



VOLUNTARY SECTOR LIAISON COMMITTEE - 21ST SEPTEMBER 2016

**SUBJECT: COMPACT WORKING WITH NATIONAL BODIES, AND FUTURE
STRATEGIC DIRECTION FOR COUNTY VOLUNTARY COUNCILS**

REPORT BY: GWENT ASSOCIATION OF VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Committee Members with an update from Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO) on their work with the Welsh Government around developing the third sector scheme following: Continuity and Change - Refreshing the Relationship between Welsh Government and the Third Sector in Wales, and around the infrastructure of County Voluntary Councils (CVS) with Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA).

2. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 2.1 This work is fundamental to the workings of the Compact Agreement with the Voluntary and Community Sector in the Caerphilly county borough. Currently there is a transitional phase as the Compact Agreement moves into alignment with the provisions of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 over the next two-years up to July 2018.

3. THE REPORT

3.1 Working with Welsh Government around the Third Sector Scheme

A Local Third Sector Scheme is an agreement between Third Sector representatives and public sector bodies to work together on agreed outcomes for the benefit of the wider community. This can address funding arrangements to reach desired outcomes as well as joint working and common understanding of key principles. Previously these agreements have usually been known as Local Compacts. Essentially this is an agreement as to how the relationship between statutory and Third Sectors should be established, maintained and monitored locally, with a view to providing a platform for dialogue to improve the well-being of people and communities. There is scope to develop Third Sector Schemes on a regional basis if deemed appropriate by local partners.

- 3.2 Welsh Government committed in their revised Third Sector Scheme 2014 to prepare guidance to support statutory partners in preparing Local Compacts or Third Sector Schemes to support local and regional implementation. A national Working group was created by Welsh Government's Third Sector Unit and GAVO's Deputy Chief Executive Officer was invited to offer expertise in drafting the guidance document. A draft was initially consulted on in a workshop with a range of representatives from third sector and public bodies. Given the new Minister, the new focus on Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the yet unknown Programme for Government, this guidance has not yet been published. However, the final guidance is likely to include:

- *What is the purpose of these guidelines?*
- *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*
- *What is a Local Third Sector Scheme?*
- *Who are the Partners in a local Third Sector Scheme?*
- *Why is it important to develop a local Third Sector Scheme?*
- *What is the distinctive contribution of the Third Sector to Public Service Delivery?*
- *Producing a local Third Sector Scheme.*
- *Agreeing Outcomes*
- *Monitoring the Third Sector Scheme and Welsh Government's role.*

3.3 The guidance will also include *Principles underpinning Partnership Working*. Since the previous guidelines on producing local Compacts was issued, two important sets of Principles have been published: the Principles for Public Engagement and the Welsh Government Principles for Working with Communities. Taken together, these provide a solid foundation on which to build a relationship both between organisations and with the wider community, and are offered here as a basis for development of local Third Sector Schemes. See link below:

<http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/principles-for-working-with-communities/?lang=en>

3.4 GAVO is now awaiting an update from the Welsh Government on the latest draft and revised timetable for publication.

3.5 **Strategic Direction for Wales Council for Voluntary Action and County Voluntary Councils**

Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) and the 19 Community Voluntary Councils (CVCs) across Wales are currently working on a joint bid for Welsh Government core funding from April 2017. This bid will be submitted in October 2016 and will outline a shared strategic framework for infrastructure provision across Wales and will reflect recent increased collaboration between WCVA and the CVCs, under the emerging branding ambitions of - *Third Sector Support Wales*.

3.6 Welsh Government infrastructure funding distributed through WCVA was subject to a 9% cut in 2015/16. It is clear that further funding reductions for 2017/18 will drive structural change, reference the WCVA and CVC architecture in Wales.

3.7 Initial meetings with Carl Sargeant, Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children, suggest that the following are priorities and provide a framework for the further shaping of an innovative and responsive infrastructure offer:

- The Cabinet Secretary recognised the ongoing need for infrastructure support and that this was needed more now than ever before, it was acknowledged that without infrastructure support there was no mechanism by which the Sector could be galvanised.
- It was acknowledged that the 4 pillars of infrastructure support i.e. Good Governance, Strategic Engagement and Representation and Sustainable Funding reflect the core business of CVCs and WCVA.
- Governance – aspiration to see increased diversity in the Trustee pool and also leadership from the sector to encourage improved governance.
- Innovation, evidence and impact – an interest in identifying people focused on locally based solutions to issues.
- Safeguarding – no additional funds available for the DBS checking service, ambition to progress alternative solutions and which could be across other Government Departments.
- Volunteering – interested in developments linked to the National Citizen Service and representation of young people and roles for trusted individuals in volunteering.

3.8 In summary the conversations with the Cabinet Secretary have been positive, affirming and constructive. The infrastructure offer was valued and there was an aspiration to commit to longer term funding agreements, although there was a re-iteration of increasingly challenging financial constraints and that more difficult funding decisions would need to be made in the future. Priorities were confirmed as around economic regeneration and well-being and the critical role the Third Sector has to play in these agendas. Issues and solutions linked to Adverse Childhood Experiences were also a real focus. A direct dialogue and further meetings with WCVA and CVC representatives were welcomed.

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