



**VOLUNTARY ACTION
MERTHYR TYDFIL
GWEITHREDU GWIRFODDOL
MERTHYR TUDFUL**

Strategic Plan 2017-2020

(Internal Version)¹

¹ An external version will be produced removing the PESTLE analysis

Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil 2017-2020

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Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil Strategic Plan 2017 - 2020

1 Introduction

Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil (VAMT) is the County Voluntary Council (CVC) for the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil. VAMT became operational in 1997 following the reorganisation of County Voluntary Councils within Wales. VAMT has a membership of 269 third sector organisations.

VAMT currently employs 18 staff and has a board of 9 Trustees, elected annually from amongst its membership. It is a Company Limited by Guarantee and a Registered Charity.

VAMT is based at the Voluntary Action Centre in Merthyr Tydfil town centre. The Centre is managed by VAMT and provides office space for VAMT, five other third sector organisations and third sector projects and has a large meeting space.

VAMT receives core funding from the Welsh Government, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and Cwm Taf University Health Board. It also receives significant project funding from the Integrated Care Fund (via CT University Health Board). Funding is also received from the Big Lottery Fund for the Community Voice project and Welsh Government for South Cluster Communities First but both of these projects will end during 2017/18. A Community Capacity Grants scheme is also administered with funding from the Integrated Care Fund.

What we do

VAMT's role as a County Voluntary Council is outlined in the Third Sector Support Wales (TSSW) Business Plan 2017 to 2022. The goal of TSSW is to:

Enable the third sector and volunteers across Wales to contribute fully to individual and community well-being, now and for the future.

Its core activities, to strengthen the third sector and volunteering, will focus on:

- Enabling and supporting
- Being a catalyst
- Engaging and influencing.

The TSSW Business Plan sets out the core service standards or 'universal offer' that will be consistently available across all TSSW partners across four pillars of activity. They are;

- Volunteering
- Good governance
- Sustainable funding
- Engagement and influencing

The Service Standards are not intended to be static documents. Third Sector Support Wales is working on a Shared Impact Framework for 2017-22. This will inform the high level outcomes against which it will report to Welsh Government. The impact framework will be designed to help inform ongoing learning. This will feed into amendments to the service specifications in future years to maximise impact. Any proposals for amendments would be agreed with Welsh Government.

2 Strategic context

Strategic Plan 2017-2020

This strategic plan focuses on the period 2017 – 2020. It has been developed with significant input from VAMT’s Board of Trustees and staff. It should be read alongside Appendices 2 and 3, VAMT’s Operational Plan and the Cwm Taf Regional Operational Plan 2017-2018

This strategic plan aims to be aspirational and focuses on developments which will provide added value to VAMT’s core services, and will allow VAMT to meet the needs of its membership and stakeholders at a local and regional level, whilst contributing to TSSW. This plan is not prescriptive in that it is meant to allow the organisation to pursue emergent strategic developments.

This plan is developed at a time of continuing austerity as well as increasing social need. VAMT recognises that during turbulent times the external environment can impact heavily on activities and progress. Third Sector organisations are facing increasing pressure to demonstrate better performance and impact, with increased competition for fewer resources. Co-production and collaboration are increasing important methods of policy development and service delivery. VAMT continues to represent its membership and promote the contribution of the third sector in service delivery and policy development.

There is an increasing expectation that organisations deliver easy-to-use convenient digital services. VAMT will work within TSSW to provide digital services to its members.

VAMT has a role to play in support its beneficiaries at a time of momentous political and social change. VAMT has a role in strengthening cohesion between communities and in enabling third sector organisations to maintain their resilience in times of change. VAMT will continue to advocate for the contribution of the sector in representation, policy development and service delivery.

VAMT is committed to working with regional CVC partners. In particular VAMT will continue to collaborate with Interlink RCT on joint projects and shared services as well as sharing the representative role on the range of strategic partnerships that are across Cwm Taf² and jointly facilitate third sector engagement.

² In Merthyr Tydfil and RCT the Public Service Board is constituted on a joint basis

3 Vision, Mission, Values

MISSION STATEMENT

To increase the extent, quality and impact of voluntary action in the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil by supporting, representing and assisting Third Sector organisations and volunteering.

Effecting change by enhancing well-being of individuals, organisations and communities.

VISION

- To be the centre of excellence in Merthyr Tydfil for the provision of services to organisations and individuals involved with the Third Sector and volunteering.
- To create a healthy community by helping to develop organisations to meet their needs, maximizing volunteering opportunities and sharing our mission with all stakeholders.

VALUES

We believe in and promote:

- Openness, honesty, transparency
- Professionalism and integrity
- Collaborative working
- Excellent governance
- Inclusion and diversity
- Sustainable change that makes a positive difference.

4 Governance principles and practice

VAMT has adopted the Charity Commission's Hallmarks of an Effective Charity and its Trustee Board adheres to the Nolan Seven Principles of Public Life (Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership.)

Charity Commission's Hallmarks of an Effective Charity:

Hallmark 1 Clear about its purposes and direction: An effective charity is clear about its purposes, mission and values and uses them to direct all aspects of its work.

Hallmark 2 A Strong Board: An effective charity is run by a clearly identifiable board or trustee body that has the right balance of skills and experience, acts in the best interests of the charity and its beneficiaries, understands its responsibilities and has systems in place to exercise them properly.

Hallmark 3 Fit for Purpose: The structure, policies and procedures of an effective charity enable it to achieve its purposes and mission and deliver its services efficiently.

Hallmark 4 Learning and Improving: An effective charity is always seeking to improve its performance and efficiency, and to learn new and better ways of delivering its purposes. A charity's assessment of its performance, and of the impact and outcomes of its work, will feed into its planning processes and will influence its future direction.

Hallmark 5: Financially Sound and Prudent: An effective charity has the financial and other resources needed to deliver its purposes and mission, and controls and uses them so as to achieve its potential.

Hallmark 6: Accountable and Transparent: An effective charity is accountable to the public and to others with an interest in the charity in a way that is transparent and understandable.

5 PESTLE Analysis

This plan has been developed within the context of our PESTLE analysis. Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental drivers present challenges and opportunities to both VAMT and the wider third sector. We address the threats in the strategic plan and have plans to make the most of the opportunities presented. This strategic plan is not prescriptive but allows the organisation to explore emergent strategic developments.

	Opportunities	Threats
Political/Policy	Good relationship with AM and MP SSWB Act Implementation of FG Act City Deal UK Government DWP work and health programme Regeneration Valleys Taskforce Welsh Government Resilient Communities Brexit <i>replacement monies</i>	Local Government elections – unknown outcome Brexit Community Asset sale Welsh Government regionalisation agenda Losing benefits office/tax office Regeneration – <i>out of town</i>
Economic	SSWBA – funding Third Sector engagement in Work and Health Programme City Deal Metro – greater connectivity across the region New businesses – Trago Mills Inward investment ESF replacement Valleys Task Force – consultation opportunities Competition for resources	Lottery money more likely to be linked to political agenda rather than need. Brexit – Void Austerity link to organisations who rely on donations Other funding priorities e.g. health and education Funders changing terms and conditions to hard outcomes Communities First and legacy projects.
Social	Work and health programme Opportunities to help encourage integration	Blame culture and blame society Less tolerant society Fear of integration Brexit and its impact Conditionality of volunteering/benefit sanctions People’s increasing expectations but at the same time less money available Ageing population
Technological	Social media support groups New CRM – demonstrate effectiveness and more efficient Increasing digitalisation of the community Talk to Leisure Trust re: digital inclusion On-line service delivery	Keeping up with rapid pace of change and chasing digital culture of younger generations Organisations falling behind digital developments
Legal	Data Protection – one improved system – up-skill, centralised support, demonstrate core value.	DBS – loss of DBS unit having affect locally/affordability DP – systems of identifiable information

	<p>Europe: keep abreast of changes and potential opportunities. SSWBA CF Programme – opportunity for Third Sector delivery of ‘health’ DWP – Communities for Work/Bridges to work. Opportunities for volunteering. Health and Work programme. Potential tendering opportunities Equal Opps – for VAMT and sector Immigration – translation services, support specialist organisation to develop and grow to support migrants</p>	<p>change/loss of reputation/cost implications/fine or new kit/threat to small organisations/affordability of roll out and knowledge. Europe: more competition for less money CF – H&WB services are removed DWP – Beneficiaries sanctions = more people unsupported or not able to comply with requirements Immigration – increased numbers of migrants to area/no translation/detrimental effect on health and well-being.</p>
<p>Environmental</p>	<p>Cyfarthfa Park – phase 2 – volunteering opportunities Take advantage of beautiful countryside LDP opportunities Sustainable energy – no experts – potential to acquire money to introduce at local level. Set up new community enterprises and support them to access funding. Keep up to date and aware – recycling/food waste.</p>	<p>Capacity of our voluntary sector staff v Council MILT volunteers and MTCBC volunteers – confusing LDP – opportunities not connected well enough Sustainable energy – not being able to take advantage of money and development. Disinterest of current government VAMT premises is MTCBC building</p>

6 KEY STRATEGIC AIMS

From our Vision and Mission Statement and PESTLE analysis we have identified five key strategic aims:

1. Enable third sector organisations to deliver services, improve in all aspects of their work and become resilient
2. Strengthen representation and influence of third sector organisations
3. Enhance volunteering and wellbeing through participation and community action
4. Enhance effectiveness of VAMT as an exemplar third sector organisation
5. Strengthen sustainability of VAMT.

These will inform VAMT's strategic position over the next 3 to 5 years.

Strategic Aim 1: Enable third sector organisations to deliver services, improve in all aspects of their work and become resilient

We will:

- Maintain the standards set within TSSW Core Service Standards and participate in the TSSW Networks
- Re-establish a strong funding advice service subject to anticipated funding being received.
- Provide improved services to trustees
- Seek to maximise VAMT involvement in CF legacy
- Develop our inclusion strategy improving our engagement with others
- Provide advice and signposting on e.g. governance, data protection, Welsh Language Standards, equality and diversity, etc..
- Offer training and development and capacity build support to the sector.
- Support the implementation of quality assurance schemes, PQASSO and iiv
- Deliver advice, briefings and support on sustainable funding
- Promote collaborative working and facilitate consortia bids
- Secure and administer funding schemes
- Represent Merthyr Tydfil on regional and national grant panels

Outcomes will include:

- Third sector staff, managers and trustees have the knowledge and skills they need to enable their organisations to operate sustainably, fairly, legally and safely.
- Trustees are confident about leading their organisations and maintaining high standards of governance
- Organisations secure and generate the resources they need to survive and grow
- New organisations or services are established to meet identified needs
- VAMT has an increased membership

Key Strategic Aim 2 Strengthen representation and influence of third sector organisations

We will:

- Influence development of public engagement, consultation and participation by involvement in the Cwm Taf Public Engagement Group
- Improve third sectors influence in local policy and service development
- Be actively involved in the implementation of the Social Services and Well Being Act 2014, the Future Generations of Wales Act 2015 and other relevant legislation
- Support ICF Community Coordinators
- Promote the third sector
- Develop our strategy around collaboration, partnerships and allegiances
- Promote our impact assessments
- Encourage joint working with other agencies (eg DWP, TTC, Working Links) to maximise resources
- Provide information, briefings and awareness raising events
- Support organisations to influence policy
- Support local networks and engagement with relevant public bodies
- Promote and contribute to consultations
- Share information about local scrutiny opportunities
- Initiate, publicise and support local third sector campaigns

Outcomes will include:

- The third sector can contribute effectively to policy at all levels
- The third sector is recognised as a vital route to participation and engagement
- The third sector plays an effective role in planning, delivering and scrutinising public services
- The third sector leads and engages in campaigns to improve the well-being of citizens in Wales

Key Strategic Aim 3 Enhance volunteering and wellbeing through participation and community action

We will:

- Administer local Youth-led grants schemes
- Provide information and advice to Volunteering Wales grants applicants
- Take part in Volunteering Wales project board
- Provide support and mentoring for individual volunteers
- Facilitate networks and volunteering events
- Provide regular volunteering news
- Identify, develop and promote local volunteering opportunities
- broker volunteering placements, including young volunteers, and provide on-going support.

- provide guidance and support to local organisations, and volunteer managers, to achieve and maintain good practice
- Host annual Volunteer Week celebrations

Outcomes will include:

- More people, organisations and the community benefitting from volunteer involvement
- More organisations providing quality volunteering opportunities
- People and communities engaging in co-production of public services
- More people benefitting from their high quality volunteer involvement

Key Strategic Aim 4 Enhance effectiveness of VAMT as an exemplar third sector organisation

We will:

- Actively seek to increase our membership including small local groups through to relevant large nationals
- Actively develop our media and social media strategy
- Undertake regular external environment scans for opportunities
- Research and write a long term business and financial plan
- Develop a strategy around collaboration
- Develop and implement PQASSO Cymru quality assurance framework across the organisation by achieving PQASSO levels 1 and 2.
- Become a Dementia Champion
- Submitting the annual Delivery Plan and bi-annual Monitoring Reports on time
- Monitoring staff performance through individual action plans.
- Implementing TSSW shared Impact Framework, and recording performance measures using TSSW database.
- Analysing technical improvements which will improve VAMT's performance and services to members
- Ensuring that Health and Safety procedures are adhered to and any recommendations for improvement implemented
- Develop a workforce strategy and plan to resource the core
- Identifying any additional internal staff resources which are required
- Identifying budgetary requirements necessary to implement meeting those needs
- Collaborating with other CVC's in developing joint services
- Identifying and maximising opportunities for tendering to deliver services
- Build our skills to implement strategic actions
- Produce a Welsh Language Progress Plan and agree this with the Welsh Language Commissioner.
- Write and implement our fundraising and income generation strategy
- Reporting on CRM
- Learning from our monitoring and evaluation

Outcomes will include:

- VAMT staff, managers and trustees have the knowledge and skills they need to enable VAMT to operate sustainably, fairly, legally and safely.
- VAMT secures and generates the resources they need to survive and grow and to support and enhance the third sector.

Key Strategic Aim 5 Strengthen sustainability of VAMT

We will:

- **Continue to strengthen VAMT's Board and its effectiveness in carrying out its governance role by:**
 - Reviewing the trustee handbook, review the Code of Conduct for Trustees and develop a staged induction process for new trustees, including meeting with staff team.
 - Annually, carrying out a clear skills audit of trustees annually and identify clear gaps in skills and expertise
 - Holding regular trustee-led development events and regular non-business meetings
 - Organising an annual staff-board event
- **Develop both champion and advocacy roles of board members across each area of the Delivery Plan by:**
 - Using the annual skills audit to identify areas of special interest and expertise amongst board members
 - Building closer communication and contact between VAMT staff and Board members
 - Implementing the champion role for each area of the Operational Plans.
 - Research emergent activities which may provide VAMT with additional resources

Outcomes will include:

- Governance of VAMT will be of the highest levels of oversight and transparency
- VAMT trustees are confident about leading the organisations and maintaining high standards of governance

7 SUSTAINABILITY, FUNDRAISING STRATEGY AND FINANCIAL PLANNING

VAMT continues to work in an environment of diminishing resources. Strategic objectives which will support our progress in maintaining sustainability include:

- Undertake regular external environment scans for opportunities
- Research and write a long term financial plan
- Develop a workforce strategy and plan to resource the core
- Identifying and maximising opportunities for tendering to deliver services
- Write and implement our fundraising and income generation strategy

As a County Voluntary Council, VAMT's Board recognises that it faces particular challenges in gaining funding going forward. Although an independent organisation, its core funding is reliant largely on local and devolved policy and priorities, and a need to balance developing new projects, with supporting its members in accessing funding.

VAMT will seek to strengthen existing sources of income from Welsh Government, local authority and University Health Board by playing an active part in all national and regional initiatives which are required.

VAMT is aware that the majority of charitable trusts across the UK have a policy of not funding infrastructure bodies and because of this have a limited pool of new funders to approach. However, VAMT will continue to scan the external environment, seeking appropriate opportunities for funding which fit with our vision, mission and values and our core aims. This may be sources of project funding appropriate for a CVC, which complement VAMT's core funding, tender or other procurement applications or other sources of contribution to our core costs utilising full cost recovery principles. As part of this, VAMT will research new and innovative income generation opportunities which may become available digitally as it has in the past.

VAMT will maximise its assets and self-generated income through rentals at the Voluntary Action Centre and 88 High Street. We will maximise our reserves through prudent investment and aim to minimise our liabilities in order to meet Charity Commission guidelines.

We will:

- research and write a long term business and financial plan
- have monthly Senior Management meetings to plan for new opportunities and review financial performance.
- have monthly Financial sub-committee meetings

8 STAFFING

VAMT recognises the contribution of its staff and volunteer team to the successful delivery of VAMT services to the third sector. VAMT will continue to support the development of the team's knowledge, skills and confidence. During this Strategic Plan, VAMT will focus on building the capacity of its team. This will be done by:

- Developing a workforce strategy and plan to resource the core
- Building our skills to implement strategic actions through training and development
- Monitoring staff performance through individual action plans
- Staff involvement in staff/trustee events
- Succession planning.

9 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND EVALUATION

VAMT will monitor the performance of the organisation against this Strategic plan and its annual operational plans.

Performance management

Managers will support and manage staff performance through effective induction and regular supervision and appraisal. Staff will receive feedback on their performance.

Customer Feedback

VAMT will adopt the new standardised TSSW process for gathering customer feedback.

Measuring Outcomes and Impact

TSSW has commissioned a Shared Impact Framework for 2017 - 22. VAMT will implement the Framework. This will enable the organisation to gather data on shared outcomes and will provide a shared reporting framework.

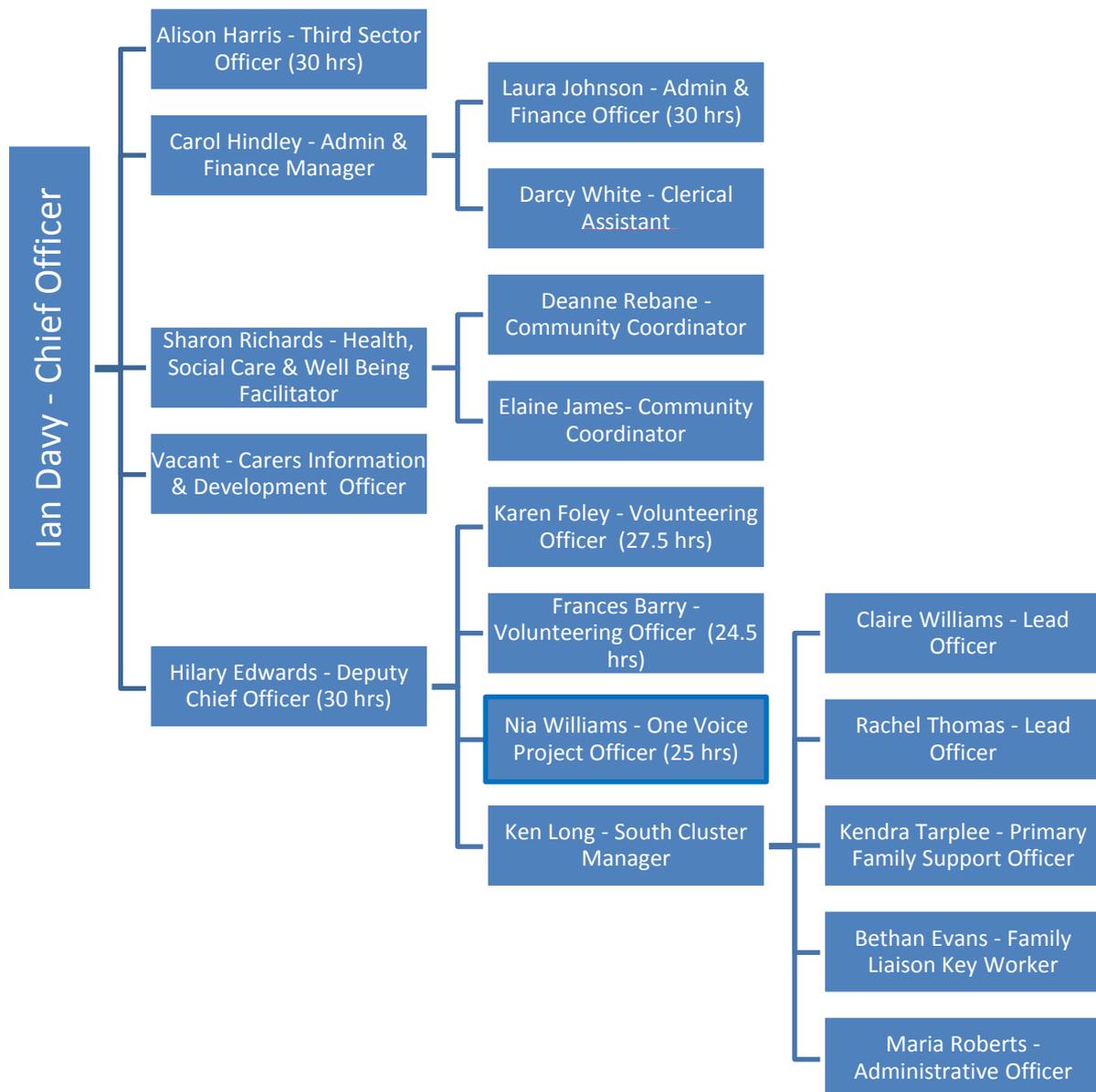
Reporting

Progress on this Strategic Plan will be reviewed on a six monthly basis by Board. A reporting mechanism, working on a red, amber, green “traffic light” system (attached as [Appendix X](#)) will be used to easily and clearly identify progress under each heading.

The format, purpose and effectiveness of the Strategic Plan will be reviewed annually by Board. The Strategic Plan will be updated annually.

Appendix 1

Staff Structure



Agreed by Board 15th May 2017

Appendix 2

VAMT's Operational Plan 2017-18

INSERT HERE

Agreed by Board 15th May 2017

Appendix 3

Cwm Taf Regional Operational Plan 2017-18

INSERT HERE

Agreed by Board 15th May 2017

Appendix 4

Risk Register (March 2017)

INSERT HERE

Agreed by Board 15th May 2017

Appendix 5
Strategic Action Plan

INSERT HERE – TO BE COMPLETED