Position Statement

Engaging in Political Activity

Background and definitions

The Charity Commission requires all charities to have a policy on campaigns and political activity. The Commission uses the term 'political activity' to describe activities or campaigning to change or influence policies or decisions taken by:

• National, devolved, local or overseas government

• Public bodies including international organisations such as the UN and World Bank, and national or local organisations such as regulators or NHS Trusts.

Charities can take part in political activity that supports their purpose and is in their best interests. Political activity, however, must not become the reason for the charity's existence. Charities must remain independent and must not give their support to a political party. Charities can support a policy that is supported by a political party or candidate and can work with political parties or candidates to influence their decisions, provided this supports the charity's purpose and the charity remains independent of the political party.

Trustees must act in the best interest of the charity which includes the responsibility to evaluate the risks of a specific political activity in relation to its impact on the charity's ability to achieve its charitable purposes as set out in its governing document.

Political activity in relation to Slow The Flow and its charitable purpose

Slow The Flow will only engage in political activity that supports the delivery of its charitable purpose. This is set out in its constitution and is:

TO ADVANCE THE EDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC IN NATURAL FLOOD MANAGEMENT, SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS AND OTHER RENEWABLE METHODS OF MANAGING THE ENVIRONMENT, INCLUDING THE EXPLORATION OF ALTERNATIVE PRACTICES WHICH SAFEGUARD THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND ITS RESOURCES IN A MANNER WHICH BEST FITS THE SPECIFICS OF A LOCAL GEOGRAPHY.

For example, Slow the Flow may choose to campaign for changes to local policy on flood management.

In deciding whether to engage in political activity, the trustees will also consider the impact this would have on the delivery of its strategy. For example, Slow The Flow may decide not to engage in relevant political activity if the board considers that this would draw too much resource from its priority activities or compromise its ability to act as an independent approachable expert advisor. In such circumstances, Slow the Flow may instead choose to share its knowledge with local and national communities to educate them in line with its charitable purpose.

This includes situations where trustees are bound by their professional status to demonstrate impartiality including by association with regard to specific projects; and situations where the

educational aims of the charity are better served by developing and maintaining diplomatic relations with local and national policy makers.

Further guidance

Charity Commission information and guidance can be found here: Campaigning and political activity guidance for charities - GOV.UK