

## Monitoring and Progress Form - One Voice Wales

Quarter: 2

Year: 2013

Months: July – September

Information provided by: Lyn Cadwallader, CEO, One Voice Wales

Date: 8 October, 2013

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

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

*a. Current membership figure: 550*

*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, and a new item, "Best Practice" has now been added in the same vein.*

*In the South East Wales, Swansea and NPT areas the Development Officers will be e-mailing the Clerks and Chairs to request the opportunity to address the Councils on the benefits of membership.*

*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. A number of non-member councillors have been impressed whilst attending our training modules, which can lead to a future increase in council membership. In Pembrokeshire, in particular, there has been a steady increase in numbers over the last six months.*

*Members are encouraged to discuss membership with non-member councils on an informal level when they have the opportunity, and to extend an open invitation to non-member council members to attend area meetings to better understand the kind of support provided by One Voice Wales, in order to try to persuade them to join.*

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

*a. Membership income for 2013/14 received to date: £134838 (The current year's estimate is £149940). Development Officers are chasing up members who have not yet paid their membership fees.*

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

- a. *What are the funding streams? Climate Change Adaptation Project Phase II Funded by Environment Wales. This is for a specific project and all income received will be offset by the same level of expenditure. Training fees for Councillors attending courses. Training Grant from WAG for training course provision. Consultancy services to member Councils. Conference and sponsorship fees.*
- b. *What amounts have already been raised? £10,000 received to date for Climate Change Adaptation Project Phase II (A further £18484 to be awarded in current financial year). Training fees received to date total £11869. The training grant awarded by WAG in the current financial year is £20,500 (There is an outstanding bid of £2500 to be submitted). Consultancy fees of £12133. Conference and sponsorship fees received to date total £21267. (Note that training, Conference and consultancy fees are gross figures and will be reduced by the cost of provision/trainer and consultancy fees).*
- c. *What total amounts for the year are expected? The current revenue estimates for income generation are as follows:*  
  
*Conference Fees £16500 (Less £10500 for costs)*  
*Training Fees £30000 (Less £12000 for costs)*  
*Consultancy Fees £17500 (Less £8750 for costs)*
- d. *What will this income fund?*  
*The income will be used to meet the costs of inflation, repayment of WAG loan and increased pension costs.*

### **4. Larger Local Councils Committee**

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

*One Voice Wales held its first Larger Council's Conference in July 2013 where [information redacted] Sustainable Futures Commissioner, [information redacted], Head of Policy and Improvement and [information redacted], Chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales gave presentations. In addition workshops were held on the Cynefin Programme, IT and GIS systems, Climate Adaptation and UnLtd and social entrepreneurs. In the afternoon there were case studies of Llandrindod TC, Penarth TC and Mold TC on community engagement, green audits and Cittaslow respectively. The first ordinary meeting of the year will be held in October. The Officer will be making a presentation on the latest employment law developments to this meeting.*

b. How many members are there currently? 49

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

*Efforts are being made to increase the number of larger Councils in membership and the Chief Executive has attended a number of meetings of larger Councils to highlight the benefits of membership (e.g. Llanelli Rural and Maesteg). A motion was passed at the 2013 AGM to review the membership fee formula and work will be undertaken over the coming months to see if there is a feasible way of changing the formula so that membership fee rates are viewed as more attractive by larger councils.*

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?

*The development of consultancy services which have the greatest appeal for the larger councils should encourage more larger councils to fully participate.*

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

a. *Legal advice: Development Officers have dealt with a wide range of legal enquiries primarily relating to cemetery management, bye-laws, payment of gratuities and status of common land.*

*Additionally Development Officers have spent considerable amounts of time in dealing with queries relating to how LA's have been dealing with the WG £500 grant programme for ICT. This has been a challenge and was an anticipated resource implication for OVW when it was decided that the grant programme would be run through 22 organisations rather than One Voice Wales. Programmes such as this will need careful consideration in future as this resource drain cannot be sustained within existing resources.*

b. *Policy advice: A very wide range of advice provided with a considerable emphasis on data protection and freedom of information, conduct of meetings, Code of Conduct issues, the power of well-being and issues relating to standing orders.. A total of 54 substantive queries have been addressed in the Mid & West region during the quarter.*

c. *Publications: Currently behind schedule on the production of The Voice primarily due to replacement for North Wales post – [information redacted] – only starting on 2 September 2013. This will be rectified by the end of October 2013.*

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: the consultation on Draft TAN 23; Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Bill Part 7; Public Sector Governance and Delivery Commission Review and Local Government Diversity.

e. Annual conference:

It is extremely disappointing to report that once again we have not had the Minister available for attendance at our National Conference. Several approaches were also made to other Ministers and the Chair of Local Government Scrutiny at the National Assembly all of whom declined our invitation to speak. Our NEC was extremely disappointed that this apparent lack of visible support for our sector continues. Letters to Minister and other speakers will be sent before the end of October 2013 inviting them to attend Conference 2014.

In terms of the 2013 Conference and AGM preparations our confirmed speakers are [information redacted], Director Planning Inspectorate Wales, [information redacted], Assistant Information Commissioner for Wales and [information redacted], Director UnLtd as well as the Chief Executive of One Voice Wales. Over 16 exhibitors have confirmed that they will be supporting the event and we are expecting over 200 delegates at the Royal Welsh Showground.

e. Training – please provide an update on training courses delivered:

January to July, 2013 (851 training days)

f. Other:

In terms of staffing developments we have had two changes in our team. [information redacted] joined One Voice Wales on 2 September as the new North Wales Development Officer. [information redacted], South Wales Development Officer has been promoted to Deputy Chief Executive and Resources Manager.

The re-structuring of roles will mean that the new South Wales Officer will take a lead on events, conferences and commercial activities within One Voice Wales as income generation is seen as a key activity for the organisation moving forward.

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

a. Anything to report?

A range of internal policies recommended by the WAG Auditor will be completed in the near future.

*One Voice Wales has spent considerable energy in the past quarter advising member councils in relation to the Welsh Government's scheme to provide £500 grants for the development of council websites. A model of good practice is being taken forward in the next quarter at Carmarthenshire for liaison between the local council sector and the unitary authority, and members have been debating and finding agreement in the stance that cables from all new power generation schemes in Wales should be undergrounded.*

*b. Progress with limited company status? No progress on this at the present time. A separate grant application will be submitted in October to WG to enable this to be taken forward.*

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

*The Deputy Chief Executive and Resources Manager recently appointed will take on this role.*

## **7. Communications**

*a. Update on quarterly newsletters and other PR: See 5c above.*

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

*a. Training Strategy for Community and Town Councils? This continues to be developed and new courses are being written this year. The National Training Advisory Group oversees the process.*

*b. What are the current trainer numbers? 11 Trainers ([information redacted] recently resigned from being an Associate Trainer)*

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

*d. Charters – progress / report?*

*The Vale of Glamorgan CBC has revised its charter which is currently subject to consultation with community and town councils. An action plan has recently been approved in Monmouthshire which will guide the deliver of the Charter. The City and County of Swansea has invited all Councils to sign the new Charter. The Cardiff Charter is slow getting off the ground even though it has been signed up. All other Charters appear to be working reasonably well although a Charter is being finalised for Neath/Port Talbot CBC.*

*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 has been delayed by a number of factors, but is now being progressed vigorously. Three-way discussions are continuing 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, having been delayed somewhat by changes in personnel.*

*The charter between the Brecon Beacons National Park and Community and Town Councils in the park area has become embedded, with local council members having attended monitoring and review sessions.*

- e. Local Service Boards: Representation has been made to the Public Services Commission on the lack of engagement by the LSB's with the community and town councils within their locality. One Voice Wales will continue to lobby for this position to be rectified given the pressures on LA budgets and the need for greater collaboration between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> tiers of local government and issues of service devolution becoming increasingly acute.*
- f. Other: We are working with colleagues in WG Environment division on the Cynefin Programme and five localities have been identified to progress this agenda across Wales. One Voice Wales is represented on the Senior Ministerial Advisory Board by the Chief Executive.*

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

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

*Generally on track with Business Plan objectives.*

## **10. Financial Information required**

- a. Have there been any revisions to the income and expenditure sheet provided to us for the last meeting? The key revisions are shown in the attached income and expenditure statement. Key issues relate to provision for possible pay awards in 2014/15 and the rising cost of pensions due to a pending actuarial valuation that shows a deficit of £12k for 2012/13 to 2013/14 and an increase in the employer contribution to 25.4% from 20% from 1/4/2014.*

## **11. Other**

- a. Details of other developments / achievements.*

*Liaison between One Voice Wales officers and external bodies continues to increase, delivering further co-operation and partnership working across*

sectors. Elected members also report back to Area Committee meetings on the activities and outcomes of the many partnerships in which they are engaged, which provides evidence that the sector is increasingly being absorbed into the mainstream of the public domain in Wales.

One Voice Wales has begun work with Ordnance Survey on the use of maps within the community and town council sector for improved service delivery, contracts management and commissioning of contracts. A survey will be distributed in late Autumn to the sector to illicit information from councils on how this can be taken forward at pace.

A report was taken to National Assets Working Group in July by the Chief Executive on Devolved Services and Assets. [information redacted] agreed that Wrexham CBC would work with OVW to take forward a pilot programme with Community and Town Councils in this area. OVW has also been approached by Torfaen and Monmouthshire in a similar vein. [information redacted], Strategic Director for Wrexham CBC will be meeting with the Programme manager WG for Invest to Save and the devolution of services agenda will be considered under this programme for development.

