



VOLUNTARY SECTOR LIAISON COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON WEDNESDAY 14TH MARCH 2018 AT 10.30 A.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs E.M. Aldworth (Chair)
Mrs M. Jones (Vice-Chair) - The Parent Network

Councillors:

A. Collis, K. Etheridge, J.E. Fussell, R.W. Gough, V. James, Mrs B.A. Jones, Mrs T. Parry, R. Whiting, L.G. Whittle, W. Williams

Together with Representatives from:

Abertridwr Community Church (Mr. L. Clay), Caerphilly Care and Repair (Mrs P. Jones), Charter Housing (Ms A. Clifford), Cruse Bereavement Care (Mrs C. Williams), GAVO (Mr M. Featherstone), Homestart Caerphilly (Ms R. Evans and Mrs M. Snowden), Right From The Start (Ms C. Loring), Vanguard Caerphilly (Mrs. M. Wade)

Also present:

K. Peters (Corporate Policy Manager), P. Cooke (Senior Policy Officer), S. Mutch (Early Years Manager), S. Tiley (Assistant Chief Executive - GAVO), Inspector J. White (Gwent Police), R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Bevan, S. Cook, A.G. Higgs and A. Whitcombe, Mr J. Goldsworthy (Natural Resources Wales) and A. Palmer (CCBC/GAVO), together with representatives from Abbeyfield (Caerphilly) Society Limited (Ms H. Billington), Bargoed YMCA (Ms. J. Price), Caerphilly People First (Mr C. Luke), Citizen's Advice Bureau (Ms J. Channing), Disability CANDO Organisation (Ms N. Perkins), Drugaid Young Persons Service (Ms L. Tibbs), Groundwork Wales (Ms K. Stevenson), Menter Iaith (Ms L. Jones), SCOPE (Mr M. Goldwyn), South East Wales Carers Trust (Ms N. George-Titley, Van Road United Reformed Church (Mr J. Wade) and YMLAEN (Mr D. Brunton).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES – 6TH DECEMBER 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on 6th December 2017 were approved as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING

4. Draft Budget Proposals for 2018/19 (Minute No. 5)

In response to Members' queries, it was confirmed that final savings proposals for 2018/19 totalling £6.736m had since been approved by Council on 22nd February 2018.

It was also noted that a report in respect of the Welsh Church Act Fund would be presented to Cabinet on 28th March 2018, and that if approved, the funding change would be implemented for the new financial year.

5. PRESENTATION ON CHILDREN'S ZONES (CHILDREN FIRST)

The Committee received a presentation from Sarah Mutch (Early Years Manager) on the new Children First project for the county borough.

Members were provided with an overview of the project, which has been set up as part of a new WG initiative to allow local communities and organisations to work together to address the specific needs of children and young people in the area and to reduce the inequalities some children and young people face compared with their peers in more socially advantaged places.

It was explained that the Children First project is not subject to any additional funding, but will instead look at utilizing existing resources and look at doing things differently to improve outcomes for children and young people in a geographical place. The project will focus on the communities of Fochriw (building on the significant community engagement of the Spinning Yarns project) and St James (whereby it will build on the significant multi agency work of WG poverty programmes, statutory and voluntary sector partners).

The Committee were reminded of the Deep Place Study which researched the Lansbury Park area to identify key areas of work needed to regenerate the area. Arising from this, a Coalition for Change Board and Operational Task Group have been established, with a Children First Steering Group sitting underneath these and then task groups sitting underneath this steering group.

The Children First project places a focus on community engagement, promoting the needs and aspirations of children, and removing barriers to future opportunities and success. Key questions revolving around these areas have been presented to families, children and young people, and the initial feedback received to date centres around the negative connotations and stigma associated with areas of the county borough such as Lansbury Park and Fochriw. Work is being carried out in this regard to encourage children to develop separate identities and be proud of their origins, and also to change perceptions surrounding young people and anti-social behaviour. This includes the establishment of a one-stop shop for central help and support and information on what's on in the St James area and the development of summer play scheme provision and 'own voice' in the Fochriw area.

Officers outlined the composition of the Children First Steering Group, which is made up of representatives from Early Years, Flying Start and Family Support, Communities First, the Youth Service, Parent Network and Families First, together with staff from other Council areas (such as Policy and WHQS) and various external agencies (such as Barnardo's and United Welsh).

Members were advised of the areas of initial consideration for the task groups which will sit underneath the Children First Steering Group, and which will aim to develop a common understanding and definition or description, unpick the actual issues and then agree how these can be addressed as a group and community. Initial themes include school readiness, anti-social behaviour perception, parental aspirations, young people aspirations, the impact of

poverty, community perception, safety and wellbeing. Membership will be relevant to each task group and may extend outside of those members of the Steering Group. Officers also outlined the extensive list of initial tasks planned for the project, which will focus on community engagement and continue the work being carried out with parent forums and partner agencies.

Following the Officer's presentation, discussion took place on the stereotypes associated with Lansbury Park and a Member suggested that rather than referring to the estate as St James, it would be more conducive to take an alternative approach, such as encouraging people to be "proud of Lansbury Park". Officers explained that the general consensus received from the focus groups is that it is more about stopping the use of Lansbury Park as a 'label', and that similarly it is important to change the way that people think about Fochriw with its rural connotations. Members were advised that it is intended to carry out the initial Children First pilot project in these two areas and then roll out the concept across Flying Start areas if successful. Officers are also examining the proposals arising from the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and how these can be maximised for the benefit of the Children First project.

A Member referred to St James' position in the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, and expressed the need to improve reading attainment levels and reduce the number of children leaving school with no qualifications. Officers outlined the transferable work being carried out by task groups, the need to improve and develop engagement with young people, and the sizeable task ahead in order to bring about a culture change and new set of values.

Members also discussed the need to improve community understanding and awareness in accessing services for young people and knowing what partner agencies to contact. The Committee emphasised the importance of having a police safety presence but also equally acknowledged the need to change perceptions surrounding young people and anti-social behaviour.

Having noted the contents of the presentation, the Committee thanked the Early Years Manager for her informative delivery.

4. VOLUNTEERING WALES WEBSITE DEVELOPMENTS

The Committee received an update from Martin Featherstone (Chief Executive Officer – GAVO) in respect of the Volunteering Wales website.

Members were provided with an update on digital developments across the website, which is the 'go to' place for volunteering in Wales and is currently being redeveloped to allow enhanced functionality for organisations and volunteers. 19 organisations, including GAVO, are currently working together to establish the direction of travel for the website. There is a need for the overhaul to address key areas of delivery, support sustainable engagement, have regard to governance and safeguarding considerations, and act as an overarching platform for volunteering opportunities.

The new website will be able to report on key volunteering indicators and outcomes, and will host a range of information directories, such as supporting people, hospital discharge, and care and repair. A whole raft of activity is planned for the site and it is intended for the new site to remove barriers to engaging with volunteering opportunities.

Organisations will be able to post opportunity information as before, in addition to a range of new functions, including managing recruitment processes, scheduling volunteer rotas, communicating with volunteers, and monitoring volunteering hours. Volunteers will be able to create their own profile, to search for and apply to join opportunities, to leave feedback and to log volunteering hours. Mobile apps will be available for smartphones to maximise the site's potential and accessibility, and information and activity can be shared on social media.

Mr Featherstone added that he would be attending a regional Third Sector Support Wales session the following day, which will give organisations an opportunity to learn more about the new platform, how it can be used and share examples of good practice.

There were no questions received from the Committee, but Members were pleased to note the details of the update and of the positive role the website could play in recruiting younger volunteers.

5. CAERPHILLY PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD WELL-BEING PLAN 'THE CAERPHILLY WE WANT 2018-2023'

Update on the Draft Wellbeing Plan

The Committee received an update from Kathryn Peters (Corporate Policy Manager) on the final draft version of the Caerphilly Public Services Board Well-being Plan 'The Caerphilly We Want 2018-2023'

Officers provided an outline of the draft Well-being Plan, which has been developed through collaborative partnership activity and has been based upon the local assessment of well-being for the area. It sets out how the PSB has developed its local objectives of well-being (the Well-being Objectives) and the steps it intends to take to meet them.

The draft Plan includes 4 high level objectives that place an emphasis on positive change and bringing about improvements in well-being for both current and future generations, empowering and enabling all residents to achieve their own potential, and enabling communities to be resilient and sustainable. It also includes a Delivery Plan that sets areas for collaborative activity under 4 Enablers and 5 Action Areas that together will lead these objectives. Copies of the draft Delivery Plan setting out these Enablers and Action Areas were tabled at the meeting.

Sitting beneath the Delivery Plan will be the groups of staff and resources that the individual Board members wish to dedicate to the delivery aims, and the Board have also agreed on the lead organisation for each aspect of the plan. Within each Action Area and Enabler, groups of staff, community members and the private and third sector partners have begun to be identified. Each theme will have a lead officer who will be expected to set programmes of activity for the duration of the plan. These action plans are currently being developed in more detail and will be in place in time to commence delivery by the statutory deadline.

Members were advised that good progress is being made on the Enablers and that agreeance has been reached on the lead agencies for certain sectors. To achieve these, there needs to be consideration of budgets, an emphasis placed on joint working, meaningful communication and the maximisation of benefits to communities.

Officers provided a summary of how each of the Enablers and Action Areas will be addressed and outlined the lead agency for each area. Members noted the involvement of the Council, voluntary sector and Regional Partnership Board across these areas and the significant staffing resources required in order for these to be achieved.

A Member queried whether the Public Services Board meetings are open to the public. Officers explained that the meeting documents are available on the PSB website but that the meeting itself is not open for observers. It was noted that a recommendation from the Partnership Scrutiny Committee had been made in this regard and that the date of the next scheduled PSB meeting is 6th June 2018.

The Committee noted the details of the update and thanked the Corporate Policy Manager for her presentation.

Volunteering Action Area

The Committee received an update from Martin Featherstone (GAVO) in respect of progress made against Action Area 2 (Volunteering and Apprenticeships) for the draft Wellbeing Plan. It was noted that GAVO have been designated as the lead agency for this Action Area.

This Action Area aims to develop a co-ordinated programme of volunteering, maximising it as a route to personal well-being and employment, including promoting corporate volunteering. It is also intended to establish an all-age apprenticeship programme across PSB member organisations with a co-ordinated point of access, and maximise the opportunities for residents through the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and the Valleys Task Force.

Mr Featherstone acknowledged the opportunities that will be created by this Action Area, including improvements to digital platforms, the forging of greater links with PSB partners, more effective time banking, and the promotion of corporate volunteering. Examples of good practice for corporate volunteering have been demonstrated through organisations including Barclays Bank and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), which also provide opportunities for continued professional development (CPD). The Committee were advised of the importance of continuing the momentum built to date in order to develop synergy across volunteering opportunities and develop innovative ways for organisations to work together.

The Committee suggested that there is a need to examine strategy and develop a structured training programme in this regard. One organisation outlined how they already encourage volunteers to achieve qualifications where there is opportunity to do so and suggested that this could be adapted as an example of good practice. Members emphasised the importance of continued personal development and the need to encourage volunteers to raise the bar for greater achievements. One agency outlined the difficulties they are experiencing in recruiting volunteers, explaining that the majority of their volunteer base are middle-aged and that there is a general feeling that there are massive barriers to volunteering. The Committee discussed the importance and value of recognising older volunteers and the value of 1 to 1 approaches/mentoring, and also referenced the need for alternative recruitment approaches in order to gather a wider bank of volunteers.

Members thanked Mr Featherstone for his update and noted the details of the presentation.

7. ITEMS OF INTEREST CONCERNING THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR FROM COMPACT PARTNERS - VERBAL UPDATES

Gwent Police

Inspector J. White (Gwent Police) outlined details of the new Community Fund recently announced by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent, which will concentrate on funding projects for children and young people. The Committee were provided with details of the proposals and the application criteria, and were pleased to note the details of the new initiative and funding available.

Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations

Members were advised that the 'One Beat' roadshow is now held twice a year and that the next event had been arranged for Saturday 24th March 2018 at Caerphilly Library.

Caerphilly County Borough Council

Reference was made to the roundabout improvements work at Pwllypant and the impact on the neighbouring community of Llanbradach. Members acknowledged the strength of feeling regarding the works but asked for the Council's efforts in minimising the disruption and communicating updates regarding the works to be noted.

Updates from Voluntary Sector Organisations

The Committee were pleased to hear that the Vanguard Caerphilly choir currently have a busy schedule of events and have recently performed at several concerts with professional opera singers.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, 20th June 2018 at 10.30 a.m. in the Sirhowy Room, Penallta House.

The Chair thanked those present for their attendance and contributions and the meeting closed at 12.10 p.m.