



VOLUNTARY SECTOR LIAISON COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE DIGITAL MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON THURSDAY, 17TH MARCH 2022 AT 10.30 A.M.

PRESENT:

Chair: Mrs L. Jones (Menter Caerfilli)
Vice Chair: Councillor Mrs E. M. Aldworth

Councillors:

A. Collis, S. Cook, K. Etheridge, J. E. Fussell, R. W. Gough and L. G. Whittle.

Together with representatives from:

GAVO: S. Tiley (Chief Executive Officer), A. Palmer (Deputy Chief Executive Officer), G. Jones (GAVO Regional Strategic Lead Caerphilly), K. Dawson (Development Officer).

The Voluntary Sector: Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly Care & Repair Cymru, Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent Citizens Advice, Groundwork Wales, Menter Caerfilli, Oakdale Community Centre, Parent Network and The Youth Centre - Cefn Hengoed,

Compact Partners: Aneurin Bevan UHB, Gwent Police and Town and Community Councils.

Officers:

P. Cooke (Senior Policy Officer), P. Massey (Policy Officer), V. Doyle (Policy Officer), S. Hughes (Committee Services Officer) and J. Lloyd (Committee Services Officer).

Also in attendance:

N. Jones (Gwent Police Funding and Partnership Manager).

RECORDING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chair reminded those present that the meeting was being recorded and would be made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items. [Click Here to View.](#)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Bevan, D. C. Harse, A. G. Higgs, Mrs T. Parry, Mrs D. Price, Mrs E. Stenner, Mrs J. Stone and W. Williams, together with representatives from Homestart Cymru, SSAFA Gwent, Natural Resources Wales and South Wales Fire and Rescue Services.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES – 2ND DECEMBER 2021

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee meeting held on 2nd December 2021 be approved as a correct record. By a show of hands this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee held on 2nd December 2021 (minute nos. 1 – 8) be approved as a correct record.

The Chair considered matters arising from the minutes of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee held on 2nd December 2021. Clarification and further information were provided on a number of items.

In response to a request from a representative of the Voluntary Sector the Policy Officer provided an update on the Community Empowerment Fund. The Committee was informed that the closing date for the second round of the grant scheme closed on 18th February 2022 and the applicants will be informed of the outcome in the next couple of weeks. The Committee was further informed that the total funding allocated from across the two rounds in this current year was around £98,000 across the county borough. It was noted that the Community Empowerment Fund is ward allocated, however in calculating the allocations the funding is divided by the number of elected representatives with the Caerphilly borough. The involvement of local ward Members, as one of the key contact points in local communities, to work with and support local community groups to develop project ideas that meet identified needs on a ward basis was highlighted. The Committee was advised that any underspend in the current year will be ring-fenced and carried forward to next year.

During the course of the update, it was noted that there had been no applications received in either round from a number of wards. In response to a request from the GAVO Regional Strategic Lead for Caerphilly, the Policy Officer agreed to provide a list of those wards in order for GAVO to identify the reasons why no applications have been submitted and to support local community groups to develop project ideas. The Policy Officer emphasised that all applications for funding must have support, in writing, from their local elected ward Member prior to submission.

The Chair sought clarification as to how the Community Empowerment Fund is promoted to the Voluntary Sector. The Policy Officer informed the Committee that the marketing of the scheme is with ward Members and not directly communicated to the Voluntary Sector. She explained that the idea of scheme is to empower groups within the community to bring forward projects and highlighted how Members have an important role to play in this. It was noted that detailed information regarding the [Community Empowerment Fund](#) is available on the Council's website.

A Member referred to the grants to the Voluntary Sector and a formal request was made for a report to be brought to the next Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee meeting encompassing the criteria, eligibility, publicity, application process and the amount remaining in the budget. It was further requested that the report included an action plan and timescales and also information on consultation and engagement. Following on from previous discussions the Member also requested that a report on the Community Empowerment Fund to be brought to the next meeting of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee, to include how many ward allocations have not been used and the reasons why and an update on the funding allocated to individual wards. The Policy Officer clarified a number of points raised by the Member. In terms of a report on the small grants to the Voluntary Sector, the Committee was advised that

the criteria for this is set by the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel. The Committee was further advised that the criteria is reviewed on an annual basis and will be considered again following the election period. The Policy Officer also informed the Committee of changes that are going to be made to the website for both the Welsh Church Funds Act and the Community Empowerment Fund. Further to this, the Committee was provided with an update on a meeting held with the Corporate Policy Unit and GAVO to discuss the concerns raised by representatives of the Voluntary Sector. At that meeting it was agreed the Corporate Policy Manager would meet with representatives of the Voluntary Sector, on date to be arranged, to discuss some of the issues around grants to the Voluntary Sector and how promotion of the scheme can be supported. In conclusion, it was agreed that the request for the two reports will be discussed at the meeting with the Corporate Policy Manager and, if appropriate, the reports will be scheduled for a future meeting.

4. MINUTES – 27TH JANUARY 2022

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the special meeting of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee held on 27th January 2022 be approved as a correct record. By a show of hands this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee held on 27th January 2022 (minute nos. 1 – 4) be approved as a correct record.

5. WELL-BEING ASSESSMENT UPDATE

The Senior Policy Officer provided a verbal update on the Well-being Assessment. It was noted that the consultation period for the Draft Well-being Assessment has now ended and the document has been updated in light of the responses received. The Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee was informed that the revised version was formally approved at the Gwent Public Services Board (PSB) meeting on 10th March 2022 and is due to be published by 5th May 2022. The Well-being Assessment will then be used to develop the Gwent Well-being plan by May 2023.

The Senior Policy Officer explained to the Committee that the next stage is called ‘response analysis’, which is a more detailed investigation into some of the key themes emerging from the Assessment and how they interact with each other. This detailed analysis will provide the PSB with the information they need to determine their priorities, which will be their new Well-being Objectives. The Committee was informed that the Well-being Assessment identified around 120 issues across Gwent which were reviewed by the PSB and the Senior Policy Officer provided an outline on the areas identified for response analysis, including which organisations would take the lead for each area. The completion date for the response analysis of 30th June 2022 was noted.

The Senior Policy Officer responded to a Member’s query regarding the implications of the current conflict in Ukraine. The Committee was advised that, due to the timescale of events, the impact it will have on the objectives of the plan have not been identified in the Well-being Assessment. It was explained that the situation could be considered under the areas identified for response analysis, in term of how it affects the objectives going forward. It was noted that there was a separate item on the agenda at the PSB meeting to discuss the current situation with regards to Ukraine. The Committee was made aware that, at this point in time, it was unclear whether the implications of the current conflict in Ukraine will be formally considered as part of the Well-being Plan or in collaboration between the PSB and other organisations.

A representative of GAVO referred to the current Well-being Plan and highlighted the importance of the support from the Voluntary Sector in relation to the development of the Gwent Well-being Plan. In response to a query, the Senior Policy Officer provided a summary

of further opportunities for individuals, communities, businesses and other stakeholders involvement.

The Chair raised concerns on behalf of the Voluntary Sector regarding deprivation data and clarification was requested in terms of the provision of the data for each individual county. The Policy Officer explained that deprivation data is published at a very small geographical level and it was not appropriate to include that level of detail in the overall Gwent Well-being Assessment. However, it was further explained that there are five local Well-being Assessments within Caerphilly and the development deprivation data has been included in those documents, which does form part of the Gwent Well-being Assessment.

Following the discussion, the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee noted the update on the Gwent Well-being Assessment.

6. COMMUNITY BUILDING SURVEY UPDATE

The Development Officer for GAVO provided a verbal update on the Community Building Survey. The Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee was provided with a summary of the preliminary data.

In order to provide more context, the Deputy Chief Executive Officer for GAVO explained that representatives of the Voluntary Sector started looking at a Community Building Survey, before the Covid-19 pandemic, to investigate and demonstrate that there are opportunities for services to be provided out of community buildings and to look at how third sector organisations with buildings could collaborate and support their sustainability through potential rental of rooms to other organisations. The Committee was informed that the survey will be circulated to local Ward Members for them to use their local knowledge to encourage organisations across the county borough, that have their own buildings, to complete the survey. The opportunity for the third sector to promote their organisations and activities was emphasised.

The Chair thanked the Development Officer for GAVO for his work on the Community Building Survey and looked forward to receiving a further update when more surveys have been completed. The Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee noted the update on the Community Building Survey.

7. PRESENTATION FROM NATASHA JONES ON HER NEW ROLE AS GWENT POLICE LIAISON OFFICER

The Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee received a presentation from Natasha Jones and a point of correction was noted in that her new role is Gwent Police Funding and Partnership Manager. The Committee was provided with an overview of her role, as the point of contact to co-ordinate funding applications and income generation opportunities.

In response to a Member's query regarding what funding is available to the Voluntary Sector and other agencies from the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Committee was advised that full details including the criteria and application process are available on the Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner website. In addition, Members were informed that the Police and Crime Commissioner has provided the two Local Policing Areas with £10,000 each for the Positive Impact Fund and the application process for this was outlined. The Committee was invited to contact the Gwent Police Funding and Partnership Manager for any further information and assistance regarding funding applications.

Following the discussion, the Chair thanked the Gwent Police Funding and Partnership Manager for attending the meeting. The Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee noted the presentation.

8. ITEMS OF INTEREST CONCERNING THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR FROM COMPACT PARTNERS

There were no items of interest concerning the Voluntary Sector from Compact Partners.

The meeting closed at 11.35 am.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd June 2022, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR