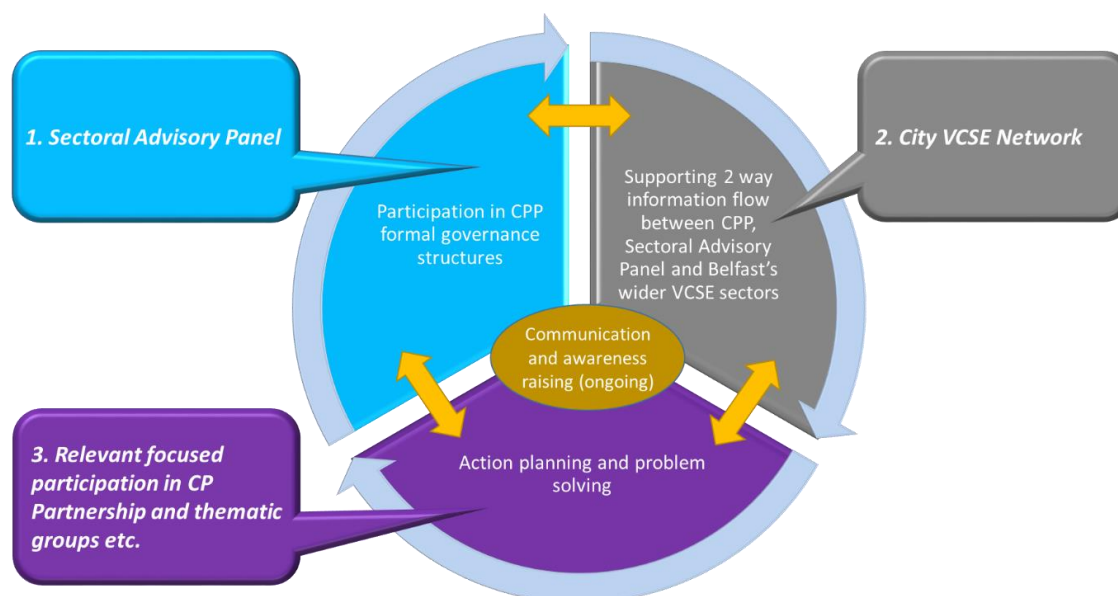# APPENDIX 2: Overview of VCSE Sector Engagement Model

The proposed model for VCSE sectors representation and participation in community planning has identified 3 forms of participation in community planning, summarised as follows:

1. Establishment of **a Sectoral Advisory Panel** to facilitate the selection of participation of VCSE sectoral delegates, who can advocate on behalf of others in the sector, in the formal community planning governance structures.

2. Establishment of **a VCSE Network** to facilitate effective and ongoing communication across the wider VCSE sectors in the city, in relation to the Belfast Agenda, community planning and the work of the Sectoral Advisory Panel, and to provide appropriate engagement and consultation opportunities to support the community planning process;

3. Utilising both the knowledge, expertise and stakeholder intelligence from both (1) and (2) above, to assist the Community Planning Partnership in identifying appropriate stakeholder **participation from VCSE sectors in action planning** activities/working groups.

1. Sectoral Advisory Panel

The purpose of the Panel will be to:

i) Ensure the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector's voices are articulated by participating in Community Planning Partnership and its Governance Structures, and providing advice and advocacy on the sector's behalf

ii) Support the development of Cross-sectoral Relationships and improved Partnership working by increasing collaboration, assisting in identifying key stakeholders and networks, and acting as a 2 way conduit for information sharing and engagement

iii) Promote ongoing and effective community engagement by promoting broad and inclusive engagement and consultation.

It is proposed the Panel would be comprised of up to 15 members (drawn from organisations and groups operating with the VCSE sectors in Belfast) via a nomination and selection process that will seek to ensure as far as possible a balanced membership across:

- Thematic areas and priorities in the Belfast Agenda

- Coverage of the city geography

- S75 groups

- Large and small organisations

2. VCSE Network

The inclusive citywide VCSE network will support both the Community Planning Partnership and the Sectoral Advisory Panel, in particular in its ability to effectively communicate and engage with the wider VCSE sectors in the city in both the Belfast Agenda and Community Planning. The purpose of this network would be to facilitate effective dissemination of information, and co-ordinate engagement around key Belfast Agenda themes.

This network will be primarily virtual (online) – in registering to be part of the network participants will be entering into a commitment from City Partners to receive communications, and also opportunities to be engaged in the shaping and design of the Belfast agenda and its delivery. In practical terms, this will involve website content, social media, an online engagement platform, along with a series sectoral engagement events (A programme of engagement around Belfast Agenda and community planning themes is being developed with Partners to animate this process).

3. VCSE Sectors participation in detailed action planning

In delivering Belfast Agenda priorities, Community Planning Partners are convening a range of action planning activities with relevant stakeholders, often on a 'task and finish' or ad hoc basis, to explore evidence and data, understand issues at hand, and develop interventions through collaborative working.

Immediate steps are being taken to embed strengthened VCSE sectors participation in action planning, working with action leads to ensure stakeholder identification/ mapping and engagement plans are in place across areas of work such as drugs, alcohol and mental health; addressing avoidable winter deaths; children and young people, early years and family support; educational inequalities; and employability and skills.

Going forward the strengthened approach to VCSE participation afforded by the Sectoral Advisory Panel and wider network aims to facilitate:

- Improved identification of key stakeholders and involvement to key organisations, groups and networks to participate in such groups through advice of the Sectoral Advisory Panel, and

- a more coherent supporting engagement mechanism to seek views across the wider VCSE sectors (through the VCSE Network) in relation to the themes and action plans under development.