



19th December 2019

Email: martin.featherstone@gavo.org.uk

Dear Members

I am writing in response to the proposed 40% cut in funding that is outlined in the Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC) draft budget proposals for 2020/21 for the funding that GAVO receives from CCBC through an annual Service Level Agreement (SLA). For clarity this proposed cut reduces the GAVO funding from £35,346 to £21,208, and follows a cut to funding from CCBC that GAVO received for the current financial year.

I would like to thank Members for their supportive comments at the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee on the 5th December where the budget proposals were discussed. To confirm GAVO is in dialogue with CAB and Groundwork, organisations also facing a 40% reduction in funding, and GAVO will be responding to the budget consultation by the 13th January. GAVO does empathise with the impact that austerity has had on Local Authority budgets across Wales and recognises that this is a challenging time with added uncertainty linked to Brexit. However, I would like to use this communication to raise the following points:

The 40% proposed reduction appears disproportionate to the funding settlement that CCBC will be receiving from Welsh Government. For example, GAVO understands that Local Authorities across Wales have been awarded a 4.3% budget increase for 2020/21. GAVO would expect that this increase would enable CCBC to review the budget proposals in the light of this settlement and GAVO look forward to receiving further communication to this effect.

It was explained at the December Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee, that CCBC Departments were asked to submit proposals as to how they would manage a percentage cut. This approach does not accommodate the relative budget sizes of departments, for example the Policy Department with a proportionally smaller budget and where GAVO understand the Voluntary Sector cuts are being made is therefore 'hit harder'. This approach also animates a silo methodology and does not reflect a joined up strategy to financial reduction across the Authority. For example, it is not clear from the reductions proposed to GAVO, CAB and Groundwork what CCBC's over-arching Strategy for the Third Sector in the County Borough is?

In terms of the rationale for decision making, GAVO would also appreciate further explanation and clarity reference the criteria for measuring the impact of proposed funding reductions, for example through an equalities and vulnerability lens.

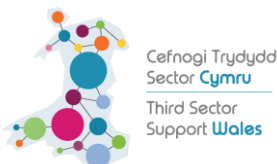
GAVO recognises the importance of the CCBC 'Team Caerphilly Better Together' operating model, moving forward and notes the focus on Corporate Volunteering, Community Asset Transfer, Consultation and Engagement Framework and Community Hubs as areas that have a particular synergy with the GAVO offer.

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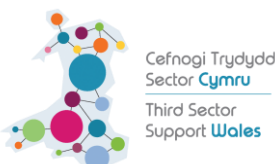


Clearly GAVO is reluctant to reduce staffing resources and activity in Caerphilly County Borough, however a proposed cut of 40% makes this inevitable and GAVO is currently developing implementation plans for the proposed 40% cut. Below is a summary of GAVO's activity in the County Borough linked to GAVO's 2019/20 SLA in Caerphilly and based on your local knowledge GAVO would welcome your thoughts on what could be reduced or discontinued and the rationale for these suggestions.

1. Public Service Board, Board Member
2. Delivery Lead and Champion for the Volunteering Action Area in the Caerphilly Well-being Plan developing a Caerphilly-wide Volunteering Strategy.
3. Facilitation of Third Sector representation and participation in the Well-being Plan priorities and, Action Areas and Enablers.
4. Fostering Third Sector commitment to the aims and ambitions of the Well Being of Future Generations Act.
5. Attendance at the Leads Group in the PSB partnership architecture.
6. Attendance at the Apprentices Delivery Group reference the Well-being Plan.
7. Maximise third sector involvement in the Social Services and Well-being Act reference both regional and local partnership arrangements including the Social Value Forum.
8. Increase participation in volunteering through the Volunteering Wales Digital platform.
9. Promote best practice in volunteering locally and via the Gwent wide Volunteer Managers Network.
10. In collaboration with the CCBC Communications team deliver annual Voluntary Sector Achievement Awards including the Mayor's Civic Awards.
11. Support the development of the Community Asset Transfer Strategy.
12. Support the PSB Asset Management work including third sector asset mapping,
13. Respond to the Programme for Government and legislation supporting and advocating for third sector representation and participation.
14. Develop and deliver Third Sector grant schemes and assist CCBC with local authority schemes accordingly.
15. Promote access to the digital funding portal.
16. Deliver funding surgeries for the Third Sector.
17. Support, broker and facilitate the Third Sector to participate in funding streams, for example the Integrated Care Fund.
18. Provision of locally based advice for third sector organisations with a focus on funding, governance, engagement and influencing and Volunteering.
19. Support and participate in emerging Community Hub Strategy.
20. Representation on the Lansbury Coalition for Change Board.
21. Representation on the Caerphilly Families First Board.
22. Delivery of the Caerphilly Third Sector Forum.
23. Delivery of two One Beat Third Sector Roadshows.
24. Maximise third sector involvement in shaping and developing Council priorities.
25. Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee
26. Voluntary Sector Representatives Committee
27. Third Sector Partnership Agreement Action Planning and Reporting in partnership with the CCBC Policy Unit.
28. Maintain GAVO Caerphilly Local Committee
29. Deliver the Health and Social Care Alliance network.

Please do get in touch if you require any further information on the work of GAVO in Caerphilly or more specifically if you would like to discuss the points raised in this communication. For information, I append GAVO's Annual Impact Report.

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Yours faithfully
Martin Featherstone
CEO, GAVO

CC:
Edward Watts MBD DL, Chair GAVO
Stephen Tiley, Deputy CEO, GAVO
Alison Palmer, Third Sector Development Manager, GAVO

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