



VOLUNTARY SECTOR LIAISON COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE
AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON THURSDAY, 30TH NOVEMBER 2023 AT 10.30 A.M.**

PRESENT:

Chair – Mrs L. Jones (Menter Iaith Sir Caerffili)
Vice Chair – Councillor M. Chacon-Dawson

Councillors:

P. Cook, C. Gordon, J. Jones, Mrs T. Parry, H. Pritchard, L. G. Whittle, S. Williams and W. Williams.

Together with:

Representatives of the Voluntary Sector: S. Tiley (GAVO), G. Jones (GAVO), K. Dawson (GAVO), R. Evans (Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly Care & Repair Cymru), T. Davies (Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly Care & Repair Cymru), K. Stevenson (Groundwork Wales), R. Evans (Oakdale Community Centre), J. Wade (The United Reformed Church) and J. Pritchard (The Youth Centre, Cefn Hengoed).

Also in attendance:

H. Delonnette (Senior Policy Officer), H. Pells (Policy Officer), V. Doyle (Policy Officer), R. Lloyd (Principal Waste Management Officer), N. White (Technical Assistant – Waste Management), N. Campbell (Technical Assistant – Waste Management), C. Phenis (Technical Assistant – Waste Management) and S. Hughes (Committee Services Officer).

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. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R. Chapman, J. E. Fussell, T. Heron, D.W.R. Preece, D. Price and Mrs E. Stenner, together with representatives from Parent Network.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. VOLUNTARY SECTOR LIAISON COMMITTEE HELD ON 8TH JUNE 2023

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee meeting held on 8th June 2023 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 8th June 2023 (minute nos. 1-13) be approved as a correct record.

4. MATTERS ARISING

Clarification was requested regarding the eligibility of Community Centres in applying to the Welsh Church Acts Fund. The Policy Officer, H. Pells, advised the Committee that clarification would be sought and provided subsequent to the meeting.

5. CHANGES TO RECYCLING LAW FOR BUSINESSES AND THE CHARITY SECTOR (PRESENTATION)

The Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee received a presentation from the Waste Management Officer on the new workplace recycling regulations that will be coming into force on 6th April 2024. The Committee was informed that all workplaces such as businesses, public sector and charities will need to separate their recyclable materials in the same way most households already do. The Committee was also informed of the ban on the disposal of all food waste to sewer from non-domestic premises and the ban on specified separate recyclable waste streams going to incineration plants and landfills. It was highlighted that the regulations apply to all waste and recycling collectors and processors who manage household-like waste from workplaces. The Waste Management Officer explained why the legislation is being introduced, who it applies to and the role of the local authority.

Following the presentation, the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee raised a number of concerns regarding the changes to the recycling law and highlighted the implications it will have on charitable organisations, particularly in relation to cost and practicality.

The Waste Management Officer confirmed that a workplace does include a charitable organisation and it will be their responsibility to separate the recyclable materials from general waste. The Officer also confirmed that the collection of recyclable materials is a chargeable service. A discussion took place regarding the different types of charitable organisations and in response to a Member's query, it was clarified that a foodbank is a charitable organisation and will therefore be subject to the new regulations.

During the course of discussion, the Waste Management Officer responded to a number of queries. It was clarified that hospitals have an additional two years to comply with separating their recyclable materials. In terms of support for charities and small businesses, the Committee was informed that government guidance on how to store and manage waste and recycling will be released at the end of the week. The Waste Management Officer acknowledged that it is going to be a challenging situation and advised the Committee that the authority's Waste Management Team will liaise with customers, charities and local businesses to help them comply with the new legislation.

The Committee was advised that Groundwork Wales has been separating their recyclable materials for a number of years and that they would be happy to advise on the process and practicality of it.

In response to a Member's query regarding a period of grace, the Waste Management Officer advised the Committee that there will be a soft touch enforcement within the first 12-18 months, with Natural Resources Wales targeting the larger workplaces and the workplaces

that are ignoring the new regulations. Reference was made to the Waste Management questionnaire and the Committee was advised of the responses and feedback received.

RESOLVED that the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee noted the presentation.

6. THE WORK OF CARE AND REPAIR BLAENAU GWENT AND CAERPHILLY (PRESENTATION)

The Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee received a presentation from representatives of Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent Care & Repair, R. Evans and T. Davies. The presentation outlined what Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent Care & Repair does and the impact their work has on the lives of the people they help. The Committee heard how their mission is to help older and vulnerable people live independently in safe, secure and warm homes. The Committee was provided with an introduction to their core service and some examples of the type of work they help people with. The Committee was also provided with an overview of a Hospital to Healthy Home Case Study. Agency outcomes 2022-23, key performance outcomes and funding sources were also outlined.

Reference was made to the overall performance for 2022-23 and it was explained that Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent Care & Repair receive their main referrals from the Local Authority and health sources. However, it was highlighted that a substantial number of referrals are also received from other organisations such as RNIB and Citizens Advice.

Reference was made to the Hospital to Healthy Home service and a query was raised regarding the response time. The Committee was informed that hospital discharge referrals are prioritised and the response time is generally within five days to complete an adaptation, however it was noted that adaptations are usually completed within two days. It was explained that the response time is dependent on co-ordination with the discharge team, availability and the type of adaptation required. It was highlighted that the Hospital to Healthy Home service supports hospital discharge teams within Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr, as well as colleagues within the Grange, Royal Gwent and Neville Hall. The demand and the number of adaptations that have been carried out was summarised.

The Chair thanked R. Evans and T. Davies for their presentation.

RESOLVED that the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee noted the presentation.

7. HEADLINE RESULTS OF THE GRANT SURVEY (VERBAL UPDATE)

The Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee received a verbal update from the Policy Officer, V. Doyle, on the results of the Grants Survey 2023. The Committee was informed that the survey was invitation only and sent to all recipients of a grant in 2022/23, across all grant schemes, which was 160 organisations or individuals. It was noted that 90 organisations/individuals responded, a response rate of 56.3%, and all respondents were successful in their application. The Committee was provided with an overview of the survey questions and results.

In response to a query, was confirmed that the survey was sent out to organisations and individuals who had applied for a grant, whether or not they were successful. It was highlighted that very few applications are unsuccessful.

The Policy Officer clarified the timescales for processing grant applications.

With regards to the Community Empowerment Fund, the Committee was informed that there are multiple rounds of the grant and the timescale for processing an application is 6-8 weeks following the closing date. In relation to other grant schemes, the Committee was informed that applications can be submitted at any time and are addressed on a monthly basis.

In response to a query, the Policy Officer stated that an annual survey would be considered, however it would be dependent on resources. During the course of discussion, a question was raised as to whether outside or professional advice had ever been sought to improve the design of the application forms. The Policy Officer acknowledged that this query had been raised previously but assured the Committee that Officers within the authority have vast experience in creating application forms. It was highlighted that the application process had been revised to make the process as easy as possible and feedback from the survey indicated that the majority of respondents thought the application form was very easy or fairly easy to complete. The Policy Officer was confident that the application forms are suitable and fit for purpose.

RESOLVED that the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee noted the presentation.

8. GRANTS AWARDED VIA THE GRANTS TO THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR FUND AND THE WELSH CHURCH ACTS FUND

The Policy Officer, V. Doyle, presented the report to inform the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee of the budget available for the Grants to the Voluntary Sector (GTVS) Fund for 2023/24 and the grants awarded between 1st May and 31st October 2023. The Committee was also informed of the budget available for the Welsh Church Acts Fund (WCAF) for 2023/24 and the grants awarded between 1st May and 31st October 2023.

In response to a Member's query the Policy Officer provided clarification on the level of grants available. The Committee was informed that the amount available for the Welsh Church Acts Fund had increased from £5,000 to £7,500, which will be reviewed when the underspend is used. The Committee was also informed that there has been a big increase in the number of applications received for the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Fund, which will reduce the amount that is available in the budget. In terms of the Welsh Church Acts Fund, the Committee was further informed that organisations now receive 50% of the grant upfront.

RESOLVED that Members of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee noted the applications received that met the criteria for the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Fund and the Welsh Church Acts Fund, which have already been approved by the Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer under delegated powers, and which are reported to the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee for information.

The meeting closed at 12.14 pm.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 11th July 2024, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR