



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY PANEL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN,
ON THURSDAY, 28TH MAY 2015 AT 5.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor D. Havard - Vice Chair (Presiding)

Councillors:

M. Adams, H.A. Andrews, C. Elsbury, S. Kent, C.P. Mann.

Together with:

P. Cooke (Team Leader, Sustainable Development & Living Environment),
S.M. Kauczok (Committee Services Officer).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Mrs A. Blackman, K. James and J.A. Pritchard.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the beginning or during the course of the meeting.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the Sustainable Development Advisory Panel meeting held on 26th February 2015 were approved and signed as a correct record.

4. VOLUNTEERING IN CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH

The Chair welcomed Keri Williams, Caerphilly Volunteering Information Officer, GAVO, to the meeting.

Keri began by providing a brief background to GAVO and her role as a Volunteering Information Officer. Members were informed that GAVO is committed to strengthening the effectiveness of the voluntary and community sector across Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Newport and Monmouthshire. It is the oldest voluntary council in Wales with four voluntary centres. GAVO supports the voluntary sector across Gwent through information, training and advice and encourages voluntary and statutory organisations to work together in planning new services.

Working with individuals and community groups as well as the public and private sector, GAVO supports the community through: -

- The provision of information, advocacy and support to communities and groups.
- Recruiting volunteers and providing a comprehensive volunteer service to individuals and host organisations.
- Promoting opportunities for voluntary organisations to work together through participation.
- Encouraging voluntary and statutory organisations to work together in planning new services.
- A community transport service which operates within Blaenau Gwent and Monmouthshire.
- Community training for both individuals and groups
- Responding to the needs of the community by identifying unmet needs and developing new services.
- Representation and partnership with government and local authority.

The COMPACT works with organisations including the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee, Caerphilly CBC, South Wales Fire and Rescue, ABUHB etc and responds to the needs of the community by identifying unmet needs, improving services and bringing about quality of life improvements with local people. Last year GAVO placed 266 people into volunteering placements and the organisation is well on its way to beating its target this year.

Potential volunteers are invited to contact the GAVO Volunteer Centres or access the WCVA Volunteer Wales website. GAVO can arrange informal meetings to discuss local volunteering opportunities and will guide and support the volunteer to determine the most appropriate voluntary work to meet their needs. On-going support is given to enable the volunteer to fully benefit and enjoy their volunteering experience and confidentiality is respected and maintained at all stages of the volunteer's involvement with the Centre.

There are lots of volunteering opportunities, including working with children and families, young people, people with learning difficulties/health problems etc. For people who prefer to work outdoors, there are conservation, environmental and heritage schemes. Some people are looking for a chance to learn new skills, make new friends, give something back to the community or just have fun. Gwirvol, a Wales-wide initiative led by the views of young people to encourage more young people in Wales to get involved with their communities through volunteering, offers youth led grants administered by GAVO.

GAVO's successful bid through the Big Lottery fund for the Sunflower Project, which is embedded in Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr and Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan Hospitals, has seen it go from strength to strength since its inception in January 2014. The volunteers befriend patients and on occasion organise activities in the Day Rooms. The volunteers receive comprehensive induction in a range of training, including infection control, dementia awareness, manual handling and POVA. The Project works in partnership with various departments of ABUHB and other voluntary sector organisations and is looking to expand.

Members were advised that GAVO can liaise with organisations to identify suitable volunteering opportunities including one off schemes that they might use to offer their employees possible team building activities. During the course of the discussion, it was agreed that Paul Cooke would pursue the proposal that a promotional day be held at Penallta House, during Volunteers Week if possible, to raise awareness of the volunteering opportunities that exist in the community.

5. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STAFF SURVEY

Paul Cooke, Team Leader Sustainable Development and Living Environment, introduced the report which informed Members of the findings of the Sustainable Development, Health and Wellbeing, staff survey which was undertaken between November 2014 and January 2015.

In total 1,014 people responded to the survey. Of those 7% were school based and 51% mostly office based. As part of the survey, questions were included to obtain data on 4 SD indicators i.e. level of understanding of sustainable development; the percentage of staff that drive to work in a car on their own; the percentage of staff who take 30 minutes or more of exercise 5 or more times per week and the percentage of staff who engage in voluntary activity in their local area.

Overall the average level of understanding of sustainable development from the 14/15 survey was 2.37%. This was down from 2.5 in 2008 and further down from 2.6 in October 2007. In terms of the second indicator, 78% of respondents said that they travelled to work in a car on their own. This compares to 66.9% in 2008 and 79% in 2007. 7% car share compared to 10.4% in 2008 and 7.2% in October 2007. 12% walk to work compared to 17% in 2008 and 10% in October 2007.

In terms of exercise, only 3% of respondents in 2014/15 said that they took part in 30 minutes or more of vigorous physical activity at least 5 times per week. 10% said that they took part in moderate physical activity at least 5 times each week. In 2008 22.5% of respondents took part in 30 minutes or more of exercise 5 or more times per week which was up from 18% in 2007. In 2014/15, 60% never took part in any vigorous physical activity. 44% never took part in moderate physical activity and 16% never took part in light physical activity. Of those surveyed in 2014/15, 65% felt that they were physically active.

With regard to the percentage of staff who engage in voluntary activity in their local area, in 2014/15 8% of respondents engaged in voluntary activity between 1 and 3 hours per month compared to 10% in 2008. 5% volunteered more than 10 hours per month compared to 9% in 2008 and 69% never volunteered compared to 67% in 2008.

The Panel discussed the findings and expressed surprise that the average level of understanding of SD across the Authority was 2.37%. Discussion ensued on the possibility of re-introducing the SD workshops that had been held for staff in the past. Reference was also made to the potential benefits of promoting volunteering amongst staff, which Paul confirmed he would be pleased to pursue.

As it had been a combined questionnaire, it was proposed that members of the Employee Health and Wellbeing Group be invited to present the findings relating to that section to a future meeting of the Panel. In the meantime, officers would undertake a detailed analysis of the results of the survey and present their recommendations in due course.

The Panel noted the findings of the survey set out in the report and endorsed the proposed course of action.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION PLAN REPORT APRIL 2015

Paul Cooke, Team Leader Sustainable Development and Living Environment, presented the report, which informed Members of progress by the Authority on the work on climate change adaptation as required under the Climate Change Act 2008.

The Welsh Government's guidance on climate adaptation follows a 5-stage management-system styled approach, the details of which are set out under paragraphs 4.4 to 4.8 of the report. The guidance identifies that undertaking a Local Climate Impact Profile (LCLIP) is a useful step in developing a Climate Change Adaptation approach. The main aim of the LCLIP is to ascertain whether weather events over the study period have had a serious impact on Council activities. The LCLIP findings should assist the Council in forecasting and planning for future disruptions to their activities resulting from future, possibly more severe, weather events (potentially linked to climate change).

The first stage of the process consisted of researching media sources in order to identify occurrences of extreme weather events between 2003 and 2013 which impacted on life in Caerphilly and therefore on Caerphilly Council operations. The study identified 89 events of extreme weather.

The next step was to ascertain the “real” relationship between the media reported events and their impacts. A series of meetings was undertaken with senior officers from each of the Authority’s services. The interviews were used to identify specific impacts of the extreme weather events on the service, how the service has responded and to identify the most significant events and impacts in order to prioritise and focus future actions. A total of 128 impacts were identified of which 33 were rated as “high” priority.

The work has identified that there is a good understanding of climate change issues across the Authority. Services are aware that the climate is changing and are considering and planning to adapt to the changes they are seeing. Climate change adaptation issues are being factored into the overall change process that the Authority is currently going through.

The completion and approval of the LCLIP will mean that Part 1 of the statutory guidance will be complete. The next step, set out in Part 2, is for those impacts identified as being high priority to go forward for further investigation, vulnerability assessment and risk assessment.

The Panel noted the progress being made on Climate Change Adaptation within the Authority.

The meeting closed at 6.32 pm.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any amendments being recorded in the minutes of the next meeting.

CHAIR