

**AGENDA ITEM 3****RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL****CABINET****Date: 7<sup>th</sup> July 2016****RHONDDA CYNON TAF TRUST FUND FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED PEOPLE****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 seek approval from cabinet committee members (the Trustees) of the 'Rhondda Cynon Taf Trust Fund for Blind and Partially Sighted People in RCT' (the Trust Fund) to allow for the funding that the Trustees oversee and administer in the Rhondda Cynon Taff area on behalf of the charity 'Cardiff Institute for the Blind' (t/a RNIB Cymru (CIB) to become unrestricted.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That the Trustees note the rationale for the proposal presented by the Director of Operations for CIB.
- 2.2 That the Trustees agree the proposal from Cardiff Institute for the Blind (t/a RNIB Cymru (CIB) to unrestrict the Trust fund given by the Trustees of the 'Rhondda Cynon Taf Trust Fund for Blind and Partially Sighted People in RCT' (the Trust Fund)

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 It was agreed at the meeting in 26th 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.

- 3.2 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. 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015-31<sup>st</sup> March 2018).
- 3.3 CIB (as from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015) 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 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.
- 3.5 At the meeting with CIB and the Trustees in September 2015, the Trustees advised that they would like CIB to consider over the next three years how they would sustain the services in Rhondda Cynon Taff once all remaining monies are spent.

#### **4. Option/Issues**

- 4.1 As noted in the meeting of the Trustees September 2015 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 CIB has indicated in February 2016 that with the current funding being restricted it will be more difficult to attract alternative funding and to make multiple funding bids.

#### **5. CURRENT POSITION**

- 5.1 Since the Trustees last met in September 2015, CIB have submitted a proposal to the Council to obtain approval (to be subject to the agreement of the Trustees) to unrestrict the funds given (refer to Appendix 1-letter to Trustees 5<sup>th</sup> February 2016-received by the Council 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016)
- 5.2 Currently the funding given to the CIB is restricted to the cost of the locality Manager post, part of the community support co-ordinator post, office costs and core costs of the RCT scheme.
- 5.3 Unrestricting the funding would allow CIB, as a Charitable organisation, to become more successful in obtaining alternative funding e.g. Lottery, Statutory and European funding and thereby sustaining the service within RCT beyond 2018
- 5.4 The Trustees to note that the service CIB is providing within the Rhondda Cynon Taff area for visually impaired residents in Rhondda

Cynon Taf continues to be delivered competently. In addition the Councils Contract Monitoring Officer will continue to review and monitor the performance of the service on a regular basis.

- 5.5 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 to include notification of any applications for alternative funding bids be scheduled for January 2017 in order to provide Trustees with a further update.

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Cardiff Institute  
for the Blind  
Sefydliady  
Deillion Caerdydd

working with NIB

#### Trustees

RCT Trust for Visually Impaired People  
c/o Luisa Bridgeman  
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council  
Ty Elai  
Dinas Isaf East  
Williamstown  
Tonypany  
CF40 1NY

25 February 2016

**Subject: Contract for the provision of services to blind and partially sighted people between Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and Cardiff Institute for the Blind (providing services in RCT under RNIB Cymru)**

Dear Trustees,

Trustees of the RCT Trust for Visually Impaired People agreed to extend the arrangement of contracting Cardiff Institute for the Blind (CIB) to provide services to blind and partially sighted people until 31 March 2018.

Trustees advised that they would like Cardiff Institute for the Blind to consider how it can aim to sustain services after this period. Whilst we (CIB) cannot guarantee the level of funding that can be obtained after this period, we have a successful track record of accessing funding across our operational areas as we have proven to make a significant impact on the lives of blind and partially sighted people and funders have recognised that our governance costs are low, we manage our budgets well and demonstrate high value for the money invested.

The majority of costs for an organisation such as ours include staffing, building and operational support (ICT, finance, HR, governance, etc) costs.

One of the difficulties charities face is that many funders include detailed restrictions as to how funding is used and some will not fund staff costs or organisational running costs.

In order for an organisation to give itself the best chance of securing income, it is obviously sensible to make multiple funding bids. However, there is a risk, if more than one bid is successful in the same area, of having to decline funding or underspend in certain areas.

As an example, we applied for funding three years ago from RCT Council, RCT Interlink and the Big Lottery Fund, the latter for services across our geographical areas of RCT, Merthyr, Cardiff, Vale of Glamorgan, Swansea and Neath Port Talbot.

All three applications primarily requested funding for our Locality Manager, staff and volunteer expenses, venue hire and communications. All three applications were successful which secured more money than we needed for our Locality Manager and for expenses, with the result that some of the funding needed to be returned to the funders.

Had some of the funding been unrestricted, we could have used it more effectively to provide services to blind and partially sighted people in RCT, to cover the cost of making our Community Support Coordinator post full-time rather than three days a week and contributing to some of our key operational support costs.

We currently have contracts with two other local authorities, who provide unrestricted funding but with agreed service levels and outcomes. To give us the best chance of obtaining funding to sustain services beyond 2018, we would like to request the Council's current funding be unrestricted. We will still be able to report how the income is used and our accounts are independently audited to ensure financial propriety.

I am very happy to discuss this in more detail and can assure you that this request is aimed at maximising our ability to provide services to enhance the lives of those with sight loss.

Yours sincerely,



Kieran Harris  
Director of Operations