

Monitoring and Progress Form - One Voice Wales

Quarter: 2nd

Year: 2012-13

Months: July to September

Information provided by: Mr Lyn Cadwallader

Date: 9 October 2012

UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENT OF PRIORITY BUSINESS PLAN OBJECTIVES

1. Membership levels

a. *Current membership figure: 546*

It is important to point out that we have success in south Wales attracting councils never previously into membership including for example Barry and Blaenavon.

The membership in RCT and Caerphilly is relatively low and any assistance from the Welsh Government in encouraging members into membership would be welcomed. Currently our work does not extend to assisting financially with the start up costs associated with the formation of a new community or town council.

b. *What are the area committees doing to increase membership?*

We continue to have "Membership Recruitment and Retention" as a standing item on all Area Committee agendas. For all of the Mid & West Wales Area Committees, non-member councils have been written to again, inviting representatives to attend Area Committees, although the take-up response is negligible. However, the reputation of One Voice Wales continues to grow, and members continue to promote our activities, resulting in a number of new Councils coming into membership, including in Pembrokeshire.

Agendas are being developed to include regular guest speakers on relevant topics as a means of helping the sharing of knowledge and good practice.

2. Increase membership income

Training income has increased considerably in the current financial year primarily due to the high take-up on induction and Code of Conduct training courses. Almost all participants have indicated their desire to attend further training courses. Consultancy work has had a reasonable take up and has included:

- *Health and Safety consultancies for Garw Valley and Coedffranc Councils*
- *Business Planning support for Penarth Town Council*
- *Preparation of HR policies for Carmarthen Town Council*
- *Support for Employment Tribunal – Clydach Council*
- *Bespoke training courses for Torfaen Councils, Pontyclun, Rogiet, Pontyberem, Tywyn, Gelligaer, Abergavenny, Barry, Newtown*
- *Commissioned by Vale of Glamorgan Council to run 4 Code of Conduct courses for Community and Town Councils*

a. *Membership income for 2011-2012 received to date: £148,529*

3. Alternative income (over and above subscriptions and WAG core grant) generated?

a. *What are the funding streams?*

Conference & AGM = £22,500

Sponsorship – Aon = £20,000

Training = £34,000

Consultancy = £17,850

b. *what amounts have already been raised?*

Conference & AGM = £13,533

Sponsorship – Aon = 0 £10,000 due and being pursued.

Training = £23,398

Consultancy = £8,578

c. *What total amounts for the year are expected?*

See 3a above.

d. *What will this income fund?*

Fund the running costs of One Voice Wales

4. Larger Local Councils Committee

a. *Please provide a summary of actions that the Larger Local Councils Officer has carried out during the quarter?*

At the last meeting of the Committee in July 2012 presentations were received from –

- *[information redacted], Young Dragons Co-ordinator for Wales. The Young Dragons is a partnership led by HRH The Prince of Wales. It is aimed at engaging with the young people of Wales and assisting*

them to actively contribute to their communities by joining a Uniformed Youth Organisation.

- *[information redacted], Aon UK limited on insurance. The speaker went through what the company has to offer town and community councils; the key policy features and what it can provide cover for.*

There was a detailed discussion on the dog fouling issue which is a problem across Wales. The Committee concluded that – Education was the key to solving the problem and that a national scheme should be introduced and that One Voice Wales should take this forward.

b. How many members are there currently? 49

c. What plans are there to further develop the committee?

The potential for staff reorganisation is being considered in order to release the funds necessary to employ a dedicated Larger Local Council officer.

d. We know that the committee is promoted to potential larger council members in member correspondence, presentations to larger councils and via the website. Has this been working well, are there any other plans?

Barry TC, Garw Valley, Llantwit Major, Llanelli TC, Blaenhonddan CC and Blaenafon CC have joined OVW this year.

5. Member services - qualitative and quantitative

a. Legal advice:

12 *referrals to NALC via SLA during the July to September period.*

Legal advice has included issues such as transfer of assets, linking footpaths to create trails, dissolution of defunct charities

b. Policy advice:

North Wales - The three area committees in North West Wales raised issues around the proposed Marine Conservation Zones and responded to the formal consultation

Mid Wales - Policy (and general) advice has been given to a wide range of councils. A total of 53 substantive queries have been addressed in the Mid & West region during the quarter.

c. Publications:

We have been requested by the Gwent Valleys Area Committee to produce a model complaints and concerns policy for all member councils based on the model published by the Public Ombudsman for Wales. This will remove a replication of individual Council effort and save costs of Councils arranging their own bilingual translations.

d. Representational service:

One Voice Wales on behalf of community and town councils across Wales have made representations on various consultations over the last three months and other consultations remain under consideration, including: Consultation on proposals for a Sustainable Development Bill; Promoting Local Democracy; Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales consultation in relation to proposals included in the Annual Report for 2013/14; Statutory Guidance to Welsh Local Authorities on the Power to promote or improve Economic, Social or Environmental Well-Being under the Local Government Act 2000.

e. Annual conference:

The theme for this year's Conference is 'The Power of Wellbeing: the future role of community and town councils'. Confirmed speakers include Jane Davidson, Director of INSPIRE, Carole-Ann Davies, CEO of the Design Commission for Wales, Reg Kilpartick, Director of Local Government and Communities Welsh Government and Chris Blake, Community Energy Wales.

f. Training – please provide an update on training courses delivered July – September 2012

The focus of attention in this period was on the delivery of Induction and Code of Conduct courses. These were provided in the period June to July, 2012 with courses being suspended in the lead up to the elections and the month of May. During this period, 19 Code of Conduct courses were delivered and 29 Induction courses. In total, 520 Councillor training days were delivered. The average satisfaction rate for courses was 93% and almost all participants indicated that they wished to attend further training events. We have also received requests for bespoke training in the field of team building and churning skills from North Wales based Councils.

g. Other:

HR consultancy services have benefitted the Councils of Clydach, Manorbier, Penarth, Van and Gorseinon. Health and safety services have benefitted the Councils of Coedffranc and Garw Valley. Pontarddulais Council has also requested health and safety consultancy support.

6. Development of internal policies, procedures and people

a. Anything to report?

A communications strategy was agreed at the last NEC – attached.

The NEC has approved a national Policy Strategy for One Voice Wales, which defines a framework for debating and developing policies across the sector, including the use of a wider base for compiling sector responses to government and other consultation exercises and a plan for introducing a series of national policy seminars in the coming year.

b. Progress with limited company status? No

c. Status of Larger Local Council Development officer post:

Exploring the potential to re-organise roles within One Voice Wales to create capacity for the role.

7. Communications

a. Update on quarterly newsletters and other PR:

The quarterly newsletter has been revised and the content increased. We will be increasing the number of press releases in the next year, following a significant impact in the press on the MCZ issue. We will be developing an e-bulletin to members with more regular and up to date information

Additionally, by way of example relating to the new communications plan, this was raised at the recent Gwent Valleys Area Committee and the Development Officer was flooded with examples of good new stories that could be included in future press releases.

8. Promoting Welsh Assembly Government policy initiatives within the community and town council sector

a. Training Strategy for Community and Town Councils?

The Training Strategy and action plan is being delivered with all deadlines being met. The training needs survey was published in September and responses are invited by 31 October, 2012. The survey results will provide us with information about the future direction of training course content and delivery.

b. What are the current trainer numbers?

In the period January to July 2012 (allowing for courses not being delivered in the pre and post election period) a total of 68 courses were delivered with 681 Councillor training sessions having been delivered.

c. Are OVW happy that the trainer numbers will meet training need?

With the support of a grant from the WG we now have 4 additional trainers with three of them able to deliver bilingually. Although we are satisfied that we can offer the full range of courses at suitable locations throughout Wales, we remain concerned that there is still a large number of Councils who fail to appreciate the importance of training. We have invited all Councils to appoint Training Champions as a means of addressing this issue but to date only 65 Councils have appointed their Champions. We will continue to look at new ways of raising the profile of training.

d. Charters – progress / report?

North Wales:

We have begun the process of discussing a Charter with the Snowdonia National Park

Flintshire County Council – we are working to support our members in monitoring the Charter agreement

Anglesey - we have been working with members and the authority on the development of the Charter, a further meeting is due in the next quarter

Denbighshire & Conwy - currently working with members over the development of the Charter

Wrexham, attended a meeting of the town and community councils forum.

Mid and West Wales:

All five Area Committees have endorsed the model charter in principle as the way forward, with the next step in each area being to progress an agreed "action plan" to accompany this document. This process was delayed by this year's local government elections, but is now being progressed with the involvement of new members. Three-way discussions are under way at officer level between One Voice Wales, Powys County Council and Ceredigion County Council on the approach to taking these matters forward in the two respective areas.

At Carmarthenshire, a draft documents for the "working relationships between community councillors and the local county councillor" has been formally signed at a ceremony between the Area Committee and the County Council.

Significant progress has been made in relation to the draft charter between the Brecon Beacons National Park and the relevant Community and Town Councils in the area. The final draft was taken to all relevant Area Committee, where it was endorsed by members, and the official signing of the charter is now scheduled for 5th October at the National Park offices in Brecon.

South East Wales:

Progress since the last report is as follows:

Newport – Charter signed and an action plan is being developed

Cardiff – Charter signed and early stages of action plan development under way

Blaenau Gwent – Some promising signs of improvement in the relationship between Councils

Monmouthshire – Re-launch of Charter currently being planned alongside the development of an action plan on a whole County area basis.

Brecon Beacons – Charter formally signed by Chairs of BBNP and One Voice Wales on 5 October – 12 Community Councils indicated agreement to sign and others likely to follow. Engagement of OVW with BBNP has been the catalyst for the current favourable state of affairs.

Neath Port Talbot

Charter - progress delayed by council elections and the fact that some working group members lost their seats. Further delays because of the Chairperson's bereavement. However we have requested that the charter be placed on the agenda for discussion in the Neath CBC Liaison Forum which takes place later this month. There is considerable opposition to the Health Service reconfiguration and a petition has been presented to the Assembly. The Area Committee is proposing an urgent motion to our AGM on the 13 October, 2012 on this.

Swansea Area Committee -

Charter - further development of the charter is to be discussed in the Area Committee meeting on the 11 October 2012. A senior officer from the County Council is attending the meeting to talk about the potential for joint working.

We would like to discuss the potential of holding another Charter Network event and as previously would welcome the financial support of Welsh Government in assisting with venue costs.

e. Local Service Boards.

Meeting of Gwynedd /Mon LSB postponed, and re-scheduled for October

One Voice Wales organising the process for appointment of a Cardiff Community Councillor to serve on the Cardiff Partnership Board.

f. Other:

Worked with Play Wales to promote good practice at a local level on Ynys Mon

9. Other key objectives listed in business plan

a. How would you assess your progress with the other key objectives?

On track with business plan predictions – generating new income is an area for concentration over next quarter.

10. Financial Information required

a. Have there been any revisions to the income and expenditure sheet provided to us for the last meeting?

11. Other

a. Details of other developments / achievements.

North Wales:

Re-organisation of health services continues to be a concern to members in North Wales, and members of the BCUHB have attended all area meetings to bring members up to date, and provide greater information about areas of concern, which centre around local provision and transport to centres of excellence, with particular concerns for residents receiving services from a different Health Board e.g. those residing in the South Meirionydd area

We continue to support Partneriath Penllyn, an innovative development between five councils in the Bala area, who are directly delivering devolved services to their residents. Our advice centres around structures and possible further developments, and we are working in partnership with both the Penllyn councils and Gwynedd council on this issue

Mid Wales:

A significant amount of liaison has taken place between One Voice Wales officers and external bodies, contributing to a rapidly expanding agenda of co-operation and partnership working across sectors. Recently, One Voice Wales was invited to join the Armed Forces Community Covenant project in Carmarthenshire, and One Voice Wales has become increasingly recognised as the only significant voice for the Community and Town Council sector in such partnership arrangements and initiatives.

South East Wales:

Climate Change Adaptation Project – Grant from Environment Wales and OVW undertaking project management.

- Presentation on grants for community projects by Creative and Rural Communities Grants officer from the Vale of Glamorgan Council to Area Committee for Bridgend/Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan*
- Presentation on Rural Affordable Housing and Community Planning to Monmouthshire/Newport Area Committee*
- Presentations planned on heritage grants and reconfiguration of health services to Gwent Valleys Area Committee*
- Appointment of Representative to the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Group in Monmouthshire*