



VOLUNTARY SECTOR LIAISON COMMITTEE - 7TH DECEMBER 2016

SUBJECT: VOLUNTARY SECTOR REPRESENTATIVES QUESTIONS

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The report provides the two questions that the Voluntary Sector Representatives have asked of Caerphilly County Borough Council regarding finances and funding.

2. THE REPORT

2.1 Question 1

Now that the Welsh Government has published its draft Budget for 2017-18 what are the implications for the Council's budget, and potential knock on effect for the Voluntary Sector?

- 2.2 A verbal response will be given at the committee meeting by Nicole Scammell, Acting Director of Corporate Services. The focus of the response will be on the draft 2017/18 budget proposals report being presented to Cabinet on the 30th November 2016, which will be emailed to the committee in advance of the Voluntary Sector Liaison committee meeting.

2.3 Question 2

The Voluntary Sector Representatives have concerns over the Communities Secretary Carl Sargeant announcement that he is minded to phase out the Communities First programme while establishing a new approach focusing on three priority areas of employment, early years and empowerment. What does the Council think the funding implications of this will be for both Council and Voluntary Sector staff funded through Communities First, and also on the ground community level engagement through the Communities First Programme?

2.4 Response

- 2.5 The Welsh Government have advised that their current position is that a final decision on the Communities First programme will not be made until wider engagement with communities, staff and strategic partners has been completed.
- 2.6 Whilst the changes being considered by Welsh Government have potential to impact upon many people in the Caerphilly county borough the Council is unable to confirm its view on the implications of the potential changes to the Communities First programme until the Welsh Government confirm their guidance and outcome targets for any Communities First programme that would be delivered beyond April 2017.
- 2.7 The Cabinet Secretary has highlighted that the Welsh Government's new approach will focus on three priority areas: Employability, Early Years and Empowerment. On 24th October 2016 the Welsh Government initiated their public engagement programme by calling on people all

across Wales to have their say in the development of building resilient communities through participation in an online survey. The Welsh Government are also seeking feedback from people who have experience of Communities First, particularly on how the programme can be focussed on employability and the way in which Lead Delivery Bodies may provide alternative ways of maintaining health and learning elements of Communities First.

- 2.8 The Welsh Government have developed two surveys; one for people who have personal experience of Communities First, and another for people who do not have any personal experience of the programme. Both of these surveys can be accessed online via the following links:-

Personal experience of Communities First:

<http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/talk-communities/yes-i-have-personal-experience-of-cf/?lang=en>

No personal experience of Communities First:

<http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/talk-communities/no-i-dont-have-any-personal-experience-of-cf/?lang=en>

- 2.9 The Council currently awaits details of the closing date on the consultation from Welsh Government but is actively encouraging all residents and organisations involved with the Communities First programme to participate in the consultation process to ensure their views are communicated to the Welsh Government.
- 2.10 2017 is currently expected to be a year of transition and change for the Communities First programme. The Welsh Government have indicated that budgets for the period beyond April 2017 will not be released until January 2017, accompanied by a further statement from the Cabinet Secretary; from which time it will be possible to begin planning delivery. The Welsh Government has indicated that a transitional Communities First programme will possibly run until December 2017.
- 2.11 The Welsh Government have confirmed that they are committed to the future of the associated Communities for Work and LIFT employment programmes; and the Welsh Government plan to work with Lead Delivery Bodies throughout the engagement period to identify options to build an infrastructure for delivery of LIFT and Communities for Work.

Dave Whetter, Principal Engineer, Communities