



VOLUNTARY SECTOR LIAISON COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN ON WEDNESDAY 18TH MARCH 2015 AT 10.30 A.M.

PRESENT:

Mr. R. Cooke – Chair

Councillors:

Mrs. P. Cook, R. W. Gough, Mrs. P Griffiths, C. Hawker, K. James, A. Lewis, J.A. Pritchard, R. Woodyatt

Together with:

Abbeyfield	-	Mr. P. Jones
Abertridwr Community Church	-	Mr. L. Clay
Age Cymru	-	Ms. S. Brown
Bargoed YMCA	-	Ms. J. Price
Caerphilly 50+ Forum	-	Mr. D. Morgan
Caerphilly Groundwork Trust	-	Mr. R. H. Cooke
Caerphilly Parents & Carers Forum	-	Mrs. B. Helps
Caerphilly People First	-	Mr. C. Luke
Cancercareline	-	Mr. A. Read
Cruse Bereavement Care	-	Mrs. C. Williams
GAVO – Assistant Chief Executive	-	Mrs. E. Forbes
New CLURV	-	Mrs. J. Morgan
SYDIC	-	Mr. M. Bridgman
The Parent Network	-	Ms. M. Jones
The Vanguard Centre	-	Mrs. M. Wade

Also present:

J. Dix (CCBC Policy & Research Manager), J. Elliott (CCBC Senior Research Officer), A. Palmer (CCBC/GAVO), M. Williams (South Wales Fire & Rescue Service), S. Crane (ABUHB), H. Llewellyn (Town & Community Council Representative)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Ms. L. Ackerman, Mrs. E. M. Aldworth, J. Bevan, P. J. Bevan, D. G. Carter, A. Rees, Mrs. J. Summers.

Also from, Ms. P. Jones (Caerphilly Care & Repair), Ms. J. Lawton (Caerphilly MIND), Mrs. H. Williams (Disability CAN DO Organisation), Mr. M. Featherstone (GAVO Chief Executive) Mr. G. Mitchell (Graig-Y-Rhacca Communities Partnership), Ms. M. Snowden (Homestart Caerphilly Borough), Mr. K. Viney (The Settlement), Mr. J. Wade (Van Road United Reformed Church), Mr. D. Brunton (VOLUME), Sgt. A. O’Keefe (Gwent Police), Mrs. M. Chapman (Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner for Gwent), Mrs. D. Crossman (South Wales Fire & Rescue Service), Mrs. D. Lovering (Caerphilly Business Forum Representative).

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None declared.

3. MINUTES

Item 4.3 regarding the costs of transport to day services for people with learning disabilities, and the mention of a meeting to be held in February 2015, with Caerphilly People First, The Parent Network and CCBC Social Services, to discuss possible savings on further transport options. It was noted that this meeting has yet to be convened, but that it was possible that the meeting would occur in April 2015.

The accuracy of the minutes of 3rd December 2014 was agreed.

4. VOLUNTARY SECTOR REPRESENTATIVES QUESTIONS – CHRIS BURNS, INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE CCBC

- a) Could CCBC highlight some specific services which require third sector support?
- b) What is CCBC's policy on asset transfer, particularly in relation to library and community services and the role the third sector can play?

Chris Burns noted that since he last spoke to the committee in December 2014 that CCBC Full Council in February 2015 approved the budget, which provided £12.3 million savings. £7 million were made from administrative and back office functions, and £1 million from highways maintenance savings.

The Council is aware that there will be tough times ahead in budgeting not just for 2015-16, but for 2016-17 and 2017-18. The final budget settlement from the Welsh Government to Local Government for 2016-17 will not be known until December 2015. It is estimated that savings for CCBC will need to be in a region of £14 million for 2016-17, and £12 million in 2017-18. The Council will need to shrink by 20% over the next two years.

Discussions with Departments across all Directorates are continuing, with each service looking at reducing management and administrative costs, while protecting frontline services as far as possible. The planned closure of Pontllanfraith House will avoid hitting front line services. Other ways of protecting public services are also being looked at, such as reducing opening hours of libraries. There will be a Members workshop on proposed budget savings options in July 2015, to be followed by a period of public consultation over the autumn.

Mr Burns alerted the committee to the Welsh Government's White Paper for Local Government "Devolution, Democracy and Delivery Reforming Local Government: Power to Local People", which highlights a key role for the third sector around the greater mutualisation of public services, and the role of the third sector in community asset transfer.

Mr Burns noted there is no prescriptive list that can be brought to this meeting, or any future meeting on possible CCBC services to transfer to the third sector. However, he said the Council would welcome and encourage any suggestions for greater co-operative working and taking on services. He noted the Council has transferred assets to the third sector in the past, and is open to further suggestions on asset transfer.

Mr Burns thanked the committee for the opportunity to speak, and informed them that he would welcome the opportunity to come to future meetings to give updates on budgetary issues.

The Chair thanked Chris Burns for his frank presentation on the difficult financial times ahead.

5. COMPACT PRESENTATION AND QUESTIONS & ANSWERS:- DELIBERATE FIRES AND ARSON RELATED ISSUES – MARK WILLIAMS (STATION MANAGER, FIRE CRIME UNIT, SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE)

Mark Williams stated that the deliberate setting of fires is a crime. From the PowerPoint presentation slides, the location of each deliberate fire was highlighted for the Caerphilly County Borough Area. These fall into two categories:- Vehicle Fires of which there were 27 in the CCBC area over the last six months. There were also 127 deliberate grass or refuse fires for the same period. These statistics do not show that the CCBC area is any worse or any better than other local authorities in South Wales.

Analysis shows that most car fires are deliberate, and are carried out for a number of reasons. In some cases vehicle crime is related to the stealing of the vehicle keys, and the vehicles, from burglaries of homes or businesses. Others relate to breaking into cars and driving away. These thefts generally can be categorised as being for:- 'Joy Riding', intent to commit crime at other premises, other unlawful purposes e.g. petrol station drive-offs, selling of stolen goods, drug dealing related, or insurance fraud. Typically the cars are burnt out to destroy evidence.

In an attempt to reduce these thefts and fires, the Fire Service is working in partnership with Gwent Police, and much work is being done with the help of Youth Workers in the area. This concentrates on explaining to young people about the dangers involved with the stealing and burning of vehicles. Some work is also being undertaken with Natural Resources Wales (Formerly the Forestry Commission) to ensure vehicular access is made very difficult for some remote forestry tracks. This reduces the possibility of car fires in remote forest locations, which could also set fire to grassland and forest areas.

Local Authorities have cuts to their finances which affects some service delivery. With the reduction in some services affecting reduced refuse collection, particularly of rubbish bags and wheeled bins, there has been an increase in the fly tipping of domestic waste. Fly tipping attracts fines to those carrying out the fly tipping, so the perpetrators, in an effort to destroy the evidence, take the waste to a remote site and set fire to the waste. Fly tipping, if not cleared up just attracts even more tipping at some sites. Depending on the amount of accumulated rubbish, deliberately set fires can be quite large. The Fire & Rescue Service has recently dealt with a Housing Association in Cwmbran, where 15 tons of rubbish was removed from a housing estate. Unfortunately there are signs of more accumulation of rubbish on the same site.

The recent dry weather has encouraged some setting of grass fires already, in this Local Authority area. Mark Williams is working with the project called 'Operation Bernie', which has been operating in South Wales for a number of years. It is an initiative running from the 27th March to 12th April which provides diversionary activities and education for youngsters, on not setting grass fires. Working in conjunction with CCBC, GAVO, Gwent Police, and Youth Groups there are activities at Aberbargoed Fire Station working with children, other youngsters and young people in their 20's, where they are encouraged to dress up as fire fighters and operate equipment etc. It has been recognised that 'Operation Bernie' may need to run for a longer period in future to possibly cover the summer school holidays. If funding becomes available, thoughts have been given to encouraging youngsters to attend soccer tournaments, with notable celebrity soccer players. There is also a big push in the comprehensive schools to better educate pupils on the effect of deliberately setting of grass fires, including not just the costs of extinguishing those fires but the damage it does to wildlife and even farm animals.

Peter Jones (Abbeyfield) asked what equipment the Fire Service uses in remote areas. Mr Williams replied that access to some remote areas can extend up many steep hills and some fire suppression equipment needs to be carried to these often remote sites using a small all terrain vehicle such as the Argocat. The use of helicopters can be effective but is extremely costly and there are difficulties in finding a suitable water source for refilling the

water release device. The Fire Service also operates a 'Wild Fire Team', who will identify overgrown areas, and grass areas regularly targeted by arsonists, sometimes near dwellings. These areas undergo controlled burning. Use is also made of individuals who come under Probation Orders, and working with National Resources Wales, these people assist in cutting fire breaks in undergrowth and in tree plantations.

The Chair thanked Mr Williams for his informative presentation.

6. VOLUNTARY SECTOR LIAISON COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP SURVEY – JACKIE DIX (CCBC POLICY & RESEARCH MANAGER)

Jackie Dix introduced this item. She said that although the response to the committee membership survey was disappointing (only 11 of the 46 members of the committee responded) that helpful information was obtained from a variety of Compact Partners to enable improvements to be introduced to the running of the committee meetings. It was agreed that committee meetings would finish before or by 12.15 pm, and that the Chair will be given discretion to extend that time to 12.30 pm if deemed necessary.

Compact Partners were reminded that they should provide written reports in advance to go out with the committee's papers. This is a requirement in the Compact Agreement that all Compact Partners sign up to in becoming a Compact Partner. There have been problems with Compact Partners not submitting these reports, and instead presenting verbally at meetings. Verbal reports tend to take up a lot of the committee's time, and written reports are also easier for committee members to read and understand prior to the meeting. Only one question will be permitted in future on each Compact Partner written report, which are intended as an item of information only.

Following the suggestion of Peter Jones (Abbeyfield) at the December committee meeting budgets will become a standing item on the agenda.

There will be a new slot for open discussion on 'What's happening in the county borough'. This may consider any issues of concern on matters pertaining to the county borough. Consideration will be given to any requirement to hold special committee meetings throughout the year on areas of specific interest e.g. Health etc. Attendance at these meetings could be open to non committee members with an interest in the subject.

7. OPEN DISCUSSION: WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE COUNTY BOROUGH (AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL COMPACT PARTNERS AND COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES TO RAISE KEY ISSUES)

A query was raised regarding recent publicity from the WCVA on funding. The reply was that the WCVA was commissioning a Third Sector funding data collection exercise, arising out of research soon to be undertaken by the Wales Audit Office, on Council funding of third-sector services. In the last survey commissioned by the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) in 2009-10, it was found that the total funding by way of grants or payments for services to the third sector by local authorities (councils, police and national park authorities) amounted to £171 million. This is the equivalent of around £57 per head of population.

The Data Unit has been commissioned by WCVA to collect data and report on Local Authority funding of the Third Sector in 2013-14. This is essentially a repeat of the previous collections the Data Unit have undertaken on behalf of the WCVA, the last being for 2009-10. All Welsh Local Authorities have recently been sent a fairly complex survey to complete on funding to the Third Sector, which contains guidance information on providing the data, which the Data Unit will aggregate up to compile a whole Wales picture, from individual local authority submissions.

Cyril Luke (Caerphilly People First) asked if a representative could be asked to attend from Caerphilly Youth Forum given the excellent work of the Forum on issues concerning Compact Partners. Jackie Dix to follow up through officers at CCBC.

8. STANDING ITEM: BUDGETS

It was felt by the Chair and the Committee that this item had been comprehensively covered following the Interim Chief Executive's verbal report in Agenda Item 4.

9. ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR COMPACT PARTNERS (ONE QUESTION ONLY FOR EACH REPORT – UP TO 15 MINS)

a) Aneurin Bevan University Health Board – Neighbourhood Care Networks (NCN'S)

A verbal update was given, with following written report circulated following the committee meeting. Sam Crane apologised for not circulating the written report with the committee papers. She said that she would like to give a presentation at the next VSLC meeting in June.

NCN Annual Reports 2014/15 and Plans for 2015/16

NCNs are in the process of signing off their annual reports which provide details of how they have progressed their NCN plans this year. Achievements to date in the Caerphilly borough include:

- Improvement in Smoking Cessation services support signposting and referrals
- Improved liaison between Primary Care Mental Health Services and the Third Sector
- Increasing referrals from GPs into the Communities First Foodwise Scheme based in the Rhymney Integrated Health and Social Care Centre

Once signed off by the NCNs in March, the annual reports will be circulated to stakeholders.

Work is also commencing on developing NCN plans for 2015/16.

Signposting to community services

NCNs across Gwent are scoping the development of an online directory which will improve signposting to third sector, advice, support and information. This has been raised as a priority by both Third Sector Partners and GPs.

Primary Care Funding

NCNs are developing proposals against the new Welsh Government Primary Care funding for NCNs in Wales. The funding focussing on improving the planning of care locally, ensuring access is equitable, improve access and quality of services, and developing a skilled local workforce.

Rhymney Integrated Health and Social Care Centre (RIHSCC)

The services provided in Rhymney Integrated Health and Social Care Centre are making a real difference to the communities in the North of Caerphilly County Borough and complements the range of health and social care services currently provided from Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr.

Work is progressing to provide a more integrated way of working between community services and other organisations within the Resource Centre, to anticipate future care needs of patients to promote independence and improve their health and wellbeing.

Integrated Care Funding (ICF) was secured to employ a Band 7 Nurse to help support the RIHSCC Beds. This has had very positive results and it is hoped that funding will continue with the ICF funding proposals that have to be submitted by 26 March.

Building Stronger Bridges (BSB) Facilitators

Meetings are being held with BSB Facilitators to work through a new model of service delivery for this programme.

b) GAVO – a written report was provided with the committee papers. There were no questions raised on the written report.

c) Digest of Committee Reports from Caerphilly County Borough Council – a written report was provided with the committee papers.

Mike Bridgman (SYDIC) raised a question on the surplus in the Grants to the Voluntary Sector budget. Cllr. Rob Gough referred to the fact that indeed there was surplus funding in the Grants to the Voluntary Sector budget but the Panel would welcome more applications as numbers submitted were low. Publicity is given regarding this funding from a number of sources including through the GAVO development officers, the Council's Newslines, information in the Grant Schemes Booklet which is available in hard copy and from the Council's web site. Mr Bridgman said there was a need to increase publicity for Voluntary Sector funding.

d) Caerphilly Business Forum – there was no written report submitted.

e) South Wales Fire & Rescue Service – presentation as described in agenda item 5.

f) Police & Crime Commissioner for Gwent – there was no written report submitted.

g) Gwent Police – there was no written report submitted.

10. COMMUNITY PLANNING QUARTERLY BRIEFING – JANUARY – MARCH 2015

Item for information only.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

17th June 2015 at 10.30am in the Sirhowy Room.

Meeting ended 12.10pm.