

**EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL LIAISON MEETING WITH THE EAST AYRSHIRE
COUNCIL OF VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS (EACVO)**

MINUTE OF MEETING HELD ON 11.3.98

COUNCIL H.Q. LONDON ROAD, KILMARNOCK

PRESENT: Councillor David Sneller, Leader of Council [Chair]
David Montgomery, Chief Executive
George Fraser, Senior Policy Advisor, Development Services
Bernadette Docherty, Senior Depute Director, Social Work
Gwen Barker, Service Officer, Social Work Department
Joe Orr, Convenor, EACVO
Janice Hendry, Vice Convenor, EACVO
Jimmy Murray, EACVO
John Houston, EACVO
Julie Williams, Community Worker. Social Work Department

APOLOGIES: Fiona Lees, Depute Chief Executive.

1. THE PARTNERSHIP - PRESENTATION BY REPRESENTATIVES OF EACVO

Janice Hendry and Joe Orr delivered a presentation to the meeting, raising the following key points:

Local Volunteer Development Agency:

The CVO informed members that they were disappointed with the Council for not backing their application for funding to Volunteer Development Scotland for a Local Volunteer Development Agency.

CVO members also expressed their concern about the delay by the Council in considering their grant application.

Rural Strategic Fund:

Members of the CVO informed the meeting of their Rural Strategic Fund project and of the Scottish Office's expectation that East Ayrshire Council support this initiative.

The CVO's main requirement is for suitable premises to house the project within the South of the authority.

Member Officer Groups:

The CVO indicated to members that it had been their expectation that they would be invited to participate on the range of Member/Officer Working Groups established by the Council. In particular, those established to review the voluntary sector or those that would have a direct impact on the voluntary sector.

Members requested updates on progress relating to each of the Member/Officer Groups and in particular the criteria used by the Council for measuring effectiveness in assessing voluntary sector projects.

Welfare to Work:

Members of the CVO indicated that they were aware of the tight timescales people were working to in relation to progressing this new initiative however highlighted the following points:

The CVO were keen that they be included in any communication that the Council should have with SCVO and that they be kept informed of progress by the Council.

Members of the CVO indicated that they had not received invitations to the initial meetings convened by the Council to discuss the New Deal. Members pointed out that although they were keen to participate in this initiative they required notice of meetings and the commitment from the Council that they keep the lines of communication open with the CVO on this matter.

Single Grant Application Forms:

The CVO indicated that their members had little time to provide feedback about the new single grant system because of the short timescale set for consultation, however highlighted the following points:

There appeared to be no appeals system; no assistance for special needs groups i.e. form in Braille or audio cassette; no receipt of application for groups; no liaison person if the group required assistance; no indication of decision making process on form.

Members indicated that they would like the opportunity to observe the decision-making processes in action .

Liaison meetings with the Council

As yet, no liaison officer had been appointed to the CVO although George Fraser had been filling this role on the Council's behalf.

There was no diary of liaison meetings set and the Partnership agreement had still not been signed.

In general, the CVO felt that to date there had been poor communication and poor consultation from the Council.

The Way Forward - Partnership

In summary the CVO were keen to work with the Council however were looking for:

- i) real consultation
- ii) real support

- iii) real equality
- iv) real benefits

2. EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE:

Councillor Sneller thanked members for their frank and full presentation and with the meetings permission agreed to work through the issues presented one at a time, thus deviating from the set agenda.

He informed members that he was unaware that relationships were poor between the CVO and the Council and in the future urged members to raise these issues as soon as possible with Council Officers.

Local Volunteer Development Agency:

Councillor Sneller reported that he was disappointed to hear that there had been a delay in the Council dealing with the CVO's LVDA application and indicated that he would look into this issue.

Gwen Barker informed the meeting that the group was looking for £30,000 of match funding or in-kind support from the Council and that at the time the application was considered this could not be produced.

Representation was made on behalf of the CVO to Volunteer Development Scotland (VDS) in an attempt to gain more time for a package to be pulled together, however the timescale could not be extended. The representative of VDS indicated that they expected to receive further grant aid next year and an application would be welcomed from the EACVO.

Members of the CVO were informed of this situation and told that Council Officers would work with them to produce an application for consideration next financial year.

Rural Strategic Fund Project:

Councillor Sneller indicated that the Council would do their best to provide accommodation for this project and suggested a number of premises that could be made available.

It was agreed that the Council would arrange for CVO members to visit possible sites within the week.

Action: George Fraser, Senior Policy Advisor, Development Services.

Member/Officer Groups:

Councillor Sneller provided an update on the work of the Member/Officer Groups indicating that the groups had been established not with the remit to cut funding but with the remit to look at existing services within the overall context of East Ayrshire.

David Montgomery, Chief Executive indicated that it had not been the Council's intention to invite representatives from the CVO to participate on these groups however each group had carried out extensive consultation exercises with the relevant community & voluntary sector organisations.

As a result of the work carried out in the Member/Officer Working Group the Council recognised the need for the voluntary sector to have a more secure funding base as opposed to annual funding arrangements. The Chief Executive indicated that the Council was committed to entering into service level agreements with the Voluntary sector while recognising the need for the sector to retain its autonomy.

Councillor Sneller reported that the Council had recently carried out the review of the Urban Programme project's due for termination in the next financial year. Councillor Sneller also reported to members the difficult financial position that the Council was facing regarding the future funding of all projects.

All projects being evaluated had been recently informed of the decision of the evaluation panel.

The Council recognised the need to support individual projects deal with the outcome of the evaluation and take the necessary actions.

Welfare to Work:

The Council welcomed the CVO's interest in the Welfare to Work initiative and stressed their importance to the development of this initiative within East Ayrshire.

David Montgomery apologised for the oversight by the Council in not inviting representatives to the initial meeting and urged the CVO to take up their delegated places on the Board of the Employment Initiative.

Councillor Sneller reported that interviews for the Chief Executives post of the East Ayrshire Employment Initiative were scheduled for Tuesday 17 March.

Single Grant Application Forms:

Councillor Sneller informed members that he felt that the new single grant application form had been produced to make application to the Council for grant aid simpler.

He explained that the majority of applications would be considered via the Local committee structure and that therefore the decision making process was an open one.

He also reported that the Council had recently carried out training for assessing officers.

It was agreed that the Council would look into identifying liaison officers and that they would check out the issues of receipt of application and the production of the form in a variety of different mediums.

Liaison Meeting with East Ayrshire Council:

Councillor Sneller informed the group that Gwen Barker, Service Officer with the Council's Social Work Department would be the liaison officer with the CVO. He also reported that the Council was committed to working in partnership with the CVO and that a regular pattern of quarterly meetings would be established.

It was agreed that the Partnership agreement be signed after the CVO's Annual General Meeting.

Action: Gwen Barker, Service Officer, Social Work Department.

3. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

To be arranged after EACVO Annual General Meeting.

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