



Minutes of the MILTON KEYNES VOLUNTARY SECTOR CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY held on TUESDAY 15 FEBRUARY at 10.00 am

Present:	C Bland	-	Milton Keynes Council
	A Donovan	-	Volunteer Connections
	G Edwards (Chair)	-	Milton Keynes Council for Voluntary Organisations
	T Hill	-	Milton Keynes Community Trust
	L Kendrick	-	Milton Keynes Council
	D Savage	-	City Counselling Centre
	P Scrimshaw	-	Milton Keynes Council
	F Skelton	-	Relate MK
Apologies:	J Balzanella	-	Pre-School Learning Alliance
	C Chapman	-	Milton Keynes Council
	A Corbett	-	Milton Keynes Council
	J Hainstock	-	Primary Care Group
	J Murray	-	Citizens' Advice Bureau
Also Present:	L McGillivray	-	Milton Keynes Council
	S Stares	-	Milton Keynes Council

ACTION

1.0 RE-ELECTION OF CHAIR

Following the Annual Meeting of the wider Consultative Assembly, the Assembly considered the appointment of its Chair.

AGREED -

That Gladys Edwards be appointed Chair of the Consultative Assembly.

2.0 WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

The Assembly welcomed its two new members, who were elected at the Annual Meeting of the Consultative Assembly held on 24 January 2000:

A Donovan (Volunteer Connections)
J Murray (Citizens' Advice Bureau)

3.0 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Assembly held on 1 December 1999 were received and approved.

4.0 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

4.1 Milton Keynes Primary Care Group

The Assembly noted that discussions were currently taking place within the Primary Care Group (PCG) to appoint a representative to attend meetings of the Assembly. It was noted that the PCG had yet to adopt formally the Voluntary Sector Strategy document.

4.2 Partnership Compact

It was also noted that as yet no response had been received from Ken Dixon in relation to the letter sent to him regarding the "Partnership Compact".

4.3 Joint Finance/Partnership Development Fund

- (i) With regard to funding, it was reported that with the phasing out of joint finance, Buckinghamshire Health Authority had agreed to allocate similar sums of money to a Partnership Development Fund.
- (ii) For the year 2000/01, funding priority would be given to supporting infrastructure, around carers, users and advocacy development.
- (iii) The previously disbanded Joint Finance Sub-Group had reconvened to consider a commissioning approach to funding, and would be meeting on 10 March 2000 to discuss allocations for next year.
- (iv) The Sub-Group had requested officers to recommend other priority areas for funding, and officers had requested that services for children be given priority.
- (v) After March, a definitive list of allocations would be produced. The voluntary sector would be invited to submit applications for funding to the Partnership Development Fund.
- (vi) Gladys Edwards reported that this year's allocation for the Innovative Funds would be a greater than previous years. Milton Keynes could expect to receive approximately £40,000.

- (vii) Charities were eligible to apply to the Health For All Sub-Group, which had been asked by MOG to facilitate it, for grants from this fund to finance small scale, specific projects.
- (viii) The Health For All Sub-Group (Jane Hainstock (PCG), Pat Scrimshaw (MKC), Lynne Kent (PCG) and Gladys Edwards CVO)) would be considering allocations to be made from the Innovatory Funds following the decisions made at the meeting on 10 March 2000 (see above). Buckinghamshire Health Authority would have considered the allocation by this time, and the funds should be available from 1 April 2000.
- (ix) It was agreed that wide and systematic advertising of this fund should be arranged. Information would be sent out via Community Link, and members of the Consultative Assembly were encouraged to use their links with other groups to raise awareness of the funds. It was to be stressed when publicising this that the grants were intended for health-related projects in the broadest sense (i.e. including mental health services and social services as well as ostensibly medical services), and those specified in the Bucks and MK HImP.
- (x) It was noted that Jane Hainstock would act as contact point in relation to enquiries about these grants.

ALL

5.0 PLACE OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR IN THE NEW DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES

- 5.1 Laura McGillivray (Head of Policy and Communications, Milton Keynes Council) outlined the proposals agreed to date by the Democratic Structures Working Group regarding the Council's new democratic structures. It was noted that these changes were likely to be required by legislation to take effect from 1 April 2001, but that the Council's proposed "leader and cabinet" model would be piloted for a year before that date.
- 5.2 Laura McGillivray asked for the Consultative Assembly's comments and recommendations regarding the relationship of the Voluntary Sector to the Council in the future. These would be reported to the Democratic Structures Working Group at its meeting on 28 February 2000.
- 5.3 It was noted that in the new system, most decision-making would be undertaken by the Executive. Officer reports would largely be public documents, and meetings of the Executive would be held in public at the point of decision-making. All decisions taken by the Executive would be subject to the calling-in procedure.

- 5.4 It was agreed that decisions on grants were not a suitable remit for the Assembly, or for officers under delegated powers. However, concern was expressed that the well-being of the unique partnership in Milton Keynes between the Council, Voluntary Sector, Health Authority and the MK Primary Care Group could theoretically rest on the sympathies of the particular Councillors elected to the Executive at any time. It was noted that the new structures would be subject to review.

AGREED -

1. That the Democratic Structures Working Group be recommended to consider:
 - (a) the retention of the Consultative Assembly under the new structures;
 - (b) formal consultation at least with regard to Grant Aid policy, framework and procedures, whatever formal decision-making processes are adopted under the new structures; and
 - (c) the nature of this consultation, such as a consultative panel, consisting of the Executive Member responsible for Grant Aid matters, non-Executive Members with particular experience of this area and representatives of the Voluntary Sector Consultative Assembly.
2. That it be stressed to the Democratic Structures Working Group that the Voluntary Sector Consultative Assembly is a conduit for other agencies, and has a wider remit than the Grant Aid Committee alone.

6.0 FEEDBACK AND ACTION ARISING FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY

- 6.1 It was noted that the first annual meeting of the Consultative Assembly had been well attended.

AGREED -

That an article be published in Community Link encouraging Voluntary Sector representatives to contact members of the Consultative Assembly with their concerns, and to attend meetings of the Consultative Assembly in order to raise issues for discussion.

GE

7.0 TERMS OF REFERENCE

AGREED -

1. That the word "elect" be replaced by the word "appoint" in the section relating to the Vice Chair so the paragraph would read:

"The Assembly will also appoint a Vice-Chair annually at its first meeting following Milton Keynes Council's Annual Meeting each year."

2. That the Executive under new political management structures be requested to appoint the Executive responsible for the Council's relationship with the Voluntary Sector, to the Assembly.
3. That subject to the Executive agreeing the Assembly's request the following paragraph be added to the Terms of Reference under the heading "Vice Chair":

"The Vice-Chair will be the Member of the Executive responsible for the Council's relationship with the Voluntary Sector."

4. The following to be added under the heading "Membership":
 - (a) "Members of the Assembly who fail to attend three consecutive meetings of the Assembly without reasonable excuse will forfeit their membership."
 - (b) "The Assembly will have the ability to appoint co-opted members at their discretion."
5. That Liz Ruddle (MK MIND) be co-opted to the Assembly in a non-voting capacity.

8.0 THE COUNCIL'S PROPERTY STRATEGY

- 8.1 It was noted that under current arrangements, officers in the Property Strategy section were authorised to determine which groups were and were not eligible for rent rebates (see **Annex** to minutes). It was agreed that Peter Smettem (Senior Surveyor) be invited to address the next meeting of the Consultative Assembly.

9.0 FUNDING ISSUES

9.1 Withdrawal of Agency Funding

A discussion took place on the process and principles of withdrawing funding if voluntary or private sector organisations were not fulfilling agreement requirements/agreements.

PAS

AGREED -

That a legal colleague be invited to the next meeting of the Assembly.

9.2 Groups Funded by more than One Directorate

(i) The Consultative Assembly considered processes of co-ordination between the Council, the Voluntary Sector and the Health Authority. Theoretically, all groups funded should fall within the scope of the Partnership Agreement or Grant Aid.

(ii) A small number of groups, however, were allocated funds by officers, without those decisions being ratified by Committee.

(iii) In addition, some groups were funded by more than one Directorate, such as the Reader Service, which received funds from the Grant Aid Committee and from the Neighbourhood Services Directorate.

CC/CB

(iv) It was noted that details of sources of funding were to be found in the back of the Voluntary Sector Strategy document. It was agreed that this information (including amounts allocated to organisations) should be more readily available. Chris Chapman would be asked to address this matter.

CC

(v) The Assembly considered whether such information could be collected by requesting organisations to state on their application forms for grants, any other Directorate to which they were applying for grants (if over £500).

10.0 AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

The following items for future meetings were identified:

- (a) Pensions.
- (b) Corporate view on reserves.
- (c) Complaints about statutory agencies by the Voluntary Sector.

11.0 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

AGREED -

That the next meeting to be held on Tuesday 4 April 2000 at 10.00 am in the Private Dining Room, Civic Offices.

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 11.55 AM