as we need your views to help us finalise this piece of work and the best place to get these views are when we are all together and we can get a conversation going on what we need as individual organisations and as a network. We will require a mandate from conference to continue as a steering group as we were only tasked up till this year's conference but as more work is required to finalise the report I am sure we can count on your support for this.

There will be **NO** decisions taken at conference on this report, therefore if you are unable to attend please feed back your views to us by the end of October for us to incorporate them into the final report by emailing us at national.council@valochaber.org

What I am going to ask of all organisations is that you set a date for your Boards to meet and make a decision on the options between the 1st week in December and Mid January 2009. The final report will be with your organisations by the 30th November 2008. Once we have a decision from each organisation on which option they wish to see, if any at all, we can then advise the network of the outcome by 31st January 2009.

I look forward to meeting with you all again at the conference in October.

Kind regards

Harry Whiteside

Harry Whiteside
Chair
National Council Steering Group

SECTION 1

Background

There are 57 Independent councils of voluntary service that make up the CsVS network. Currently the Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations provides agency support and facilitates the network. In October 2007, CsVS chairs indicated they wanted progress on a network that would function better with structure, identity and role clearly defined and able to develop and endorse strategic policy which CsVS could adhere to. Scottish Government, through statements made at the October 2007 National Conference encouraged the development of a National Body and subsequently committed financial support to the Steering Group.

A steering group was elected by ballot in March 2008 and in May 2008 consultation and a national survey indicated that 43 CsVS wanted a national body - 75.5%, 13 CsVS were unsure - 22.75% and 1 CVS did not want a national body, 1.7%. Whilst there were some inadequacies in the questionnaire due to the broad sweep approach of some of the questions, the responses clearly indicated there was substantial support from the Network for change and reflected the degree of dissatisfaction and frustration with current arrangements and lack of effective voice. A majority of CsVS have also contributed financially to the work of the steering group indicating further support for change. Subsequently, support for the principle of a national body increased to 80%.

It had been the intention of the Steering Group, through the purchase of external consultancy support, to engage in an in depth consultation process with CVS to determine more fully the range of opinions on scope and depth of the remit for a National Body, structures, governance, communication, funding and relationships with external bodies. It was a working premise of the Steering Group that whatever model may be put forward, it had to command the enthusiastic support of the majority if in turn it was to command credibility and authority. It was hoped that this extensive piece of work would be funded through the SVA programme with a contribution from the Scottish Government funding but this proved impossible to secure.

A desktop study was undertaken of a number of other National Bodies, ranging from CABx, social enterprise networks, development trusts, and local infrastructure organisations in England and Wales. (See section 2)

The landscape and the funding environment that was known and anticipated at the time of the November 2007 Conference, is, likely to be substantially different from that which may be in place post 2011. The degree of uncertainty over how that landscape will be populated does make the determination of the final shape and scope of a National Body for CVS type organisations more problematic and we acknowledge that to some extent a degree of flexibility will be required in our thinking to allow for adaption to change. We cannot however wait for "certainty", we can only acknowledge the present threats and opportunities anticipate to the best of our ability likely changes and seek to place ourselves in the best position, structurally and organisationally to further the cause of the Network and the services we offer to our members, communities and stakeholders.

We believe there are three broad options facing the network:

Option 1: Status Quo

Option 2: CVS specific National body

Option 3: Wider Partnership Model

The desire and rationale for change is to develop a fit for purpose body for the network.

A SWOT analysis of the three broad options is enclosed as appendices 1, 2, 3. Appendix 4 highlights frequently asked questions as an aid memoir, dealing with a variety of general points, to assist debate and consideration of matters by CsVS and their boards.

In looking ahead there is a basic premise that the status quo is not working, even adequately. A few may dispute this but we would not be where we are, now if this were not the case. Nevertheless to do nothing, to make no decision is symptomatic of a deeper malaise, which is frustrating to all concerned and a barrier to progressing to a more productive and meaningful agenda.

Some may consider that there is in existing arrangements value in the retention of “agency” support and the funding conduit which is currently provided, as well as the skills and experience of SCVO staff. These are fair points, however, it is only in recent times that SCVO took on the role of funding conduit and it is by no means certain that after 2011, when CsVS and VC funding streams will no longer be separate, that existing arrangements will continue or even be appropriate. In addition there is no suggestion that development support will automatically cease with the creation of a network body, which could then decide, if it were empowered, to negotiate a mutually satisfactory contract with SCVO or anybody else. It is the absence of such authority and the absence of any network decision making process which is debilitating in a world where there is much more rapid and long reaching change.

It may also be worth recalling what professor Mundy said about CVS in the “Mundy Report”:

“ For me the most important piece of generic voluntary sector infrastructure which SCVO supports is the network of councils of voluntary service” And he also commented that CVS should be taking more of a lead themselves. Interestingly in more recent times this view has been supported by the Avante Reports.

SECTION 2

Desk Research

Analysis of network body structures

Presented below is an analysis of network bodies for social enterprise networks, citizen advice bureaux, local infrastructure organisations in England, county voluntary councils in Wales, regional and county infrastructure consortia in England, development trusts and community groups in Scotland, and rural community councils in England (RCCs are county wide community development agencies).

The analysis is presented as a full tabular analysis on each model with summary comparison grids.

This work was done as a desk study based on available internet information.

All shadowed text is a direct copy from an internet source.

1. NAVCA

Name	National Association for Voluntary and Community Action
Type of body networked	<p>Local infrastructure organisations:- “its primary purpose is to provide one or more good quality infrastructure services (services and support, development, liaison, representation, and engagement in strategic partnerships) to voluntary and community organisations at a neighbourhood, sub-district, district, borough, county, sub-regional or regional level within England; it has a broad membership of voluntary and community organisations and/or other LIOs relevant to its primary purpose from within its area of benefit; at least 60% of its trustees are elected by its membership of voluntary and community organisations and/or other LIOs from within its area of benefit on the basis of one vote per member”</p> <p>Most members have names using terms such as “voluntary action”, “community action” and “council for voluntary service”</p> <p>“To begin with though a word about NACVS. We are a national charity which speaks to government on behalf of 357 local infrastructure organisations, working in all but 20 of England’s 388 local areas. Many of these are called Council for Voluntary Service but at the last count there were more than 30 other names including Voluntary Action, Association of Voluntary Services, Community and Voluntary Sector Forum, and so on - national branding has never been our strong point. Each of these local infrastructure organisations has a membership of local organisations and groups - typically 200 of them. And a larger number of local user organisations including neighbourhood groups, faith groups and social enterprises. Our total reach is around 148,000 local voluntary organisations and community groups. Many are charities but some are not.”</p>

Aim	“establish and support or aid in the establishment and support of Local Infrastructure Organisations or similar charitable organisations and subscribe or guarantee money for charitable purposes in any way connected with the purposes of the Association or calculated to further its purposes”
Number of bodies	289 full member LIOs plus 58 affiliate member LIOs There are also 31 national affiliates
Legal status and governance	Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee “The Board shall comprise the Chair, two Vice Chairs, a Treasurer and nine elected members.”
Development history	NAVCA was established in January 1991 as NACVS in a situation which has been described to me as a fairly acrimonious breakaway from NCVO as a result of member action
Structure	NAVCA operates some 18 community of interest support networks including a chairs’ network, IT network and social enterprise advisers’ network, etc
Services	Offers (NAVCA Members only) Deals for members on recruitment advertising, pensions and employment law advice Enquiry service Events Conferences, seminars and training ICT Support Learning opportunities Learning and training services including: SKiLD (learning for LIO development workers), Action Learning Matters, Empowering the voluntary sector (using public law), Full Cost Recovery Networking Email networks to support staff and trustees of local infrastructure organisations Performance standards and NAVCA quality award The NAVCA Quality Award is assessed against the NAVCA Performance Standards. It offers a rigorous, externally audited, NAVCA-accredited award that evaluates the quality of services offered by local infrastructure organisations. Publications Support for chairs and trustees of NAVCA member organisations NAVCA services for chairs and trustees of local infrastructure organisations Support for Chief Officers Trainers and consultants direct
Staffing	32 of whom five function as senior “directors”
Most recent gross income	£1,736,435
Relationships	In addition to a very wide range of links with government and other

<p>with other networks or bodies</p>	<p>agencies NAVCA have memoranda of understanding with NCVO Volunteering England Scarman Trust (a big national with competition in mind with LIOs) In the case of the VE MOU the following may be of interest</p> <p>Volunteering England has suggested that there should be one accountable, body for volunteer centres in each two-tier or unitary authority with a range of local delivery points. NAVCA agrees that in some counties there is a need to reduce the number of separate volunteer centres. Both Volunteering England and NAVCA are agreed that the existing providers, in consultation with their funders, will make the decision about how best to deliver volunteering infrastructure functions across the two-tier or unitary area. This may or may not reflect existing patterns of delivery, but any changes will be locally owned, managed and led. In counties where the existing pattern of provision is coherent, strategic and sustainable there will be no case for change.</p> <p>The Memorandum of Understanding between NAVCA and VE makes it clear that neither organisation seeks to impose any particular structure. Whether volunteer centres are independent or integrated within local infrastructure organisations is a matter for local determination.</p>
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2. ACRE

Name	Action with Communities in Rural England
Type of body networked	<p>Rural Community Councils</p> <p>Action with Communities in Rural England is the national umbrella of the Rural Community Action Network (RCAN), which operates at national, regional and local level in support of rural communities across the country.</p> <p>The Rural Community Action Network is the collective name for the 38 Rural Community Councils throughout England, their eight regional bodies and their national umbrella, ACRE. RCCs are charitable local development agencies, generally based at county level, which support and enable initiatives in rural communities.</p> <p>RCAN collectively:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • employs approximately 1,000 staff with a variety of specialist skills • engages in 1,300 different partnerships, including working with 58 different higher tier local authorities • has over 12,000 fee-paying members and • reaches 40,000 grass roots contacts and organisations in the 11,000 rural communities across England.
Aim	<p>We aim to promote a healthy, vibrant and sustainable rural community sector that is well connected to policy and decision-makers who play a part in delivering this aim.</p> <p>The aims of the Rural Community Action Network are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support community-led action and strong local governance • Increase the long-term sustainability of local community life • Influence policies and services, particularly to achieve equity for rural communities.
Number of bodies	38
Legal status and governance	<p>Charitable company limited by guarantee</p> <p>The ACRE board of trustees consists of a chair, a treasurer and a maximum of eight trustees selected by the Rural Community Action Network. A further six trustees can be co-opted by the board to provide skills appropriate to ACRE's work focus. There are two sub-committees of the board which take responsibility for Finance & Resources and Marketing & Communication.</p>
Development history	Incorporated March 1997
Structure	8 regional networks
Services	<p>ACRE services</p> <p>To fulfil its strategic objectives, ACRE provides a variety of services to RCCs, government departments and agencies, partners and other stakeholders. The table below refers to the areas of service delivery</p>

	<p>outlined above.</p> <p>1 Work in the national arena</p> <p>1.1 Strategic work with government and agencies</p> <p>1.2 Third sector partnership development</p> <p>1.3 Corporate relationships</p> <p>2 Support to the RCC network and rural community activity</p> <p>2.1 ACRE network performance</p> <p>2.2 ACRE network capacity building</p> <p>2.3 Developing and sharing best practice in rural community activity</p> <p>2.4 Support to rural communities</p> <p>3 Communications and information</p> <p>3.1 Marketing and communications strategy</p> <p>3.2 Network communications</p> <p>3.3 External communications</p> <p>Producing publications, information services and promotional products</p> <p>Generating media presence</p> <p>Managing the ACRE website and interaction with external websites</p> <p>Information provision and networking with external stakeholders</p>
Staffing	14 staff
Most recent gross income	£838,645
Relationships with other networks or bodies	<p>On the executive of the Community Sector Coalition which has some 26 national bodies and an executive of five - it is a facilitated network based in BASSAC (British association of settlements and social action centres - BASSAC is a membership organisation that represents and supports a national network of multi-purpose organisations who provide services, community development support and host smaller community initiatives.)</p>

3. Welsh CVC network support is facilitated by WCVA (the Welsh equivalent of SCVO) using what appears to be an informal name of Wales Association of County Voluntary Councils; the CVCs are both CVS and VC in function.

It is almost impossible to track them down in the WCVA website and in three different locations are listed as numbering i) 15 ii) 19 and iii) 22.

4. Networks 1st

Name	Networks 1 st (network of social enterprise networks in Scotland)
Type of body networked	Geographic and community of interest networks of social enterprises
Aim	Networks 1st web portal reflects the collective identity of the Local Social Enterprise Networks (LSEs) across Scotland. It provides SENs with the opportunity to share information and resources online but it also takes the form of gatherings, both regional and national. It is a platform where issues of common interest to all SENs can be aired. It acts as a broker and exchange of practical help and support. Networks1st is currently being hosted by Senscot but only until such time as Networks 1st moves towards independence.
Number of bodies networked	18 local social enterprise networks (15 LA area and 3 interest based)
Legal status and governance	Senscot is funded by Scottish Government to facilitate and develop Networks 1 st till March 2011
Development history	First meeting of local networks in Fife over four years ago
Structures	Local network structures -a network of networks
Services	Senscot helps in establishing and supporting Local Social Enterprise Networks across the country. These networks are set up in response to direct requests from local social enterprises, operating both geographically and thematically. They are independent and self-managing gatherings of social enterprises. The networks provide social enterprises with an opportunity to exchange information, offer mutual support and address issues of common interest.
Staffing	Colin Campbell (Network Development Manager) Colin Campbell has been Network Development Manager with Senscot since August 2003. Colin is responsible for the setting up and support of the Local Social Enterprise Networks throughout Scotland. Colin has an Honours Degree in Science and Management studies and worked in a variety of voluntary organisations over the last eight years. He has experience in; teaching, business administration, fundraising and development work. Colin has recently been involved in leading the development of a social enterprise to promote best practice in social capital.
Most recent gross income	£120,411 as shown against Networks expenditure in 2007 accounts of Senscot
Relationships with other networks	Senscot is one of four networks in the local people leading campaign facilitated by DTAS

5. Region and county infrastructure consortia in England

Names	Varied across nine regions each with several county based consortia																																						
Type of body networked	<p>At regional level a mix of local infrastructure bodies with wider stakeholder groups and regional government input plus funders such as BIG</p> <p>At county level more frequently just LIOs plus specialist BME, faith and rural interests</p> <p>For example</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Regional Consortium Members East Midlands</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>BTCV</td> <td>EM5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CAN Network East Midlands</td> <td>Engage East Midlands</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CEFET</td> <td>Fatima Women's Network</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Children's Links</td> <td>Groundwork (regional)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Citizen's Advice Bureaux</td> <td>North East Midlands Open College</td> </tr> <tr> <td>East Midlands Acre Network</td> <td>Network</td> </tr> <tr> <td>East Midlands Churches Forum</td> <td>Social Enterprise East Midlands</td> </tr> <tr> <td>East Midlands Voluntary Youth</td> <td>Voice East Midlands</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Volunteering England</td> </tr> </table> <p>However the Consortium is run by a steering group as follows</p> <p>Structure</p> <p>East Midlands Infrastructure Steering Group is an independent non constituted partnership.</p> <p>Membership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two representatives from third sector infrastructure organisations nominated by each infrastructure consortium (14 people) • One representative from ChangeUp fund manager, currently Nottinghamshire Community Foundation • A representative from Capacitybuilders. • Representatives from funders with an interest in the work of the group such as the Big Lottery Fund and Government Office for the East Midlands. <p>And at county consortium level for example</p> <p>Derbyshire Consortium Members</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>Age Concern</td> <td>Groundwork - Creswell</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Amber Valley CVS</td> <td>Groundwork - Erewash Valley</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ashbourne Volunteer Bureau</td> <td>Heritage Railway Association</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bolsover Voluntary Sector Forum</td> <td>High Peak CVS</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Buxton Volunteer Bureau</td> <td>INVOLVE</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Churches Together</td> <td>Learning & Development Consortium</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Derby CVS</td> <td>Links - Chesterfield & NE</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Derby Millennium Network</td> <td>Derbyshire CVS</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Derbyshire Coalition for Inclusive Living</td> <td>Multi-faith Centre at the</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Derbyshire Community Foundation</td> <td>University of Derby</td> </tr> </table>	BTCV	EM5	CAN Network East Midlands	Engage East Midlands	CEFET	Fatima Women's Network	Children's Links	Groundwork (regional)	Citizen's Advice Bureaux	North East Midlands Open College	East Midlands Acre Network	Network	East Midlands Churches Forum	Social Enterprise East Midlands	East Midlands Voluntary Youth	Voice East Midlands		Volunteering England	Age Concern	Groundwork - Creswell	Amber Valley CVS	Groundwork - Erewash Valley	Ashbourne Volunteer Bureau	Heritage Railway Association	Bolsover Voluntary Sector Forum	High Peak CVS	Buxton Volunteer Bureau	INVOLVE	Churches Together	Learning & Development Consortium	Derby CVS	Links - Chesterfield & NE	Derby Millennium Network	Derbyshire CVS	Derbyshire Coalition for Inclusive Living	Multi-faith Centre at the	Derbyshire Community Foundation	University of Derby
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	Derbyshire Dales CVS Dbys' Diocesan Council for Social Responsibility Derbyshire Rural Community Council Erewash CVS Glossop Volunteer Bureau	NEMOCN New Mills & District Volunteer Centre North Derbyshire Voluntary Action SDVSMHF South Derbyshire CVS Voluntary Action Bolsover
	<p>Another example from Bedfordshire Consortium members are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bedford Race Equality Council • Bedfordshire Advice Forum • Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity • Community and Voluntary Service Mid and North Bedfordshire • Voluntary Action Luton • Voluntary and Community Action South Bedfordshire • Voluntary Organisation Consortium for Children, Young People and Families • Volunteer Centre Bedford <p>The Accountable Body for the Consortium is Voluntary and Community Action South Bedfordshire.</p>	
Aim	<p>The HM Treasury document The Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector in Service Delivery 2002 - A Cross Cutting Review (CCR) recognised that despite a revolution in the contribution of the voluntary and community sector to service delivery, many frontline organisations - especially the small- and medium-sized - are still unable to access the support they need. It recommended that the voluntary and community sector and central and local Government develop a shared strategy to underpin the capacity of the sector.¹</p> <p>This Framework is the response. It sits alongside the forthcoming Community Capacity Building Action Plan which is being drawn up after the consultation document Building Civil Renewal.²</p> <p>The Government recognises through ChangeUp that the voluntary and community sector should be in the driving seat in delivering high quality, collaborative and sustainable sector support services and representation.</p> <p>This has been partly achieved through local and regional consortia as well as national partnerships.</p> <p>However, to improve the sector lead, in March 2005 the Home Secretary announced the creation of the Capacitybuilders agency. Backed by a further £70m over two financial years, this new agency led by sector experts now manages the ChangeUp framework at</p>	

	arms-length from Government.
Number of bodies	Nine regions with several county consortia per region
Legal status and governance	Lead member facilitated partnerships with often differentiated fundholding arrangements
Development history	Consortia developed from the 2004-14 Changeup programme
Structure	Regional and local authority based
Services	Development of regional and county infrastructure investment plans and delivery of approved infrastructure developments
Staffing	Each region has Capacitybuilders NDPB staff support plus funded admin and co-ordination support
Most recent gross income	Capacitybuilders is making £7million funding available to consortia via the Consortia Development Fund (CDF) in the financial year from 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008.
Relationships with other networks and bodies	Pulls together all key infrastructure bodies at appropriate geography (Since SG got “thrive and connect” from England, perhaps these consortia are the origin of Geoff’s “things”?)

6. Citizens Advice Scotland

Name	Scottish Association of Citizen Advice Bureaux
Type of body networked	Citizen Advice Bureaux
Aim	<p>Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS) is the national umbrella body that provides support services for Scottish citizens advice bureaux and collates client case evidence to shape policy in Scotland and the UK.</p> <p>In particular, CAS: Provides a range of services and the best possible advice and support to its member bureaux to meet the needs of existing and potential clients Sets quality standards and audits bureaux compliance with these standards Is the voice of the CAB Service in Scotland and its clients to raise the profile of the service and make changes to social policy.</p>
Number of bodies networked	55 CABx, 71 CAB offices and 199 service points
Legal status and governance	Charitable company limited by guarantee Board elected by members as well as four standing committees covering Information, Development, Membership and Training
Development history	SACAB became autonomous body in 1975 and fully independent in 1980 and became a company in 1984
Structure	No regional structure
Services	<p>Here are just some of the things that CAS does for CABx. You may be surprised by just how much there is!</p> <p>Expert help for bureau advisers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information for advice-giving • Information and communications technology • Membership standards • Promoting the Scottish CAB Service • Social policy work • Supporting bureau management • Training
Staffing	70 staff in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Inverness
Most recent gross income	£3,900,000
Relationships with other networks and bodies	

7. DTAS

Name	Development Trusts Association Scotland
Type of bodies networked	Community based development bodies, community anchor organisations
Aim	<p>Aims of DTAS</p> <p>DTA Scotland aims to have a successful development trust in every community that wants one. To achieve this DTA Scotland will address itself to four key tasks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To encourage mutual support among development trusts in Scotland by creating opportunities for development trusts to network with each other in order to share ideas and experiences and to learn from one another. 2) To encourage the growth of new development trusts in communities who want them. 3) To promote and represent the interests of development trusts at all levels of local and central government and with the other UK associations, at European and international level. 4) To run our own organisation efficiently and to reflect the
Number of bodies networked	107 full members and 20 associate members
Legal status and governance	Charitable limited company Board of 12 elected by members
Development history	Set up in 2003 with support from Senscot and ASTIS (small towns group)
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • input to DTAS responses to government policy consultation • support and advice from DTA Scotland staff • Free access to the Melting Pot - a new social enterprise offering hot-desking and meeting facilities in the heart of Edinburgh • free advice on annual accounts preparation • VAT advice • access to members insurance scheme • access to and participation in DTAS training events and seminars throughout the year

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • briefing papers on relevant policy topics • free DTA (UK) magazine - Networker • free subscription to New Sector magazine • free subscription to New Start magazine • participation and voting rights within DTAS and DTA(UK) • discounts on publications, training materials • subsidised rates at national and regional seminars, training events and conferences • lobbying and representing the interests of development trusts at national and local government • access to members area of DTA Scotland website (www.dtascot.org.uk)
Staffing	5 staff
Most recent gross income	£185,665
Relationships with other networks and bodies	Facilitator of Local People Leading - a partnership of national and local groups and local activists set up in 2007 by DTAS, Community Woodlands Association, Community Recycling Network, and Senscot.

Comparison Grid

Name	NAVCA	ACRE	CVCs/ WCVA	Network 1st	Reg/county consortia	CAS	DTAS
Company owned by members	Yes	Yes				Yes	Yes
Informal network facilitated by external body			Yes	Yes			
Informal network facilitated by member					Yes		
Development lead for network from external strategy			Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Development lead from members	Yes	Yes				Yes	
One type of member	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
More than one type of member					Yes		
Members in other networks	ACRE Consortia DTAuk	NAVCA Consortia DTAuk		NAVCA ACRE	NAVCA ACRE DTAuk Network 1st	Consortia	

Conclusions and Commentary

There are supported networks of VDS/Volunteer Centre Network Scotland and SCVO/CVS

There are 32 VCs in Scotland whose networking is described by VDS as “contracted support” and also as a “partnership” or as the “partnership of 33”. They have a website and have the right in the Memorandum and Articles of VDS to appoint two directors to the board of VDS.

There are 57 CVS in Scotland networked by SCVO through its networks division.

Both networks can be described as externally facilitated informal networks such as the CVC network and Networks 1st above.

- ACRE and CAS are focussed networks which have complete buy in from their target membership
- DTAS and Networks 1st are focussed networks with (currently) poor buy in from members
- ACRE and CAS were set up by their members and DTAS and Networks 1st were set up with Senscot intervention
- NAVCA, CVC and Consortia have fairly full membership and their role is more generic
- Massive funds were released into infrastructure by the consortia approach and they have contributed to a degree of rationalisation and better joint working
- There are significant numbers of Community Action and Voluntary Action bodies that are in both NAVCA and Volunteering England while many “volunteer centres” are parts of CsVS but there remain many stand alone CVS and VCs
- The increase of procurement of CVS services by LAs in England has led to a loss of CVS business to national bodies who, tend to be favoured in procurement. In, 22% of areas local VCS organisations have lost funding as a result of national charities’ tenders. If this means that local people get a better service we cannot complain. But there are often other factors at play which favour competitive bids from big charities. In one third of local areas, VCS organisations have lost funding as a result of bids from local authority in-house providers. In one third of areas the funder believed that the local organisation was too small and this was a principal reason for not awarding the contract.
- In Manchester the Manchester CVS lost the contract for CVS services to the Scarman Trust precisely because it maintained a historic partnership with specialist service providers the LA did not want to fund. If it had gone alone it could have competed more strongly. The Scarman Trust benefited from a perceived focus on small neighbourhood bodies
- The existence of strongly resourced consortia networks at regional and local level did not undermine the role and function of focussed support networks - NAVCA and Volunteering England have moved on with valued network services and quality focus unaffected by joint working by their members through consortia or by joint function within one organisation
- The CVS function is recognised as a different function from that of volunteering and the value of a national focussed network provider for each function rather than for each “organisation” is recognised

- It is clear that government values “focus” and the provision at national level of appropriate support networks
- Social enterprises and community anchor groups have had investment in targeted network support even though far more social enterprises and community anchor groups are members of CVS than of their focussed network bodies
- To compete it seems clear we need the value of a focussed support body promoting our function so we can compete on quality and on our unparalleled reach into the market

Analysis of Network Body Structures

Overview

This overview presents information from the attached analysis to highlight implications for CVS considering the issue of network body development in Scotland.

1. Partnership network body

Numbers of networks or partnerships of networks exist. These do not function with full membership of the partnership to each member of a contributing network but with membership direct to the network body itself; there are clear efficiency reasons for this.

The other side of this coin is that where there is no proper network body there tends to be no representation from that network on a partnership. For instance, in England both NAVCA and ACRE are leading members of the Community Sector Alliance whereas in Scotland CVS are not represented in alliances such as Local People Leading.

2. Network Body structure for CVS

It seems clear the existence of a network body allows and promotes representation, focus, and engagement. Those networks with network bodies are far more visible and more likely to engage with government in new initiatives. The Welsh CVC network is virtually invisible on the internet and there is no clear route to communicate with the network as a network. This seems to reflect across to lack of CVC network engagement perceptible in any search.

Apart from the Scottish and Welsh CVS/CVC networks all national networks are either companies or are moving toward their own constituted status. Functionally, they are inclusive and supportive rather than directive with perhaps the exception of the CAB network structures.

It is clear NAVCA, for instance, is more interested in promoting information and communication flow and in supporting development of quality services by those who wish to engage with that than with defining who, can be a local infrastructure organisation and with intervening directly in resource allocation. NAVCA seems to succeed in its roles without taking on issues around branding; the very sort of issues which involve the CAB network in a disciplinary relationship.

3. Implications for way ahead from network analysis

Normal would be a company limited by guarantee structure with a focus on a support function rather than a directive function and offering one door contact to government and other agencies.

In England where there was an emotionally negative split away from networking support from NCVO to create NACVS (now NAVCA) NCVO and NAVCA now work collaboratively with excellent results and NCVO is happy to use NAVCA to engage with the local dimension.

The incentive for CVS has to be future gains from future clarity in networking arrangements.

SECTION 3: Options

Option 1: Status Quo

1. Function

The function of the CVS Network is to deliver on the Thrive & Connect Agenda as agreed with the Scottish Government. It is recognised that some of the 57 CsVS provide additional services within the context of community development.

There is currently no universally accepted definition of what a CVS is or even so it is no surprise that opinion and loyalties vary. Although some CVS work may give the impression that unity of purpose exists across the country it is more of an aspiration than a reality

So the fundamental question which must be addressed is “What is a CVS?” There also seems to be differences in the client group, with a disproportionate amount of effort apparently devoted to public services support organisations.

2. Structure (including governance)

The CVS network connects through a series of regional meetings and an annual network conference. It has made progress in the recent past to become more robust, collective and responsive. While laudable, the outcomes are limited with individual CsVs priorities prevailing over any common interest. The current CVS network has no official or legal status and has no authority to make decisions. As there is no CVS network in any meaningful sense and collective decision making is impossible. This makes the network and its members more vulnerable.

Most CsVS are limited companies with charitable status others operate as part of a larger unit with a variety of other structures. It is a legal requirement that we operate independently under our constitutions.

The management and governance model of Board - CEO - Staff - (Volunteers) is well tried and proven. Larger CVS may have specialist departments.

Network support services are currently provided by SCVO as a funding administrator on behalf of the Scottish Government.

3. Vision; Values & Ethos

- CsVS contribute much to Improving Quality of Life and Building Better Communities.
- CsVS do not restrict their activities to following Local Authority and Scottish Government programmes. They provide added value to wider partnership agendas.

The potential voluntary sector client group is largely known. Additional funding is required to commission robust research to inform policy at a local and national level.

CVS (as anchor organisations) enable the Scottish community and voluntary sector to:

- play a clear role in developing thriving communities
- connect to policy and decision-making, and
- grow our own social economy

4. Perceived outcome (the difference Option 1 will make)

If we do nothing CVS in its current form may cease to exist.

5. Finance

Option 1

If we decide to remain with the status quo, then there will be no financial implications for us as a network. This is due to the Scottish Government funding SCVO to be our support agent, which will continue till 2011.

Option 2: CVS Specific National Body

1 Function

- Create a strong, unified and organised network
- Deliver improved communication, good practice and collaboration with the network
- Create an empowered and dynamic network
- Form a collaborative body that can negotiate and make decisions for/with and on behalf of the network
- Work closely with Volunteer Centre network and others
- Strive for continuous improvement in quality standards
- Recognise the primacy of local delivery at network member level, and
- Represent the network at national level

2. Structure

The option provides choice for CsVS or similar bodies to join their own network and has the advantage that organisations elect to join together for mutual advantage and empower each other. If the majority or a significant number of CsVS decide to move forward then there will be an increased voice and role for a real network with reach into Scotland's communities. The advantage in this option is that it can be established speedily, provide a mechanism for network views to be heard and better enable CsVS shape its future with an enhanced degree of responsibility.

The main difference between this option and a broader national body is fleshed out in appendix 2 and largely relate to issues around membership and membership criteria, as well as whether any regional groupings would require to be instituted in the process for electing its governing body. In all probability the options to be considered relating to governance and powers would be very similar if a company limited by guarantee was the constitutional instrument chosen.

It would be possible to move forward as option 2 and evolve into a broader church at a later date.

Resource issues, including premises, staff etc will be material considerations if a body is established, but the basic starting point is in establishing an entity which can enter into negotiations and contracts. In any event that does not preclude provision from existing providers but it also offers the potential of greater use of facilities and people from the network, across the network in a leaner, harder and more streamlined manner which enhances overall network capacity and communication. Neither does this preclude linking into other functions or services which could be continued to be offered by SCVO or indeed others.

3. Vision, Values & Ethos

A National Body that has at its heart the primacy of local infrastructural services. A National Body with a strong interface with the Scottish Government and intermediaries

It will be built on the opportunities within Thrive & Connect in addition to:

- inclusion,
- equal value
- communication
- accountability
- connection
- engagement
- consultation
- a culture of service
- a collective voice
- visible profile
- point of contact
- collaboration

4: Perceived outcome (the difference option 2 will make)

Option 2 is not mutually exclusive to but a pre requisite to option 3. Improved ability to address the needs of individual CsVS and the communities they serve, more likely to thrive through a more robust and adaptable network.

5: Finance

Option 2

If the network decides on option 2 there will be costs attached to it in the region of £40,500 for 9 members and £47,700 for 11 members. These costs include all members getting backfill for participating at a set rate of £250 per meeting. The network would require to, decide if this was feasible or would organisations be expected to give their members time freely.

We envisage that there would be a contribution from every CVS that became a member of the National Body and would be asking the Government to look favourably at continuing financial support over the next two years to allow us to form a strong and unified National Body. Since the Government have indicated that SCVO's agency support funding shall be reduced in the next two years as we require less support, they may be prepared to filter this saving to the National Body.

Based on 8 meetings per annum

<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>9 members</u>	<u>11 members</u>
Meeting Costs	2500	3080
Secretariat	1800	1800
Administration	800	800
Postage & Photocopying	650	650
Marketing & Stationery	800	800
Travel & Accom Expenses	12000	14650
Miscellaneous	500	500
Contingency	3500	3500
Total Expenditure	<u>22550</u>	<u>25780</u>
Council Members Backfill *	18000	22000
Total Expenditure	<u><u>40550</u></u>	<u><u>47780</u></u>

* All Members receiving £250 per meeting for Backfill

Option 3: Wider Partnership Model

1. Function

The function of option 3 is to deliver all of option 2 (above) with Volunteer Centre Network, SENs and LSEPs.

2. Structure

The structure of option 3 is to deliver all of option 2 (above) with Volunteer Centre Network, SENs and LSEPs.

For example it may encompass many “infrastructure” organisations at local and national level

3. Vision Value & Ethos

To work to improve the lives of the citizen’s of Scotland through local “things”/alliances and change the way Scotland does business

- Equality
- Diversity
- Transparency
- Democracy
- Participation

The style would be: inclusive, engaging, involving & participative.

4. Perceived Outcome (the difference option 3 will make)

An improved local connectivity leading to improved local outcomes this would be led by functions relating to CsVS, VCs, SENs and LSEPs.

5. Finance

Option 3

At the present time it would be difficult to place a figure on a partnership model as we do not know who the partners would be and how many members would make up this partnership. We would see it being in the same ratio as for a national body but due to the larger capacity and the more complex structure we would envisage that there would be a requirement to budget for at least two members of staff and office accommodation. However as there would be more organisations at the table the funding could come from different sources. Hypothetically speaking if “things “ emerge and alliances were made even between the CVS Network and the VC Network savings could be made from less support required to these networks by SCVO and VDS and there could be the option of the Partnership Body being the Support Agent for about 2/3rds of the current Network support costs. The Government currently pay SCVO and VDS approximately £900k per annum to look after both networks. This option requires more in-depth financial investigation, by the time the final report is prepared we would hope to have some realistic figures in place.

SECTION: 4 Recommendations

It is not for the National Council Steering Group to recommend any of the options but to present options. It is up to the Network to decide, and come together to the same achievement for the greater good of the network.

Option 1 Status Quo	Option 2 CVS Specific National Body	Option 3 Wider Partnership Model
1. Membership		
CsVS are de-facto Part of CsVS “membership” No membership as such	CsVS elect to apply for membership and are wholly/ mainly CsVS and a right to withdraw membership	Applicants apply Right to withdraw membership
2. Criteria		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multifunctional - Constitutionally independent of local government/ other national or local organisations - Managed by representatives, operate at local level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multifunctional - Constitutionally independent of local government/ other national or local organisations - Managed by representatives at local level - May allow associate membership for other infrastructural players who do not fully meet criteria 	May potentially include “CsVS”, Volunteer Centres, Social Enterprises, Chambers of Commerce, CABS, Development trusts OR have associate membership
3. Other Conditions		
Constitutionally none but some “core” grant may be withdrawn if funder dissatisfied e.g. with quality etc	May have quality standards as a membership condition, and other key core areas of work	May have quality standards as a membership condition, and cover key core areas of work
4. No Membership Period	Annual/2/3 year membership	1/2/3 year membership period
Groups that loosely meet the above criteria (SCVO membership is not a necessity for being a CsVS)	There could be annual or a two or three year membership period	There could be annual or a two or three year membership periods
5. Constitution		
None But not former COGS was standing committee of SCVO	Legal persona e.g. Company limited by guarantee	Legal persona e.g. Company limited by guarantee
6. Charitable Status		
None	Could have charitable status	Could have charitable status

7. Governance		
None, but interim national council had 9 elected members	<p>(a) Continue with 9 members but may get geographical under representation OR</p> <p>(b) Increase governing body to 11 which will encourage spread of participation and: allow up to 3 co-options to cover disparities and experience / skills required OR</p> <p>(c) As in (b) above but have 1 member elected from each regional group and the remainder elected from across the membership (note regional groups may not be necessarily by the same as existing regional groups) And/or associated members, if any, would have restricted membership rights</p>	<p>(a) Continue with 9 members but may get geographical under representation OR</p> <p>(b) Increase governing body to 11+ which will encourage spread of participation and: allow up to 3+ co-options to cover disparities and experience / skills required OR</p> <p>(c) Other local infrastructural players may not operate with a regional structure OR there may be different communities of interest which their own regional grouping but this could be too complex and expensive.</p>
8. Chair/Board representation on National Board		
No right at present although previous bodies and NCSG both had	Nomination and election to N.C could be both Board chairs, directors or CVS staff , lending their time for national duties (Note- if legally constituted as charitable company, directors duties will have their principle duty to the company- they are not there as chair or representative of their nominating organisation:- status as board or employee becomes irrelevant)	Nomination and election to N.C could be both board chairs, directors or CVS staff lending their time for national duties Reps could also come from community based organisations and social development agencies

<p>SCVO facilitated 1 chair event in the last year</p>	<p>But could:</p> <p>(a) leave nominations open to member bodies but encourage local board participation OR</p> <p>(b) Seek a % split of board/officer participation and help redress balance through co-option</p> <p>If (b) what % is preferred E.g. 30%, 50%, 55+%?</p> <p>And/or encourage specific events at conferences etc for chair participation</p>	<p>May get too cumbersome if there is wider broader membership</p>
<p>9. Role and Powers</p>		
<p>(a) Join together in discussion and action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Currently ad hoc, partial and lacks strategic consistency, no collective decision making capacity <p>(b) To advise on policies and activities in relation to the “localism” agenda and other issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no mechanism for collective pro-active work for network <p>(c) seeks “lively mutual relationship with SCVO” and others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relationships between “the CsVS network and SCVO have been difficult if not damaged. - <p>(d) Represent the interests of local community development/ infrastructural organisations at Scottish level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Currently entirely dependent on SCVO 	<p>Join together in discussion and action</p> <p>Would provide structure and opportunity</p> <p>To advise on policies and activities in relation to the “localism” agenda and other issues</p> <p>Would provide structure and opportunity</p> <p>Seeks “lively mutual relationship with SCVO” and others</p> <p>Could strengthen the need for mutual co-operation based on partnership agreements</p> <p>Represent the interests of local community development/ infrastructural organisations at Scottish level</p> <p>This was a role of former body, it would seem reasonable to include it</p> <p>Exchange good practice</p>	<p>Join together in discussion and action</p> <p>To advise on policies and activities in relation to the “localism” agenda and other issues</p> <p>Would provide structure and opportunity</p> <p>Seeks “lively mutual relationship with SCVO” and others</p> <p>Create stronger links and alliances with other interests</p> <p>Create stronger links and alliances with other interests</p> <p>Represent the interests of local community development/ infrastructural organisations at Scottish level</p> <p>It would seem reasonable to include it</p>

<p>(e) Exchange good practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beginnings of this through SVA programme <p>(f) Encourage local and regional partnerships and consortia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Currently no real mechanism for this <p>(g) Brokerage regional/national/ services/ support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Currently no mechanism for network to do so itself, currently dependent on SCVO <p>(h) Marketing, Education and Awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “National” CsVS events are generally marketed under SCVO’s logo with lack of clarity for CsVS network, its role, identity and purpose. The CsVS network website for example has lacked development for too long. 	<p>Network body could strengthen this and reinforce good practice</p> <p>Encourage local and regional partnerships and consortia</p> <p>Provide structure and opportunity</p> <p>Brokerage regional/national/ services/ support</p> <p>Would provide mechanism and legal capacity. Could also include brokering or “agency” support with SCVO or directly with other funders. It could provide negotiating platform for new partnerships.</p> <p>Marketing, Education and Awareness</p> <p>This is a key area for increasing customer awareness of local infrastructural groups and increased partnership awareness. A national body will help build the capacity and focus for it and its membership</p>	<p>Exchange good practice</p> <p>Network body could strengthen this and reinforce good practice</p> <p>Encourage local and regional partnerships and consortia</p> <p>Provide structure and opportunity</p> <p>Brokerage regional/national/ services/ support</p> <p>Would provide mechanism and legal capacity. Could also include brokering or “agency” support with SCVO or directly with other funders. It could provide negotiating platform for new partnerships.</p> <p>Marketing, Education and Awareness</p> <p>This is a key area for increasing customer awareness of local infrastructural groups and increased partnership awareness. A national body will help build the capacity and focus for it and its membership</p>
<p>10. Value for money</p>		
<p>It is questionable whether the tax payer gets value for money for an externally facilitated network where the network function is as dysfunctional as it has been over the last few years</p> <p>(a) Premises Development functions and support from existing SCVO offices</p> <p>(b) Staff</p>	<p>Option 2 and 3 provide an opportunity to invest in a fit for purpose organisation with a sharper, clearer focus which can help lift the capacity and quality of CsVS engagement at local and national level</p> <p>(a) Premises Utilise CsVS network offices to build capacity and ownership, and internal stake holding interests or</p>	<p>Option 2 and 3 provide an opportunity to invest in a fit for purpose organisation with a sharper, clearer focus which can help lift the capacity and quality of CsVS engagement at local and national level</p> <p>(a)Premises Dependant on Partner Negotiations</p> <p>Staff</p>

<p>Development functions and support for SCVO staff, and “network” input, mainly through SVA Programme areas.</p>	<p>(b) Utilise SCVO premises through brokered agreement</p> <p>Staff</p> <p>(a) Utilise existing CsVS network staff or SCVO through brokered agreement and /or</p> <p>(b) After transitional arrangements seek decentralised staff by a mix of small staff team or bought in time from CsVS members themselves.</p>	<p>Dependant on Partner Negotiations</p>
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Continuation of Steering Group

November 2008 - March 2009

The current Steering Group of 9 members were elected in Jan 2008. Nomination was open to any Staff or Board Member from a CVS. All CVS were eligible to vote. Voting was on a “first past the post” basis with no attempt to seek or ensure Regional representation.

There was a minority view from some CVS that membership of the Steering Group should be limited to Board Members, whilst others took the view that it was up to each CVS to determine where a nomination should come from. The election resulted in 6 Board members and 3 Chief Officers being appointed, with their first meeting taking place on 13th March 2008.

The remit for the Steering group was essentially to develop the structure and remit for a National Council and to report back the next National Conference. There is a view that the current Steering Group has a lifespan which concludes at Conference, and another that suggests they continue until January 2009.

If it is the view of Conference that any of the options identified should be further progressed with a view to detailed proposals being presented to individual CVS for consideration in early 2009, then there is a clear requirement for some body to be in place to undertake that work.

The obvious choice would be to continue the lifespan and mandate of the current steering group through until 31st March 2009, thus allowing a continuity of work and working relationships. Such a position does however demand a consideration of any existing weakness within the makeup / capacity of the existing steering group.

The election process of earlier this year resulted in a steering group membership with no member being drawn from the South. This created some difficulties in communication but has now been addressed through inviting a member from the South to attend NCSG meetings periodically. It would be the view of the current steering group that the mix of Board Members / Chief Officers has been to the benefit of the Group and would have no wish to change that balance.

There have been some issues which have developed over the lifespan of the steering group, which had, it been “An Interim National Council” it may have wished to respond to or raise more widely with the Network. It was the view however of the steering group that to have done so, despite the importance of the issues, would have been out-with the terms of reference for the steering group and would have laid the group open to deserved criticism.

We would recommend to Conference that:

1. The life of the Steering Group and its membership is extended until 31st March 2009.

2. The Steering Group finalise detailed options on the formation of a National Body and for these to be presented for formal consideration and decision by CVS in early 2009.
3. If a National Body is to be taken forward the Steering Group will put in place an election process to be completed by 31st March 2009 for the appointment of a new National Body who would then progress the implementation of whatever structure is agreed by the majority of CsVS.
4. That the Steering group be authorised to enter into any discussions relevant to the re-sourcing of a National Body and its relationships with key stakeholders.

Appendix 1 SWOT Analysis for Option 1

STATUS QUO

Strengths	Weaknesses
All CsVS nominally members.	Lack of CVS identity.
Network support developed through SCVO staff.	Democratic deficit in CVS representation.
Connected to SCVO information systems.	No network decision-making process / capability.
Provides SCVO with local reach and credibility.	SCVO have difficulty in determining network views.
Distribution of Scottish Government and Lottery funds.	No simple clear picture of dynamics of network.
Development support can be provided through SCVO staff.	Difficulty in collective planning.
	CsVS disempowered at national and regional level.
	Other organisations providing similar functions to CVS are denied access to the network
Opportunities	Threats
Elect CVS representatives to SCVO Policy Committee and Board	Inability of the network to respond promptly to change, threat or opportunity
Can target additional funding e.g. SVA monies.	Inability of network to meet “localism” agenda on its own terms.
Ad hoc and piecemeal development.	Network has imposed solutions at local and national levels.
	Fragmentation of network with loss of skills and experience.
	Independence of network reduced.
	Competition at local level from SCVO.
	Network becomes increasingly irrelevant.

Appendix 2: SWOT Analysis for option 2

CVS SPECIFIC NATIONAL BODY

Strengths	Weaknesses
Open to all CVS members as a deliberate choice.	Some members may not initially choose to join
Establishes clearer identity for CVS network and role.	May not include all local infrastructural players
Empower network.	May be perceived as creating an additional tier
Help CVS take strategic role in conjunction with SCVO and others.	Will need to find own resources/staff base
Improve capacity of CVS to share good practice internally and externally.	May not have full range of support/development tools to help network develop
May provide leaner, dynamic and cost effective body with decentralise of operations within and across the network	May not acquire full development support package
Opportunities	Threats
Help articulate and shape “localism” agenda	Hostility from S.C.V.O
Help members and the Scottish Government deliver better local outcomes and priorities	May be overtaken by events if not established timely
Broker better network support	Other competitive voices may emerge/tender for development of support role or provision of local infrastructural support
Improve network collaborations and communication	Diminution of independence of sector
Establish closer links with the V.C network and others	
As confidence and capacity develops could take over development role at later stage	
Could expand to become wider infrastructural network body at later stage	

Appendix 3: SWOT Analysis for option 3

WIDER PARTNERSHIP MODEL

Strengths	Weaknesses
Open to all CVS and local infrastructural/development bodies	Some members may not initially join
CVS will provide strong core with a reach throughout Scotland	May not include all local players
Help with strategic direction in common cause with other players	May be perceived as creating an additional tier
Improve capacity for showing good practice	Will need to find own resource base
May provide leaner, more efficient, dynamic and decentralised operations	May take time to build up broader membership
Able to provide own development support	Inability to reach and stick with decisions
Help safeguard role and independence of sector	Inability to get agreeable leadership and direction
Multi partnership approach	
Opportunities	Threats
Help shape localism/other agendas	Hostility from S.C.V.O and V.D.S
Help members grow social economy	May be overtaken by events if not established timely
Help broker better network support arrangements	Other competitor networks may emerge/tender for providing support services for CVS local/national level
Help members grow own development support	Diminution of independence of sector
Keep, /tenders for work with members, S.C.V.O and others	Too removed from individual local priorities.
Advise Scottish Government and others	
To enable members to join together for discussion and action	
May create better relationship basis for CVS and S.C.V.O in the longer term	
Could be the conduit for Government funding	
Wider capacity building of “enterprising” skills	

Appendix 4: Frequently asked questions

Q.1 Do we need a national body?

A. 80% of CVS surveyed earlier this year indicated broad agreement with the need for a national body. SCVO have acknowledged the benefits of having a body they could speak to with the authority of the CVS Network.

Q.2 Events have moved on from last October. Is the concept of a national body for CVS not now redundant, given the localism agenda and other priorities such as “*facing your customers*”, “*providing the service*” and “*providing value for money*”?

A. The need for a national body is even more urgent if CVS are to be in a position to influence the policy agenda and go on to deliver on providing a strong infrastructural role. The later it is established, the greater the risk that CVS will be marginalised and act in isolation of others. We need to maintain our wide geographical reach and have the means to encourage and support good practice, quality and innovation amongst ourselves, and with other partners and funders, in a more direct fashion. It is by accepting our responsibilities as a network of many members that we can develop a shared response to other priorities, and at the same time demonstrate that we do indeed deliver value for money and much more besides. There is no contradiction in addressing the localism agenda and seeking to organise for common benefit at the national level. There is however real danger in isolation and division.

Q.3 There was a national body some time ago and it did not work?

A. There was a body called Community Organisations Group Scotland from 1976 until around 1988, which began its life as a committee of the Scottish Council of Social Service, which had a mainly advisory role and which elected three members to SCSS policy committee. Its management committee also had the function of “representing the interests of local community development organisations at a Scottish level” and had a partnership agreement with SCVO. Clause 1.3 of that agreement said:

“The Council (SCVO) seeks a lively mutual relationship with local community development organisations, many of whom will be members of SCVO. Such a partnership rests on the understanding that each will recognise the distinct interests and functions of the other and that each can be of benefit to the other.” It also added: *“This implies that SCVO should, in seeking to forward its own interests at a local level, work with and through local community development organisations, and that in recognising the autonomy and functions of local community development organisations SCVO would not undertake to intervene for local development purposes in the territory of any organisation except by consultation with the organisation/s concerned.”*

It was also acknowledged that community development organisations (CVS) are constitutionally independent of local government and of other national or local organisations. The COGS group was replaced by CVS Scotland. Neither were

independent bodies and both relied on SCVO staff to varying degrees of satisfaction.

Q.4 Is the setting up of a national body not just an attempt to remove the development support provided by SCVO?

A. It would be disappointing if the debate were characterised in these terms. One can understand that SCVO may perceive this as a threat, but at the same time it is in the members' interests, the Government's interest and SCVO's interest that we have a fully functioning network able to have value for money support provided to the network as a whole. A network will be able to better engage with its development agent, which could continue to be SCVO or, depending on network choices, broker its own support or even deliver its own development support. SCVO has, over time, helped establish a range of national bodies. Why should a CVS national body be any different?

Q.5 Should a national body be for CVS only or should other organisations be involved?

A. This is something the network will have to consider, but to some extent it is not a new question. The former COGS constitution allowed for a membership of "*community based organisations and social development agencies*" which were defined elsewhere as having a number of characteristics:

- multi-functional rather than single issue;
- independent of local government and of other national or local organisations;
- managed by representatives of the groups for whom they work;
- operate at a local level;

Quite clearly, all the CVS fall into these criteria and a national body could be established by existing CVS as its core constituency. This would not necessarily exclude or prevent membership or criteria from being widened to take into account other factors, or indeed forming alliances or partnerships with other suitable networks for joint purposes.

Q.6 Should a "National Council" be for Chairs or Board members only?

A. The initiative came from Chairs and CVS committee members, but for the Steering Committee elections it was agreed that it was up to individual CVS to determine the level of organisational representation, bearing in mind that restricted membership may debar participation by reason of geography or where work commitments made it difficult for Board or Chairs to get time off work, especially where travel was taken into consideration. Previous representative bodies usually had a mix of Officer and Board representatives dependent on local governance and allowing the membership their democratic choice on nominees for election. The experience of the Steering Group has been that its capacity and knowledge has been enhanced by the presence of Officers.

Q.7 If a "National Council" is established how will it ensure geographical representation from across Scotland?

A. It will be important for any governing body seeking to represent a national interest that it has the widest representation possible. In part, numbers will be important, as will the capacity to co-opt additional expertise or to correct any geographical imbalance. A Board of 11, with the power to co-opt an additional 3 members, should create sufficient room to accommodate representation from across Scotland. Another option would be to have a proportion elected from regional groups (which may not need to be the same number of regions that currently exist) and the remainder by open ballot across the country.

Q.8 Could any CVS be a member of the CVS body and of SCVO?

A. Yes, membership of a CVS national body will not preclude any CVS applying to join SCVO or any other national body whose criteria it meets.

Q.9 What next?

A. That is up to the network as a whole, which will consider the issues in October, and, subsequent to that, allowing time for local discussion by governing bodies. At the end of the consultation period the network, individually and collectively, will need to adopt a constitution it can work with and then elect its own governing body.

Appendix 5: Collated views from CVS Regional Meetings

- There is a lack of a decision making process in the Network as the Network has no legal status, no AGM or governance in place.
- Need to go back to basics, i.e. representative, robust and practical voice for the network.
- There needs to be a positive outcome from the mediation process in order to move forward.
- Wholly supportive, needs “a good set of teeth” and to exist to support unequivocally CsVS.
- CsVS under no obligation to be members of SCVO, therefore SCVO cannot be seen as the decision making body for the network, but provide support for the network.
- There is a need for a National Voice for the CsVS especially with the changing landscapes.
- Geographical representation required with a regional not national vote.
- Need to have credibility and trust in the group before sign up.
- Needed urgently, less concerned about a National Body that dictates to its members as it will be owned by its members.
- Time limited role on Board i.e. 3 years
- We must not in a National Body lose sight of the importance of local decisions, but they should be within national parameters.
- CsVS need national representation in dealings with the Scottish Government and other bodies.
- Mandate to be the “Voice” of the network either individually or in partnership with SCVO
- Have supported the formation of a National Council since day 1, need to see options
- Strongly in favour of National Council, Happy to be presented with options, then decide on sign up.
- Don’t want another NLG, we need a “body” that Scottish Government amongst others can relate to.
- Quality assurance/performance management role. Depends on SCVO’s future intentions.

- Must be transparent.
- National Body can “act on behalf of and report to the network” but must be agreed by the network.
- Want CsVS at the forefront, no private agendas. We need to get on with it and stop dithering.
- This is exactly the right time for this to happen, don’t wait, we need a process and mechanisms to support the network.
- Shouldn’t be a threat to SCVO, needs to have clear voice, there needs to be some give/take and confidence in the group.
- Concerns about the level of powers but recognise it needs to have some “bite” not just a talking shop.
- Would like Chair of National Body to be a Director of Chair of CVS.
- Membership fees should evolve dependant on whether it will be funded or not.
- Need acceptance that if there is a divergence of views from the regions, it is up to the National Body to sort it out.
- If the majority of CsVS are in favour of a National Body then the rest should have to be in.
- A body who can speak on behalf of the network with the SG and SCVO within limits but with flexibility.

SCVO View:

Paul White Director of Networks:

North Regional Meeting 11/09/08

- SCVO is unable and would not want to thwart the ambitions of the network.
- SCVO would really welcome a “voice of the network” it would make their life easier.
- SCVO have questions on provision and procurement of services given the flux we are in.

VC Partnership Management Group

Meeting with NCSG 14/08/08

- Look forward to working in some form of alliance with the CsVS

Monkey Survey

We are in the process of compiling a monkey survey which is to be sent to all CsVS and a wide range of stakeholders. These results will be included in the Final Report.