



VOLUNTARY SECTOR LIAISON COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN ON WEDNESDAY 3RD DECEMBER 2014 AT 10.30 A.M.

PRESENT:

Mr. R. Cooke – Chair

Councillors:

Ms. L. Ackerman, P. J. Bevan, C. Hawker, K. James, A. Lewis, Mrs. J.A. Pritchard, A. Rees, Mrs. J. Summers, R. Woodyatt

Together with:

Abbeyfield	-	Mr. P. Jones
Abertridwr Community Church	-	Mr. L. Clay
Age Cymru	-	Ms. S. Brown
Bargoed YMCA	-	Ms. J. Price
Caerphilly 50+ Forum	-	Mr. D. Morgan
Caerphilly Groundwork Trust	-	Mr. R. H. Cooke
Caerphilly People First	-	Mr. C. Luke
Disability Can Do Organisation	-	Mrs. H. Williams
GAVO – Chief Executive	-	Mr. M. Featherstone
GAVO – Assistant Chief Executive	-	Mrs. E. Forbes
The Parent Network	-	Ms. M. Jones

Also present:

J. Dix (CCBC Policy & Research Manager), J. Elliott (CCBC Senior Research Officer), A. Palmer (GAVO), Sgt. R. Davies (Gwent Police), C. Hunt (Regional Community Cohesion Officer – West Gwent), M. Chapman (Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner for Gwent)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Mrs. E. M. Aldworth, J. Bevan, D. G. Carter, Mrs. P. Cook, R. W. Gough, Mrs. P. Griffiths.

Also from, Ms. P. Jones (Caerphilly Care & Repair), Ms. J. Lawton (Caerphilly MIND), Mrs. B. Helps (Caerphilly Parents & Carers Forum), Mr. A. Read (Cancercareline), Mrs. C. Williams (Cruse Bereavement Care), Mr. G. Mitchell (Graig-Y-Rhacca Communities Partnership), Ms. G. Jervis (Homestart Caerphilly Borough), Mrs. J. Morgan (New CLURV), Mr. M. Thorne (SYDIC), Mr. K. Viney (The Settlement), Mrs. M. Wade (The Vanguard Centre), Mr. J. Wade (Van Road United Reformed Church), Mr. D. Brunton (Vice Chair Voluntary Sector Representatives), Ms. S. Crane (ABUHB), Mrs. D. Crossman (South Wales Fire & Rescue Service), Mr. H. Llewellyn (Town & Community Councils Representative), Mrs. D. Lovering (Caerphilly Business Forum Representative).

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None declared.

3. MINUTES

3.1 Disappointment was expressed at the lack of representation from the ABUHB, when questions were wished to be asked regarding the present situation at the Trinant Surgery. It was commented that the ABUHB had also not attended the Health Social Care and Wellbeing Committee on 2nd December 2014. It was requested that the Chair of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee send a letter to the ABUHB on the importance of attending the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee meetings.

3.2 The accuracy of the minutes of 17th September 2014 was agreed.

4. SAFEGUARDING PUBLIC SERVICES – WHAT ROLE CAN THE THIRD SECTOR PLAY?

4.1 Chris Burns (Interim Chief Executive, CCBC) introduced the open budget discussion with the Committee around what role can the third sector play in these times of public sector budget constraints. He informed that CCBC is facing a cut of 3.4% in the local government provisional settlement for 2015/16 and will need to make an estimated saving of £39m over the next three years. All CCBC services will be looking at a 20% reduction over the next 3-years. He noted CCBC is seeking an early engagement with services users, with the emphasis on protecting front line services, and looking at possibly reducing services rather than loosing services all together. Back office functions, such as administration, will be cut back as far as possible, and there will be streamlining of the CCBC's estate. The challenge for CCBC will be on how to provide services for the future, and focus on what matters most to local communities, in providing more imaginative and innovative ways of working with partners in service delivery. The good model of the voluntary sector working with partners was noted, with the CCBC's door open for suggestions in working together to provide services in local communities around the reduced budget.

4.2 Martin Featherstone (Chief Executive, Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO)) thanked CCBC for having an open door policy for hearing suggestions from the voluntary sector. He mentioned that GAVO was in the process of developing a voluntary sector leadership group, which will be looking at shared approaches to public sector delivery. He noted that it would be helpful in moving the discussion on around shared services for CCBC to be more specific about what it is looking for the voluntary sector to take on.

4.3 Cyril Luke (Caerphilly People First) and Michelle Jones (The Parent Network) discussed the partnership work they are doing with Social Services around day services for people with a learning disability. CCBC have calculated that half of its budget for day services is consumed by costs of transporting people to the day centres. The Parent Network helped with Caerphilly People First consultation with the parents of children and young people attending day services, and it has been found that alternative sources of transport can be sourced through parents and the voluntary sector in reducing costs. In addition Caerphilly People First have surveyed service users of learning disability services, and found 98% satisfaction with services received. A meeting is being held with Social Services in February 2015 to further consider the transport options. Cllr Woodyatt noted his support of the work being undertaken by Mr Luke and Ms Jones.

4.4 The beneficial experience of providing volunteering opportunities was described by Caerphilly People First. The organisation has taken on ten volunteers who have a learning disability, who are now running a range of good training courses on meeting the needs of people with learning disabilities. It was commented that some people with learning disabilities run Woodfield Services and Blackberry Catering which are working well, but would benefit through better marketing.

- 4.5 It was noted that a trigger in developing a solution to the transport costs of getting people to day services, was having the specifics of the situation. It was suggested that it would be helpful to know the specifics of what CCBC would like the voluntary sector to take on.
- 4.6 Peter Jones, Abbeyfield Wales Society Ltd described how Abbeyfield in Wales provides a range of care services for older people including people with dementia. In Caerphilly, Abbeyfield provides two supported care homes. He noted the growing problem of loneliness among the older population. He commented that Abbeyfield would welcome an early dialogue with CCBC over what Abbeyfield can do in providing innovative care. He also noted that there are funds available to the voluntary sector, which are unavailable to local authorities. Mr Jones asked for budget discussions to become a standing item on the agenda.
- 4.7 Cllr P.J. Bevan observed how this agenda item was just the start of an important conversation around shared services with the voluntary sector. He stressed the importance of voluntary organisations being aware of the complexity in taking on council services, such as libraries and community facilities, and the need to understand the full financial undertaking. He noted that there were possibilities for town and community councils to take on services through a small rise in precepts, if required, and agreed by the residents affected.
- 4.8 Cllr Pritchard suggested that the voluntary sector should familiarise themselves with the budget reports being considered at CCBC scrutiny committees, which contain lots of detail on specific information. Cllr Pritchard also alerted to the technological advances, which were resulting in savings, and gave the example of low energy street lighting being introduced, which as well as reducing costs, were contributing to carbon reductions.
- 4.9 Cllr Woodyatt noted the importance of shaping services with people who use services. He highlighted the budget consultation which features in the current edition of the Council's *Newsline*, and the drop in consultation events being held in local communities, which are dealing with the specifics of the current budget situation.
- 4.10 Chris Burns said while he understood comments about the voluntary sector requiring a list of services that they could potentially take over, this was not possible at this stage. It was noted that at the moment CCBC was trying to keep budget reductions fairly modest in comparison to some other South Wales councils. However, once the budget for 2015-16 is set, councillors will need to look at budgets over the next two years, and so by the Spring CCBC may be able to give a better steer. The importance of two way discussion between CCBC and the voluntary sector was highlighted, with the Council being receptive to ideas.
- 4.11 Cllr P.J Bevan commented that there are two years for continuing discussions with the voluntary sector over this, and it is important for community and town councils to become involved. Cllr Bevan in support of Mr Jones suggestion on budget discussions put forward the recommendation for budget discussions to become a standing item on the agenda, which was passed.

5. MAINSTREAMING COMMUNITY COHESION – VERBAL REPORT BY CHRIS HUNT REGIONAL COMMUNITY COHESION CO-ORDINATOR (WEST GWENT)

- 5.1 Chris Hunt noted committee report is for raising awareness of the community cohesion agenda and promoting the need to embed cohesion within both the statutory and voluntary sector. He described the background to the development of the community cohesion agenda as residing in lessons learned from the 2001 civil disturbances in Northern England - Bradford, Burnley and Oldham and in Wales 2003 - Wrexham. In the aftermath of these public disturbances the government took two approaches regarding community cohesion: targeted community interventions and mainstreaming. The first refers to projects specifically relating to community cohesion i.e. that aim at directly bringing people together and on creating a sense of belonging. The second refers to introducing the principles of community cohesion to all the work undertaken by government at local, regional and national levels.

5.2 *Why mainstream community cohesion?* This is because we are living in increasingly diverse communities which can often present challenges in the way people get on together; immigration, deprivation, prosperity can all impact the way communities integrate with each other and on rare occasions these factors can create community tensions which can disrupt cohesion. Recognising local cohesion priorities (such as the growing influence of far right extremism or the intolerance of some communities towards diversity or difference) and strategically embedding cohesion in the way we provide services and support communities, can encourage communities to become more cohesive, particularly with regards to tackling intolerance, and to develop greater community resilience to violent extremism.

5.3 The Welsh Assembly Government launched *Getting on Together* the national community cohesion strategy for Wales along with the first of its funding streams in 2009, as part of the Welsh Assembly Government's One Wales commitment to achieve a 'fair and just society, a place where all citizens are empowered to determine their own lives and shape the communities in which they live'.

<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsijq/publications/commsafety/091130ccstratenv1.pdf>

Easy read version

<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsijq/publications/commsafety/100706gotreaden.pdf>

5.4 *What is Mainstreaming?* The following is taken from the *Mainstreaming Community Cohesion Guidance for Local Authorities* (Sheffield Hallam University) [Local Authority Mainstreaming Community Cohesion Guidance](#)

'Mainstreaming involves infusing the principles and priorities of the community cohesion agenda into the collective consciousness of a local authority or partnership so that responsibility for building cohesion is embedded within the everyday duties and functions of all departments and partners'.

5.5 The potential role of the voluntary sector in developing community cohesion is seen in its role with communities. Whilst the public sector has the potential to influence policy-making and service delivery, especially on issues such as housing and policing, the role of the third sector (in relation to the cohesion agenda) can be seen more in terms of liaising directly with communities, especially those defined as 'hard-to reach' communities and communities of interest.

5.6 Mr Hunt was asked if Communities First would be an important link to develop with communities and the voluntary sector around community cohesion. He said that he was working with Communities First in several areas of the county borough, to involve them with the principles of Community Cohesion in local action plans.

6. **THE COMPACT AGREEMENT AND ANNUAL ACTION PLAN – JACKIE DIX (CCBC POLICY & RESEARCH MANAGER)**

6.1 Jackie Dix as requested by the Voluntary Sector Representatives sitting on the Committee gave the background to the Compact Agreement and Annual Compact Action Plan. Following the recent consultation on the Compact Action Plan 2015-16 the Committee were asked to endorse the new Compact Annual Action Plan, which was approved by the Committee.

7. **COMMUNITY PLANNING QUARTERLY BRIEFING – OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2014**

7.1 This is an information only item.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 18TH MARCH 2015 AT 10.30AM IN THE SIRHOWY AND EBBW COMBINED ROOMS

Next meeting on the 18th March 2015, will be held at 10.30am in the Sirhowy and Ebbw combined rooms.

The Chair wished everyone a Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year.

Meeting ended 12.05pm.