

VOLUNTARY SECTOR LIAISON COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 19 March, 2014

PRESENT:	Mr Islwyn Humphreys (Samaritans) (Chair)
	Local Authority
	Councillors Jim Evans, Kenneth Hughes, Alun Mummery, Alwyn Rowlands, Ieuan Williams.
	Voluntary Sector
	Aled Roberts, Mrs Dilys Shaw
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) Ann Holmes (Committee Officer)
APOLOGIES:	Mr Wyn Thomas (BCUHB), Cadi Roberts (Merched y Wawr)
ALSO PRESENT:	Ms Lyndsey Williams (Project Manager, Medrwn Môn)

The Chair welcomed all those present to the meeting and thanked Councillor Alun Mummery for chairing the previous meeting in his absence.

1 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Liaison Committee held on 17 January, 2014 were presented and confirmed as correct.

Arising thereon –

- The Director of Community informed the Committee that training arrangements in connection with child protection and the Volunteering Policy had been confirmed for the end of April and beginning of May.
- In response to a question by the Chair regarding initiating the 2015/16 Budget consultation process as soon as possible, Councillor Ieuan Williams explained that the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive had met with Service Heads the previous week in relation to commencing the process and that a meeting between officers and Portfolio Members is scheduled for the 24th of the month to discuss the process of formulating the budget with a view to seeking an alternative approach to that whereby a uniform percentage cut is apportioned across all services. Councillor Williams said that it is felt the Authority has reached an end point in terms of budget reductions but that it is seeking to be creative in the manner it addresses the financial situation.
- In response to question about the extent to which joint commissioning with Health is taking place, the Director of Community explained that there are ongoing discussions where there is overlap and that there is also a regional programme for joint-commissioning which is looking at making it happen in a more structured and strategic way. Joint commissioning is not always straightforward as the drivers are different. Previous guidance and the new Social Services and Wellbeing Act are steering developments towards strengthening community support so that the focus moves away from hospital based care. In Anglesey there have been efforts to

take matters one step further by seeking to promote integrated management arrangements. The Officer said the objective is that decisions should be made jointly on the basis of information held jointly in accordance with Anglesey's priorities. The difficulty arises in establishing common priorities across the six North Wales authorities when each authority works within slightly different financial arrangements and when the population profiles and priorities are different. However, the will to move forward with on this is strong and there are ongoing discussions with regard to getting systems to work together. There will be an expectation that this occurs in a more planned and purposeful way.

- A representative of the voluntary sector requested that a schedule of scrutiny items be made available to the Third Sector's representatives. The Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn said that he would forward to them a list of scrutiny priorities as made available to him. The Interim Head of Democratic Services said that he would also pursue that matter.

Action Arising: Interim Head of Democratic Services and/or Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn to arrange for the schedule of scrutiny items and priorities to be made available to the Committee's Third Sector representatives.

- The Interim Head of Democratic Services confirmed that a briefing session on the scrutiny process for the Liaison Committee's voluntary sector representatives is still planned.
- The Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn said that detailed guidance by the Welsh Government regarding local compacts in Wales had not been issued thus far and that once the guidance is available he would report thereon to the Liaison Committee.

3 COMMISSION ON PUBLIC SERVICE GOVERNANCE AND DELIVERY

The Interim Head of Democratic Services said the final report of the Commission on Public Service Delivery headed by Sir Paul Williams has delivered over 60 recommendations some of which relate to reconfiguring local authorities and partnership structures. Significant emphasis is placed on scrutiny, governance and accountability throughout the report as well as the on importance of developing a new leadership culture and strengthening performance management and its reporting. The Officer said that the timescales for change put forward by the Commission are challenging; the WLGA has formulated a response to the Commission's findings.

Councillor Ieuan Williams informed the Committee that he had made a statement opposing a voluntary merger with Gwynedd Council as proposed by the Williams Report. The feeling is that a business case has not been made to justify the structural changes proposed by the report and that those changes would not necessarily improve the quality of the services currently provided. The proposals made with regard to scrutiny might however facilitate a different and more creative approach to the scrutiny function. The Minister for Local Government and Government Business has indicated that a formal response to the Williams report will be made by the Welsh Government by April.

Councillor Alwyn Rowlands said that the focus in the meantime will be on continuing to seek areas where joint-working with other authorities in the provision and delivery of services is feasible.

Position noted. No further action arising.

4 BUDGET 2014/15 AND FUNDING CODE

In the absence of the Authority's Head of Function (Resources), the Interim Head of Democratic Services reported that he was seeking to meet with the Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn and the Head of Function (Resources) to progress the issue of the Funding Code.

The Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn explained that due to changes in funding arrangements and a movement towards commissioning services rather than a grant funding system, the Funding Code which formalises the funding arrangements between the Council and the Third Sector needs to be reviewed and updated. He emphasised that it is essential that the Officer meeting takes place as soon as practicably possible so that the revised Funding Code can then be approved via the democratic process. The Officer said that there is some uncertainty within the Third Sector around the issue of commissioning arrangements which needs to be clarified through the renewed Funding Code.

The comments made by the Chief Officer regarding the urgency of arranging the Officer meeting were supported by the Chair and the Portfolio Member for Social Services who suggested that specific time limits be given for the meeting to take place.

The position was noted.

Action Arising: Interim Head of Democratic Services to arrange a meeting with the Head of Function (Resources) and the Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn before the end of March if possible to review the Funding Code.

5 INTERMEDIATE CARE

The Director of Community reminded the Committee that it had been previously informed about the intention to promote integrated services for older people jointly with Health. The Welsh Government has established an Intermediate Care Fund and has made available indicative funding of £1m for Anglesey to be spent in the current financial year under specific conditions – the funding is provided on a one-off basis and plans have to be developed collaboratively across the North Wales region and with Health in promotion of integrated services that will improve older people's independence. Information about the Fund and the basis on which proposals were to be made was received in October/November of last year and plans for all six authorities that comprise the North Wales regional consortium had to be subsequently agreed and presented by the end of February. Whilst confirmation of approval has not yet been received it is a stipulation that the funding must be spent during the current financial year. As such it has been a challenge to formulate initiatives that do not create any form of dependency. The Officer said that once the plans have been approved she would make them available to the Liaison Committee. One such plan involves trying to establish 24 hour care including at weekends which again provides a challenge in terms of securing appropriate personnel in a way that does not lead to dependency.

Members of the Committee expressed some dissatisfaction with the form of the funding which they felt as an ad hoc and time limited arrangement, does not allow for continuity. The Director of Community said that with regard to care especially, the direction of travel is towards working on a regional basis and working jointly with Health. Whilst there are advantages in sharing intelligence across the North Wales region the risk lies in those plans becoming so general because they are regionally focussed and that they therefore mean very little locally. In this respect forums such as the Liaison Committee can prove their value in reflecting the local tempo in terms of what people want locally and which can be actioned quickly. In developing plans the Department has sought to act upon local feedback through for example the Community Voices project. It was suggested by a representative of the Voluntary Sector that it would be useful to have plans on the shelf in readiness for the availability of ad hoc funding.

Position noted. No further action arising.

6 INTEGRATED DELIVERY BOARD

The Director of Community reported on initial developments with regard to the Integrated Delivery Board and a meeting of the Board held on 14 March at which the Chair of BCUHB was present. She referred to the following points –

- The challenge for Social Services in working in a common way across the six North Wales counties and in working with one large organisation such as the Health Board.
- Agreement that county fora be established to meet in each county.
- That that arrangement in Anglesey has been taken further to establish a joint management framework rather than just co-ordination – Health as part of that development has agreed to include operational managers on the Board rather than development managers
- The Board's membership has been strengthened by the inclusion of an independent Health member.
- There has been discussion around what form input from partners including the Third Sector will take. The priority is to bring Social Services and Health Officer frameworks closer together in a wider corporate context.
- A development session has been arranged with an invitation to attend to the Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn as a stakeholder in terms of a body that represents the Third Sector.
- It has been recommended that a Stakeholders Reference Group be established.

Councillor Ieuan Williams said he would like to see the formulation by the Board of specific plans for measuring and reporting on outputs. The Director of Community said that the need to come to a common understanding of integration was discussed and following on from that the need to agree on output measures as well as reporting arrangements and how to address problems should they rise in terms of escalation to the next level. The Officer said that whilst governance, accountability and performance issues have been aired no specific statements on targets or attainments have been reached at this point in time.

The Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn said that as the new Board matures and evolves, he would like to see what form the involvement of the Third sector will take and particularly how Medrwn Môn as an organisation can support Third Sector representatives to fully participate in the Stakeholder Group.

Position noted. No further action arising.

7 COMMUNITY VOICES

Lyndsey Williams, Project Manager provided the Committee with an overview of the consultation and engagement work undertaken by the Listen Community Voices Project to date including a summary of the partners involved, the nature of the activities undertaken and the results. She highlighted issues arising in relation to feeding into services, establishing frameworks and structures for engagement and feedback that can be adopted across departments and services, how services provide feedback where communities have contributed to a consultation, managing expectations and measuring impact.

The Committee discussed how best to maximise the outputs from the Community Voices project as regards harnessing the expertise that has been developed in relation to consultation work and extending and developing those skills within the Council. The Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn referred to the role of Local Voices as a critical friend in highlighting the fact that much more value can be derived from consultation processes if investment is made in those processes in terms of strengthening them and ensuring they are robust.

Councillor Alwyn Rowlands spoke of the work undertaken in the Seiriol Ward around the Building Communities project and he underlined what he believed to be three fundamental principles in building effective consultations -

- The need to identify individuals who can take the lead
- The need to identify individuals who can go out and engage with communities
- The need to identify individuals who have the right skills to be able to engage with a range of people

In identifying such individuals and providing them with appropriate training a skilled team can be established which can then support communities across the Island in getting the best out of consultations.

The progress was noted. No further action arising.

8 WORK PROGRAMME

The Interim Head of Democratic Services tabled an updated Work programme for the Committee which covered the following matters –

- Executive Work programme
- Local Voices project regular updates
- Financial Code
- Volunteering
- Budget and mid-term financial strategy
- Local Partnerships/Local Service Board
- Review of Local Compact
- Regional and national issues as relevant
- Impact of Transformation Programme on the Third Sector

The Interim Head of Democratic Services said that the work programme provides the Committee with a focus and direction for its work for the forthcoming year. The Work programme has been developed in consultation with the Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn and will also require the input of the Health Sector particularly in relation to areas where there is local joint-planning.

The Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn suggested that a presentation on the Local Service Board be made to the Liaison Committee's next meeting and that the Manager of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Partnerships be invited to the next meeting to that end.

The Director of Community raised the question of how the Committee can address issues of substance within its quarterly meetings cycle e.g. the implications of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act in terms of what the partners wish to achieve. Various suggestions were made as to how the Committee might arrange its work to greater effect for example by giving its attention to matters of substance within the formal forum and disseminating other information without; by grouping common themes to coincide with consultations e.g. finance themes in the Budget consultation meeting in January and by distinguishing on the agenda matters of significance that require consideration as opposed to matters for update only.

The Work programme was noted.

Actions Arising:

- **Interim Head of Democratic Services to further discuss the contents of the Work programme in terms of scheduling items within the Committee's quarterly meetings cycle with the Chair and Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn.**
- **Interim Head of Democratic Services to issue an invitation to the Manager of the Gwynedd and Môn Partnerships to address the next meeting.**

9 NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Liaison Committee be held at 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, 10th July, 2014 in Canolfan Beaumaris.

**Mr Islwyn Humphreys
Chair**