

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY RENEWAL & ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOMS 2/3, CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON MONDAY, 13 APRIL 2015 AT 2.00 PM

Present

Councillor JC Spanswick – Chairperson

DK Edwards	RD Jenkins	G Phillips	HJ Townsend
CA Green	JR McCarthy	DR Pugh	R Williams
RM James	HE Morgan	JH Tildesley MBE	

Invitees:

Councillor P J White	Cabinet Member Communities
Mark Shephard	Corporate Director - Communities
Richard Hughes	Group Manager – Cultural Services
Satwant Pryce	Head of Regeneration and Planning

Officers:

Kym Hirons	Scrutiny Officer
Andrew Rees	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Sarah Daniel	Democratic Services Officer - Committees

116. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following Members / Officers:

Councillor R D Jenkins – Family Bereavement
Councillor D R W Lewis – Holiday.

117. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Declarations of Interest were made:

Councillor D K Edwards declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 – Cultural Partnership Project as a Member of Maesteg Town Council which makes a financial contribution to the running of Maesteg Town Hall.

Councillor R M James declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 – Cultural Partnership Project as a Member of Llangynwyd Middle Community Council which makes a financial contribution to the running of Maesteg Town Hall.

118. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Community Renewal & Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 23 February 2015 were approved as a true and correct record.

119. CULTURAL PARTNERSHIP PROJECT

The Scrutiny Officer introduced a report on the business case for establishing a new Not for Profit Distributing Organisation (NPDO) as an alternative service delivery model for the delivery of a range of Cultural Services.

The Corporate Director Communities informed the Committee that Cabinet had approved, based on a robust business case, the establishment of a NPDO for the management and operation of Cultural Services which had been defined in scope for an indicative transfer of 1 October 2015. Cabinet had also approved the inclusion of B-Leaf and Wood-B into the scope of the NPDO given its close synergies with Bryngarw Park. He stated that overall scope of the new organisation kept together a number of services that had worked well together for a number of years and which had the potential to offer more integrated services in the future.

The Corporate Director Communities informed the Committee that the NPDO would be established as an independent Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG).

The Committee questioned how the services in the organisation had been scoped. The Corporate Director Communities stated that overall scope of the new organisation kept together a number of services that had worked well together for a number of years and which had the potential to offer more integrated services in the future. He stated that B-Leaf and Wood-B would be in scope due to the alignment they have with Bryngarw Park but Adult Community Learning would not be within scope of the NPDO. A great deal of consideration had been given to the inclusion of services within the scope of the NPDO which gave the opportunity to bring more services together. The Group Manager Cultural Services informed the Committee that the various services already work together and that the NPDO would give rise to considerable opportunities for the expansion of B-Leaf and Wood-B. The Committee considered the need for the inclusion of B-Leaf and Wood-B in the NPDO to be looked at sensitively due to the service users being vulnerable adults and supported by Social Services. The Group Manager Cultural Services informed the Committee that consideration can be given to offering an expanded work based programme for service users where in addition to placements being offered at B-Leaf and Wood-B, there would be opportunities for placements in theatres and libraries. He stated there would continue to be a strong connection with the assessment process and that a client role for Adult Social Care will form part of the management agreement. He also informed the Committee that the Culture service already worked through the Arts Development Programme with a wide and diverse range of people. It was envisaged that service users would gain skills which would enable them to develop skills and go into employment. The Committee also expressed concern regarding the inclusion of the B-Leaf and Wood-B programmes in-scope and the savings identified of £134k in the Medium Term Financial Strategy and questioned whether it would be delivered at the expense of vulnerable adults. The Group Manager Cultural Services informed the Committee that it was about ensuring that people are safe and are employed productively and gaining skills. He stated that service users are assessed in terms of their needs as it was a statutory duty to do so. Concern was expressed by the Committee at the budget cut identified and how the service could continue to operate. The Corporate Director Communities informed the Committee that the budget reduction had been agreed by Council as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Concern was also expressed by the Committee that B-Leaf and Wood-B would diminish or discontinue being managed by a Trust and whether the new management in place would have the correct skills to manage the service users. The Corporate Director Communities informed the Committee that all staff would transfer across to the Trust through the TUPE process. The Cabinet Member Communities informed the Committee that a social enterprise had been considered as an option but it was felt that there would be greater safeguards in place with a cultural trust being pursued as the preferred model.

The Committee expressed concern that an Equality Impact Assessment had not been undertaken due to the potential impact of the Trust on vulnerable service users who

participate in the B-Leaf and Wood-B programmes. The Group Manager Libraries, Art and Community Living informed the Committee that an Equality Impact Assessment of the proposals would be undertaken and would be part of the Business Plan prior to the transfer of services taking place.

The Committee considered that the case for retaining services in-house was light in comparison with the detailed case presented for the NPDO. The Group Manager Libraries, Art and Community Living informed the Committee that there are tax advantages in forming a NPDO and it would be able to generate external funding which would not be the case if the services were retained in-house. He stated that the NPDO would have flexibility in the way in which it operated and not be bound with more rigid local authority structures. The NPDO would also have the ability to trade commercially and compete in the market place and be more dynamic and not tied to local authority procurement procedures. The Corporate Director Communities informed the Committee that the NPDO offered the opportunity of a single focus business and also the opportunity of delivering services differently. The Cabinet Member Communities informed the Committee that some services were difficult to deliver in-house and delivering services through a NPDO offered the opportunity to make recurring budget savings whilst at the same time sustaining as many jobs as possible.

The Committee questioned the need and costs of using a consulting company to review management options and whether the skills to carry out this work were available in house. The Corporate Director Communities stated that he would provide the Committee with detail of the costs of engaging consultants. He informed the Committee that the NPDO would be in a position to bid for change management funding. He stated that there was no intention of creating management posts with the introduction of the NPDO. He also stated that operating costs would be reduced due to the need for fewer buildings and less support staff.

The Committee also expressed concern at one of the key principles of the NPDO which allowed the Council to terminate or vary agreement, including partial termination of one or more facilities especially as a number of cultural venues are extremely important to communities with venues such as the Maesteg Town Hall built from contributions by miners. These facilities were also funded by contributions from Town and Community Councils. The Corporate Director Communities informed the Committee that the management agreement for the NPDO would be for a period of 20 years which allowed an element of flexibility for the Council supporting the Trust. He stated there was a need to safeguard the funding made by Town and Community Councils to those cultural venues.

The Committee questioned the process for the appointment of trustees. The Group Cultural Services informed the Committee that the closing date for applications for Trustees was today and that the recruitment process had been delegated to the Cabinet Member Communities and Corporate Director Communities for the appointments to be made to the Shadow Board in May.

The Committee expressed concern regarding the performance of the libraries service and that BCBC is in the worst performing quarter for visits to public libraries in the latest Local Authority Services Performance Report, published in February 2015 and questioned which body would remain responsible for gathering that data for the WPLS. The Group Manager Cultural Services informed the Committee that the Council would remain the statutory body for collecting data about the libraries service and it would be made explicit to the Trust that it would have to provide data which would be submitted by the Authority to the WPLS. He informed the Committee that apart from visitor numbers to libraries the Authority was performing well against the Welsh Public Library Standards Fourth Framework as previously reported. The Committee expressed concern were the

NPDO to fail to collect performance data on the WPLS. The Group Manager Cultural Services the Committee that the responsibility for collecting performance information required to inform evaluation and monitoring of the partnership would be agreed contractually with the NPDO. He stated that the NPDO would be given 3 years in which to be established and put in place funding and structures. The NPDO was on track for 1 October 2015 start and the closing date for applications for Trustees was today.

Conclusions

The Committee noted the report, which provided an update of the business case for establishing a Not For Profit Distributing Organisation (NPDO) for the delivery of a range of Cultural Services.

- Members raised concerns regarding the inclusion of the B Leaf and Wood B programmes within the scope of the NPDO, specifically regarding the minimum savings target of £134,000 attached to the programmes and the potential risk of the programmes eventually being diminished or discontinued. The Officer presenting the report explained that part of the rationale for including B Leaf and Wood B was the link already established between the two programmes and Bryngarw House and Park and the opportunity for participants in the programmes to have easier access and links to other Council services and activities.
- Members felt that there was a need for an EIA specific to the B Leaf and Wood B programmes due to the savings required and potential impact on participants. The Officer responded that an EIA would be undertaken as part of the business planning process.
- Members felt that the information provided regarding the assessment of the potential for developing an in-house option was 'light' and less detailed than the NPDO option.
- Members questioned the need for using a consulting company to review management options and whether the skills to carry out this work were, or should be, available in house.
- Members were concerned that performance against the indicator which monitors visits to public libraries should not be affected negatively by the agreement as BCBC were already in the worst performing quarter for this indicator in the latest Local Authority Services Performance Report, published in February 2015. The Officer acknowledged this and told the Committee that apart from the indicator monitoring library visit the Council is performing well against Public Library Standards.
- The Committee acknowledge that the examples provided in the Outcomes Framework are illustrative but noted that many of the examples of measures relate to outputs or soft outcomes and that more meaningful outcomes will need to be identified.
- The Committee raised concerns that information and data used to evaluate performance against targets will need to be collected and reported accurately and in a timely manner, in particular where the Council has the responsibility for providing performance information for mandatory returns to regulatory bodies. The Officer reported that responsibility for collecting performance information required to inform evaluation and monitoring of the partnership will be agreed and written into contracts.

The Committee requested the following further information:

- The Committee requested further detail regarding how the £134,000 savings attached to the B Leaf and Wood B programmes will be achieved.

- The Committee requested further information on the costs involved in using a consulting company to carry out the options appraisal and the evaluation of management options.

120. COMMUNITIES FIRST 2014/15 AND 2015/16

The Head of Regeneration and Development reported on an update on the Communities First programme for 2014/15 and on proposals for the 2015/16 financial year, as the Welsh Government had confirmed funding for this period. She stated that there had been a 5% reduction across the programme with funding of £1,738,317 allocated across the three clusters of Upper, Mid and Lower. The Head of Regeneration and Development also informed the Committee of the continuation of the current Communities First and Pupil Deprivation Grant funded project "Every Child Counts" for Oldcastle, Pen-y-Bont, Tremains, Brackla and Litchard primary schools in the Lower Cluster had been approved at a level of £57,990.50. She stated that Cabinet had approved the acceptance of both elements of the funding and also agreed the continuation of contract arrangements for a Financial Wellbeing and Support project with Bridgend Citizens' Advice Bureau.

The Head of Regeneration and Development reported that the current programme had reached a period of relative stability with more staff in place than the previous year, with more activities taking place in communities. Integration of staff had been a significant factor in the success of the programme and the continued implementation of this model would ensure the corporate impact of the programme is not undermined. The Head of Regeneration and Development highlighted the range of activities which had taken place.

In response to a question from the Committee, the Head of Regeneration and Development undertook to provide the Committee with detail on the locations covered by the 3 Clusters.

The Committee referred to the success of the PDG funded project "Every Child Counts" and commended those involved which had seen numeracy levels in participating primary schools increasing. The Partnership and Integration Manager informed the Committee of the success of the project which had seen results improving. It was hoped to replicate the project in other schools by rolling training out to Teachers and Learning Assistants. The Welsh Government Minister had been approached to address an Anti-Poverty Conference on 21 July 2015 when it was also intended to take the Minister on a visit to view the project at Oldcastle Primary.

The Committee questioned whether residents who do not live in the Communities First 1st cluster areas could be provided with support from the programme and able to participate in Communities First activities. The Partnership and Integration Manager informed the Committee of the application of 'fuzzy boundaries' which could apply to instances where potential participants live outside of the cluster areas who may have the opportunity to be included in activities where they are in need of support.

The Committee requested further information regarding progress by the Welsh Government in reviewing criteria for inclusion in the programme and expanding C1st areas and the provision of support.

The Committee questioned the methods used for engaging with communities and for raising awareness of Communities first activities as the Committee had concerns that the use of social media may not reach all potential participants and that the number of views may not reflect the number of people actually accessing the programme. The

Committee considered that a better means of public engagement would be via the delivery of leaflets to households. The Partnership and Integration Manager informed the Committee that marketing support had been made available through a secondment arrangement with BAVO and a marketing group had been set up to advise on the most appropriate way of contacting people. She stated that a newsletter and e-bulletin was used to communicate Communities First activity. The Cabinet Member Communities commented on the success of using social media to engage with people. In response to a question from the Committee on reaching households who are not in Communities First areas but need that support, the Partnership and Integration Manager informed the Committee that households who are outside Communities First areas are not actively targeted but are provided support where a need had been identified.

The Committee commented that this programme was delivering at a higher standard than the previous programme and whether delivery of the programme was hampered due to staff being engaged on short term contracts. The Head of Regeneration and Development commented that short term contracts were disruptive to the delivery of the programme but confirmed that delivery of this programme was better than the previous programme however longer term programmes were preferential.

In response to a question from the Committee the Head of Regeneration and Development stated that she would extend an invite to members of this Committee to attend the Communities First conference.

The Committee noted that some of the targets for individual measures had been exceeded by the end of Quarter 3, while other targets looked like they would not be achieved by year end and questioned the process for target setting. The Partnership and Integration Manager informed the Committee that some of the outcomes are set by the Welsh Government. Targets are set by project leads and officers. Performance against some target had been affected by issues of staff retention.

Conclusions

The Committee noted the report, which provided an update on the Communities First (C1st) programme and proposals for the next financial year.

- The Committee would like CRE Scrutiny Members to be invited to participate in the annual conference.
- Members questioned the methods and formats cited in the report regarding engaging communities and raising awareness of C1st opportunities and activities, raising concerns that using social media may not reach all potential participants and that the number of views may not reflect the number of people actually accessing the programme.
- Members questioned whether the cluster areas covered everyone who may benefit from the programme and whether and how people from outside the areas may be able to access support. The Officer responded that WG have used the term 'fuzzy boundaries' which could apply to instances where potential participants living outside of the cluster areas may have the opportunity to be included in activities if they are in need of support.
- Members noted that many of the examples of measures relate to outputs or soft outcomes and that more meaningful outcomes will need to be identified and included in future reports. The Officer acknowledged this and said that some of the measures are set by WG.

- Members noted that some of the targets for individual measures had been exceeded by the end of Q3, while others looked like they would not be achieved by year end. Members questioned the process for target setting. The Officer said that due to the nature of some of the activities some of the measures are subject to seasonal variation which means that for these measures a representative assessment of performance against targets may not be available until year end.

The Committee requested the following further information:

- The Committee requested that more detail be provided on the locations covered by each of the clusters.
- The Committee requested information regarding the number and type of instances where residents who do not live in C1st cluster areas have requested and been provided with support from the programme.
- The Committee requested further information regarding progress by WG in reviewing criteria for inclusion in the programme and expanding C1st areas and provision of support.
- The Committee requested further information on how communities are made aware of C1st opportunities and on the costs involved in using a marketing company to promote services and activities and why this was not carried out using skills available in-house.

121. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The Scrutiny Officer presented a report which detailed the items to be considered at the meeting of the Committee scheduled for 13 April 2015, and sought confirmation of the information required for the subsequent meeting following the Annual Meeting of Council.

Conclusions:

The Committee noted the items to be considered at its meeting on 13 April 2015 and for the first meeting after the Annual Meeting of Council.

122. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no additional items.

The meeting closed at 4.45 pm