



Voluntary Action South Lanarkshire

Putting the Voluntary Sector FIRST

Strategic Plan

2017-2020



Engage - Promote - Involve

CONTENTS

Foreword 3

Where Are We Now? 4

- Who We Are
- Our Vision and Mission
- How Are We Funded
- Our Journey since 2011
- Representing the Sector
- Third Sector Feedback on VASLan
- VASLan Engagement with the Sector
- Board Activity

Where Are We Going? 11

How Will We Get There? 14

- Action Plan

Implementing The Strategy .. 19

- Staff Development Programme
- Staffing Review
- Revised Operating Structure
- Communications Pipeline
- What the Strategy will Provide

Appendix 1 Strategy Timeline

Appendix 2 South Lanarkshire Demographics



“VASLan has offered first class advice on our group structure and forward planning as well as supporting stakeholders and volunteers” – Gillespie Centre Association

FOREWORD BY VASLan's CHAIR

Voluntary Action South Lanarkshire are passionate about working with others to improve the lives of children, young people, families and communities and about making South Lanarkshire's Third Sector among the best in Scotland.

We are fortunate in having strong relationships with Third Sector organisations, and public sector partners who need and value the Third Sector's ability to deliver high quality services across South Lanarkshire, particularly to the most disadvantaged and marginalised in the community who face additional challenges in fulfilling their potential.

The current economic problems that affect everyone in this country means that a number of Third Sector organisations are facing the double pressure of increased demands for their services and reduced income, so it is increasingly important that VASLan and its Third Sector partners and Public Sector stakeholders work even more closely together.

In 2016, Scottish Government commissioned a review of Third Sector Interfaces (TSI) across Scotland. One of the key messages coming from the review indicated that TSI's should have a more active strategic role between public and Third Sector stakeholders.

We are aware that the Third Sector already make a



significant contribution to supporting communities, we have to become more strategic and seek to ensure that this contribution is recognised and that co-production between the Third Sector and statutory organisations is improved, so that our communities and sector continue to thrive, and are fully supported to utilise emerging opportunities.

This is our first VASLan Strategic Plan for 2017-2020. We have taken the opportunity to look back at the progress VASLan has made in the last five years, but continue to be mindful about the future direction for the organisation, and set out our strategic aims under the banners of Engage, Promote and Involve while operating under our 4 core areas of work: Community Capacity Building; Social Enterprise; Strategic Engagement and Volunteering which will see VASLan fully support greater Third Sector involvement.

As the Strategic Plan becomes fully integrated into our approach, I will be asking our VASLan Management Team to monitor the progress in making this strategy and action plan a reality, and commit to review and amend as new opportunities continue to emerge for the sector.

Rev Ian Barcroft
Chair of the VASLan Board

WHERE ARE WE NOW?



WHO WE ARE

Voluntary Action South Lanarkshire, or VASLan, is South Lanarkshire's Third Sector Interface (TSI). Third Sector Interfaces across Scotland are required by the Scottish Government to operate within 4 core areas of activity:

- Volunteering development
- Social Enterprise development
- Supporting and developing a strong Third Sector
- Building the Third Sector relationship with community planning

Within these 4 core areas VASLan delivers a wide range of activities and services designed for the benefit of the Third Sector, and the wider community.

OUR VISION AND MISSION

As the Third Sector Interface for South Lanarkshire VASLan's Vision is;

'The quality of community and voluntary sector action in South Lanarkshire is among the best in Scotland'.

To achieve this we are committed to being sustainable and innovative in delivering all of our activities and services.

This will enable us to achieve our mission for communities:

'To shape, strengthen and serve a strong, vibrant, empowered and inclusive volunteering community and voluntary sector in South Lanarkshire'



How We Are Funded

VASLan receives an annual grant from the Scottish Government to deliver the 4 core areas of activity to volunteers and organisations.

Additional funding is received from local partners, including NHS Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire Council to deliver on specific topics out with the 4 core areas, (e.g. Early Years; Health and Social Care Integration and others) VASLan’s income is also supplemented through our business services including the hire of accommodation within the VASLan building, and through our membership.

Being a VASLan member allows organisations to tap into the rich vein of resources and expertise we have at our disposal, as well as entitling organisations to a range of benefits including free training courses and discounts; Funding advice; Health Checks; Publicity and PR services; Social Enterprise advice and Sector recognition (such as Volunteer Friendly Award).

Our policies and charges for the services we provide are regularly reviewed to ensure these are appropriate and in line with our aims and principles.

The activities of VASLan are prioritised in line with the aims and principles set out in this plan, to ensure our resources are focused on where we can make the greatest difference in supporting and developing the

Third Sector across South Lanarkshire.

Sustainability of Third Sector organisations remains a primary priority for the TSI and we will seek to develop and enhance capacity within organisations to attract and secure funding through various grants and service procurement opportunities.

Recognising wherever possible we will opt for a collective means of support and encourage peer learning and mutual exchange through the Third Sector Forum Structure which is made up of VASLan members, regular Forum meetings convened in each of South Lanarkshire’s four localities (Hamilton/Blantyre; Cambuslang/Rutherglen; East Kilbride; Clydesdale), and the Third Sector Chief Officers’ Group.

The membership of the forum is open to any voluntary organisation, social enterprise and community group as well as any individuals from that locality who wish to attend, thereby recognising people’s existing skills and knowledge to empower, enable and enhance resilience across the sector.

We will seek to influence the local social economy market through a range of supports and investment and also seek input from national providers to encourage and sustain future growth and social trading across South Lanarkshire.

“VASLan provide good, diverse support to a range of different organisations”
– Lanarkshire Association for Mental Health

Our Journey Since 2011

Since VASLan was established in 2011, our foundation as a Third Sector Interface has been consolidated. New areas of development have been added that reflect the growing demands from a range of organisations and agencies that seek the involvement of the Third Sector for example Community Planning; Community Empowerment; Health and Social Care.

Our achievements overall include:

989

Organisations Supported

In our first year of 2011 we supported 76 organisations,
last year it was 301 organisations

1,173,000

On-line Hits to Date

Locator Tool

Launched in 2013

£7,106,000

Total Funding Secured for Organisations

In our first year in 2011 we supported organisations to receive funding of £153,000
Last year we supported organisations to secure £1,836,000

Figures correct as at June 2017

1385

People Trained

In our first year 82 people took part in our training sessions

Last year we had 315 people

Volunteering

In our first year we advertised
74 Opportunities

Last year we advertised 171
Opportunities

110

Organisations supported with Social Enterprise Development

In our first year 24 Organisations were supported
Last year we supported 66 Organisations

Third Sector Forum

Established 2015 — 16 Events held— 247 Organisations Represented

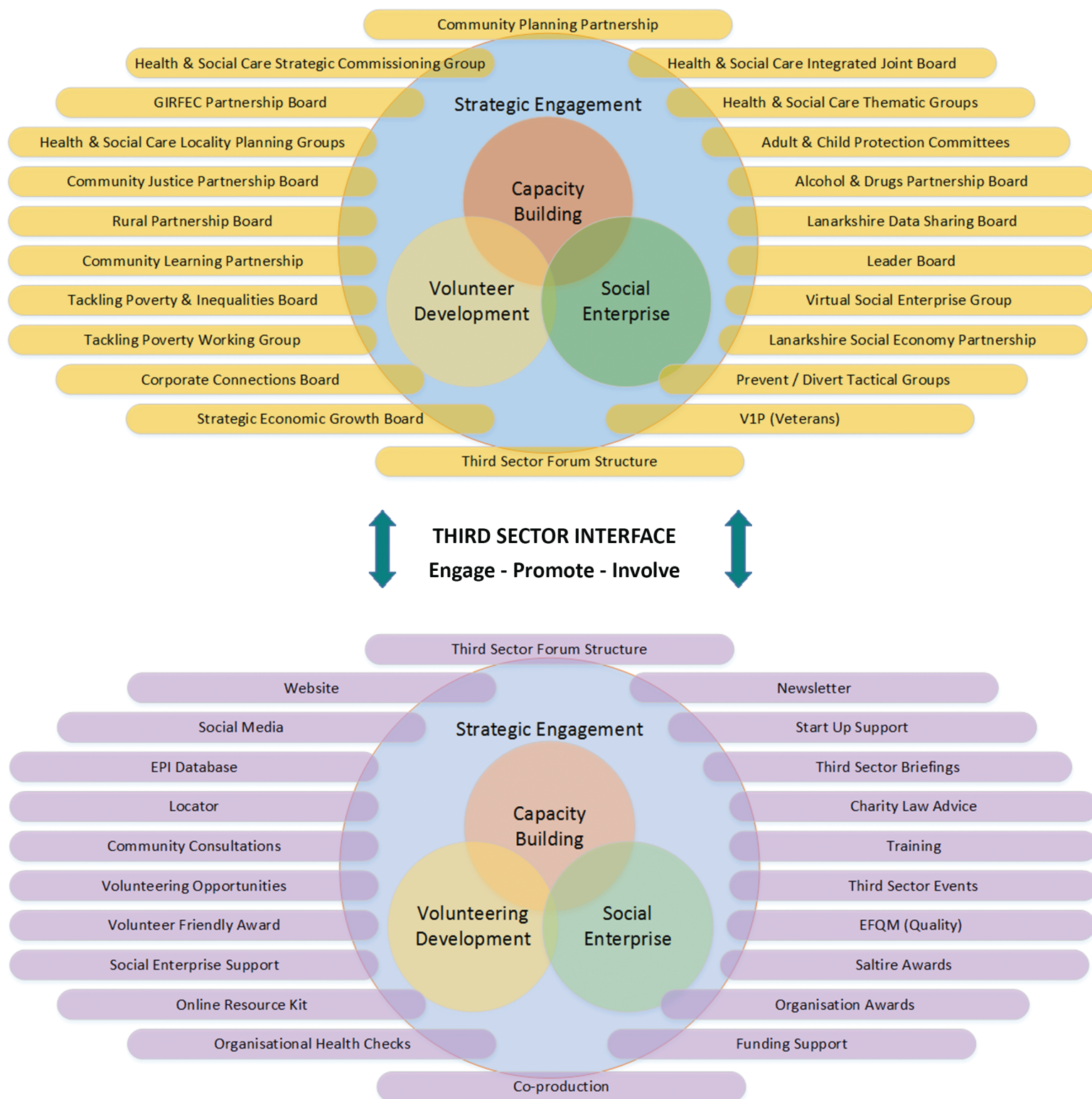
133

Member Organisations

Figures correct as at June 2017

Representing the Sector

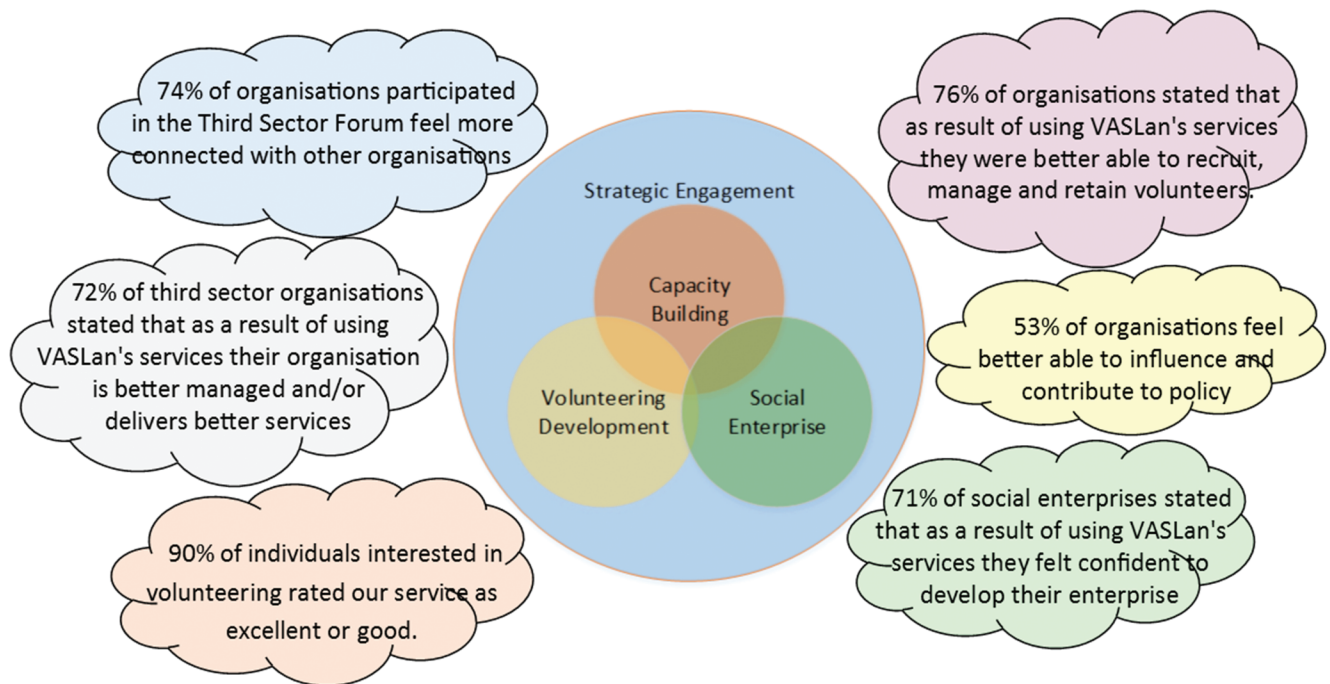
VASLan participates in a number of strategic partnership boards, groups and networks representing the Third Sector at all levels of engagement which cover the four core areas.



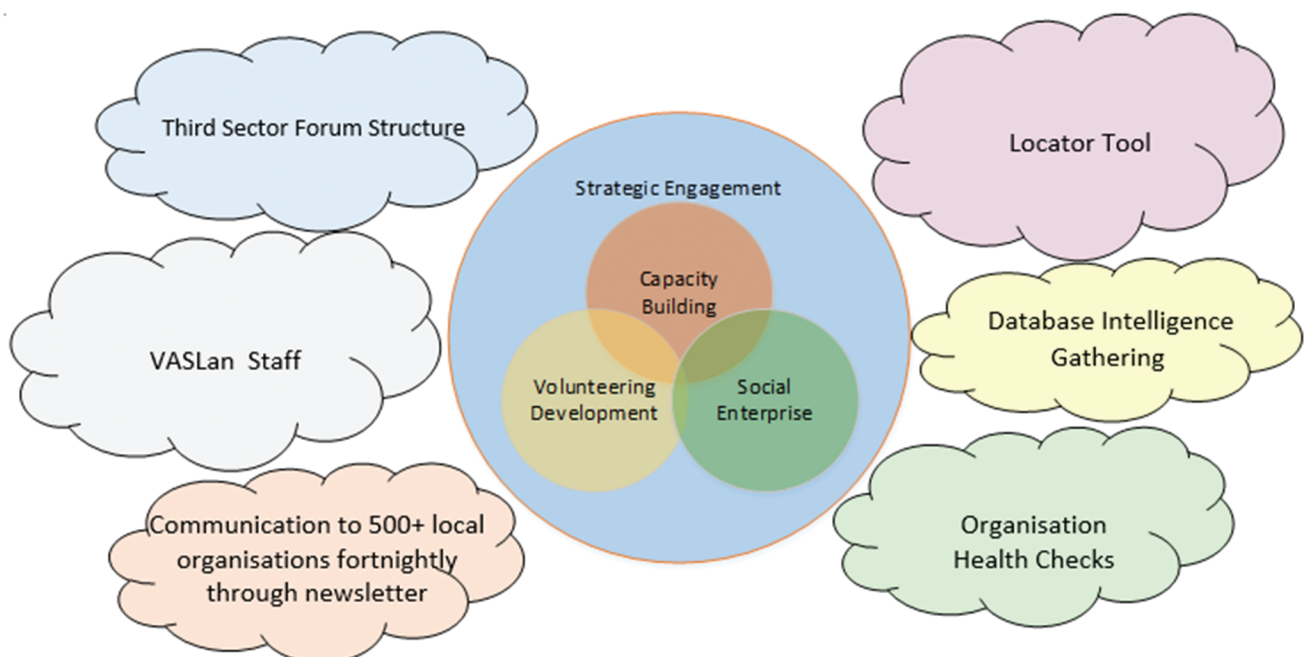
VASLan engages with the Third Sector and localities at all levels to strengthen relationships and ensure that the voice of the community is heard at a strategic level.

Third Sector Feedback on VASLan

Feedback is regularly gathered through an annual survey, training evaluation, Third Sector Forum Structure, Social Enterprise virtual network, social media, ad hoc surveys on specific themes and a volunteer feedback survey.



VASLan Engagement with the Sector



Board Activity

The VASLan Board has responsibility for the sound and effective governance of VASLan. Board members will discharge this responsibility through active involvement in the strategic development of the organisation and in ensuring the performance of the organisation is regularly reviewed and maintained. Board members will play an active role in managing key sub groups including Finance and Staffing and will provide regular updates on performance and issues arising to the full Board.

All Board members will also act as ambassadors for the organisation and will ensure that its reputation is promoted positively with key partners and local organisations agencies. Board members will

ensure key processes and policies are implemented effectively and will respond to any complaints made against the organisation or its staff.

To help achieve the strategic aims the Board of Trustees will champion and work with the staff team to ensure that the appropriate drivers are in place to raise awareness and encourage activity to achieve successful outcomes.

Areas of board activity include:

Communication and Relationship Building; Funding/Investment Strategy; Information and Communication Technology; Stakeholder Management; Training/Up-skilling and Strategic Development.



WHERE ARE WE GOING?

In October, 2016 VASLan's Trustees and Management Team met to consider and review the overall purpose and scope of the organisation. The review also assessed VASLan's capacity to meet stakeholder expectations within an ever changing environment, and identified strategic priorities to guide future developments and performance.

A high level SWOT analysis was carried out with the main points highlighted below:

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <p>Single Interface Organisation</p> <p>Motivated Leadership</p> <p>Knowledge of the Third Sector in South Lanarkshire</p> <p>Staff Knowledge/Skills</p> <p>IT Tools (MILO/Locator/EPI)</p> <p>Good governance</p> <p>Access to key strategy groups</p> <p>Relationship with Third Sector</p>	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <p>Not seen as full equal partners</p> <p>Communications</p> <p>Third sector organisations who won't engage/trust</p> <p>Difficult for sector to evaluate 'value for money'</p> <p>Evidence/data related to impact</p> <p>Resources (specialist skills/training/finance)</p>
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <p>Community Empowerment</p> <p>Digital Technology</p> <p>Health and Social Care</p> <p>Political Landscape</p> <p>Social Enterprise</p> <p>Increased value to public sector partners</p>	<p>THREATS</p> <p>Funding Challenges</p> <p>Resource capacity to deliver</p> <p>Community Organisations/public sector not recognising our role</p> <p>Seen as competing with other organisations</p> <p>TSI Role in Scotland</p> <p>Constantly changing agenda and sector landscape</p> <p>Political Landscape</p>

Engagement, Promotion and Involvement (EPI)

This Strategic Plan for 2017-2020 reflects our aspirations to support the continuous development and improvement of VASLan and the Third Sector in South Lanarkshire. Through the engagement, promotion and involvement of communities and Third Sector organisations VASLan will achieve its vision and mission.

VASLan will work in partnership with the Third Sector with a clear focus of mobilising the sector in shaping local accountability and empowerment. We will also facilitate, champion and challenge the power dynamics that the sector has to deal with.

The Strategic Plan sets out the key principles used to prioritise our work.

As a Third Sector Interface, the four core areas of activity are predetermined by the Scottish Government. They are volunteer development; Social Enterprise development; supporting and developing a strong Third Sector, and building the Third Sector relationship with Community Planning.

We will balance these with key and emerging local and national developments impacting on communities: including Children and Young People; Community

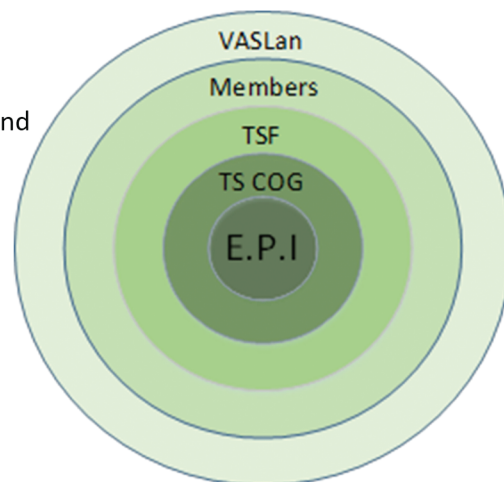
Planning; Health and Social Care; Poverty and Inequalities and Sector Sustainability.

We will shape, and prioritise our activities to maximise our resources and focus on where we can make the greatest difference.



In seeking to extend the role and input of local communities we will do so through the Third Sector Forum meetings structure, consisting of members of VASLan, locality Third Sector Forum (TSF) and the Third Sector Chief Officers' Group.

Members of VASLan – VASLan's work depends upon maintaining a close and productive working relationship with the South Lanarkshire Third Sector. Discussion and dialogue is vital to the development of a sector that is strong, successful and sustainable. Membership is one way of ensuring that the lines of communication are always open.

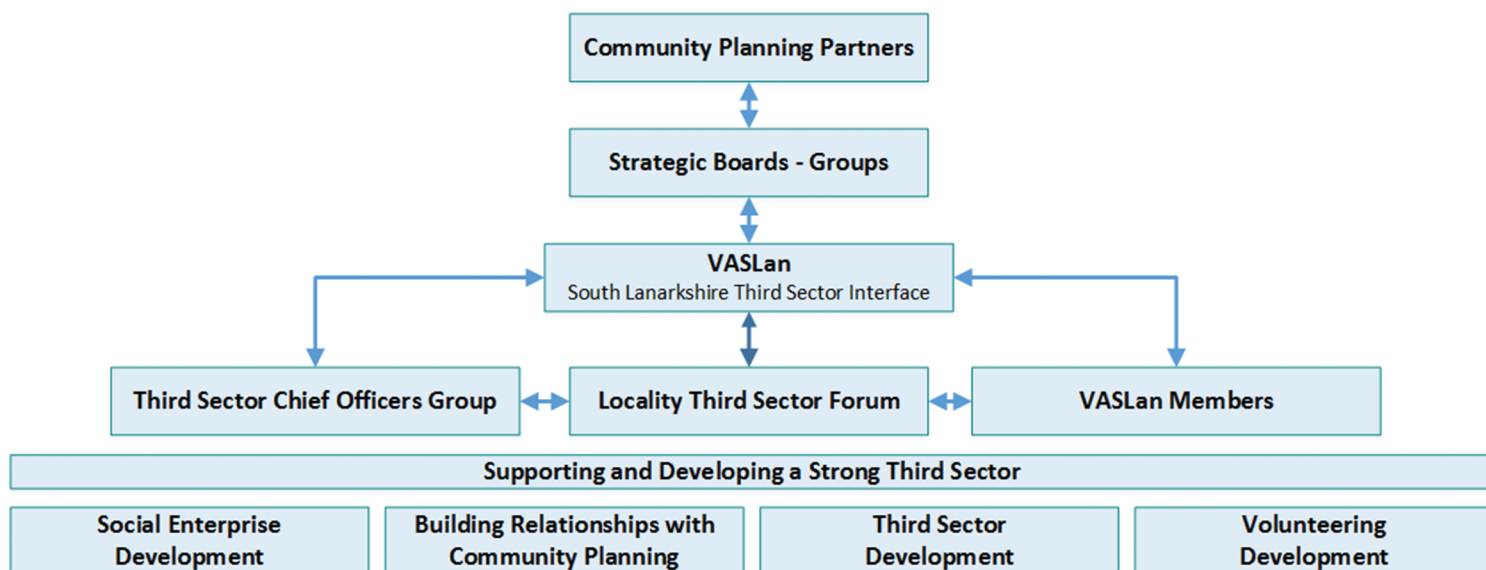


Third Sector Forum – The Third Sector Forum provides a platform for local organisations to meet, share views, identify local needs and propose solutions to address local issues. The membership of the forums is open to any voluntary organisation, social enterprise and community group as well as any individuals from that locality who wish to attend.

VASLan works with the Third Sector Forum Structure to inform the representation of the Third Sector at a strategic level, support developments that embed the position of the Third Sector in decision making, policy development and community planning, and evidence the impact of Third Sector services within communities.

Third Sector Chief Officers' Group (TSCOG) - A voluntary membership of chief officers drawn from organisations across South Lanarkshire form part of the Third Sector Forum Structure. The group advises and supports the identification of strategic topics which are impacting on the Third Sector and communities, produce proposals that address issues and propose developments to enhance the position of the Third Sector in decision making and policy development.

Third Sector Forum Structure - Links to Strategic Partners



HOW WILL WE GET THERE?

Strategic Priorities	Strategic Objectives	Operational Objectives
1.0 Four Core Areas	1.1 Knowledge, skills and understanding of key areas of activity are maintained and developed	<p>1.1.1 Well targeted training will encourage and drive community engagement to strengthen locality focus that feeds future strategic planning.</p> <p>1.1.2 Deliver a high quality organisational governance support service to our member groups.</p> <p>1.1.3 Establish a strategic approach with identified locality focused development officer(s) leading on sector engagement, feeding to and from the Third Sector Forum (TSF) together with providing specialist support on core areas across all localities.</p> <p>1.1.4 Establish an updated on-line community development toolkit supported by weekly lunchtime drop-in sessions.</p>
	1.2 Effective Third Sector performance, growth and sustainability	<p>1.2.1 Deliver appropriate training and advisory sessions relevant to local need.</p> <p>1.2.2 Use training and sharing of best practice to support the Third Sector to design, deliver and demonstrate effective strategies which meet local growth needs, promote social inclusion and tackle poverty.</p> <p>1.2.3 Support opportunities that build and contribute to the assets of local communities to ensure they are involved/contribute to key strategic decision making structures.</p> <p>1.2.4 Promote and support increased access to external funding opportunities.</p>
	1.3 High levels of volunteering and positive contributions of volunteers to the Third Sector	<p>1.3.1 Introduce a revitalised approach to promoting, advising and encouraging volunteering across South Lanarkshire.</p> <p>1.3.2 Support specific areas of need in line with strategic objectives through targeted pre-volunteering training and taster sessions.</p> <p>1.3.3 Establish an alternative system to help those who are best placed to help themselves to access suitable opportunities to volunteer.</p>
	1.4 Increasing levels of social enterprise and its economic impact	<p>1.4.1 Grow a sustainable and dynamic local economy through the development of innovative and locally focused enterprising organisations that meet the needs of the community.</p> <p>1.4.2 Continue to develop, promote and support online Social Enterprise virtual network.</p>

Strategic Priorities	Strategic Objectives	Operational Objectives
2.0 Partnerships	2.1 Local and national structures and processes are used effectively to benefit Third Sector organisations and communities	<p>2.1.1 Maximise the TSI's involvement with statutory partners at a strategic level to ensure input from communities and the Third Sector has an influence on future planning.</p> <p>2.1.2 Encourage and drive community engagement using the Third Sector Forum Structure, our training and local intelligence to strengthen a locality focus that feeds future strategic planning.</p> <p>2.1.3 Provide support to local communities and Third Sector organisations through the Third Sector Forum structure to co-produce efficient and effective services that meet local needs.</p> <p>2.1.4 Build on and contribute to the assets of local communities and ensure community organisations are involved and contributing to key strategic decision making structures.</p>
	2.2 Effective and productive partnerships and relationships with local and national organisations and agencies	<p>2.2.1 Develop and maintain a dynamic Third Sector Forum Structure, which reviews and advises on the most appropriate methodologies to highlight and promote sector performance and encourage growth through seeking solutions and encouraging partnership and collaborative working.</p> <p>2.2.2 Establish locally-led partnerships between various stakeholders, from public and private sector, social enterprises and Third Sector organisations through the Third Sector Forum, online networking and topic specific workshops and events.</p>
	2.3 Strong and trusting relationships among VASLan, the Third Sector and the public sector	<p>2.3.1 Develop and make effective use of positive partnerships to address local issues, including the identification of sustainable funding.</p> <p>2.3.2 Maintain a sustainable level of strategic engagement with Community Planning Partners.</p>
	2.4 The needs and priorities of partners, Third Sector organisations and communities are embedded in VASLan's strategic plan.	<p>2.4.1 Improve the use of locally based community and voluntary organisations representatives to assist with local expertise and knowledge, and to support locally based planning groups.</p>

Strategic Priorities	Strategic Objectives	Operational Objectives
3.0 Communication	3.1 Manage up to date, detailed knowledge of the Third Sector effectively	<p>3.1.1 Gather reliable up to date intelligence through enhanced communication with local organisations, the Third Sector Forum Structure, supported by annual and ad-hoc surveys.</p> <p>3.1.2 Strengthen strategic links and two way communications among the management team, the VASLan Board and the Third Sector Forum Structure.</p>
	3.2 A positive reputation for VASLan with third sector organisations, partners and communities	<p>3.2.1 Raise the level of awareness and recognition of the impact of the Third Sector across South Lanarkshire using improved levels of impact data, contributory analysis and communications across partnerships and through social media and events.</p> <p>3.2.2 Raise the level of awareness and recognition of the impact of volunteering across South Lanarkshire by gathering reliable, comprehensive information.</p> <p>3.2.3 Promote and support organisations to gain 'Volunteer Friendly' Award.</p>
	3.3 Performance in achieving strategic and operational objectives is communicated effectively to all partners.	<p>3.3.1 Wider engagement of Third Sector organisations will be achieved through ensuring an appropriate agreed format for the Third Sector Forum which encourages involvement, engagement and effective communication across the sector.</p> <p>3.3.2 Use a wide variety of media to communicate relevant changes in local and national procedures and policies to local organisations.</p> <p>3.3.3 Establish effective channels of communications with all elected members in South Lanarkshire.</p>
	3.4 Third Sector organisations respond positively to the support and opportunities provided through VASLan	<p>3.4.1 Over 80% of local organisations and partners surveyed annually respond positively to the services and opportunities provided through VASLan.</p>

Strategic Priorities	Strategic Objectives	Operational Objectives
4.0 Performance	4.1 Commitment, coherence and sound governance is sustained into the future	<p>4.1.1 Establish key performance indicators (KPIs) for all operational objectives and work plan targets.</p> <p>4.1.2 Monitor, evaluate and report on the performance of VASLan against the strategic objectives, the operational objectives and the levels of achievement of work plan actions on a regular basis.</p> <p>4.1.3 Produce performance reports designed and targeted for specific audiences including community organisations, local and national partners and local elected members.</p> <p>4.1.4 Ensure the number of VASLan directors is sustained and that there is an appropriate gender and skills balance on the Board.</p> <p>4.1.5 Conduct an annual review of the performance and contribution of the VASLan Board to achieving the strategic objectives.</p> <p>4.1.6 Achieve a positive response from the Scottish Government to the annual performance report.</p> <p>4.1.7 Maintain the quality standards of governance management, policies and processes internally and externally in delivering our services and continue to identify areas for improvement.</p>
	4.2 New technology used to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of VASLan	<p>4.2.1 Conduct an annual review of the use and effectiveness of information technology systems and communications systems.</p> <p>4.2.2 Ensure operating systems to support the administration and the wider functioning of VASLan are fit for purpose.</p>
	4.3 Strategic and operational planning is fit for purpose and makes a positive difference to the effectiveness of VASLan	4.3.1 Annual development days are used effectively to review and evaluate the performance of VASLan against the strategic objectives and to review the impact, layout and content of the Strategic Plan.
	4.4 Sound sustainable financial management and reporting.	4.4.1 All systems for financial management, budgeting and reporting are fit for purpose and operate effectively to provide the necessary information to support the operation of VASLan.

Strategic Priorities	Strategic Objectives	Operational Objectives
4.0 Performance (continued)	4.5 VASLan has the capacity to achieve strategic and operational objectives	<p>4.5.1 Staffing resources are continuously reviewed by the senior staff and Board to ensure services can be delivered effectively.</p> <p>4.5.2 Financial resources are continuously reviewed by senior staff and the Board to ensure service can be delivered effectively.</p> <p>4.5.3 As part of the annual budget review by senior staff projections of future income and expenditure are produced for the VASLan Board and any issues are highlighted and resolved.</p>
	4.6 All staff are effective and confident in the work they undertake	<p>4.6.1 Individual professional reviews of the work of all staff are carried out at least annually and the outcomes used to ensure appropriate staff development and training is provided to individual staff.</p> <p>4.6.2 At least 1% of the annual VASLan core income is allocated for staff development.</p>

“VASLan has provided us with invaluable advice relating to policies, recruitment and funding applications, all of which has enabled us to deliver and develop” –
21st Century Families

IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY

To fulfill the aims of our strategy a number of internal actions have been identified, these actions are designed to improve how VASLan as a TSI provides the best outcome for our Third Sector and statutory partners.

Staff Development Programme

- We will undertake a staff, management and trustee skills audit.
- Based on the findings we will implement a training and development plan to support and enhance the delivery of our strategic and operational priorities.

Staffing Review

- Review the level of available staff capacity to deliver against our strategic and operational priorities.
- Identify the best options for resource allocation.
- Highlight future capacity requirements to deliver the strategy over the 2017-2020 period and plan accordingly.

A detailed timeline of planned progress for the strategy is

included in Appendix 1.

Operating Structure

We will develop and sustain a staff team who can operate as the lead in strategic engagement with statutory partners and further establish VASLan as the key interface between Third Sector organisations, local communities, and Community Planning Partners.

- Improved flow of information across statutory partners and Third Sector.

To ensure a continuous flow of information between strategic and Third Sector partners VASLan will utilise a number of tools in line with our communications and marketing plan.

- A revamped VASLan EPI (Engage, Promote and Involve) database
- A revised Locator tool
- A refreshed website
- E-newsletter
- Improved use of Social Media
- Virtual Networks

- More focused Third Sector Forum events
- Annual surveys and reports, ad hoc surveys and reports
- Briefing papers

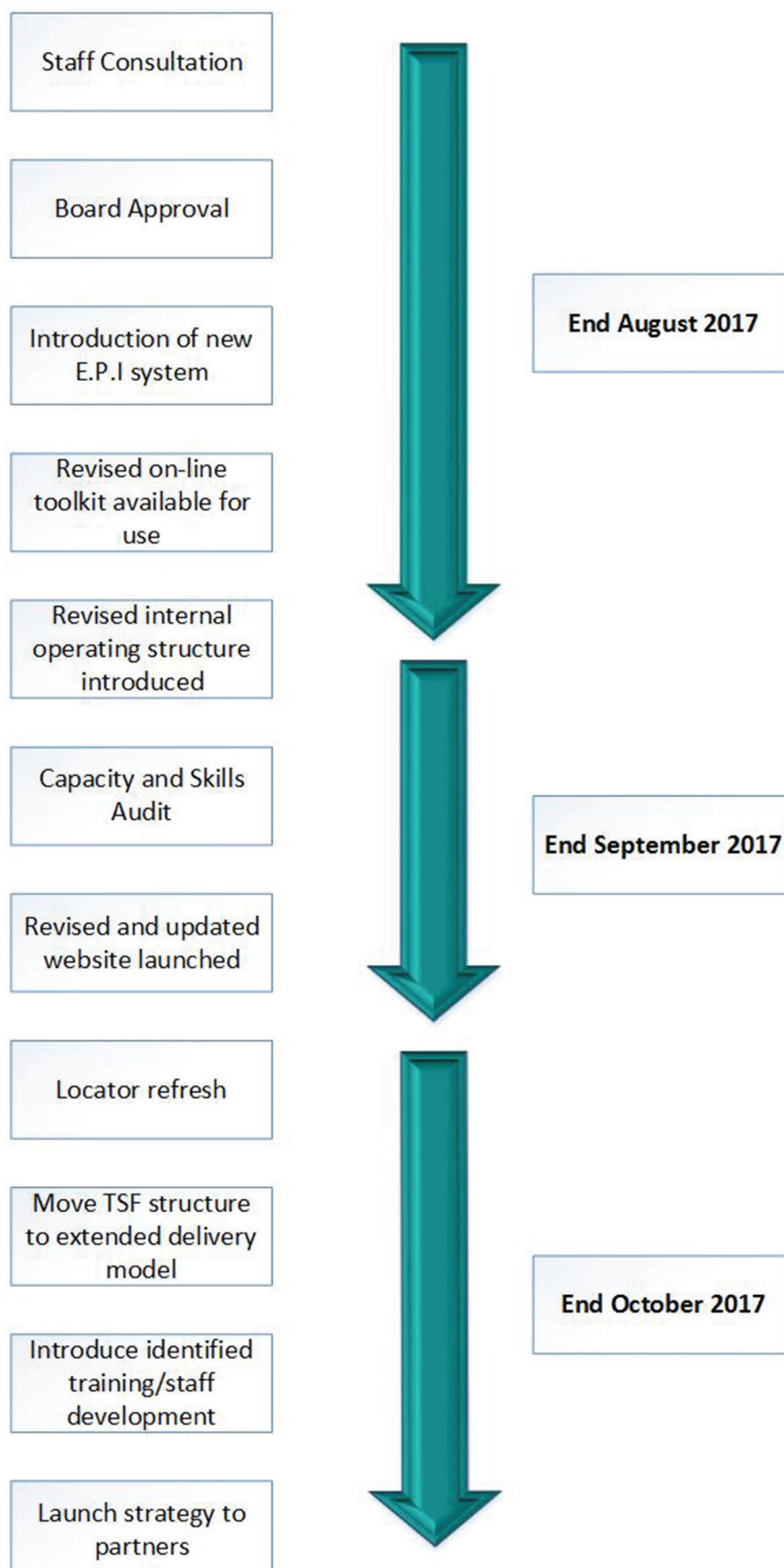
Through the combination of these actions the strategy will provide a greater understanding of the scale and range of activity delivered by Third Sector organisations across South Lanarkshire. It will also support a better understanding of unmet need in communities and enable improved planning across the wider partnership.

By adopting a clear and credible locality focus the strategy will provide a coordinated accountable approach to assessing and resourcing emerging need, increase sector stability, and will provide a richer communications platform for statutory partners to engage with the Third Sector.



APPENDIX 1

Key Milestones



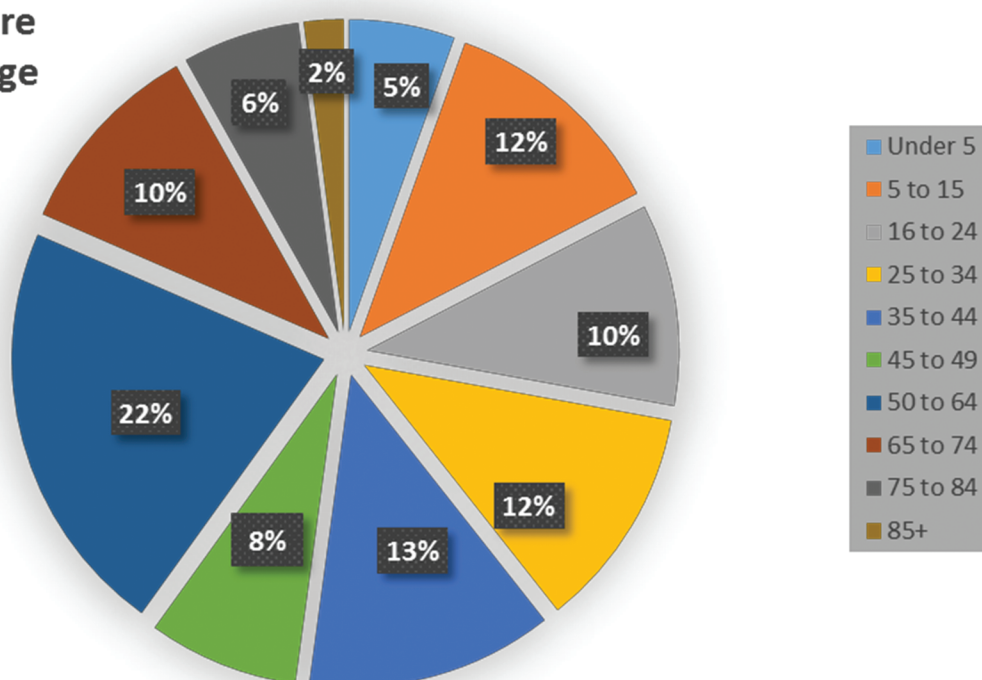
APPENDIX 2

South Lanarkshire Demographics

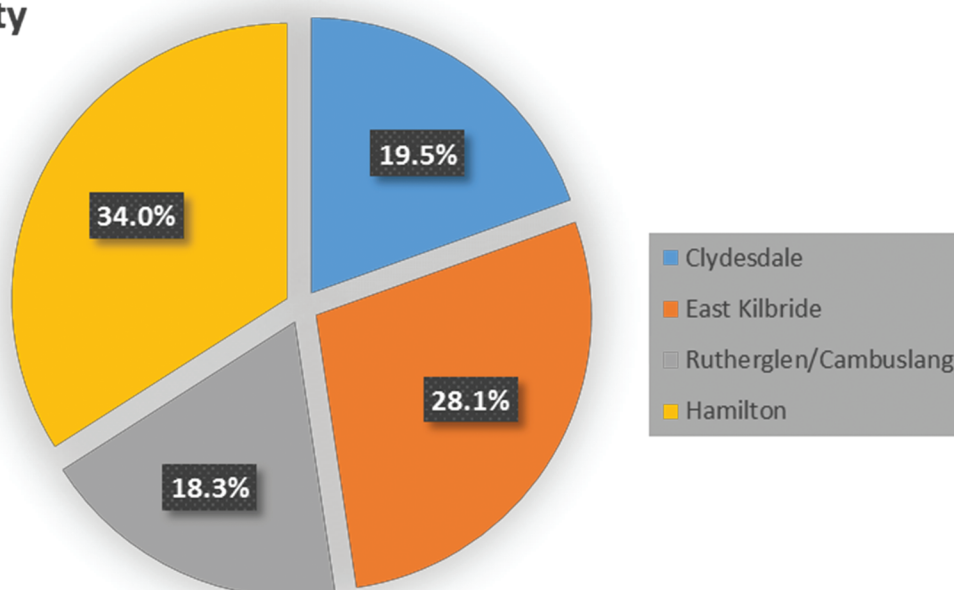
Size and Scale of Area

South Lanarkshire spans through central and southern Scotland covering an area of 686 square miles and is both urban and rural.

**South Lanarkshire
Population by Age**



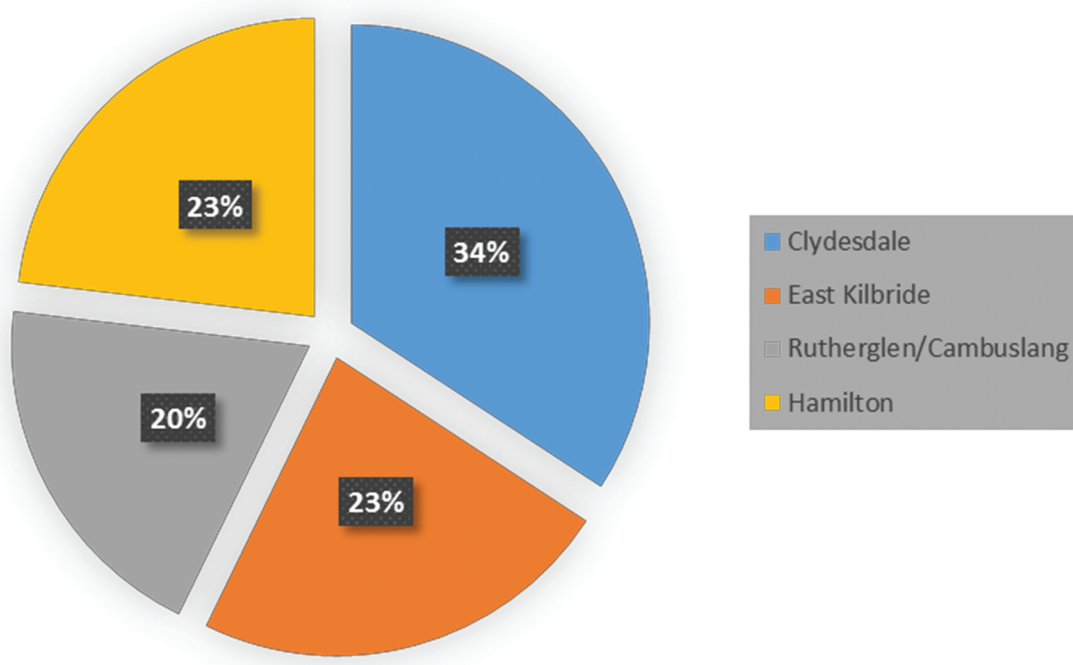
**South Lanarkshire
Population by Locality**



Source: South Lanarkshire Population Mid-Year Estimates

Serving this population is a wide ranging group of organisations, including registered charities, voluntary organisations, community groups, social enterprises and faith groups involved in social action, known collectively as **The Third Sector**.

South Lanarkshire Third Sector Organisations



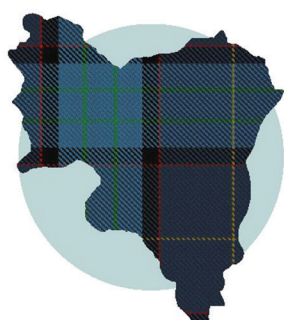
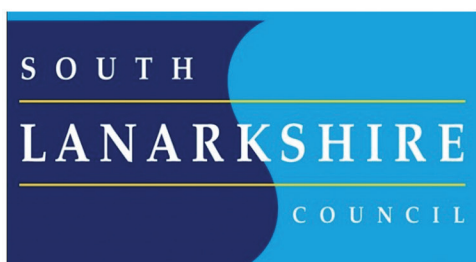
Source: E.P.I CRM (Feb 2017)



*Working together to improve health and wellbeing
in the community – **with** the community*



The Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba



Voluntary Action
South Lanarkshire
Putting the Voluntary Sector **FIRST**

Voluntary Action South Lanarkshire
155 Montrose Crescent
Hamilton
ML3 6LQ

For general enquiries: office@vaslan.org.uk

Phone Number: 01698 300390

www.vaslan.org.uk



@vasouthlanarkshire



@VA_SLAN