



VOLUNTARY SECTOR LIAISON COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN ON WEDNESDAY 21ST SEPTEMBER 2016 AT 10.30 A.M.

PRESENT:

Mr. R. Cooke - (Chair)
Councillor D. Carter - (Vice-Chair)

Councillors:

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

Together with Representatives from:

Abbeyfield (Mr. H. Billington), Abertridwr Community Church (Mr. L. Clay), Caerphilly 50+ Forum (Mr. D. Morgan), Cando (Mr R. Evans), Cruse Bereavement Care (Mrs. C. Williams), Carers Trust South East Wales (Mr W. Morgan), GAVO – Assistant Chief Executive (Mrs. E. Forbes), GAVO - (Ms G. Jones) GAVO – (Ms. S. Maddox), Homestart Caerphilly (M. Snowden), The Parent Network (Ms. M. Jones), The Vanguard Centre (Mrs. M. Wade), Natural Resources Wales (Mr J. Goldsworthy).

Also present:

J. Dix (Policy Unit), A. Bolter (Group Manager (Strategy Funding and Support), A. Dredge (Committee Services Officer).

A. Palmer (CCBC/GAVO), L. McDonald (ABUHB), H. Llewellyn (Town and Community Council Representative).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: J. Bevan, Mrs. P Griffiths, G. Johnston and R. Woodyatt, Age Cymru (Ms. D. Johnston), Bargoed YMCA (Ms. J. Price), Caerphilly People First (Mr C. Luke), Cancercareline (Mr. A. Read), M. Featherstone (GAVO), Groundwork Wales (Mrs K. Stephenson), M. Williams (South Wales Fire and Rescue Service).

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

3. MINUTES – 15TH JUNE 2016

Subject to it being recorded that Councillor J.A. Pritchard's attendance had not been recorded, the minutes of the meeting held on the 15th June 2016 were approved as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING

Compact Review – (Minute No. 4)

It was agreed at the previous meeting that the Compact Review be put on hold and this would be reconvened in May 2017 to coincide with work around developing the "Caerphilly County Borough Well-being Plan". In terms of the "Caerphilly County Borough Local Well-being Assessment" a residents questionnaire survey on "The Caerphilly We Want" is open to 30th September 2016, which committee members are urged to respond to. Ms Dix is currently drafting the "Caerphilly County Borough Local Well-being Assessment" with a view to completing the drafting by 31st October 2016. Following editing, the assessment will be considered by the Caerphilly Public Services Board in their meeting on 6th December 2016, and will be published in April 2017.

Compact Action Plan – (Minute No. 9)

Members of the Committee expressed their disappointment by a lack of commitment by some of the Compact Partners to the "Caerphilly County Borough Delivering Together Compact Agreement 2013-17" with organisations not meeting their full responsibilities as Compact Partners. Cllr. R. Gough moved for Martin Featherstone (CEO, GAVO) to raise again the responsibilities of organisations as signed up members of the Compact Agreement at the next meeting of Caerphilly Public Services Board.

At the previous meeting of the Committee it was requested that a copy of the Compact Action Plan Annual Report 2015-16 be sent to Mr Mark Drakeford, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government. Ms Dix read out a letter received in response from Mr Drakeford. Mr Drakeford noted of particular interest to him - *"is the way you are approaching the work of the compact...looking to embed the sustainable development principle, including the five ways of working...It is important that the strong relationship with the Third Sector in Caerphilly continues to grow...I am also pleased to see Natural Resources Wales now sits on all Public Services Boards...Therefore it makes sense for collaboration between the Liaison Committee and the PSB to include NRW, as they play an important statutory in ensuring the wellbeing of local areas is fully considered."*

4. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION ON VOLUNTARY SECTOR FUNDING - ANTONY BOLTER GROUP MANAGER (STRATEGY FUNDING AND SUPPORT) CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Mr Bolter explained to the Committee that he was happy to express his views during the session and stated that these views were not necessarily those of the Council. In terms of current funding in Wales and the potential impact of Brexit, the following details were provided:

- In the first quarter of 2016, exports to the EU accounted for nearly 40% of Welsh exports.
- In addition to regulating trade across the single market, EU also negotiates external trade agreements on behalf of Member States and has trade agreements in place with over 50 Countries.
- Such agreements can take up to seven years to negotiate.
- It should be noted that any member of the World Trade Organisation can benefit from preferential trade agreements involving any other member.
- Wales currently receives gross funding of c. £600m p.a. from the EU, through sources managed by Welsh Government.

- EU directly managed funds also that benefit Wales.
- Important to note that EU funding was due to end in 2020 anyway, so this should not be blamed on Brexit.
- European Investment Bank has directly invested nearly £2bn during past decade.
- Estimated net benefit from EU for Wales in 2014 = £245m or £79 per head or 0.4% of Welsh GDP.

An overview was provided in terms of other issues to consider, including legislation – with EU regulations currently becoming law in the UK automatically. The laws will remain until the UK leaves but many existing laws will then need to be re-visited. In concluding, Mr Bolter advised that currently there are too many unknowns especially regarding UK and Welsh Government negotiations on future funding support for Wales.

Concerns were expressed in relation to grant funding ceasing in Wales in 2020. Members were advised that the award of EU funding is based on Gross Domestic Product (GDP). There will be issues with ongoing funding as the government will no longer be “paying in” to the EU. The Welsh Government will need to negotiate with the Government for support. A Member queried if a Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and was informed that Officers are trying to establish the position but it is evident at this stage that there will be a significant impact on funding. Reference was made to interest rates and a member suggested/queried if Welsh Government or Local Authorities could set up an investment fund in a way of keeping investment local.

The Chair thanked Mr Bolter for his informative update and responding to questions raised.

5. COMPACT WORKING WITH NATIONAL BODIES AND FUTURE STRATEGIC DIRECTION FOR COUNTY VOLUNTARY COUNCILS – MRS EMILY FORBES, GAVO

Mrs Forbes provided the Committee 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). It was explained 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.

The Committee were advised that the Wales Council for Voluntary Action and Wales Association of County Voluntary Councils (WACVC) made up of 19 County Voluntary Councils (CVCs) across Wales, that 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. It will reflect recent increased collaboration between WCVA and the CVCs, under the emerging branding ambitions of - *Third Sector Support Wales*. 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.

In concluding Mrs Forbes confirmed that initial conversations with Carl Sargeant, Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children have been positive, affirming and constructive. Priorities were confirmed 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.

The Chair thanked Mrs Forbes for her informative report.

6. DISCUSSION WITH CAERPHILLY PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD ON COMPACT AGREEMENT AND COMPACT ACTION PLAN ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16 - VERBAL UPDATE, GAVO

Mrs Forbes provided the Committee with a verbal update on behalf of Mr Featherstone (GAVO). She confirmed that Mr Featherstone took the Compact Action Plan Annual Report to the Public Services Board (PSB) and although there were no detailed discussions held in this regard, all parties signed up to the Compact.

7. COMPACT ACTION PLAN 2016-17 SUGGESTIONS - JACKIE DIX, CCBC

Ms Dix introduced the report and reminded the Committee that at the meetings in April and June 2016 it was suggested that all Compact Partners come up with actions of shared activity with the Voluntary Sector/Other Compact Partners for a brief transitional action plan for 2016-17. To date comments have been received by the Council, the Aneurin Bevan Health Board, and had been presented in Appendix 1 of the report as a – *Proposed Caerphilly and Community Sector Compact Action Plan April 2016 to March 2017*. The Committee endorsed this proposed Compact Action Plan for 2016-17.

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

Members referenced two recent incidents regarding potential scams within the Borough. A member informed the committee that a BT phone line at her organisation had been hacked and a bill had been received for the last quarter amounting to £6,000 and the Fraud Squad in London are currently investigating the matter. Another member advised that a bill had been received from British Gas at a local Community Centre for the sum of £5,000 that was also being investigated. The committee were advised to be vigilant in their homes as well as work places and that these incidents should be reported to the Police and Crime Commissioner.

9. ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR COMPACT PARTNERS

Compact Partner Reports had been received from GAVO and Natural Resources Wales with no comments made during the meeting. A report had been received from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Gwent and it was suggested that the incidents referred to under agenda item number 8 be referred to the PCC. It was actioned for Ms Dix to approach the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for a cyber-crime expert to attend the next committee meeting.

The Chair invited Compact Partners to come back to either Ms Dix, or Ms Palmer with any queries stemming from the reports.

10. COMMUNITY PLANNING QUARTERLY BRIEFING – JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2016

The above report was received and noted as an item of information.

11. ANOUNCEMENTS

The Committee were informed that Mrs E. Forbes is leaving GAVO at the end of September 2016 to take up a new post. The Chair expressed his personal thanks for the help and support received throughout from Mrs Forbes and offered his best wishes for the future, which was endorsed by the whole Committee.

The Chair confirmed that he would be standing down from his post as Vice Chairman of GAVO at the AGM on the 10th November 2016 and consequently would no longer be eligible to be the Chair of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee, and this is likely to be his last meeting he will be chairing. He expressed his appreciation for the support received over the years from the Committee and Jackie Dix and the Policy Unit. Councillor Carter (Vice-Chair) thanked Mr Cooke for his valued advice, support and guidance he had given to the Committee and Members individually over many years of service. He wished him every success and happiness for the future. Councillor R Gough noted that the close working relationship that Bob Cooke provided with the Voluntary Sector would be difficult to replace, and commented that he was a “true Figurehead - and always took his time to speak to GAVO staff.” Cllr L Ackerman paid tribute to Mr Cooke’s “immense contribution to the Voluntary Sector.” Cllr J Prichard spoke of how much she had valued Mr Cooke’s support and guidance when she became Chair of the Voluntary Sector Liaison committee in 1999. Councillor DWR Preece stated he had worked closely with Mr Cooke since their days spent at the former Islwyn Borough Council and thanked Mr Cooke for his enormous contribution. Finally Councillor K James stated that Mr Cooke – “had run the Committee rock steady, with first rate experience and knowledge, with his work to the community un-paralled and now deserved a well-earned rest.”

12. DECISION AND ACTION SHEET

Councillor R.W. Gough requested that the Compact Action Plan Annual Report be taken back to PSB for a detailed discussion to be undertaken in terms of the importance of the Compact Agreement and the responsibilities of the organisational representatives on the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee. Ms Dix to contact Office of Police and Crime Commissioner to request an expert on cybercrime to speak to a committee meeting.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

Wednesday 7th December 2016
Wednesday 15th March 2017
Wednesday 28th June 2017

The meeting ended at 11.40am.