

AGENDA ITEM 5**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL****CABINET – TRUST FUND FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED PEOPLE****9th SEPTEMBER 2015****RHONDDA CYNON TAF TRUST FUND FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED
PEOPLE – UPDATE REPORT****REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S
SERVICES****Authors: Luisa Bridgman, Head of Service Short Term Intervention,
Community Care - Tel No: 01443 425442****Yvonne Powell, Contracts Officer, Purchasing and
Commissioning Team - Tel No: 01443 425434****1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To update the cabinet committee members (the Trustees) of the 'Rhondda Cynon Taf Trust Fund for Blind and Partially Sighted People in RCT' (the Trust Fund) on the service that Cardiff Institute for the Blind (t/a RNIB Cymru (CIB)) is delivering within Rhondda Cynon Taff. The report seeks to inform the Trustees that the service CIB is providing continues to be delivered competently and in accordance with the principles and values which the Council stipulates are fundamental to the support of visually impaired residents in Rhondda Cynon Taf

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Council's Community Care Contracts Officer and Contract Monitoring Officer continue to review and monitor the performance of the service on a regular basis.
- 2.2 A report be prepared for the Trustees at the end of March 2016 to further consider the work that the CIB are undertaking and the prospects for future sustainable service delivery once current trust funds are expended.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Trustees met on the 26th February 2015 to make recommendations for the future of the remaining Trust Fund monies

following the expiry of the current contract with Cardiff Institute for the Blind t/a RNIB Cymru (CIB) in March 2015.

- 3.2 It was agreed at the meeting in February 2015 that there should be a 3 year extension (subject to appropriate termination clauses) to the existing contract with CIB, with an option for further annual extensions subject to funding being available, adequate performance and appropriate termination clauses.
- 3.3 CIB is receiving the remaining Trust Fund monies at the rate of £33,000 per annum for the next 3 years. Any funds remaining after the 3 years (it is envisaged that there may be sufficient funds available for an additional 2 years) will be paid annually at a rate to be approved by the Trustees.
- 3.4 It was agreed that the Trust Fund would be wound up after the remaining monies are spent.

4. Option/Issues

- 4.1 CIB cannot guarantee replacement funding beyond 2018 and are heavily reliant upon contracts, lottery and statutory funding, and donations, all of which are becoming difficult to obtain in the current financial climate.
- 4.2 It is not yet possible to know what Lottery, Statutory and European funding will be available from 2018 as applications cannot be made and processed so far in advance.

5. CURRENT POSITION

- 5.1 Since the Trustees last met in February 2015, CIB continues to facilitate the delivery of a range of appropriate services to help assist those people identified as having a visual impairment. Services are aimed at maintaining or regaining independence.
- 5.2 In March 2015 CIB was notified by the Contracts Officer for Community Care of the Trustees decision to extend the contractual arrangements with the organisation for a three year period (i.e. 1st April 2015-31st March 2018).
- 5.3 On May 27th 2015, the Chairman of Trust met with the Director of Operations for Cardiff Institute for the Blind and the Locality Development Manager at the CIB offices in Pontypridd. The purpose of the meeting was to meet staff and to have an overview of the work currently being undertaken by CIB in supporting visual impaired people residing in Rhondda Cynon Taff.
- 5.4 Since the contract extension the following services continue to be developed; (this list is not exhaustive)

- The contact telephone line continues to operate to support people who are blind or partially sighted across RCT. The contact line is operated by a CIB volunteer 2 days a week. Currently there are 370 RCT citizens on CIB contact list.
- Blind or partially sighted people on the contact list receive a telephone call from CIB every year to establish whether or not they require help and support from the services CIB can offer. It is also an opportunity to review whether or not circumstances have changed for the individuals and services from other partner agencies.
- CIB will (if required) provide information and advice and signpost people to other services.
- Home Visits (if requested) by RCT citizens on the contact list are being undertaken by the locality development manager. CIB have increased the hours of a home visit to 2 hours. CIB continue to address any issues resulting from home visits and the service continues to provide emotional support to service users.
- CIB will signpost individuals to relevant agencies to include RNIB welfare rights services, the Council's sensory impairment service team and the Eye Clinic liaison officer.
- The Action for Blind Bus will continue to have a presence within the Community (i.e. Aberdare, Pontypridd and Llantrisant) throughout 2015-2016. It provides advice and information on the services available for people with a visual impairment. The bus will be coming to the Aberdare area in October 2015.
- Leaflets entitled 'Support and Services for people with sight loss in RCT and Merthyr Tydfil' continue to be circulated within the community to include Council Offices, GP surgeries and opticians. They aim to raise awareness of the direct services RNIB Cymru is able to provide for people with sight loss in the community.
- The CIB locality development manager has recently set up the 'Happy Wanderer's Group' with the assistance of the Council's sensory Impairment rehabilitation officer. This is a younger persons group for people under 50 who have sight loss and/or are visually impaired. The Younger Persons Group is keen to promote the services of CIB within RCT through social media and is active in setting social activities for younger people with a visual impairment.
- CIB continue to facilitate support groups for people who are blind or partially sighted across RCT.

- Following the resignation of the CIB community support worker in June 2015 a newly recruited co-ordinator took up her post in August 2015. Her role is to support the locality development manager in delivering and developing services according to the needs of visually impaired people with Rhondda Cynon Taff.
- The Council assisted CIB with the recruitment by circulating the job advertisement on the Council's staff briefing website.
- The RCT Disability Forum meeting was held on Thursday 13th August. At the forum Network Rail consulted on proposals for Treforest, Treherbert and Taff Wells train stations. Representatives from Arriva Trains were also in attendance at this meeting.
- CIB representatives attended the meeting to discuss with Arriva trains and Network Rail the issues that visually impaired people within Rhondda Cynon Taff have been experiencing whilst travelling by train on the Valley lines. Announcements are not being made on the Valley Line trains to inform visually impaired people of the station they have arrived at.
- Arriva trains and CIB representatives will be liaising further to rectify the issue.
- CIB continue to offer 'Finding Your Feet' independent living workshops for blind and partially sighted people free of charge.
- The Council's sensory impairment team continue to work in partnership with CIB.

6. Conclusion

It is proposed that a further meeting on the progress of CIB t/a RNIB Cymru, and the work they do within Rhondda Cynon Taff area, be scheduled for March 2016 in order to provide Trustees with a further update.