



VOLUNTARY SECTOR LIAISON COMMITTEE – 18TH MARCH 2015

SUBJECT: DIGEST OF CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report from Caerphilly CBC contains a digest of committee reports of items of interest for the voluntary sector. If there are reports of particular interest Members can request the committee report author to attend a future meeting of the Voluntary Sector Committee to prepare a further report/take questions.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 A quarterly summary of Caerphilly CBC committee reports selected as they contain areas of interest for the voluntary sector.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 All Caerphilly CBC reports relate to aspects of the Caerphilly County Borough Community Strategy.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The following reports have been selected as having particular interest on voluntary sector issues (note Members can request a full hard copy of any of the reports included) :-

EDUCATION FOR LIFE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 13TH JANUARY 2015 DISCRIMINATORY INCIDENTS IN SCHOOLS REPORT 2014

To update Members on the monitoring and reporting of discriminatory incidents in schools. This report is an update to Education for Life Scrutiny of the report presented in January 2014 and covers the full range of work undertaken by CCBC and partner organisations on Equalities issues, both within the Directorate of Education and in schools and governing bodies, with particular focus on discriminatory bullying.

Members may recall that since the Spring Term in the 2011-2012 academic year, termly reporting of discriminatory bullying incidents to the Directorate of Education has been a mandatory requirement, as part of wider bullying and equalities monitoring.

The positive work being undertaken by this Council is receiving publicity across the country, with a short article in Fyne Times reflecting the last few years' work. Fyne Times is a national publication covering LGBT issues but its most recent edition was specifically around homophobic bullying in Education.

GRANTS TO THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR PANEL - 26TH NOVEMBER 2014 APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

To present the Panel with the applications for financial assistance received to date for the current financial year.

The report advises Panel members of the budget allocations for both the Voluntary Sector budget and the "Welsh Church Fund" and provides details of applications received.
Assistance To Voluntary Sector Budget

The Panel's budget for 2014/2015 is as follows:

- Budget 2014-15 £255,220.00
- Less Discretionary Rate Relief (Estimated) £234,925.00
- Remaining Budget £20,295.00
- Carry forward balance from 2013-14 £83,258.00
- Total Budget 2014-15 £103,553.00
- Total Grants awarded to date £7,215.00
- Balance Remaining £96,338.00

The Discretionary Rate Relief for 2014-15 is now forecast to be £234,925; this is an increase from the last panel meeting projections of some £12,959. This now leaves a projected budget allocation of £20,295. Together with the carry forward from previous years of £83,258.00 this gives a total budget allocation of £103,553.00. To date grant awards total £7,215.00. Budget remaining for allocation is £96,338.00.

HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 10TH FEBRUARY 2015

WALES AUDIT OFFICE REVIEW OF LOCAL AUTHORITY ARRANGEMENTS TO SUPPORT SAFEGUARDING OF CHILDREN

To inform Scrutiny Committee Members of the findings of the Wales Audit Office (WAO) Review into the local authority arrangements to support the safeguarding of children and the actions being undertaken within the Council as a result.

In the period March to May 2014 the WAO completed a review of Caerphilly County Borough Council's (the Council) assurance and accountability arrangements for ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and are being adhered to. The findings of the Review were published in October 2014. The Review was reported to Cabinet on 10th December 2014 where it was agreed that a cross Directorate group of key Officers would be established to implement the recommendations made by WAO. This report summarises the conclusions and recommendations of the Review and serves to update Members on the proposals to implement the required actions on behalf of the Council.

The WAO Review focused on: Does the Council's governance and management arrangements provide assurance that children are safeguarded?

The main questions that the review sought to answer were:

- Are there clear governance, accountability and management arrangements for overseeing whether the Council is meeting its safeguarding responsibilities to children?
- Is the Council monitoring and evaluating appropriate information, which provides assurance that it is meeting its safeguarding responsibilities to children?
- Are assurance systems operating effectively?

The report concluded that:

- The governance, accountability and management arrangements for overseeing whether the Council is meeting its safeguarding responsibilities to children have some weaknesses which the Council is addressing.
- The Council's arrangements for monitoring and evaluating its safeguarding responsibilities to children have some weaknesses which the Council must address.
- The Council's approach to identifying and acting on improvements in its safeguarding arrangements has some weaknesses which the Council is addressing.

It is important for Members to note that the Review does not identify any weaknesses in the operational, day to day safeguarding arrangements for children and young people in Caerphilly. The recommendations relate to the corporate governance of those arrangements.

Following on from the conclusions referred to above, the Review makes five proposals for improvement. These are:

- Develop a Corporate Safeguarding Policy that clearly specifies roles, responsibilities and procedures for safeguarding.
- The Council should clarify who designated officers with responsibility for safeguarding are.
- Improve the range, quality and coverage of safeguarding performance reporting to Members to provide adequate assurance that corporate arrangements are working effectively.
- Ensure all Elected Members and staff who come into contact with children on a regular basis receive training on safeguarding and child protection issues and the Council's corporate policy on safeguarding. This should also include volunteers.
- Identify and agree an appropriate internal audit programme of work for safeguarding.

LICENSING COMMITTEE – 16TH FEBRUARY 2015 INTRODUCTION OF FITNESS/KNOWLEDGE TEST FOR ALL NEW HACKNEY CARRIAGE/PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER'S APPLICATIONS

To inform members of a proposal to introduce a fitness test as a means to assist in the assessment of whether or not a person can be considered as a fit and proper person to be granted a hackney carriage / private hire driver's licence.

This report aims to inform members of recent concerns over the general suitability of applicants for taxi driver licences within the county borough. Increasing numbers of applications are being submitted from persons whose fitness to hold a taxi drivers licence is questionable due to lack of local knowledge, poor communication skills and low levels of literacy and numeracy. The report therefore recommends the introduction of a pre application fitness test as a means of assessing their suitability to hold such a licence.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Equalities implications have been taken into account for a number of reports submitted to Cabinet and other committees.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 None, this is an information paper only on the contents of Caerphilly CBC reports which contains items of interest for the Voluntary Sector Committee.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None arising.

8. CONSULTATIONS

8.1 Not applicable.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Members are invited (if they feel appropriate) to select any report for further consideration by the Committee by requesting the report author to attend a future meeting of the Voluntary Sector Committee to take questions/prepare another report.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 To ensure Members are fully briefed on items of interest for the Voluntary Sector.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Local Government Act 2000.

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