

MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT COMMITTEE OF ABERTILLERY AND LLANHILLETH COMMUNITY COUNCIL HELD ON 10 FEBRUARY 2023 AT 7.00 PM in the Chairman and Members' Room at Council Offices, Mitre Street, Abertillery and via video conferencing (Zoom).

PRESENT

Councillors: Barrie Page (Chair), Ben Owen-Jones, Josh Rawcliffe

Other: Tracey Dyson

Officers: David Cartwright (Clerk)

PRESENT VIA VIDEOLINK

Other: Deb Pitt

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST OR DISPENSATIONS

None.

3. MINUTES – 28 NOVEMBER 2022

The Committee **RESOLVED** that the minutes were a true and correct record.

4. CO-OPTIONS

- a) The Committee **RESOLVED** to co-opt Tracey Dyson and Deb Pitt as Non-Voting Members of the Committee.
- b) The Committee considered whether to recommend to Full Council that Tracey Dyson and Deb Pitt be appointed as full members of the Committee. Ben Owen-Jones raised the issue of a potential conflict between Cllr Pitt being a Member of the Committee and being also the Lead Practitioner of the Off The Streets detached youth team, whose salaries were funded by a budget managed by the Committee. Cllr Owen-Jones was eager to find a way to avoid any conflict of interest as he believed Cllr Pitt's skills, experience and knowledge would deliver significant benefits to the Committee's work. Cllr Dyson wondered whether it would be necessary for Cllr Pitt to remain as a non-voting member of the Committee. The Clerk advised that it would be in order for Cllr Pitt to become a full member of the Committee as long as her interest was declared scrupulously. Usually, this would be a personal interest, allowing Cllr Pitt to take a full role in Committee discussions about youth work in general, although she may need to consider whether it would be wise to abstain from some votes. Whenever the Committee discussed the funding of the Off The Streets detached youth team, it would be necessary for Cllr Pitt to declare a pecuniary interest and to leave the room.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council that Tracey Dyson and Deb Pitt be appointed as full members of the Committee.

5. VISITS AND MEETINGS

The Committee discussed proposed visits by Members of the Committee to Abertillery youth centre and arrangements for meetings between the Committee and staff at Off The Streets and the Blaenau Gwent Detached Youth Team. Ben Owen-Jones

suggested that it be clarified that such visits and meetings would be made by the Committee's Youth Engagement Working Group (Barrie Page, Ben Owen-Jones and Josh Rawcliffe). Deb Pitt agreed with this proposal as it would ensure that, when she attended such visits and meetings, she would do so only as a representative of Off The Streets. The Committee agreed to use an online spreadsheet to co-ordinate such visits and meetings pending use of a shared calendar when the Council migrates to Microsoft365's Outlook application.

- b) John Rawcliffe agreed to liaise with Off The Streets and the Blaenau Gwent Detached Youth Team to arrange appropriate access to see the teams' work.

6. NAOMIE PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Barrie Page presented a paper outlining the proposed needs, aims, objectives and method for the Council's support of youth engagement work. Ben Owen-Jones and Deb Pitt both welcomed the paper but were of the opinion that it contained too many elements. Josh Rawcliffe stated that the successful work of the detached youth teams meant that youth anti-social behaviour in the Abertillery and Llanhilleth Community Council area was now substantially lower than all other wards in the borough. He questioned the value of retaining lower ASB as a measure of success as it was becoming increasingly apparent that youth ASB was merely a symptom of the wider issues that the Committee needed to address.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to instruct the Committee's Youth Engagement Working Group to re-draft the paper and to make recommendations to a future meeting of the Committee.

7. ADULT ENGAGEMENT

Barrie Page presented proposals for the Committee's first steps in leading the Council's adult engagement work. Deb Pitt questioned whether it was wise to restrict such engagement to adults aged over-25. Although the detached youth teams engaged with young people up to the age of 25, the age of crossover from youth to adult provision varied from individual-to-individual and project-to-project. She suggested that 18 years – the age of adulthood under most laws and under the UK benefits system – would be more relevant, even if this resulted in a degree of overlap between the Council's youth engagement and adult engagement work.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to develop a register of local groups and organisations that support and interact with people aged 18-and-over who could be described as vulnerable, isolated or disadvantaged. The register would then be circulated among the groups and organisations as a first step towards networking between organisations and the co-ordination of provision.

The meeting ended at 8.19 pm.