



VOLUNTARY SECTOR LIAISON COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN ON WEDNESDAY 2ND DECEMBER 2015 AT 10.30 A.M.

PRESENT:

Cllr. D. Carter – Chair

Councillors:

Mrs. E. M. Aldworth, Mrs. P. Cook, R. W. Gough, C. Hawker, K. James, D.W.R. Preece, J. A. Pritchard.

Together with:

Bargoed YMCA	-	Ms. J. Price
Caerphilly 50+ Forum	-	Mr. D. Morgan
Caerphilly Parents & Carers Forum	-	Mrs. B. Helps
Caerphilly People First	-	Mr. C. Luke
Disability Can Do Organisation	-	Mrs. H. Williams
GAVO – Assistant Chief Executive	-	Mrs. E. Forbes
GAVO (Vice-Chair)	-	Mr. R. H. Cooke
Groundwork Wales	-	Mr. B. Dando
Homestart Caerphilly Borough	-	Mrs. M. Snowden
Menter Iaith	-	Mrs. L. Jones
Right From The Start	-	Ms. C. Loring
The Parent Network	-	Ms. M. Jones
The Vanguard Centre	-	Mrs. M. Wade
Van Road United Reformed Church	-	Mr. J. Wade
VOLUME	-	Mr. D. Brunton

Also present:

J. Dix (CCBC Policy & Research Manager), J. Elliott (CCBC Senior Research Officer), A. Palmer (CCBC/GAVO), G. Jones (GAVO), C. Burns (Interim Chief Executive CCBC), C. Jones (Head of Performance & Property Services – CCBC), N. Scammell (Acting Director of Corporate Services and S 151), C/Insp. N. McLain (Gwent Police)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Ms. L. Ackerman, J. Bevan, P. J. Bevan, Mrs. P Griffiths, G. Johnston, A. Lewis, R. Woodyatt, Cllr Keith Reynolds (Leader of Caerphilly County Borough Council).

Also from, Mr. L. Clay (Abertridwr Community Church), Ms. P. Jones (Caerphilly Care & Repair, Mr. A. Read (Cancercareline), Mrs. K. Stevenson (Groundwork Wales) Mrs. M. Chapman (Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner for Gwent), Mr. H. Llewellyn (Town & Community Council Representative), Mrs. D. Lovering (Caerphilly Business Forum Representative), Ms. S. Crane & Ms. C. Gregory (ABUHB), Mr. H. Llewellyn (Town & Community Council Representative).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

3. MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the meeting on 16th September 2015, and they were accepted as a true record.

4. CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL BUDGET SETTING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT RE-ORGANISATION UPDATE – CHRIS BURNS, INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Chris Burns (CB) updated the Committee on the budget setting process. At the moment the budget proposals for Caerphilly County Borough Council are out for public consultation, with colleagues to expand further following his update.

On Local Government Reorganisation, CB informed that the Welsh Government has published a Draft Local Government (Wales) Bill, which is out to consultation until 15th February 2016. There is an Executive Summary of the Bill, which makes for easier reading, given the detail of the Bill across a number of documents. There are proposals under the Bill, which will not be considered until after the National Assembly for Wales Elections in May. The nature of the Bill is wide ranging, for example including Community Councils *general power of competence*, different boundary configurations, local authority finances, the public participation duty as well as other matters.

The most publicised proposal is to reduce the present 22 local authorities to 8, with options for 2 or 3 Counties in North Wales. The proposal in this area is to create a 'Super Gwent' authority, which will combine Caerphilly, Torfaen, Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire and Newport creating the largest authority in Wales. There will be Local Government elections, as scheduled in 2017. In 2019 there will be new elections to form a Shadow Authority i.e. Greater Gwent representation, and in 2020 the new authority will be in place. There will then be Local Government Elections in 2023, and from that year onwards, the elections will be on a five year cycle.

Through reorganisation there will be complex issues to address, for example the wide variety of Council Tax levied, and the harmonisation of this, across other councils. It was noted that Blaenau Gwent Council's council tax is over 30% higher than the Caerphilly borough's.

Detail is provided in the Bill on Community Area Committees (also included under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act) in addressing local issues, with County Councils possibly being able to delegate functions to the Committees.

It was noted that Caerphilly County Borough Council led by the Leaders of the political groups will be submitting a response on the Draft Bill consultation to the Welsh Government.

CB introduced Nicole Scammell (NS) Acting Director of Corporate Services and S 151 Officer, to give an update on the financial situation and overall budget proposals for the Council. NS informed the Council is assuming a 4.3% reduction from the Welsh Government, and a continuing period of austerity. Budget setting for 2016/17 has been delayed by the later than usual date by the Government Spending Review not being until 25th November.

NS referred to the overall Council saving proposals set out in the 14th October 2015 Cabinet report, which had been circulated to the Committee Members in advance of this meeting. 70% of the proposed savings will be of nil public impact not affecting front line services. NS noted the requirement that Health and Schools budgets are protected within Local Authorities, and there is as yet an unknown increase in funding for Health.

NS explained that the Council's Cabinet have set out draft savings proposals after an extensive period of public consultation. It was noted that the Council's Scrutiny Committees are looking in detail at the budget saving proposals with all the papers for the committee in the public domain and readily available. The budget decisions will be ratified by Full Council on 24th February 2016.

NS passed to Colin Jones (CJ) Head of Performance and Property Services who talked through the previously circulated Special Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee report (7th December 2015) on the Medium Term Financial Plan 2016/17 for Property and Policy Services. The report proposes to – *reduce the Council's annual budget for supporting voluntary organisations in 2016/17 by £30k*. CJ noted that over the years the Council had done well in protecting the Voluntary Sector Budget, but given the extent of financial pressures facing the Council cuts now need to be considered with a 8% reduction proposed in the core funding provided through the budget to: Groundwork Wales, Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent Citizens Advice Bureau, and Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations, and reductions in the budget heading promoting the work of the Voluntary Sector, and the Community Plan. It is proposed that the officer costs for supporting the Voluntary Sector is retained, as *it contributes significantly to the special partnership relationship this council has developed with the voluntary sector over many years*.

CJ referred to the Wales Audit Office (WAO) *All Wales Local Government Improvement Study: Council funding of third sector services*, which has recently commenced and is considering whether councils' commission third sector services effectively (previously circulated to the Committee) and noted that the findings of the study will be reported back to the Committee.

CJ stated he would take comments on the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee report up to noon 7th December 2015, if they could be channelled through Jackie Dix (Policy & Research Manager).

The Chair thanked, Colin Jones, Nicole Scammell and Chris Burns for their presentations, and expressed his gratitude on behalf of the Voluntary Sector for keeping them well informed. He said that he would hope that the Council and the Voluntary Sector will continue to keep the successful relationship ongoing

The Vice Chair speaking on behalf of the Voluntary Sector Representatives sitting on the Committee endorsed the protection of officer costs for supporting the Voluntary Sector, which has contributed to the special relationship the Council has with the Voluntary Sector.

Emily Forbes (Deputy Chief Executive GAVO) noted the importance of CCBC's wider funding to the Voluntary Sector and the accumulative impact of these cuts on the Sector, and asked what was CCBC's total spend on funding the Voluntary Sector.

Chris Burns commented that this is a piece of work that is currently being considered by CCBC, and estimated that funding was in the region of £3-5m with a sizeable amount of funding attributed to the funding of Education and Social Services projects. Chris Burns referred to the current Wales Audit Office (WAO) study, and noted that although the Council is not one of the 6 in-depth local authority areas, that the Council is contributing to the data request from the WAO, and will keep the Committee informed of the outcomes of this study.

In response it was commented that the Voluntary Sector brings significant money into the Caerphilly borough through lottery and other sources of funding.

Although it was acknowledged that continuing cuts to budgets were inevitable in these times of economic restraint, it was noted that there is a potentially a bigger role for the Voluntary Sector to play in the borough.

The importance of the local Voluntary Sector pulling together was emphasised as it was felt that there was a danger that contracts could be lost to outside, national voluntary organisations.

5. UPDATE ON THE WHITE RIBBON CAMPAIGN AND JUNIOR AND YOUTH FORUM PRIORITIES FOR 2016 – CAERPHILLY YOUTH FORUM REPRESENTATIVE

A representative from the Caerphilly Youth Forum gave a PowerPoint presentation on the priority issue over the past year. Under the Health, Social Care & Well-Being theme –

Domestic Abuse – There are not enough services for different age groups affected.

The Youth Forum has worked alongside Llamau on the white Ribbon Campaign, and supported Safer Caerphilly in the *Tweet your feet Campaign*, to raise awareness on Domestic Abuse. The Forum has also created a film in association with the Welsh Government, on healthy relationships. In order to further publicise the White Ribbon campaign, the Youth Forum has created a radio advertisement to advertise *Our Launch*, and as part of the continuing campaign, another launch event was held at Blackwood Miners Institute which coincided with International Children's Rights Day on the 19th November 2015.

A poster was created focusing on the facts of Healthy / Unhealthy Relationships and a festival wrist band was designed and created to tie in with the White Ribbon Campaign. Examples of the bands, publicity posters and leaflets explaining the signs of domestic abuse and its consequences, were handed out to the Committee members, in the form of information packs.

The Junior Forum Priority for 2015 was *The Living Environment*. This concentrated on persuading the public to reduce litter, and fly tipping, and also to clean up dog mess.

The priority for the Youth Forum 2016 is *Education for Life*. It will assist in modernising the Youth Service so it fits into young people's lifestyles with Wi-Fi in all building – based locations, improving access to the service and increased awareness of the service through use of social media.

The priority for the Junior Forum is the Living Environment. This will encourage the public's need to respect the natural habitat of wildlife.

The Chair thanked the Youth Forum representative and the accompanying Youth worker, for an informative presentation and wished them well in their new projects for 2016.

6. COMPACT PRESENTATION AND Q & A: UPDATE ON OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORKS FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD CARE NETWORKS IN CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH – ANEURIN BEVAN UNIVERSITY HEALTH BOARD.

Unfortunately representatives from the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) were unable to attend this meeting to give the presentation. Following the meeting the PowerPoint was circulated, with the ABUHB offering to give the presentation at a later date to the Committee.

7. CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOPROUGH ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY – ROB HARTSHORN, HEAD OF PUBLIC PROTECTION & ANTI POVERTY OFFICER CHAMPION

Rob Hartshorn (RH) spoke on a paper about the Caerphilly borough Anti Poverty Strategy. In explaining *What is poverty?* - it means that for individuals, and in family situations, not being able to make ends meet. This may for example mean that fuel and other utility bills are not able to be paid, and the household may not be in the position on being online to take advantage of better deals.

A Caerphilly borough Anti-Poverty Board has been established with the following membership: the Member Anti-Poverty Champion Cllr Elaine Forehead and the Officer Anti-Poverty Champion the Head of Public Protection. Along with the Chief Housing Officer, the Chief Education Officer, the Head of Regeneration and Planning, and Public Health Wales. There is also a standing invitation to the Leader and Chief Executive of the Council to attend.

The Anti-Poverty Board held its first meeting on 27th July 15. The meeting chaired by the Interim Chief Executive agreed to meet quarterly. There are a number of existing groups contributing to tackling poverty in the borough. The Anti-Poverty Board has reviewed existing delivery arrangements and agreed to provide strategic lead to:

- The Welfare Reform Steering Group
- Poverty Programme Collaboration Group
- Training and Education Forum.

A complementary strand of work has been initiated in response to the 2014 release of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD), which ranks St James 3 (largely comprising of Lansbury Park) as the most deprived area in Wales. The Lansbury Park Board has been established to address the multifarious adverse factors in Lansbury Park in an attempt to turn the area around in making Lansbury Park once more a desirable place to live, and to build in stability to the community. Caerphilly County Borough Council is determined to tackle the causes of this poor ranking. Work will focus on:

- Tackling low household income levels and debt
- Improving employment opportunities and helping people to become work ready
- Fostering healthy life styles in supporting and empowering local people to make healthy choices
- Focus on initiatives promoting the mental health and well being of local people
- Improving education attainment and promoting lifelong learning
- Improving access to local services through better coordination and understanding of local need.

Cllr. D. Preece said that there should be a priority within the Anti-Poverty Strategy on the links with the causes of obesity, with particular reference to parents / carers of young children as they are growing up, and the potential unhealthy lifestyles.

RH replied that physical activity is addressed in the Anti-Poverty Strategy and the ABUHB has a strategy to cover obesity issues.

Cyril Luke referred to page 9 of the Anti-Poverty Strategy under Prevention point 2. He said that the understanding of Universal Credit etc., for people with learning disabilities, will be difficult and people will need support from Social Services. They may also not be IT literate so could there be any alternatives or assistance offered?

RH said that he would hope that Tenancy Support would be able to provide advice and deal with these issues. However he would look into this.

The Chair thanked Rob Hartshorn for his presentation on the Anti-Poverty Strategy.

8. VOLUNTARY SECTOR REPRESENTATIVES QUESTION: DISCUSSION ON COMMUNITY CENTRES AND HOW THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR CAN BE INVOLVED – STEVE HAWKINS, COMMUNITY CENTRES SERVICE MANAGER

Steve Hawkins was invited to this meeting to discuss comments and queries on Community Halls and Community Centres. Discussion centred around a possible confusion over questions raised on this subject from previous meetings. The question is how exactly can community based organisations support their centres and halls.

Community Centres and Halls are managed on a day to day basis by Management

Committees (Trustees), all of which have charitable status. One of the main problems is actually recruiting and retaining committee members on these committees. Ideally there should be greater representation from the 18 to 21 age group, but these people are not interested in participating on management committees.

Management Committees (Trustees) are responsible for *managing* community centres and not for managing the activities that take place within them. There is a distinct shortfall in those willing to organise and run such activities on a voluntary basis.

Emily Forbes (EF) said that there are forty two community centres in the county borough which will require building insurance and caretakers insurance. Should this not be provided under the Health and Well Being, and Anti-Poverty Strategies as services to the people? When required Community Centre Forums are arranged for management committee members to attend, as a supportive measure, to update on new initiatives and resolve queries. SH to further discuss these issues with EF.

9. REVIEW OF COMPACT AGREEMENT AND ANNUAL COMPACT ACTION PLAN: JACKIE DIX, POLICY AND RESEARCH MANAGER

Jackie Dix (JD) said that a review of the Compact Agreement and Annual Compact Action Plan needs to be undertaken for next year. The review of the Compact Agreement will need to incorporate new policy directions ushered in by the Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 . A Task and Finish Group will need to be formed to work on the Compact Agreement 2017 – 2021, and to review the design of the Annual Compact Action Plan, which will be convened by the Council's Policy Unit. This Group will comprise of Compact Partners, and nominated Councillor and Voluntary Sector Representatives and some staff members from GAVO. The Chair asked if there are any volunteers to sit on this Group that they should get in touch with JD.

10. OPEN DISCUSSION: WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE COUNTY BOROUGH (AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL COMPACT PARTNERS AND COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES TO RAISE KEY ISSUES)

No issues raised.

11. ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR COMPACT PARTNERS (ONE QUESTION ONLY FOR EACH REPORT – UP TO 15 MINS)

a) Update from the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB)

A written report was provided with the committee papers. There were no questions raised on this report.

b) Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations

A written report was provided with the committee papers. There were no questions raised on this report.

c) Digest of Caerphilly County Borough Council Committee Reports

A written report was provided with the committee papers. There were no questions raised on this report.

d) South Wales Fire & Rescue Service

A written report was provided with the committee papers. There were no questions raised on this report.

e) Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Gwent

A written report was provided with the committee papers. There were no questions raised on this report.

12. COMMUNITY PLANNING QUARTERLY BRIEFING:– SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 2015

To receive and note the information items attached.

13. DECISION & ACTION SUMMARY

SUBJECT	DECISION	ACTION
1. Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Report 07/12/15	Comments on the budget report to be channelled through Jackie Dix in collating for Colin Jones	All
2. Wales Audit Office (WAO) <i>All Wales Local Government Improvement Study: Council funding of third sector services</i>	Committee to receive further updates on the study	Jackie Dix
3. Anti-Poverty Strategy under Prevention point 2 raised that the understanding of Universal Credit etc., for people with learning disabilities, will be difficult and people will need support from Social Services. They may also not be IT literate so could there be any alternatives or assistance offered?	RH said that he would hope that Tenancy Support would be able to provide advice and deal with these issues. However he would look into this.	Rob Hartshorn
4. Members sought for task and finish group of Compact Agreement and Annual Compact Action Plan	Compact Partners to contact Jackie Dix direct. Nominations required for Councillor and Voluntary Sector Representatives	GAVO – and Jackie Dix

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

Wednesday 16th March 2016 at 10.30am in the Sirhowy Room, Penallta House.

Meeting ended 12.10 pm.