

GAVO paper to Monmouthshire Local Service Board, 15 October 2015

Purpose

This paper has been prepared for the Monmouthshire Local Service Board to outline a framework that GAVO and its members believe will maximise the contribution of the Third sector in the planning and delivery of local services.

Context

Improving the health and well-being of people in Monmouthshire requires a concerted effort by all stakeholders, and the Third Sector has an important and unique role to play in this. Voluntary and community organisations provide a wide range of services and support, often to the most needy and vulnerable in our communities. It is widely accepted therefore that Third Sector organisations are well placed to understand local needs and identify innovative solutions and important that they are involved at all stages of policy development, planning, delivery and review. The current legislative context makes further provision for engaging third sector organisations in new delivery models (e.g. Social Services and Wellbeing Act) and also a renewed emphasis on engaging people and communities appropriately to help shape public services (Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and White Paper on Local Government Reform).

Additionally, Welsh Government has recently published its Principles for Working with Communities and advocate that other bodies working with communities adopt them if possible and appropriate:

- the involvement of communities, service users and organisations in defining problems and in the identification, design, delivery and evaluation of new approaches,
- recognition of shared responsibility to improve public services focused on outcomes and people's needs,
- mutual respect for the contributions of different partners in the process of designing and delivering services and improving outcomes, recognising roles will vary,
- valuing diversity and promoting equality,
- processes designed to recognise there are resources, capabilities and assets not just within public services but in communities too and ways should be found to release these and realise their potential to increase wellbeing,
- readiness to adopt and invest in new ways of working in policy and delivery
- transparency regarding how and by whom decisions will be taken.

GAVO Local Committee Monmouthshire

At a recent meeting of GAVO's Local Committee, strategic representation of the Third Sector was discussed, particularly in relation to Monmouthshire Local Service Board's Anti-Poverty Annex, which provides a map of strategic partnership working across Monmouthshire.

Through discussions with Local Committee members and staff, it has become apparent that there are some gaps in engagement of the Third Sector in existing structures and a consensus that we need to strengthen engagement and participation of the Third Sector to ensure consistency across all statutory partnerships and in relation to Single Integrated Plan themes.

GAVO solution

GAVO seeks to create an organised, informed and co-ordinated structure to support the Third sector in playing a full part in the planning and delivery of services. We will establish and support a Third Sector Network that will provide:

- a structure which will support the voluntary sector to develop and sustain strong partnerships with each other and with other agencies
- a mechanism to establish a democratic process for nominations and elections of representatives onto appropriate partnerships and planning groups
- a valid and legitimate forum/reference group for the Third Sector
- an opportunity to contribute and collaborate on strategy development
- support efficiency and effectiveness and avoid duplication
- an opportunity to identify gaps in services and to evidence these
- a forum to identify innovative ways of meeting the needs of citizens

Next Steps

GAVO proposes that the strategic planning groups establish full and effective representation of the Third Sector through a process of nominating and electing representatives from the newly formed Third Sector Network (as set out above) and recognises this Network as the formal route for electing Third Sector representatives to engage in strategic partnerships.

Anticipated benefits

The establishment of the Third Sector Network will support a co-ordinated approach to joint working. The following benefits are anticipated:

- the provision of one clearly structured Network to minimise confusion and fragmentation by bringing the Third Sector to one central point
- one consultation point for LSB member organisations to engage with the Third Sector
- maximising numbers of people that partner organisations are engaged with and reducing time wasted on organising meetings, venues and other associated costs
- maximising engagement with hard to reach and vulnerable people, as well as a cross section of the voluntary sector
- strengthening links across voluntary and community groups
- building capacity to respond to commissioning demands
- providing an additional support structure to the strategic planning groups

Recommendations:

- 1. That LSB members note the contents of this report**
- 2. That LSB members discuss and endorse GAVO's approach**