



VOLUNTARY SECTOR LIAISON COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON THURSDAY, 8TH JUNE 2023 AT 10.30 A.M.

PRESENT:

Councillors:

M. Chacon-Dawson, R. Chapman, P. Cook, J. E. Fussell, C. Gordon, J. Jones, Mrs T. Parry, D.W.R. Preece, D. Price, H. Pritchard, Mrs E. Stenner, L.G. Whittle, S. Williams and W. Williams.

Representatives of the Voluntary Sector:

S. Tiley (GAVO), A. Palmer (GAVO), G. Jones (GAVO), K. Dawson (GAVO), B. North (Groundwork Wales), L. Jones (Menter Iaith Sir Caerffili), R. Evans (Oakdale Community Centre), J. Wade (The United Reformed Church), J. Pritchard (The Youth Centre, Cefn Hengoed) and M. Wade (Vanguard Caerphilly).

Compact Partners:

L. McFarlane (Gwent Police) and H. Llewellyn (Town and Community Councils Representative).

Also in attendance:

K. Peters (Corporate Policy Manager), S. Richards (Head of Education Planning and Strategy), H. Delonnette (Senior Policy Officer), H. Pells (Policy Officer), P. Hudson (Business Enterprise Renewal Team Leader), I. Raymond (Principal Project Officer) and S. Hughes (Committee Services Officer).

RECORDING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chair reminded those present that the meeting would be live-streamed and a recording made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items - [Click here to view](#). The Committee was advised that voting on decisions would be taken via a show of hands.

1. TO APPOINT A CHAIR FOR THE ENSUING YEAR

It was moved and seconded that Mrs L. Jones (Menter Iaith Sir Caerffili) be appointed as Chair. By way of a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that L. Jones (Menter Iaith Sir Caerffili) be appointed as Chair of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee for the ensuing year.

2. TO APPOINT A VICE CHAIR FOR THE ENSUING YEAR

It was moved and seconded that Councillor M. Chacon-Dawson be appointed as Vice Chair. By way of a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that Councillor M. Chacon-Dawson be appointed as Vice Chair of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee for the ensuing year.

3. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from South Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

A Councillor raised concerns regarding low attendance at the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee meetings from Voluntary Sector Representatives and Compact Partners. The Chair and the Deputy Chief Executive for GAVO advised the Committee that this issue has been raised in the Voluntary Sector Representatives Forum, and it was explained that there has been a substantial change of personnel within organisations and also a number of volunteers have stepped down following Covid. The Committee was further advised that elections will be held during this year for Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee representation, which will go out to the wider voluntary sector and Third Sector Forum in Caerphilly.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

5. VOLUNTARY SECTOR LIAISON COMMITTEE HELD ON 2ND FEBRUARY 2023

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee meeting held on 2nd February 2023 be approved as a correct record. By way of a show of hands this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee meeting held on 2nd February 2023 (minute nos. 1 – 8) be approved as a correct record.

6. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

7. UPDATED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR LIAISON COMMITTEE

The Corporate Policy Manager presented the report to update the Terms of Reference for the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee following the decision taken at full Council on the 11th of May 2023 to combine the role of the Committee with the main role of the former Grants to the Voluntary Sector Advisory Panel.

It was noted that the Terms of Reference for this Committee was last considered in 2013. Following a review undertaken by the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Advisory Panel into the operation of grants provided by the Council under the 'Welsh Church Acts Fund' and the small grants scheme, the 'Grants to the Voluntary Sector', a recommendation was made to Council to combine the roles of the two bodies and to disband the Advisory Panel in favour of its main functions transferring to this Liaison Committee. Save for a role for Council members only, explained at section 5.6 of the report. It was further noted that the effect of the changes to the

Terms of Reference are minor and primarily centred on this Committee receiving reports on grants awarded in future.

The Corporate Policy Manager reported that some partners to the Third Sector Agreement and members of the Committee were no longer able to attend meetings due to capacity and reduced resources. An amendment was proposed that the Terms of Reference would reflect that partners would attend and provide reports, on request, and as agendas dictate.

A representative of the Voluntary Sector positively commented on the decision to combine the role of the Committee with the main role of the former Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel, as it will allow Voluntary Sector Representatives to speak directly to Members of the Sub-Committee to explain the frustrations that have been experienced with the system over the years and to be able to suggest improvements. The Voluntary Sector Representative referred to the workshop session held on 18th January 2023 with the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel and the Voluntary Sector and further information was sought on the recommendations that were proposed, particularly in relation to the Welsh Church Acts Fund. A number of points were made which included making the application form available online, the requirement for funding organisations upfront rather than being re-imbursed, the requirement for a six-year minimum lease on premises which include Council owned buildings, and further points were raised around the lease, grant of faculty and planning and building regulations.

In response, the Corporate Policy Manager provided an overview of the workshop and explained that the recommendations proposed by the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel in relation to the Welsh Church Acts Fund and Grants to the Voluntary Sector Fund would be considered by Cabinet on 14th June 2023 and reported back to the Voluntary Sector. The Corporate Policy Manager highlighted that she did not have the Cabinet Report available to refer to, however it was noted that some of the points raised are going to be considered by Cabinet. It was confirmed that the points raised around the lease, grant of faculty and planning and building regulations were not discussed in the workshop as they have previously been answered by the Head of Property Services and there will not be any change to those elements. The Deputy Chief Executive for GAVO added that the workshop did discuss funding organisations upfront and the Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer agreed to consider the potential of changing it to funding 50% upfront.

A Voluntary Sector Representative suggested that the operation of the Welsh Church Acts Fund and Grants to the Voluntary Sector Fund is discussed at the next Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee meeting to consider further recommendations.

Following consideration of the report, and subject to the amendment proposed Under Section 2 (Membership) of the draft Terms of Reference, in that 'One nominated representative from each of the following or a nominated substitute' be replaced with 'Partners to the Third Sector Agreement will attend and provide reports as agendas dictate', it was moved and seconded that the recommendation be approved. By way of a show of hands this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee considered and agreed the amended draft terms of reference appended to the report (Appendix 1).

8. PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING - VERBAL UPDATE

The Chief Executive Officer for GAVO provided an update on the Participatory Budgeting position. The Committee was informed that conversations are taking place with the Health Board and Caerphilly County Borough Council as to how funds will be distributed. It was confirmed that £427,881 has been received from the local authority and of that £363,700 is going to be given out in grants. It was explained that the difference in amount will be to fund a part time member of staff for two years to manage the funding and who will be dedicated to support organisations, not only in applying for the funding but also after the process. It was highlighted that this part time member of staff would also support organisations who are

unsuccessful with bids. The Committee was provided with timeline for the application process and advised that more updates will be provided as the role progresses.

The Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee noted the verbal update.

9. INTRODUCTION FOR PLANS TO CONSULT ON THE THIRD SECTOR PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT FOR GWENT - VERBAL UPDATE

The Deputy Chief Executive for GAVO provided a verbal update on the introduction for plans to consult on the Third Sector Partnership Agreement for Gwent.

The Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee noted the update.

10. GRANTS AWARDED VIA THE GRANTS TO THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR FUND AND THE WELSH CHURCH ACTS FUND

The Corporate Policy Manager introduced the report to inform the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee of the budget available for the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Fund for 2023/24 and the grants awarded in April 2023. The Committee was also informed of the budget available for the Welsh Church Acts Fund for 2023/24 and the grants awarded in April 2023. Details were also provided on applications received and approved by the Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer under delegated powers during April 2023, for each grant scheme.

Members of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee noted the applications received that met the criteria for the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Fund and the Welsh Church Acts Fund, which have already been approved by the Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer under delegated powers, and which are reported to the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee for information.

11. UPDATE ON SHARED PROSPERITY FUND – PRESENTATION

The Business Enterprise Renewal Team Leader delivered a presentation to provide an update and overview on the Shared Prosperity Fund, which included the allocation of funding, the Investment Plan which sets out how they intend to use and deliver the funding, UK Government investment priorities and objectives, progress to date, the Local Investment Plan, the delivery of the fund, future projects, projects in progress and voluntary sector supported future projects.

In response to a request from the representative of Gwent Police, the Business Enterprise Renewal Team Leader provided contact details for the persons in charge of the crime and disorder reduction grant.

A representative of the Voluntary Sector requested a copy of the presentation and raised concerns regarding the short timescale given for the progress to date. In response to a query from a Councillor, the Business Enterprise Renewal Team Leader clarified that the Shared Prosperity Fund is a 3-year programme, the allocation of funding has to be spent by March 2025 and any un-spent monies are re-distributed to the Treasury. It was highlighted that there were ringfenced amounts at the end of the first year which have been carried forward to year two, so there are opportunities to develop current projects.

The Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee noted the presentation.

12. WELL-BEING PLAN UPDATE – PRESENTATION

The Senior Policy Officer delivered a presentation to provide an update on the Gwent Well-

being Plan, which included a brief introduction and an overview of the objectives and steps of the Gwent Well-being Plan. The Committee was informed that the final sign off by PSB is the 22nd June and it will be published by the end of June 2023. Furthermore, an overview was provided on the Local Delivery Plans and how they are going to be developed.

In terms of the draft Local Delivery Plans the Chair asked if there will there be any opportunities for people across the voluntary sector to get involved. In response, the Senior Policy Officer advised that GAVO are involved in the process and they will make sure the Voluntary Sector and Third Sector are involved in some way. In response to a request from a Councillor, it was agreed that a copy of the presentation would be e-mailed to all members of the Committee.

The Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee noted the presentation.

13. ITEMS OF INTEREST CONCERNING THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR FROM COMPACT PARTNERS

There were no items of interest concerning the voluntary sector from Compact Partners.

The meeting closed at 11.55 am.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 30th November 2023, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR