

VOLUNTARY SECTOR LIAISON COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 17 January, 2014

PRESENT: Councillor Alun Mummery (Vice-Chair) (In the Chair)

Local Authority

Councillors Jim Evans, Kenneth Hughes

Voluntary Sector

Eleri Lloyd Jones (Age Cymru)
Aled Roberts (Taran)
Mrs Dilys Shaw (Chair Medrwn Môn)

Health Sector

Mr Wyn Thomas (BCUHB Assistant Director of Community Development)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr John R.Jones (Chief Officer, Medrwn Môn)
Mrs Gwen Carrington (Director of Community - IOACC)
Mr J.Huw Jones (Interim Head of Democratic Services – IOACC)
Ann Holmes (Committee Officer)

APOLOGIES: Mr Islwyn Humphreys (Chair), Cadi Roberts (Merched y Wawr), Councillors Alwyn Rowlands, Ieuan Williams.

ALSO PRESENT: Ms Lyndsey Williams (Project Manager, Medrwn Môn).

The Chair extended a welcome to all those present to the WI Hall, Llanfairpwll and thanked those involved in making the arrangements.

1 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No declaration of interest was received.

2 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Liaison Committee held on 3rd October, 2013 were presented and confirmed as correct.

Arising thereon –

- In response to a question by a representative of the voluntary sector regarding progress in identifying volunteers currently within the system and the areas wherein they are active, the Director of Community responded by saying that the Volunteering Policy has been presented to the Authority's Penaethiaid Team with a view to undertaking an audit and to combine it with an audit of Child Protection. There has been slippage on the training arrangements scheduled for the forthcoming week in preparation for the audit due to Job Evaluation matters and those arrangements have now been rescheduled to March and/or April. The Officer said that she could confirm that the work is planned and that a report would be made to the next meeting of the Liaison Committee.

ACTION ARISING: Director of Community to report back to the next meeting on developments in taking the Volunteering Policy and related issues forward.

- The Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn said that following a meeting with the Head of Function (Resources) he hoped that an agreement could be reached with regard to the Funding Code by the next meeting. The Interim Head of Democratic Services said that he would seek to expedite the matter.
- The Director of Community confirmed that work had been carried out in response to the requirements of the Welsh Government's consultation document on a Framework for the Provision of Integrated Health and Social Care and an Integrated Board established. A workshop was held the previous week which included consideration of engagement with the Third Sector.
- The Director of Community confirmed that the initial phase of the review of Third Sector contracts had now been completed and that she would be happy to meet with the Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn to discuss the outcome in detail. The review whilst it has led to immediate and specific decisions has also identified matters that will be addressed next year on account of their requiring a longer run in period ahead of determination and resolution. As well as discussing these issues with the Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn there will have to be dialogue as regards facilitating these matters jointly with the Health Service. The review has looked at contracts in the context of tightening arrangements; re-evaluating the commission and/or focused investment which will entail discussions with individual organisations. The Third sector has already been informed of the likelihood of a 5.2% reduction in funding and a small cluster of contracts have come to an end whilst others have been subject to a larger cut.

The Assistant Director of Community Development at BCUHB said that the Health Board currently commissions £1.5m of Third Sector services and that it is undertaking a strategic development review to assist the organisation in determining the nature and kind of provision which it wishes to commission as from April, 2015. The review will take place in consultation with all North Wales local authorities and with the Third Sector and will also entail engagement with a range of stakeholders. Added to this, the Board is also seeking to redefine the services it requires from individual organisations.

3 MEETING THE CHALLENGES – BUDGET CONSULTATION 2014-15

The Executive's initial proposals for the 2014/15 Budget encompassing service reductions and efficiency savings as outlined in the Meeting the Challenges Budget Consultation document were presented for the Committee's consideration.

The detailed savings proposals put forward by Social Services covering Adult Social Care, Learning Disabilities Services and Children's Services which were not incorporated in the Consultation document were tabled at the meeting and were explained by the Director of Community. The Director of Community said that the 2014/15 financial year will be an extremely challenging one in budget terms and that the situation has only been ameliorated to an extent by the fact that the consultation and planning process has commenced much earlier. There has been much discussion as regards putting forward proposals which are achievable in order to try to avoid a pattern of overspending especially in respect of Adult Social Care and those proposals are still being discussed and modified. There has been differentiation in the savings targets imposed on services with some services having to meet higher targets than others. There is also an ongoing dialogue with regard to grant funding with the Welsh Government seeking to change the use of grants in way that increasingly advocates more regional working. This change of emphasis can impact upon local agreements. The Officer went on to say that although Social Services have been given greater budgetary protection than some other services, they remain below the savings target and further work is required. In response to a question about greater joint working in relation to the learning disability provision at Bryn y Neuadd, the Director of Community said that the service is highly integrated in terms of management and planning. The work required in this service area is around better housekeeping but given that contracts involve individual clients the approach must be measured and requires that a plan and service expectations be carefully and clearly set out.

The Portfolio Member for Housing and Social Services said that in formulating their savings proposals, the Social Services had carefully scrutinised their statutory requirements and had looked at all other provision on the basis of affordability.

The Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn commented that a reduction in the funding support to the Third Sector has been based historically on a specific sum. The proposals as set out need to be

discussed further in terms of their implications for the Third Sector particularly in relation to the follow considerations –

- Whether it is possible to forward plan to prepare the sector for future reductions
- Whether it is possible to give an indication of the sector's funding prospects based on the kind of pattern which the review of contracts has disclosed and in order to enable pre-emptive planning and also in order to identify opportunities.
- The need for a dialogue on commissioning grants in order to clarify the Authority's commissioning intentions with regard to the Third Sector.
- The potential to explore Third Sector capacity to support and contribute to alternative forms of provision in relation to discretionary services thus providing an opportunity for Social Services to safeguard services they regard as important but which are not mandatory.

The Director of Community acknowledged that such a discourse is essential in terms of shaping both Social Services and the Third Sector workforce. Efforts are being made to strengthen commissioning and purchasing arrangements involving closer working with the Health Sector with a view to increasing opportunities for jointly shaping and profiling provision. The Officer emphasised that changeability of the situation and she said that consequently there needs to be an element of trust within the immediate "family" of organisations in terms of recognising that information shared might not be definitive at the point of issue.

The Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn confirmed that the organisation would be responding formally to the Budget consultation. He welcomed the intention to monitor contracts as an opportunity for the Third Sector to demonstrate value for money.

The Director of Community said that she would forward details in relation to the savings to the Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn.

It was agreed to note the Executive's initial budget proposals with particular reference to the Social Services' proposals for efficiency savings.

NO FURTHER ACTION ARISING.

4 CONTINUITY AND CHANGE – REFRESHING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE WELSH GOVERNMENT AND THE THIRD SECTOR

The Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn informed the Committee that Medrwn Môn had responded to the Welsh Government's consultation documentation in relation to the above. One of the recommendations of the consultation is that the Third Sector funding grant will be on a regional basis as from next year entailing a bidding process to a regional fund. The Officer said that this change will inevitably affect the way the sector provides its services as from 2015/16. The funding formula will also have to be discussed. The Committee will be kept informed of developments in this respect.

The Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn said that there is also detailed guidance being developed with regard to local compacts in Wales suggesting that the Welsh Government will be bringing influence to bear in some form on the relationship between the sector and the authority via the Liaison Committee.

It was agreed to note the position.

NO FURTHER ACTION ARISING

5 TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME – INTERFACE WITH THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR.

The Interim Head of Democratic Services explained to Members of the Committee the structure of the Transformation Programme Framework which is overseen by three Transformation Programme Boards relating to Service Excellence, Business Transformation and the Island of Enterprise which in turn are fed into by project boards governing a range of related work streams. A copy of the Governance Model of the Transformation Programme Boards was provided for Members' information. The subject areas covered by the Programme Boards are central to the Authority's high level work programme and inform the Corporate Plan which is due to be published at the end of the month.

The Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn asked whether there is a role for the voluntary and independent sectors in relation to the Partnership Collaboration Programme Boards.

The Interim Head of Democratic Services said that the Work Programme is being managed in accordance with project management disciplines and it identifies the relevant stakeholders. Project officers provide a channel through which consideration can be given to whether input by the Third Sector is required.

The Director of Community said that there are specific work streams under the Transformation Programme relating to Adult Services including Learning Disabilities and citizen directed support some of which are yet to commence due to the prioritisation of work around residential care. Social Services are endeavouring to utilise current groups and mechanisms to engage with the Third Sector on these matters e.g. via Local Voices and via the locality groups. One important work stream planned for next year is that around Intermediate Care the structure of which will be examined and consulted upon with the voluntary and independent sectors. The Integrated Board will be looking at this work area.

It was agreed to note the information.

NO FURTHER ACTION ARISING

6 SCRUTINY PROCESS

The Interim Head of Democratic Services informed Members of the Committee that arrangements have now been put into effect for the Interim Head of Democratic Services and the Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn to meet on a monthly basis to discuss the Executive's Work Programme. Following a meeting between the Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn and the Scrutiny Manager it has been agreed that the latter will arrange a briefing session on the scrutiny process and the opportunities for contribution for the Liaison Committee's Voluntary Sector representatives. The Scrutiny Manager will also hold bimonthly meetings with the Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn to discuss the two scrutiny committees' work programmes with a view to forward planning. In addition, an annual scrutiny programme is in the offing.

The Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn said that the arrangements above will formalise the third Sector's commitment to scrutiny and that it was important now for those Third Sector representatives who will be involved in the scrutiny process to be inducted in terms of putting across the viewpoint of the Third Sector in a succinct and balanced way. The task now is to form a suitable pool of Third Sector representatives who can contribute constructively to the Authority's scrutiny process.

It was agreed to note the position.

NO FURTHER ACTION ARISING

7 COMMUNITY VOICE PROJECT

Ms Lyndsey Williams, Project Manager provided the Committee with an update on the latest activities linked to the Community Voice Project as follows –

- The development of baseline questionnaires designed to gauge the levels of confidence within the community as regards talking to the public sector and whether they feel able to contribute to public service led consultations. Also, to establish whether the Public Sector's duty to engage with the hardest to reach groups is being fulfilled. A baseline questionnaire has been developed as well for service providers to examine their methods of engagement over the past 12 months. The questionnaires and their results will be used to create a framework for engagement and will provide a structure and guidance for future consultations.
- A presentation was made to the Authority's Heads of Service in December, 2013 on the aims of the project in working with service providers to look at the structure of consultations and the importance of feedback from consultations. Following on from the presentation further meetings have been arranged with individual departments.
- A presentation and consultation took place in December on the draft Single Integrated Plan which looked specifically at whether the Plan's priorities are aligned with those of communities; whether there are any gaps and whether the Third Sector and community groups are already doing some of the work the plan is meant to cover.
- Three portfolio projects and an event were held in December to consider the Direct Payments Scheme on the Island.

- A meeting with officers of the Council is scheduled in February to look at the Corporate Plan in terms of how the project portfolio can help communities to shape the individual strands of the plan through consultation.
- Members of the Committee were provided with a summary of the discussion and recommendations around the Making a Difference consultation provided by the North Wales Advocacy following an in-depth discussion at the Equality and Diversity Partnership. The information forms the basis of the Community Voice project in ensuring that consultations follow the National Principles of Public Engagement in that they are accessible to all; well-planned; allow time for response in a variety of ways and that feedback is given as a matter of good practice.

Members of the Committee discussed the importance of well-structured consultations and the provision of clear and different mechanisms for feedback. Mention was made of community hubs and how these are to be defined.

It was agreed to note the position.

NO FURTHER ACTION ARISING

8 NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting be held in the Council Offices, Llangefni on a date to be confirmed.

**Councillor Alun Mummery
(Vice-Chair in the Chair)**