

## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **CABINET**

**24<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2016**

#### **SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING ACT: IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY**

#### **REPORT OF GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES, IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR J ROSSER**

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#### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to draw Cabinet attention to the importance of promoting and supporting community based activity as a means of improving general health and wellbeing as well as fulfilling the spirit and direction of National Policy
- 1.2 In addition, the purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet authorisation for officers to explore the wide ranging models of support initiated and delivered by other Local Authorities in Wales and England to consider their effect and their applicability within the RCT context.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the contents of this report.
- 2.2 Agree for officers to research and appraise the models of support provided by other Local Authorities to support and promote community groups and consult with key stakeholders across the borough to test the benefit these models of support could potentially offer to communities in RCT.

#### **3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The reasons for the recommendations are so that Cabinet is aware of the nature of the exploratory activity being undertaken by officers and in particular the consultation with stakeholders.

#### 4. **BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 National Policy is driving us to support and build community capacity both as a means of improving general health and wellbeing but also to facilitate and promote social enterprise.
- 4.2 The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, in particular, lays out a model of social care that is reliant on the community responding to low level needs to prevent escalation into statutory services and emphasising service models that support people take more control over their care. It also sets out a requirement that Councils promote social enterprise the third sector and co-operatives.
- 4.3 Locally RCT's corporate plan 'The Way Ahead' is clear about the benefits of supporting the community sector as set out below.

- ***The Council is at its most effective when it is helping people to live successful lives as independently as possible and when it is helping communities to help themselves.***
- ***We believe that if you give power to local people you get better results and achieve better value.***
- ***We want to help communities to do more themselves and give them more control over local services such as schools, libraries and other cultural and community facilities.***
- ***We know that RCT's army of volunteers already make a huge difference to thousands of people's everyday lives in their neighbourhoods, towns and villages.***
- ***We want to work more closely with RCT's voluntary and community sector to stimulate innovation and encourage communities to step forward and take on new roles in providing local services and solutions. In doing so we recognise that some of our most deprived communities will need additional capacity, and we will work with Welsh Government to ensure the various poverty programmes are refocused to maximise their impact for those families and individuals that require the greatest support.***

- 4.4 However, whilst some areas in the Borough already have strong networks of support in place this is not a consistent picture and vulnerable people and families can escalate into statutory services because they did not, or did not have the opportunity to, seek help earlier or because there are limited options available.
- 4.5 This is particularly true for older people. Loneliness and isolation is a common concern for older people, often they report that bereavement (friends and spouses) or illness contributes to loss of confidence and opportunities to socialise which can have wide ranging effects on their health and wellbeing.

4.6 There is evidence in some English Local Authorities that low level community run activities can have a significant impact on supporting vulnerable groups, which is reflected in lower demand for statutory services.

4.7 This success appears to be at its strongest where Local Authorities actively support communities to build their capacity in response to their specific local needs.

## 5. **NEXT STEPS**

5.1 With Cabinet endorsement officers from across the Council will work together to:

- Research best practice and the evidence base across Wales and England to consider the most effective support options available.
- Consider the cost benefits of these support options and the likely costs within an RCT context.
- Consider opportunities within existing Council resources that could be mobilised to support those options.
- Engage our key stakeholders in the community and third sector in a conversation about the options found elsewhere and use their knowledge and expertise to identify which would be most acceptable and provide the best fit locally.
- Report back next year to set out the outcome of the research and consultation and make recommendations for Cabinet's further consideration.

## 6. **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

Not required.

## 7. **CONSULTATION**

Not at this time.

## 8. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

None.

## 9. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

9.1 This work meets requirements set out in the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and supports the implementation programme aligned to this Legislation.

## **10. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN/OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/SIP**

### **10.1 The Way Ahead for Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's Corporate Plan 2016-2020**

#### **Help people and communities help themselves**

- The Council is at its most effective when it is helping people to live successful lives as independently as possible and when it is helping communities to help themselves.
- We believe that if you give power to local people you get better results and achieve better value.
- We want to provide communities with the opportunity to contribute to and influence services provided from local community facilities.
- We know that RCT's army of volunteers already make a huge difference to thousands of people's everyday lives in their neighbourhoods, towns and villages.

10.2 We want to work more closely with RCT's voluntary and community sector to stimulate innovation and encourage communities to step forward and take on new roles in providing local services and solutions. In doing so we recognise that some of our most deprived communities will need additional capacity, and we will work with Welsh Government to ensure the various poverty programmes are refocused to maximise their impact for those families and individuals that require the greatest support.

## **11. CONCLUSIONS**

11.1 This report highlights the importance of promoting and supporting community based activity as a means of improving general health and wellbeing as well as fulfilling the spirit and direction of National Policy.

11.2 In addition the report also suggests that in order to deliver the requirements of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act that Officers now need to work with partners to explore the wide ranging models of support initiated and delivered by other Local Authorities in Wales and England to consider their effect and their applicability within the RCT context.

## **OTHER INFORMATION:**

### **Relevant Scrutiny Committee**

- Health and wellbeing scrutiny committee

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**  
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**BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY**

**Background Papers**

Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014

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