



## VOLUNTARY SECTOR COMMITTEE – 4TH DECEMBER 2013

**SUBJECT: DIGEST OF COMMITTEE REPORTS FROM CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT BY: INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE & ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF GAVO**

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report from Caerphilly CBC contains a digest of committee reports containing items of interest for the voluntary sector. If there are reports of particular interest Members can request the committee report author to attend a future meeting of the Voluntary Sector Committee to prepare a further report/take questions.

### 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 A quarterly summary of Caerphilly CBC committee reports selected as they contain areas of interest for the voluntary sector.

### 3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 All Caerphilly CBC reports relate to aspects of the Caerphilly County Borough Community Strategy.

### 4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The following reports have been selected as having particular interest on voluntary sector issues (note Members can request a full hard copy of any of the reports included) :-

#### 4.2 HEALTH SOCIAL CARE & WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 22ND OCTOBER 2013

##### **Potential Impact Of The Welfare Reform Act 2012 On Young People Leaving Care**

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 contains provision for the introduction of a 'Universal Credit' to replace a range of existing means-tested benefits and tax credits for people of working age, commencing from 2013.

Universal Credit is a new benefit that has started to replace 6 existing benefits with a simpler, single monthly payment for individuals out of work or on a low income. Universal Credit is intended to assist individuals to be better off in work, to start a new job or to work more hours.

Universal Credit will eventually replace:

- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Support

- Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit

Besides introducing Universal Credit and related measures, there are other significant changes to the benefits system:

- Introduction of Personal Independence Payments to replace the current Disability Living Allowance
- Restrictions to Housing Benefit entitlement for social housing tenants whose accommodation is larger than they need
- Links the Local Housing Allowance rates to the Consumer Price Index
- Amendments to the forthcoming statutory child maintenance scheme
- Limitations to the payment of contributory Employment and Support Allowance to a 12 month period
- Introduction of a cap on the total amount of benefit that can be claimed – this will particularly impact on larger families.

For young people Leaving Care there will potentially be issues regarding the benefits they are eligible to claim and the accommodation choices they will have as a result of the Welfare Reform Act 2012.

Universal Credit is paid differently to current benefits. It is paid monthly into a bank, building society or Post Office account. Any assistance with rent i.e. Housing Benefit will now be included in the Universal Credit payment and individuals will be expected to pay their landlord themselves.

The issues that young people may face are as follows:

- Historically allowances have been paid on a weekly or fortnightly basis, there may be issues regards budgeting for food, bills, rent and other sundries as the new allowances will be paid on a monthly basis
- Linked to 4.2 above, rent may not be paid as young people may not prioritise this aspect of the finances. (There are cases where landlords can advise the Benefits Agency that someone is vulnerable and the rent can then be paid directly to them not the young person)
- There is limited 'Move On' accommodation suitable for young people. Families who have lived in three/four bedroom houses for a long period of time will now receive less Housing Benefit and will be expected to meet the short fall or down size to smaller properties thereby increasing the demand for smaller properties and reducing available accommodation for Care Leavers
- There is a real risk that families will have to move into smaller properties and in turn young people may be forced to leave home increasing demand on homelessness services
- Any changes to the welfare system could potentially impact on crime rates and anti social behaviour. Many young people report feeling pressured into shop-lifting and other petty crimes when faced with financial hardship
- Whilst a principle of the welfare reforms is to encourage people into work, many young people are not 'work ready' and require additional supports in order to progress into work

Overall it is probable that the reforms will lead to an increase in demand for support and services from the Local Authority in a time of reducing resources. Work is being undertaken to consider any families known to Social Services who may be affected by the Welfare Reform Act.

## **CABINET - 16TH OCTOBER 2013**

### **Results Of The June 2013 Household Survey**

Members were advised of the key findings of the 2013 Household Survey, which is undertaken every two years. In June 2013 a detailed questionnaire was distributed to approximately 10,000 households across the County Borough. Results from the survey were very positive and in general show that residents are satisfied with the services provided by the Council.

Eighty two per cent of respondents are satisfied with the overall service provided by the Council, compared to 77% in 2011. This exceeds the Improvement Plan target for 2013 of 78%. Services generating high levels of satisfaction include refuse and recycling, parks and play areas, libraries, leisure, learning, local town centres, bus services and Newline.

### **Improving Governance Programme Update**

The report outlined progress made against the WAO Public Interest Report Action Plan and the wider Improving Governance Programme.

Members were advised that significant progress has been made on all five aspects of Phase 1 of the Public Interest Report Action Plan. In particular 67% of the actions within the plan have been completed and considerable progress has been achieved on others. It is anticipated that all actions will be completed by December 2013 and each recommendation will have a date identified for follow up and monitoring to ensure that changes put in place as a result of improving governance are sustained.

It was noted that some of the work streams will be fed into the review of the Constitution which is to be undertaken by the Cross Party Working Group set up at Council in June 2013.

At this stage of the Programme, the additional areas are Performance Management; Risk Management; Scrutiny and Human Resources. The Interim Chief Executive advised that good progress was being made in all these areas.

### **Public Library Standards In Wales - Annual Library Update Report 2012-2013**

The report was presented to the Education for Life Scrutiny Committee on 24th September 2013. It informed Members of progress made by the County Borough Library Service in seeking to meet the 4th Framework of Welsh Government Public Library Standards and Performance indicators during 2012-2013.

Members were advised that CBC Library Service met or exceeded 6 of 9 Welsh Government Public Library Standards in 2012-2013. The County Borough's performance is deemed as average when compared to Wales as a whole. For the purpose of comparison, the average number of Standards achieved by Welsh Library Authorities in 2012-13 was 6 the highest number achieved by an Authority was 8 and the lowest was 3. Welsh Government Standards assessors commended the Authority's 2012-13 Annual Return for the clarity of its detail and the coherence of the Council's approach to the planning and delivery of its Library Service.

### **Amendments To Council's Standing Orders For Contracts; Adoption Of Caerphilly County Borough Council Procurement Policy And Strategy And Welsh Government Procurement Policy**

The report was presented to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 1st October 2013.

The report sets out a number of proposals to update the current Standing Orders for Contracts. The proposed amendments are summarised in Appendix A together with Standing Orders as amended. The amendments are minor in detail but will allow a secure operational guide to procuring in an open, fair and transparent manner whilst maintaining all the principals of the EU Procurement Legislation. Appendix B sets out the WG Policy to Procurement, much of which is already embedded as operational working practices within the Authority. Appendix C details a Procurement Policy and Strategy for Caerphilly. Members sought

assurances that the Council has a process in place to ensure that anyone who is employed to act on its behalf in relation to any procurement, adheres to the Council's Standing Orders for Contracts and Financial Regulations.

## **CABINET – 30TH OCTOBER 2013**

### **Progress With Rugby/Football Centre Of Excellence At Ystrad Mynach**

To update Cabinet on the facility at Ystrad Mynach in terms of construction progress/timeline and user agreements and to seek approval for a partnership request to be made to the Welsh Rugby Union.

Cabinet Members will be aware of the requirement for the replacement of sports pitches as a result of the loss of pitches in Ystrad Mynach resulting from the development of Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr and previous decisions (taken by Cabinet in 2012) to develop all weather facilities instead of standard grass football and rugby facilities.

The development commenced in May 2013 after the relevant planning permission was secured and a European Procurement exercise was completed for the construction work.

#### **Construction Progress and Completion Timeline:-**

To date two contracts have been let. The first contract was completed earlier this year (2013) and was for the demolition of the former hospital buildings. Under this contract the buildings were taken down to floor slab level, demolition material crushed and screened for reuse where appropriate and the site generally made safe. The works were undertaken by Bond Demolition of Bedwas.

The second, and main contract, is for the construction of the playing fields and associated infrastructure. Excellent progress has been made thus far. Approximately 80% of the site has been excavated to remove building foundations, floor slabs, and abandoned services. This has been followed by the commencement of construction of the two grandstands, the formation of the new rugby pitch and the commencement of the changing facilities/conditioning suite/community facility.

The main contractor, Heron Bros of Northern Ireland, is aiming to get the main structure wind and weather tight as soon as possible. This in turn will allow the internal trades (plumbing/heating/electrical etc) to be undertaken over the Winter months. Completion of the project is programmed for the end of March 2014.

#### **Progress with User Agreements:-**

Officers have developed a usage profile for the 3G Rugby and Football pitches and Gymnasium. This profile has been developed in conjunction with key partners such as the Gwent Dragons, Welsh Rugby Union and Cardiff City Football Club.

The usage profile is based around dividing the day (Monday to Friday) into 3 key areas to allow for a mix of use by elite teams, representative age grade teams and community clubs.

## **CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 12TH SEPTEMBER 2013**

### **Protocol Between Caerphilly County Borough Council Crime And Disorder Scrutiny Committee And Safer Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership**

To inform and seek comments on the amended protocol between Caerphilly County Borough Council and the Safer Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership (SCCSP) for the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee. The revised protocol reflects the changes to the statutory responsible partners on the SCCSP since the election of the Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Police and Justice Act 2006 require local authorities to convene a Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee, to meet at least biannually, to scrutinise the work of the local Community Safety Partnership.

The Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee operates under an agreed protocol between partners setting out the terms of reference, the scrutiny role of elected members, the process for meetings and reports and the sharing of information between partners and the committee.

The advent of the Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner and the dissolution of the former Gwent Police Authority has meant that the Police Authority is no longer a statutory responsible authority. The list of responsible authorities under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 was amended by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 in November 2012.

## **EDUCATION FOR LIFE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 24TH SEPTEMBER 2013**

### **Report Of The Cabinet Member For Education And Leisure**

Councillor Mrs. R. Passmore, Cabinet Member for Education and Life Long Learning, gave a verbal report and informed Members that the figures for School Attainment 2012/13 have not yet been confirmed but a full report will be brought to Members at a later date.

Councillor Mrs. R. Passmore advised that the performance of pupil in Foundation phase has increased year on year. Key Stage 2 has seen an improvement in all subjects, which contribute to an increase in the core subject indicator from 82.7% to 84.3%, which has exceeded the target of 83%. Key Stage 3 has also shown an overall improvement, contributing to the core subject indicator from 68.4% to 73.5%. Key stage 4 results are provisional results and it was advised that they should be treated with caution as they may be subject to change. However, it was reported that the percentage of learners achieving the level 2 threshold rose by over 4% to 68.05%, and there was an overall increase in level 2+ English and Maths, although the performance varied across schools. It should be noted that 5 out of the 15 secondary schools in Caerphilly made more than a 5% improvements in this indicator.

The Cabinet Member referred to the Flying Start Programme Expansion 2013-15. An outline of the programme was provided and members were pleased to note that the expansion will offer an entitlement to families in a further 9 areas, making 19 in all. The number of children who will benefit from this programme will also increase from 1,262 in 2011/12 to 2,246 in 2014/15. Cabinet has now approved the recruitment of staff required to implement this expansion.

Finally, the Cabinet Member highlighted the achievements of The Basement Youth Information Network, CYPN Award Finalists. Councillor Passmore was delighted to inform Members that following the judging of the Children and Young People Now Awards 2013. The Basement Youth Information Network has been voted as a finalist in the category for The Advice and Guidance Award.

The Basement is a youth information and support service, which provides free, confidential and impartial advice, information and advocacy for young people between the ages of 11 and 20 within the Borough. The Children and Young People Now Awards have become the hold standard for everyone working with children, young people and families in the UK. These awards provide a great source of pride and recognition for all those who strive day in, day out, to improve the lives of others. They offer an opportunity to raise the profile of projects and initiatives to funders and the general public.

## **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Equalities implications have been taken into account for a number of reports submitted to Cabinet and other committees.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 None, this is an information paper only on the contents of Caerphilly CBC reports which contains items of interest for the Voluntary Sector Committee.

## **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 None arising.

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

- 8.1 Not applicable.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 Members are invited (if they feel appropriate) to select any report for further consideration by the Committee by requesting the report author to attend a future meeting of the Voluntary Sector Committee to take questions/prepare another report.

## **10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 To ensure Members are fully briefed on items of interest for the Voluntary Sector.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

- 11.1 Local Government Act 2000.

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