

# VOLUNTARY SECTOR LIAISON COMMITTEE

## Minutes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2013

**PRESENT:** Councillor Kenneth Hughes (Isle of Anglesey County Council) (Chair)

Mr Arthur Beechey (Agoriad Cyf.)  
Jackie Blackwell (CAB)  
Mr Islwyn Humphreys (Samaritans)  
Mrs Dilys Shaw (Medrwn Môn)  
Mrs Jean Baker (Menai Partnership)

Eleri Lloyd (BCUHB)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** John R.Jones (Chief Officer Medrwn Môn)  
Mrs Gwen Carrington (Director of Community – IOACC)  
Mr J.Huw Jones (Head of Service – Policy, IOACC)  
Mr Mark Gahan (Making the Connections Officer – Medrwn Môn)  
Mr Gareth Llwyd (Business Support Team Manager)  
Bev Symonds (Scrutiny Manager) (for item 3)  
Ann Holmes (Committee Officer)

**APOLOGIES:** None received

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The Chair welcomed all those present to this meeting of the Liaison Committee.

### 1 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No declaration of interest was received.

### 2 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Liaison Committee held on 22 January, 2013 were presented and confirmed as correct.

Arising thereon –

- With regard to the workshop held between officers of the Council and representatives of the voluntary sector in late November and the action areas agreed at that meeting, one of which was joint planning with the voluntary sector in relation to elderly care provision in a pilot area the Director of Community informed the Committee that prior to this meeting she had been in a meeting of the Adults' Services Group and that she was aware that some work with the voluntary sector's Making the Connections Officer and the Health and Well-being Partnership group has been on-going in the area of Adults' Services and particularly community building and that consequently she thought it would be advantageous to the Committee if representatives of the Adults' Services Group be invited to its next meeting to provide Members with an impression of the progress and direction of that work hitherto. The Committee concurred with the suggestion.

### **ACTION ARISING: Director of Community to arrange for representatives of the Adults' Service Group to attend the next meeting of the Liaison Committee.**

- In response to questions regarding whether or not European and/or other monies had been included within the Council's budget formulation process and cutback strategy, the Director of Community explained that the letter as at Enclosure B of the agenda sets out the strategy with regard to investments in the third sector for 2013/14. With reference to European monies and their implications consideration was of necessity given to this source of funding in order to be able to

identify and distinguish Council funding streams as opposed to funding that is European derived and that is one of the reasons for recommending as part of the Third Sector/IOACC joint work programme a full review of the Council's contributions to the third sector so as to be clear regarding existing contracts and their funding basis.

The Business Support Team Manager pointed out that contracts under the Taith i Waith scheme had not been included as possible sources of efficiency savings in 2013/14 due to the fact that they are based on a 3 year commitment.

Mr Arthur Beechy having raised the matter underlined the importance of the Third Sector's being able to obtain a full and clear picture of the funding position and based on that, to be able to plan and tailor resources as necessary over the longer term without having to revisit and face up to the same challenge next year.

The Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn confirmed that the Director of Community had responded by letter to the representations made in relation to the 2013/14 budget in its totality.

### **3 SCRUTINY AND THE ROLE OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR**

Bev Symonds, the Scrutiny Manager provided the Committee with an update on the position regarding enhancing the role of the Third sector within the scrutiny process.

The Scrutiny Manager said that hitherto the scrutiny function on Anglesey has not made optimum use of the voluntary sector in scrutiny reviews but it is hoped that that might be rectified in the coming year. The Local Government Wales Measure remains in flux at the present time and guidance is awaited from the Welsh Government in relation to designated persons and joint scrutiny i.e. persons that can be legitimately called in for the purposes of scrutiny and joining forces with other authorities to look at subjects that cross boundaries. In preparation for this the scrutiny function will require the added skills that sit within the voluntary sector to help and add knowledge to scrutiny reviews. There have been discussions with the Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn as to how this might be best achieved with the agreement that the Scrutiny Manager will liaise with the Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn as and when reviews emerge with a view to the Chief Officer then providing a steer towards the relevant area. Training in terms of undertaking effective scrutiny is an issue that needs to be addressed and post May the newly elected county councillors will be undergoing training, which might also provide an opportunity to extend that training to relevant representatives of the voluntary sector as well.

The Officer proceeded to explain that the Council has approved a reduction in the number of scrutiny committees from 5 to 2 committees, one of which will be outward looking and focused on partnership working and the other inward looking focussed on the range of Council services. The scrutiny team will therefore be looking outside for assistance in conducting reviews. Whilst the Measure does not at present provide details e.g. as to the rights of co-optees on scrutiny committees, the primary issue for the scrutiny team is to be able to draw on the knowledge that there is outside in order to support Members in undertaking thorough and effective reviews.

**It was agreed to note the position.**

**NO FURTHER ACTION ARISING.**

### **4 REVIEW OF SOCIAL SERVICES CONTRACTS – TO AGREE A FRAMEWORK**

A copy of a letter dated 25 March, 2013 from the Director of Community to voluntary sector bodies in explanation of the position with regard to investments in the Third sector in 2013/14 along with a service review pro forma were presented for the Committee's attention.

The Director of Community explained that it had become apparent in the discussions last year regarding funding that there was a feeling that agreement tends to be a "last minute" arrangement. The Department as part of the budget setting process was therefore keen to establish an arrangement for reviewing and obtaining general information about expectations, contracts and procedure. Discussions have taken place with the Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn and the BCUHB's Assistant Director of Community Development in the awareness of the fact that BCUHB has undertaken a review of its own contracts previously. The substance of the recent discussions has been the potential for the Authority to utilise the BCUHB framework for its own

review and to share the information obtained so as to be able to build a more complete picture of the funding position in both the public and the third sectors. The Department is also keen to establish a clearly defined timetable in preparation for the next year's budget formulation exercise, with the aim of completing the review work programme before October.

The Business Support Team Manager said that consideration has been given to the BCUHB template used to conduct its own review of Third sector contracts and that it has been adapted to suit the requirements of the Social Services Department and the County Council. At present discussions with Adults and Children's services managers are on-going with the aim of planning a programme to review current service level agreements and contracts. As explained in the letter at Enclosure B, the Department has looked at all investments in the third sector to establish whether or not they are appropriate as subjects of efficiency savings – hitherto the uplift of 2% for inflation has been set against the efficiency savings target which explains the standstill position of third sector contracts for 2013/14. However, further efficiency savings need to be identified as explained in the letter to the amount of £16,000. The next step is to create a work programme over the course of the next six months to support the intended review. The Officer said whilst some contracts do meet the priorities and commissioning intentions and fulfil the aims, others need to be reviewed for example on account of being dated. Consideration also needs to be given to the price of the investment to see whether savings can be realised or whether there needs to be a remodelling of services to either disinvest or re-invest in services that are prepared in accordance with policy priorities and commissioning intentions. The Department is at present in the process of prioritising those contracts that need to be targeted in order to plan a work programme and this is being done jointly with Adults and Children Services managers. The Department is seeking input regarding the decisions it will have to make regarding contracts which can be renewed over a 3 year period, contracts that perhaps can be exempted from procurement and tendering regulations and other service areas where it might be necessary for the Department to commit to procurement and tendering arrangements for the provision of those services.

Members of the Liaison Committee considered the information presented and in the subsequent discussion the following were matters regarding which they sought further explanation and clarification –

- The position of, and prospects for voluntary organisations which are not subject to formal funding contracts but which nevertheless receive financial support from the Social Services.
- The rationale for postulating 1%, 2% and 5% savings against investments which some Members found confusing and potentially misleading in terms of the definitive percentage reduction to be implemented. The Business Support Team Manager replied in explanation that these were options for presentation to Elected Members to allow them to see exactly what savings of 1%, 2% or 5% would achieve against the Department's investments in the third sector.
- The absence from the process of any information regarding ways in which opportunities for developing business in partnership might be considered.
- The outcome of the contracts review undertaken by BCUHB and whether the proforma used at had worked well.
- The arrangements for reviewing MEC as being community based and therefore presuming greater involvement by the third sector. It was suggested that any review should take into account the expectations regarding third sector input into community based care and that contracts should reflect this.
- Community benefits.

The Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn welcomed the explanatory letter at Enclosure B which he said would be of assistance to third sector organisations in enabling them to plan more sensibly for the future as were the references to different forms of funding and to 3 year contracts which were also positives. The intended review mentions the Department's priorities and aims for the medium term which it is important for third sector organisations to be aware of so they have an idea of how the future might unfold and can decide whether they want to be part of it and develop their plans accordingly. However, the fact should not be lost that these developments are set against a backdrop of serious spending cuts facing the Social Services

**It was agreed to note the position and the points raised.**

## **NO FURTHER ACTION ARISING**

### **5 IMPLEMENTING/INTRODUCING THE COMPACT AND VOLUNTEERING POLICY**

A copy of the report as presented to the meeting of the Executive held on 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2013 incorporating the revised compact and Volunteering Policy was presented for the Committee's information.

The Head of Service (Policy) confirmed that the Compact and Volunteering Policy had been endorsed by the Executive and Council and could now be implemented. The Compact supports and supplements the existing compact between the BCUHB and the six North Wales authorities.

Members welcomed the information and emphasised the importance of disseminating information about the new compact to all parties. The Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn said that the next step is to take ownership of and implement the compact and volunteering policy.

**It was agreed to note the information.**

## **NO FURTHER ACTION ARISING.**

### **6 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Head of Service (Policy) tabled a draft work programme for the Liaison Committee based on initial discussions with the Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn which had identified six priority areas for action which would form the basis of the Committee's future work. The Officer asked the Voluntary Sector's representatives for input on the draft work programme before the end of April.

The Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn said that he would bring the draft work programme to the attention of the Medrwn Môn Management Committee. He highlighted the fact that the tendering process remains a source of concern to the third sector in terms of what is put to tender and how to go about tendering for it. It was a cause of worry that local organisations might be placed at a disadvantage in comparison with larger regional and national organisations in being less conversant with the tendering process with the risk that they will subsequently lose out as regards succeeding to win tenders to provide certain services. He suggested that the issue and the matter of preparing local third sector organisations for the tendering process and the opportunity to tender might be an item for inclusion on the draft work programme.

The Director of Community informed Members that as part of the Council's Transformation Programme there is a work stream around introducing a commissioning framework for the Council. Presentations have been made by the Council's Procurement Officer which have indicated that there is room for improvement in terms of practice and consistency. A message has also emerged in other places that the independent and third sectors would like an input as regards developing better business planning. She suggested that it might be useful for the Procurement Officer to give this Committee a presentation on procurement and the Council's expectations in relation to procurement.

The Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn welcomed the fact that the issue of procurement is receiving attention on a corporate basis within the Council.

**It was resolved to note the draft Work Programme.**

#### **ACTIONS ARISING:**

- **Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn to co-ordinate responses/input to the draft work programme by the Third sector and to forward the information to the Head of Service (Policy) by the end of April.**
- **Head of Service (Policy) to ask the Procurement Officer to make a presentation on procurement within the Council to a future meeting of this Committee.**

### **7 WELFARE BOND SCHEME**

Mr Mark Gahan provided the Committee with a brief explanation of how the Bond scheme works by saying that the opportunities exist to enable organisations to work together to identify savings in a specific area, and then to work with the third sector to put together a project which would set out clear outcomes to be achieved. The designated area would need the agreement of all the parties involved. Examples of bond schemes in operation thus far are few but one has been developed

around a feasibility study in the field of antidepressants and preventative work which has involved the BCUHB, the WCVA and other partners.

The Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn said that the Bond related work will be incorporated within the Making the Connections Officer's work in respect of looking at sources of funding to promote the work within a defined area and will involve identifying the baseline and then bringing in the Bond in terms of identifying where the money can be saved. The funding is available depending on identifying a project and the savings to be made.

Mr Mark Gahan pointed out that the opportunities where the Bond can be used have to come from the Authority and/or the BCUHB themselves in terms of those organisations identifying the savings they want to make and where, and then a package can be put together setting out how those savings can be achieved.

The Director of Community explained that she had raised the matter via the agenda in order to be sure that the Committee is being sufficiently proactive in exploring Bond possibilities.

Following further discussion it was agreed that there are possibilities to explore the Bond opportunities in relation to adults' services and that a meeting with the relevant officers should be convened to this end.

**It was agreed to note the information.**

**ACTION ARISING: Director of Community and Eira Lloyd BCUHB to liaise with the relevant officers to convene a meeting to explore the Bond possibilities in relation to Adults' Services.**

## **8 REMIT OF THE LIAISON COMMITTEE**

A copy of draft terms of reference for the Liaison Committee was presented for Members' consideration.

The Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn said that with the current Council nearing its end and with the adoption of a new Compact and Volunteering Policy he believed that it was timely to be reviewing the Committee's membership and terms of reference as the forum with oversight of the workings of the compact.

There was subsequently a discussion about the potential for partnerships' representatives to sit on the Liaison Committee e.g. a representative of the Office of the Police Commissioner or a representative of the Community Safety Partnership and whether certain officers should sit as full Members of the Committee rather than simply in an advisory capacity. It was emphasised that the Committee's make up also needs to reflect the situation in Anglesey.

**It was agreed to note the draft terms of reference.**

**ACTION ARISING: Head of Service (Policy) and Eira Lloyd (BCUHB) to liaise with relevant officers as necessary to establish the most appropriate representation on the Liaison Committee for the County Council and BCUHB respectively.**

## **9 UPDATING THE FUNDING CODE**

Consideration was given to the position with regard to the Funding Code.

The Head of Service (Policy) said that the Funding Code as a supporting document to the Compact has to be updated and that the process ideally will run in line with the review of contracts.

**It was agreed that a draft of the Funding Code be presented to the next meeting of the Liaison Committee.**

**ACTION ARISING: Head of Service (Policy) and Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn to liaise to present a draft of the Funding Code to the next meeting of the Committee.**

## **10 THE CASE FOR STATUTORY COMPACTS BETWEEN WELSH LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND THE THIRD SECTOR**

The Welsh Government's summary report and recommendations in relation to the case for statutory compacts between Welsh local authorities and the Third Sector was presented for the Committee's information.

**It was resolved to note the report and its contents.**

**ACTION ARISING: Head of Service (Policy) and Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn to monitor the position for potential developments that could impact on the local Compact.**

**Councillor Kenneth Hughes  
Chair**

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