



VOLUNTARY SECTOR LIAISON COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE
AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON THURSDAY, 2ND FEBRUARY 2023 AT 10.30 A.M.**

PRESENT:

Vice Chair (Presiding) – Mrs L. Jones (Menter Caerffili)

Councillors:

R. Chapman, P. Cook, C. Gordon, Mrs T. Parry, D. W. R. Preece, H. Pritchard, Mrs E. Stenner, L. G. Whittle, S. Williams and W. Williams.

Also in attendance:

P. Massey (Policy Officer), H. Delonnette (Senior Policy Officer), K. Peters (Corporate Policy Manager), S. Harris (Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer), R. Hartshorn (Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services), J. Reynolds (Sports and Leisure Facilities Manager), A. Griffiths (Community Wellbeing Manager), L. Hughes (Area Regeneration Co-ordinator), E. Saunders (Area Regeneration Coordinator), V. Doyle (Policy Officer) and S. Hughes (Committee Services Officer).

Together with:

Representatives of the Voluntary Sector: S. Tiley (GAVO), A. Palmer (GAVO) G. Jones (GAVO), S. Ellington (Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent Citizens Advice), R. Evans (Oakdale Community Centre), J. Powell (SSAFA), J. Wade (The United Reformed Church), J. Pritchard (The Youth Centre, Cefn Hengoed) and M. Wade (Vanguard Caerphilly).

Compact Partners: D. Llewellyn (Aneurin Bevan UHB), L. McFarlane (Gwent Police) and H. Llewellyn (Town and Community Councils Representative).

RECORDING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chair reminded those present that the meeting would be live-streamed and a recording made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items - [Click here to view](#). The Committee was advised that voting on decisions would be taken via a show of hands.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K. Etheridge, J. E. Fussell, Mrs D. Price, J. Sadler and J. Winslade.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor H. Pritchard declared a personal interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 5 – Draft Budget Consultation - Presentation, as an active volunteer with the local football club. As there was no requirement for him to leave the meeting, he took full part in the debate.

A question was raised as to whether representatives of the Voluntary Sector should declare any interests as some will be affected by matters discussed in relation to Agenda Item No. 5 – Draft Budget Consultation - Presentation. The Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer advised that as part of the consultation process there was no requirement for representatives of the Voluntary Sector to declare any interests and could full take full part in the debate.

3. MINUTES – 29TH SEPTEMBER 2022

The following point of accuracy was raised in relation to Item No. 6 – Gwent Wellbeing Plan Consultation - Presentation:

In line with Section 43 of the Well-being of Futures (Wales) Act 2015, the consultation period will run from 1st October 2022 and end on 31st December 2022, should state:

In line with Section 43 of the Well-being of Future **Generations** (Wales) Act 2015, the consultation period will run from 1st October 2022 and end on 31st December 2022.

It was moved and seconded that, subject to the point of accuracy, the minutes of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee meeting held on 29th September 2022 be approved as a correct record. By way of a show of hands this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee held on 29th September 2022 (minute nos. 1 – 8) be approved as a correct record.

4. MATTERS ARISING

A request was made for an update on the progress of the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel Workshop to be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

5. DRAFT BUDGET CONSULTATION

S. Harris (Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer) delivered a presentation to provide details on the Draft Budget Proposals for 2023/24. The Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee was asked to consider and comment upon the Draft Budget Proposals for 2023/24 prior to Final Budget Proposals being presented to Cabinet and Council later in February.

A representative of the Voluntary Sector sought clarification on the Voluntary Sector Service Level Agreements (SLA) budget realignment as there was no mention of which organisations it applied to and a request was made for it be removed from the 2023/24 draft savings proposals. The Corporate Policy Manager explained that the savings proposal of £25,200 has never been used for the Service Level Agreements and that it is an amount in the total Voluntary Sector budget which has been unallocated for a number of years. The proposal will therefore not result in a cash cut to the current Service Level Agreements and the budget available to support them would be the same in the coming financial year. The Corporate Policy Manager highlighted that the details of the effect of the proposed cut were set out in more detail in the Integrated Impact Assessments that are hyperlinked to the main budget report that had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Committee was informed that the recipient organisations will be contacted very soon to discuss the Service Level Agreements for the next financial year.

The Committee raised concerns regarding the 50% reduction in the subsidy for Caretaker costs in Community Centres and it was suggested that the budget of each individual Community Centre is taken into consideration. In response to the concerns raised, the Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services acknowledged that Community Centres are in different situations, in terms of how they might accommodate the savings proposal, and that some may be in a better position than others. The Committee was advised that at the moment there is a blanket service provision across all of the Community Centres and therefore some reduction is being proposed across the board. Members of the Committee were asked to note this is a part year saving that will allow work to be undertaken in the first half of the financial year with the Community Centres to introduce the proposal. During the course of discussion, further comments were made in relation to the 50% reduction and it was felt that this would mean the closure of many Community Centres across the borough. It was highlighted that Community Centres are also facing huge increases in their fuel costs and despite this many Centres are opening as warm spaces to help the less fortunate in the communities. Cost comparisons were also made with similar Council premises. In conclusion, a representative of the Voluntary Sector offered a number of solutions to help address this matter. These included asking each Community Centre Management Committee if they feel the need to close their Community Centre to help streamline costs and the number of Centres, calculating each Community Centre's caretaking costs to base it on actual usage and floor area instead of the current flat rate of 12 hours, adding details of each Community Centre's weekly programme to the Council's website, and providing each Community Centre with a copy of the three-yearly building condition survey in order for the Management Committees to prioritise improvements and repairs to keep the buildings up to standard.

Concerns were also raised regarding the proposed deletion of the Community Empowerment Fund budget. It was commented that the Community Empowerment Fund has delivered some very useful projects, especially where wards are able to collaborate, and a request was made for it to continue as it strengthens the rapport between Councillors and their wards. The Corporate Policy Manager reminded the Committee that the current proposal is that any underspend on the 2022/23 financial year will be carried forward into the 2023/24 financial year, which would be on a ward basis for the first six months and then pooled for the second six months of the financial year. In conclusion, the Committee requested the Community Empowerment Fund be continued into the future and not just monies rolled over into the next financial year.

A Councillor requested that the proposal to increase the current scale of charges for use of sports pitches by 20% be revisited in the integrated impact assessment. It was noted that the reason behind this was to minimise the impact upon individuals and target team activities, but it was argued that the proposed saving would impact on individuals as it would impact on the ability for the parents to pay for children to take part in teams sports on a regular basis. The Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services clarified that the proposed fee increase relates to team sports, so the total increase would be spread across all participants taking part in team sports. An alternative proposal would be to look more broadly across sport and leisure fee charges and to introduce increases for individual users, which could be suggested as an alternative proposal which would be fed in as part of the budget consultation process.

A representative of GAVO asked how the Voluntary Sector is going to be involved in the process moving forward. In response the Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer reiterated that as part of the TeamCaerphilly Operating Model, community engagement and collaboration will take place with the Voluntary Sector when working through proposals.

Another Councillor referred to the proposed 50% reduction in the subsidy for Caretaker costs in Community Centres and to the proposed withdrawal of the £10,000 subsidy for Markham Community House and Leisure Centre. A number of concerns were raised including the age profile of members of the Management Committee and difficulties recruiting, paying staff wages and service price increases. It was felt that Markham Community House and Leisure Centre was being treated differently to other areas and the proposal would impact on the facility's ability to continue service at existing levels, which could result in the closure of the facility. The Councillor highlighted that Markham Community House and Leisure Centre is a

Council owned building and if the lease for Markham Community House and Leisure Centre is unable to continue, the Council would still be responsible for the repairs and maintenance of the building. A request was made for the reserves to be used for this savings proposal in order to keep Markham Community House and Leisure Centre open. The Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services noted that a discussion has taken place with the Cabinet Member for Waste, Leisure and Green Spaces who is minded to support a change to this proposal so that it would be a £5,000 reduction for 2023/24. Further comments were made in relation to Markham Community House and Leisure Centre being an anomaly within the current Community Centre and Leisure Centre network. The Sport and Leisure Facilities Manager addressed the Committee to provide context in relation to Markham Community House and Leisure Centre and addressed the concerns and comments raised. The Committee was advised that the facility was initially put in place on the very understanding that it would be delivered by a volunteer network and that reactive and statutory maintenance on the Markham Community House and Leisure Centre site is picked up by the Council to significant amounts. It was highlighted that Sport and Leisure Services continue to support the facility by signposting activities.

RESOLVED that the comments of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee on the Draft Budget Proposals for 2023/24 prior to Final Budget Proposals being presented to Cabinet and Council be noted.

6. PARTICIPATORY BUDGET - PRESENTATION

D. Llewellyn (Integrated Wellbeing Networks Lead, Caerphilly – Aneurin Bevan UHB) delivered a presentation on Participatory Budgeting for community-led health and wellbeing initiatives. The Committee was informed that Participatory Budgeting is envisaged by the Integrated Wellbeing Networks (IWN) as a mechanism to empower communities to decide upon and devise initiatives to address local health and wellbeing challenges. Dedicated funding by the Health Board/IWN has been given to partners to work collaboratively to deliver Participatory Budgeting in Integrated Wellbeing Networks focus areas initially. It was explained that Participatory Budgeting is a form of citizen participation where the communities are involved in the process of deciding how public money is spent.

An update was provided by S. Tiley (GAVO) as Participatory Funding will be transferred from the Local Authority to GAVO to oversee delivery. The Committee was informed of how GAVO are involved in the project and how they are currently working with the Local Authority and health partners to reach the most vital areas to address some of the challenges around health and wellbeing.

A representative of the Voluntary Sector sought further information on the types of community led health and wellbeing initiatives, particularly in relation to speeding traffic and parking on pavements and double yellow lines. In response, D. Llewellyn (Integrated Wellbeing Networks Lead, Caerphilly – Aneurin Bevan UHB) advised the Committee that he envisaged speeding traffic and parking on pavements and double yellow lines would not be the type of project that a community would come up with to address some of their health and wellbeing issues, however he fully accepted the merit in terms of it impacting on the local communities. A number of examples were provided on the types of community led health and wellbeing initiatives that have been focussed on in other local authority areas, including men's mental health and women's health, which are the types of initiatives that are more focussed on addressing some of the health and wellbeing issues. However, it was highlighted that the health and wellbeing initiatives are decided by the community. The representative of Gwent Police offered to have a conversation with the representative of the Voluntary Sector outside of the meeting with regards to speeding, Speed Watch and Go Safe.

Further information was also sought regarding the level of expertise required to take the initiatives forward. It was explained that Participatory Budgeting is very much in the early stages, but hopefully there will be a system in place that allows for people with expertise to work with communities to see how their proposals can be improved in order to have the impact required. A Councillor raised concerns regarding the voting process and the

Committee was assured that the voting process would be transparent and done in a way that is fair and equitable as possible.

In response to comments made on the Participatory Budget funding, which will be transferred from the Local Authority to GAVO, S. Tiley (GAVO) offered to provide an update at the next Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee meeting.

The Chair thanked D. Llewellyn (Integrated Wellbeing Networks Lead, Caerphilly – Aneurin Bevan UHB) for the presentation which was noted by the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee.

7. CAERPHILLY CARES - PRESENTATION

A. Griffiths (Community Wellbeing Manager), L. Hughes (Area Regeneration Co-ordinator) and E. Saunders (Area Regeneration Coordinator) delivered a presentation to provide an overview of Caerphilly Cares. They explained what Caerphilly Cares is and how it came about. During the presentation an overview was provided on a number of areas including collaborating and supporting the voluntary community sector, community well-being priorities, community well-being projects in progress, community well-being future plans, the cost of living priorities, the cost of living crisis projects in progress, the cost of living crisis future plans, community development priorities, training and development projects in progress, volunteering priorities, volunteering future plans and the progress of Caerphilly Cares.

In response to a question from a representative of the Voluntary Sector it was confirmed that there are approximately 21 employees in the Caerphilly Cares Team and there are also a number of vacancies.

Clarification and further information were sought in relation to the type of support provided by the Caerphilly Cares Team. The Committee was advised that the Caerphilly Cares Team are going out and about and visiting welcoming spaces, foodbanks and other community organisations to talk to people in order to understand the variety of needs an individual may face, focusing on early intervention. Caerphilly Cares provides advice and signposting to internal and external community support, ensuring people are able to receive the right support, in the right place at the right time.

The Chair thanked A. Griffiths (Community Wellbeing Manager), L. Hughes (Area Regeneration Co-ordinator) and E. Saunders (Area Regeneration Coordinator) for the presentation which was noted by the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee.

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

There were no items of interest concerning the voluntary sector from Compact Partners.

A request was made for the Shared Prosperity Fund to be an item on the agenda for a future meeting.

The meeting closed at 12.20 pm.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 8th June 2023, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR