

## Monitoring and Progress Form - One Voice Wales

Quarter: 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter

Year: 2012 - 2013

Months: October - December

Information provided by: Mr Lyn Cadwallader, Chief Executive, OVW

Date: 18 January 2013

### **UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENT OF PRIORITY BUSINESS PLAN OBJECTIVES**

#### **1. Membership levels**

a. *Current membership figure: 546*

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

##### *North*

*Area committee members are planning to network with members from councils not currently in membership in the forthcoming quarter order to encourage an increase in membership*

##### *Mid and West Wales*

*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 a number of times, 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 and engage in our activities. The CEO due to attend a meeting of Brecon Town Council to discuss them coming into membership.*

##### *South Wales*

*Membership levels are already high in the Newport/Mon, Bridgend/Cardiff/Vale and Gwent Valley's area. In the Caerphilly/Merthyr/RCT area, a letter was recently sent to all Chairs of non-member Councils encouraging them to meet with OVW representatives to hear about the benefits of becoming members. During the year however, there have been a number of new members including Barry, Blaenavon, Garw Valley and Cornelly becoming members. The South Wales Development Officer is also due to meet with Ynysawdre CC to discuss the benefits of membership.*

#### **2. Increase membership income**

a. Membership income for 2011-2012 received to date: **£153,163**

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

a. What are the funding streams?

Conference & AGM = £16,500

Sponsorship Aon = £20,000

Training = £34,300

Consultancy = £14,000

b. what amounts have already been raised?

Conference & AGM = £15,694

Sponsorship Aon = £15,000

Training = £33,394

Consultancy = £14,192

c. What total amounts for the year are expected?

Conference & AGM = £15,694

Sponsorship Aon = £20,000

Training = £40,000

Consultancy = £18,000

d. What will this income fund?

*This income will 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?

*It was resolved that [information redacted] (Mold Town Council) would be the Chair for the year 2013-14 and [information redacted] (Pembrey and Burry Port TC) the Vice Chair.*

*At the Larger Councils Committee held on 17 October 2012 members received a presentation from [information redacted] of Creation Development Trust identifying opportunities for larger councils to engage in the work of local social enterprises and development trusts. The presentation was well received.*

b. How many members are there currently? 49

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

*We will be holding our first Larger Councils event on 21 March 2013 at the Cefn Lea Conference Centre, Newtown. It is anticipated this will become an annual event in the One Voice Wales calendar.*

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?*

*It was agreed at the NEC held on 14 December to continue to offer non-member councils a 50% discount for their first year membership fees. It is anticipated this will encourage new members in 2013-14.*

**5. Member services - qualitative and quantitative**

a. *Legal advice:*

*Councils in my area continue to benefit from the legal advisory service with advice being provided in relation to issues such as access to common land; footpath management; contractual law etc.*

b. *Policy advice:*

**Policy (and general) advice has been given to a wide range of councils. During the period Councils received A total of 58 substantive queries have been addressed in the Mid & West region during the quarter.**

c. *Publications:*

*The latest edition of The Voice has been distributed week beginning 6 January 2013. Work has begun on the final publication of 2012-13 which will focus on 'Youth' following agreement at NEC on 14<sup>th</sup> December that each edition should have a specific theme.*

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: 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; Non-domestic permitted development rights; Vibrant and Viable Places; Non-material amendments to planning permissions; Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Bill.*

e. *Annual conference:*

*A review of the 2012 Conference and AGM has been undertaken – One Voice Wales intend to invite the First Minister Carwyn Jones to speak at its National Conference in 2013.*

*f. Training – please provide an update on training courses delivered April – December 2012*

*In addition to the standard modules, a significant number of courses were delivered covering the topic areas of Code of Conduct and Induction for New Councillors. Over 1000 Councillor training days were delivered during this period with high satisfaction levels recorded and attendees in the main indicating that they wished to attend other courses. Courses were well attended in all parts of Wales.*

*During 2012, an additional 5 Training Associates were appointed and each has been trained in the programmes utilising the grant received from the Welsh Government. In addition, the Training Associates met as a group in December, 2012, and completed the process of updating all training materials ready for the roll-out of programmes in 2013. An ambitious programme of training has been circulated to all Councils covering the period February to July, 2013.*

*The number of bespoke training programmes delivered during the year increased markedly with Induction and Code of Conduct training being delivered to Councils including Newtown, all Councils in Blaenau Gwent/Torfaen, Rogiet, Tywyn, Gelligaer, Pontyclun and Barry.*

*A new agreement has been reached with Planning Aid Wales for the delivery of planning training. To date, courses have been arranged for Penarth, Chepstow, Pencoed, Aberystwyth and Bay of Colwyn Councils. These courses rely on a host Council and neighbouring Councils are then invited to submit nominations on a chargeable basis. This kind of arrangement is proving popular.*

*For 2013, new courses on health and safety and chairing skills are being piloted and courses delivered by Cynnal Cymru on Strong Roots/Green Futures are being offered throughout Wales. We are also planning to introduce courses on allotments/community gardens delivered by the Federation of City Farms and Gardens.*

*g. Other:*

## **6. Development of internal policies, procedures and people**

*a. Anything to report?*

*The NEC has approved the decision to formulate a national Sustainable Development Policy for the sector, and has endorsed a model Complaints*

*Policy for member councils based on the template issued via the Welsh Government. Plans are now advanced for the launch of a series of national policy seminars for the sector, which will focus on key areas of policy such as sustainable development, devolved services and various aspects of the newly acquired power of well-being.*

*b. Progress with limited company status?*

*No – current funds have not been sufficient to engage the services of a solicitors practice to support the legal elements of the process.*

*c. Status of Larger Local Council Development officer post.*

*No progress as funds do not allow for the creation of this post.*

## **7. Communications**

*a. Update on quarterly newsletters and other PR:*

*The organisation has agreed a Communications Plan during this period, which includes*

- Reviewing The Voice*
- Developing an e-bulletin*
- Developing other forms of electronic media to aid communication, including the website, twitter etc*
- Capturing case studies in an agreed format in order to share best practice*
- Building member capacity in relation to media work*

*The timetable for the delivery of the Plan is from late 2012, up to the end of the 2013 /14 financial year. Some aspects of the plan are cost neutral, others rely on increased income to deliver successfully.*

## **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 continues to guide the development and delivery of training programmes. The National Training Advisory Group is kept fully informed about developments and the progress of delivering on the internal strategy that was designed to support the roll-out of the National Training Strategy. The role of the Welsh Government and recognition of the funding received to develop training programmes is embodied in each of the training modules. Next NTAG to be held in Caernarfon TC offices on 6 February 2013.*

*b. What are the current trainer numbers?*

*We currently have 12 Associate Trainers*

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

Yes

d. Charters – progress / report?

#### **North Wales**

*Progress in North Wales has been slow, in some cases delay has been due to Officer illness (Ynys Mon) Flintshire is progressing well and Conwy is in development. Wrexham has determined not to proceed with the development of a charter, citing the reason of insufficient officer resource to do so, and preferring to retain the current system of regular meetings with councils which provide an exchange of information*

#### **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, having been delayed by the local government elections in May, is now being progressed with a renewed degree of priority. 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.*

*The member relationship protocol, the "working relationships between community councillors and the local county councillor" pioneered at Carmarthenshire, is being looked at by Powys County Council as a potential model for agreement in that county.*

*A significant milestone was reached in relation to the charter between the Brecon Beacons National Park and the relevant Community and Town Councils in the area, with the official signing of the charter having been completed in October at the National Park offices in Brecon.*

#### **South Wales**

*There are Charters in place in all Unitary Authority areas in South East Wales with the exception of Merthyr. In Monmouthshire, OVW has been instrumental in acting as a catalyst between County officers and representatives of the Area Committee to develop an agreed action plan to implement the signed Charter. The arrangements for implementing the Charter in Newport, RCT and Caerphilly appear to be working well with the success primarily due to the creation of effective Community Liaison Committees. The Torfaen Charter also works well with a new body having recently been created to co-ordinate partnership working. There have been a number of issues relating to the Charter implementation in Blaenau Gwent although we understand that there have been recent improvements in its operation. Recently OVW became*

*involved to resolve an issue relating to consultation on a central bus station development in Brynmawr. It is pleasing to note that our engagement resolved the issue for the Town Council. The Vale of Glamorgan Council is currently embarking on a Charter review process with Community and Town Councils. In Bridgend and RCT it appears that effective Community Liaison Committees are in place to co-ordinate the commitments in these Charters.*

#### *Neath Port Talbot CBC*

*A meeting between the One Voice Wales working party and Neath Port Talbot CBC was held on the 17 January 2013 when the proposed content of the charter and other issues such as code of conduct training was discussed. A further meeting will take place in March.*

#### *City & County of Swansea*

*The One Voice Wales Task and Finish Group will meet with the City & County of Swansea on the 28 January 2013 to discuss further development of the existing charter.*

#### *e. Local Service Boards.*

*The North Wales development officer attended the Gwynedd Mon LSB and is working with the officer recently appointed to ensure the most appropriate contribution from the sector.*

*The NEC on 14 December noted the unfortunate developments at Powy LSB where community and town council representation has been down graded from the LSB to a 'stakeholder' group meeting. It was resolved that this be raised by the CEO at the next Ministerial meeting.*

#### *f. Other:*

*North Wales councils received presentations at each area meeting from officers of the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board in order to inform their responses to the latest consultation. Strong views were expressed at all meetings about the location of services and accessibility to those from remote and rural areas*

*The N Wales officer has worked with the officer from Ynys Mon and local councils to ensure they contribute fully to the current Audit of Play being undertaken. NB in Ynys Mon childrens play areas were transferred to the community and town councils some years ago*

*The three area committees in North Wales affected by the current consultation by National Grid about the renewal and replacing of power lines held a joint meeting under the auspices of One Voice Wales to develop a collective response to the proposals*

*One Voice Wales has identified an individual from a member council to represent stakeholders on the MCZ committee*

## **9. Other key objectives listed in business plan**

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

## **10. Financial Information required**

*a. Have there been any revisions to the income and expenditure sheet provided to us for the last meeting? Attached is a copy of the estimated projections for year end. There appears to be no significant variations to our original forecasts for the year end.*

## **11. Other**

*a. Details of other developments / achievements.*

*A growing 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. Members are working to try to achieve full membership of various Local Service Boards, and are already active in partnerships such as the Armed Forces Community Covenant project in Carmarthenshire. 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 across Wales.*

*Consultancy work has increased during 2012 with OVW no able to offer services covering internal audit, HR/employment law and health/safety. We are also looking at the possibility of offering planning guidance as an addition to the current portfolio. Charges for consultancy work are set at £350 which represents a significant reduction on charges that are levied by the private sector. This savings can be used to plough back into service delivery. During the year we have successfully represented a Council at an Employment Tribunal, undertaken a business infrastructure review for Blaenhonddan Council, delivered a staff/member workshop and helped design a business plan for Penarth Town Council, carried out a full health and safety review including delivery of training and preparation of policies/risk assessments for Coedffranc CC, prepared health and safety assessments for Pencoed and Garw Valley Councils as well as undertaking a range of internal audits for Councils. This area of work is beginning to grow.*

*One Voice Wales is increasing its contributions to public policy developments through our representation on several Welsh Government advisory panels including the Sustainable Development Bill Advisory Panel and National Assets Working Group to name but two. In terms of our representational role there have been many meeting held with national bodies including Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales, Carmarthenshire Armed*



Forces Convention, representing the sector at Buckingham Palace at the Queens Diamond Jubilee Reception, Minister for the Environment Urban Sustainability event in Wrexham, Big Society event run by the Welsh Office, meeting with the Director of the Planning Inspectorate for Wales to name but a few. Additionally we have represented the sector at National Training and Advisory Group, Local Councils Audit Liaison Group convened by Wales Audit Office, provided input at the Sustainable Development Bill Advisory Panel, led on developments with Communities 2.0 on digital inclusion projects for the sector and provided responses to the Power of Wellbeing Consultation and Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.

It has been a very productive 2012 for One Voice Wales – with the various Bill's going through government is promises to be an even more eventful 2013 and One Voice Wales looks forward to working with Welsh Government colleagues in promoting the role and development of the community and town council sector in Wales.

#### **PARTNERSHIP WORKING UPDATE**

There have been a number of significant and pleasing developments on the partnership front to report to the Minister as set out below:

**Environment Wales** – exploratory meetings have been held with the Flood Risk Programme Manager for Wales and actions are being developed for the focussed support of vulnerable communities across Wales. An article highlighting the programme will feature in the winter edition of The Voice. Essentially Environment Wales outreach staff will be made available as a resource to community and town councils to ensure everything possible can be developed to manage the risk of flooding in communities. One Voice Wales has recently brokered a meeting between Environment Agency and Brecon Town Council which took place on 15 January 2013 and will support new resident and At the time of writing we are awaiting confirmation of dates to meet with representatives in Brecon Town Council to carry out engagement activities.

**UnLtd** – This is a national organisation established approximately 10 years ago and was formerly known as the Millenium Development Trust. Essentially the organisation supports individuals keen to develop social enterprises to support community development. We have negotiated with UnLtd that community and town councils will identify 70 individuals across Wales who will be eligible for 100% non-contributory grants of up to £15,000 per annum. Unfortunately the launch event planned for mid-November had to be cancelled due to very unfortunate circumstances. We will be liaising with UnLtd colleagues to re-arrange the launch of the initiative in the New Year.

**Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA)** – appended to this report is a first draft Memorandum of Understanding for discussion with WLGA. At the

time of writing the CEO and Head of Improvement at WLGA are due to meet on 17 January to progress. An update on the outcome of this meeting can be fed into the Minister.

**Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA)** – As mentioned in my previous briefing investigatory discussions have been held with WCVA and a presentation made by the CEO to the WCVA Senior Management Team on the role of One Voice Wales and the future roles of community and town councils in Wales. Cementing this developing relationship the CEO presented along with [information redacted], CEO WLGA to the WCVA National Conference on 29 November on 'Transforming Local Public Services'. Feedback received subsequently from the CEO of WCVA indicates delegates were pleased with our contribution to the debate and further joint working will be pursued.

**Sustainable Development Advisory Panel for Wales** – One Voice Wales is represented on this group by the CEO at the request of the Sustainable Futures Commissioner, [information redacted] (who spoke at the One Voice Wales National Conference in 2011). The Sustainable Development Bill as launched on 3 December 2012 and will have implications for the sector. It is proposed that a 'Sustainable Development Duty' will come into force in 2017 for the community and town council sector. There is a consultation period until 4 March 2013 and we will be developing a draft response to be circulated to our sector in early New Year. The CEO will be representing the sector at events planned for the New Year and has already provided verbal feedback to the SD Advisory Panel including concerns the sector is the only public service not receiving some central government financial support to enable it to meet these statutory requirements. Additionally it is unclear the role the sector will play in the Single Integrated Plan process and in particular whether there will be a de-minimus level applied as part of the legislation.

**Communities 2.0/Mumbles Community Council** – One Voice Wales has supported Mumbles Community Council in identifying support for taking forward a pathfinder pilot on better use of digital technology with a community council. Communities 2.0 have been engaged (they are a WEFO funded organisations established to provide support for businesses and community organisations on better use of digital technology and improve digital inclusion) to provide support to Mumbles CC to develop the use of digital technology for improving not only internal governance systems but also to identify new methods for using technology to engage stakeholder organisations and local residents. A programme of actions has been established and it has been agreed that a pilot programme of IT training will be developed for community and town councils in the Swansea area and to be delivered by Communities 2.0 outreach staff with the intention of working jointly with OVW to roll out the training programme to all community and town councils within convergence

funded areas of Wales. This is a really exciting development for the sector and will help to develop the understanding of how IT can support community and town councils to deliver better outcomes in communities and at the same time increase the skills and capacity of the sector to engage more effectively with communities.

**Snowdonia National Park** – following on from the recent successful collaboration with Brecon Beacons National Park regarding the development of a Charter with community and town councils in its area we have now approached Snowdonia to undertake the same process. We are awaiting feedback from [information redacted] Snowdonia National Park at the present time on a date for a meeting.

**Welsh Government National Assets Working Group** – the CEO has now been co-opted onto this group following discussions with [information redacted], Deputy Director for Property at Welsh Government. The CEO presented to the Working Group meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> September on the future role of community and town councils. The CEO will be addressed the matter of devolution of services and how this can be best managed between the two tiers of local government in the coming months and years ahead. The presentation generated significant debate and as a consequence of this we have also been invited to sit on the Third Sector Assets Working Group for Welsh Government. Initial discussions with [information redacted] and [information redacted] in the WG Assets team identified the potential for pilot towns to be identified to look at the issues of asset transfer and how procedures can be developed to support this process in future. A further meeting was held with [information redacted], WG Assets Manager on 17 December to discuss the drafting of a bid to develop guidance documentation for the sector on asset transfer. A report will be taken to NAWG meeting in March 2013 setting out proposals for moving this agenda forward.

**Hywel Dda Health Trust** – the CEO and Mid and West Wales Development Officer met with representatives of Hywel Dda Health Trust on 6 November to explore the joint opportunities afforded by the Innovative Communities grant programme run by Carmarthenshire Rural Development Plan team. Initial discussions have focussed on possible bids relating to community transport for vulnerable elderly adults and also well-being initiatives to be run via a local leisure centre and with support from local community and town councils. We are awaiting feedback from Hywel Dda colleagues on potential ways the Community and Town councils in Carmarthenshire can help communicate and support community transport programmes in their areas.

Below is a list of the organisations (though not exhaustive and in no particular order) One Voice Wales has been working with over the last six months and a brief indication of the activity:

**PLANED** – currently working on a joint bid regarding the Big Lottery Community Voices and presented at their Rural Service Conference on 14 June. We are at the time of writing awaiting the outcome of the above bid.

**Participatory Budgeting Unit** – development of new training module and support for Community Councils on implementing this activity, for example, Radyr and Morganstown

**Citizens Advice Bureau UK** – supported their National Conference in May 2012 presenting on the future role of community and town councils in rural services provision and latterly presented to their National Conference in Exeter on 12 September 2012 on the role of Community and Town Councils (Parish's in England) in supporting the Third Sector.

**Welsh Government** – supported John Griffiths Minister for Environment conference on Urban Sustainability held in Wrexham on 25 October. One of the outcomes of the day was that community and town councils were recognised as key players in the implementation of sustainable development initiatives within communities and this was relayed to the Minister in person.

**Welsh Government** – we are currently represented on the LSB ESF Advisory Board and on the Planning Bill Research Group on Management Development. More recently we have taken up advisory positions on the Urban Sustainability Advisory Panel and SD Bill Advisory Panel, National Assets Working Group and Third Sector Assets Working Group of WG.

**Cynnal Cymru** – we continue to take forward the work of the **Strong Roots** project. One Voice Wales continues to make a significant contribution to the sustainable development agenda in Wales and our importance to the practical implementation of sustainable development have been acknowledged by [information redacted], Sustainable Futures Commissioner. In recognition of our anticipated future role regarding the SD agenda a Roundtable event has been organised for 31 January 2013 – a copy of the briefing document is attached.

**Association of Local Authority Monitoring Officers** – developed Code of Conduct training materials for the Community Council sector endorsed by the association.

**Federation of City Farms and Community Gardeners** – we are collaborating on a joint training initiative to train community and town councillors across Wales on the benefits of community growing. A programme is now being devised and will be rolled out in Spring 2013.

**Cardiff University Sustainable Development Institute/ Climate Change Commission** – we have been successful in our joint application with Cardiff University, Cynnal Cymru and the Climate Change Commission for a £14,000

Supporting Sustainable Living Grant administered by Environment Wales where the implications of climate change on the sector will be researched. This project will run over the next nine months as a collaborative adventure between the above parties. At the time of writing we have received over 220 responses to this programme of work and will help to inform how community and town councils can support community resilience efforts across Wales. Naturally we will report back on progress as appropriate during the course of the project.

**Aberystwyth University** – joint ESF funded project looking at the potential of community councils in local economic development. A survey to all community and town councils was distributed in July. We have now received the completed report from [information redacted] the MA funded student taking part in the joint project. I am pleased to report that [information redacted] [ed: MA student] has recently started an internship with One Voice Wales and will be producing a short summary document for distribution to all councils. Additionally [information redacted] [ed: MA student] will be working on the development of best practice case studies over the coming weeks and months. This will enable One Voice Wales to promote good practice to the community and town council sector and encourage knowledge sharing and improvement actions.

**Wales Audit Office** – we continue to work very closely with colleagues at Wales Audit Office representing the sector on the Local Councils Audit Liaison Group. This is where representatives of WAO along with representatives of the three external audit companies contracted in Wales meet to discuss issues and developments within the sector.

**CYLCH** – working with [information redacted] [ed: CYLCH] investigating the potential of local waste management run by community and town councils included a visit to Presteigne Town Council on their 'slow waste' initiative. Additionally, the CEO has recently met with [information redacted] the current CEO of CYLCH to explore how our respective organizations can work more closely on initiatives of mutual interest. A draft Memorandum of Understanding has been developed and following NEC approval in December 2012 will be implemented in Spring 2013.

**Creation Development Trust Ltd** – we are continuing to work with [information redacted] CEO at Creation Development Trust and she provided an excellent presentation to the last Larger Towns Committee in October on the work of her organization and highlighted areas where community and town councils can support social enterprises in their communities.

**Public Services Ombudsman** – ongoing liaison meetings where information and issues relating to the sector are discussed. This helps to inform our

training provision. The CEO met with [information redacted] Public Services Ombudsman on 4 December 2012 and discussed emerging issues facing the sector. One Voice Wales has distributed information on behalf of the Public Services Ombudsman on recent case law relating to Code of Conduct as well as the latest Casebook No.10.

**Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales** – positive relationships have been developed between the Local Government Boundary Commission members and the CEO of One Voice Wales. At the present time bi-monthly meetings are being held between the bodies to ensure the work of the Commission is communicated to the community and town council sector.

**Wales Community Resilience Forum** – sit on the forum and currently supporting Cardiff University researchers undertaking a study on flood risk across Wales. There are no updates to report at the present time.

**Independent Remuneration Panel For Wales** – have liaised with the Panel significantly over during 2012 setting up three regional meetings in North, Mid and South Wales respectively and attendance at the OVW Larger Councils Committee. The draft IRP report out to consultation is welcomed and generally reflects and has captured the views put forward in the consultative events organised across each of One Voice Wales regions in the late Spring/early summer period 2012.

**Information Commissioners Office (Wales) (ICO)** – positive partnership relations have developed between the two bodies and information has been distributed to the community and town council sector on Publication Scheme requirements. Presentations have been received by One Voice Wales National Executive and Larger Councils Committee. At the time of writing a publication is being jointly prepared on the outcomes of two information audits undertaken by ICO of community councils which will form a best practice briefing for the sector.

**North Wales LSB Forum** – our North Wales Development Officer recently attended the above forum for the first time and this will help to improve relations with each of the LSB's in North Wales. This will be an ongoing arrangement and updates will be provided when available.

**Charter Working** – continues to develop across Wales. Currently 11 Charters are in place the most recently signed being the Brecon Beacons National Park signed on 5 November 2012.

**Sustainable Futures Commissioner Advisory Panel** – One Voice Wales is a sitting member of the advisory panel and supports the work of the Commissioner providing the community and town council views. The CEO attended the Climate Change Commission briefing on 6 December where the

*Sustainable Future Commissioner set out the challenges facing organizations and governments in the months and years ahead.*

**Welsh Government: A New Approach to Managing Developing in Wales: Towards a Welsh Planning Act** – *One Voice Wales provides the representative voice of the sector and is one of the sitting members of the Research Steering Group. We have recently received the Independent Advisory Group report on planning which clearly sets out an emerging role for the community and town council sector in community planning and a role in the Single Integrated Plan process.*

**SLCC/Institute of Local Councils Management** – *continue to work with SLCC on training and are currently working towards a joint training event to be held in Swansea in April 2013.*

