

COMMUNITY PROFILE & PARTNERSHIPS
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
13 APRIL 2015

Minutes of the meeting of the Community Profile & Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held in the Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold on Monday, 13 April 2015

PRESENT: Councillor Brian Dunn (Chairman)

Councillors: Paul Cunningham, Chris Dolphin, Ian Dunbar, Robin Guest, Joe Johnson, Dave Mackie and Paul Shotton

APOLOGIES: Councillors: Ian Smith and Nigel Steele-Mortimer

CONTRIBUTORS: Chief Executive and Ms. Ann Woods, Chief Officer of Flintshire Local Voluntary Council

IN ATTENDANCE: Member Engagement Manager and Committee Officer

49. DECLARATIONS ON INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

No declarations of interest were made.

50. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9 March 2015 had been circulated with the agenda.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

51. FLINTSHIRE LOCAL VOLUNTARY COUNCIL (PRESENTATION)

Ms. Ann Woods, Chief Officer of Flintshire Local Voluntary Council (FLVC) was in attendance to deliver a presentation on the following:

- Third Sector Difference
- Core Roles
- Opportunities for Development
- Flintshire Compact
- Flintshire County Council Community Asset Transfer Process
- National and Regional Developments
- The Future

In detailing the aims of the FLVC, Ms. Woods referred to the current financial pressures faced by all organisations and the impact on third sector organisations. Discussions were taking place between the County Council and FLVC to identify ways of managing the cuts and opportunities for collaborative working to reduce the impact. Ms. Woods described the range of FLVC projects to meet an increased demand for training and support for volunteers who wished

to engage in community activity placements. She outlined the objectives of the Flintshire Compact where work was being undertaken to co-ordinate a mix of future funding streams and to facilitate workshops with organisations. The new arrangements were due to be implemented in April 2016 and progress would be shared. Information was also provided on the independent role of the FLVC in partnership with the County Council to support the Community Asset Transfer process, where Council funding had been used to provide additional resources to support any interested community groups. On regional developments, Ms. Woods stated that a Memorandum of Understanding had been agreed for cross-boundary working and she outlined future plans to respond to the reduction in core funding.

The Chief Executive said that a strong and respectful working relationship existed between the County Council and FLVC, to the credit of all involved. He referred to the Compact arrangements between the two organisations and the importance of managing financial cuts, where Flintshire had sought to protect services as much as possible.

In recognition of the excellent work undertaken by the FLVC, Councillor Paul Shotton particularly welcomed the project to offer digital inclusion support and asked if more could be done to raise awareness. He went on to refer to the library consultation process which could provide opportunities for third sector groups to safeguard their local libraries. Ms. Woods agreed with the need to highlight the efforts and aims of third sector groups, however there was a balance between securing funding, supporting individuals in the community and promoting activities to encourage volunteer participation.

Councillor Chris Dolphin praised the Community Asset Transfer initiative which he felt had significantly benefited from involvement of the FLVC. Whilst acknowledging the challenges on limited funding, he raised concerns around the impact on workload and resources available within FLVC. In response to comments on forthcoming training events by FLVC, Ms. Woods confirmed that other town/community council representatives were able to attend to hear what was being achieved in other areas. She gave assurances that resources were being carefully managed.

The Chief Executive explained that work at Chief Officer level had helped to generate further interest in Community Asset Transfers. Whilst it was encouraging that some town/community councils were taking a proactive approach in recognising the benefits of this in their communities, others were yet to do so. It was hoped that more examples of good practice would encourage others to follow.

Commenting on the positive relationship between the two organisations, Councillor Robin Guest said that FLVC was held in high regard by voluntary organisations and elected Members. He asked if representations had been made to reduce the complex governance arrangements which applied to voluntary organisations as a whole, which could deter volunteer participation. Ms. Woods agreed with the point made, but added that the rules and regulations set by the Charity Commission offered reassurance to those involved with third sector groups and that the support covered individuals' own personal safety. The Chief

Executive commented on the need for governance arrangements to be proportionate and to seek the right balance where possible.

In response to further comments on the launch of the new Digital Communities Wales project and a suggestion for a more user-friendly title, Ms. Woods explained that the focus was now aimed at front-line staff to cascade to others. On the co-ordination of funding streams under the Flintshire Compact, she highlighted the effectiveness of the Council's Single Integrated Plan in linking to service delivery planning.

Following queries by Councillor Joe Johnson, Ms. Woods advised that enquiries should be directed to Mr. John Gray, the Information and Advice Officer at FLVC, to assess the aims and objectives of potential projects so that an appropriate legal framework could be determined.

Councillor Dave Mackie commented on the need to raise awareness of good initiatives and to identify areas for voluntary opportunities to make a difference to the lives of individuals, which now had a greater value due to efficiencies and workforce reductions.

On the voluntary redundancy programme, the Chief Executive spoke of the potential to progress training support for individuals who may wish to pursue voluntary work after their retirement.

The Chairman thanked Ms. Woods for her attendance and presentation.

RESOLVED:

That the content of the presentation be received and Ms. Woods be thanked for her contribution.

52. CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS

The Chairman reminded the Committee that this would be its last meeting: the May 2015 meeting had been cancelled and at the Annual Meeting of the Council, a new Overview & Scrutiny committee structure would be put in place. The Chairman went on to comment that the Committee had done some good work and that he was confident that Members had learnt a lot from their membership of it. He then thanked the contributors and officers for their role in the work of the Committee.

53. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the press or public in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 10.46 am)

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Chairman