

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

RHONDDA CYNON TAF TRUST FUND FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED CABINET COMMITTEE

28TH FEBRUARY 2017

REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

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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 also seeks to update the Trustees regarding the charity's success in obtaining alternative funding and undertaking multiple funding bids to sustain services within Rhondda Cynon Taff.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Trustees are requested to note and endorse the actions being taken to monitor and support existing schemes with the limited funding that remains available.
- 2.2 Trustees are requested to note and endorse the success achieved in obtaining funding for new projects within RCT County Borough for blind and partially sighted people.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 It was agreed at the Cabinet meeting on 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 CIB (as from 1st 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.
- 3.3 It was agreed that the Trust Fund would be wound up after the remaining monies are spent.
- 3.4 At the meeting with CIB and the Trustees on 7th July 2016 a decision was made to unrestrict the funds that the Trust Fund provides to allow CIB to become more successful in obtaining alternative funding and undertake multiple bids to sustain services within Rhondda Cynon Taf.

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 that fundraising for the Charity has been very limited over the last year. They do not have staff to support such activities, as their main focus is to deliver services within RCT to the people who are in need.
- 4.3 RNIB as a national organisation have a fundraising Team. A percentage of monies raised would be given to CIB to help in supporting the project.
- 4.4 CIB will be considering generating additional money for the scheme by using the commercial arm of their charity to put income into the existing scheme within RCT. In February they will be launching a scheme where any goods that are donated to the charity will displayed on ebay, some of the monies raised will be allocated to support the scheme in RCT.
- 4.5 Trustees are asked to note that whilst funding is available for the purpose of developing new initiatives within existing services, (see 5.1) funding to support the continuation of current schemes is more difficult to obtain.

5. CURRENT POSITION

- 5.1 Since the Trustees last met in July 2016, CIB have obtained confirmation (December 2016) from the Big Lottery that they have been successful in their bid for funding for their New Places, New

Experiences project. Approximately half a million pounds over a 4 year period has been awarded to CIB to deliver the above project in Cardiff Swansea and RCT which will cover 6 Local Authority areas (Cardiff and the Vale, Swansea and Neath Port, RCT and Merthyr).

- 5.2 The 'New Places, New Experiences' project will engage with and influence the delivery of local sports, leisure and interest services resulting in enhanced, more accessible community services that meet the needs of people with sight loss. It aims to give blind and partially sighted people the knowledge, skills and confidence to try and then continue participating in leisure, sport and interest activities.
- 5.3 The project will work with existing mainstream sports and leisure organisations and in close partnership with the local authority to make use of the expertise of local sports development officers, leisure and community services.
- 5.4 Trustees are requested to note that the service CIB is providing within the Rhondda Cynon Taff area for visually impaired residents continues to be delivered competently. Since the contract extension the following services continue to be developed; (this list is not exhaustive)
 - The contact lines continue to operate to support people who are blind or partially sighted across RCT. Currently there are 342 RCT citizens (to date) on the CIB contact list.
 - CIB continue to facilitate and support social groups in Aberdare, Mountain Ash, Pontypridd, Rhydfelin and Ferndale for people who are blind or partially sighted.
 - CIB continue to address any issues resulting from home visits and the service continues to provide emotional support to service users. In addition CIB have recently developed a new service called ('Time to Talk' (TtT)) similar to the telebefriending service currently provided but aims more to focus primarily on supporting those people who are newly diagnosed.
 - CIB continue to work in partnership with RNIB (in order to signpost individuals to the organisations Counselling and welfare rights services), the Council's sensory impairment service and the Cwm Taf UHB eye clinic liaison officer.
 - CIB continue to signpost individuals to relevant agencies and accept referrals for services from the Council's sensory and rehabilitation Team.

- CIB continue to raise awareness of the services they provide by attending and facilitating promotional events. Between August and October they visited Prince Charles Hospitals, Festivals, Tesco stores Community Centres and Council events (e.g. Big Bite Welsh Bite 2016)
 - CIB continue to provide information and advice about the services they provide via a quarterly newsletter, telephone, website, facebook and twitter.
- 5.5 The Councils Contract Monitoring Officer will continue to review and monitor the performance of the service on a regular basis.

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 (to include notification of any applications for alternative funding bids) be scheduled for September 2017 in order to provide Trustees with a further update.