

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES ADVISORY BOARD

13 December 2011

Report of the Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken by the Cabinet Member)

1 GRANTS TO KEY VOLUNTARY SECTOR BODIES – UPDATE AND REVIEW OF SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS

To set out a number of recent changes to the delivery of key voluntary sector services in the Borough and to outline the need for a review of the service level agreements that cover such services.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The former Community Development Advisory Board adopted, in March 2009, a number of service level agreements for six of the Borough's key voluntary sector bodies:

- The Citizens Advice Bureau
- Age Concern (Tonbridge) and Age Concern (Malling)
- Tonbridge and Malling Volunteer Centre
- West Kent and Maidstone Mediation Schemes

1.1.2 An earlier review of grant provision by the Scrutiny Committee identified the above bodies as key providers of community services within the Borough and recommended that grant support be provided to them on an annual basis, guided by three-year service level agreements. The following annual grants have been made:

Citizens' Advice Bureau - £111,000

Age Concerns and Volunteer Centre - £10,000 to each body

Mediation Schemes - £6,000 shared equally between the two schemes.

1.2 Recent Changes to Service Delivery

- 1.2.1 Significant changes to some of the above voluntary sector bodies have occurred over the past year.
- 1.2.2 The Tonbridge and Malling Volunteer Bureau has now ceased to operate and its services taken over by Voluntary Action Within Kent (VAWK). VAWK deliver a wide range of voluntary sector services including volunteer services for both Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells.
- 1.2.3 Age Concerns are now named 'Age UK'. On 1st April 2011, Tonbridge Age UK merged with Sevenoaks Age UK to form the Sevenoaks and Tonbridge Age UK.
- 1.2.4 The Tonbridge and Malling CAB is currently exploring a merger with Sevenoaks and Swanley CAB although no formal decision has been taken on this.
- 1.2.5 In order to provide a fuller update on these changes, representatives of the above organisations will be attending the meeting to explain the changes and the issues currently facing these voluntary bodies in more detail:

Angela Newey – Manager, Tonbridge and Malling CAB

Mandy Wynne, Deputy Chief Executive and Jenny Wilders, Development Manager, VAWK

Gillian Shepherd-Coates, Chief Officer, Sevenoaks and Tonbridge Age UK.

- 1.2.6 There are no changes to the structures of the two Mediation Schemes or Age UK Malling.

1.3 Service Level Agreements

- 1.3.1 Service Level Agreements for all six organisations are due for renewal by the April 2012. Given the changes to a number of the organisations as outlined, new service level agreements may need to be substantially changed rather than just 'rolled' forward'. In addition, these voluntary bodies have, in the past, been focused entirely on the delivery of services within Tonbridge and Malling but have been (or are planning to be) replaced with voluntary bodies with a much wider geographical area of cover. This raises a number of additional concerns that will need to be addressed as part of this review process as follows:

- The extent to which a full borough-wide service can be provided by these bodies given their wider geographical area of cover and the need to ensure that adequate outreach services are provided to achieve this;
- How grant support provided by the Borough Council to these bodies to provide voluntary services to local residents can be ring-fenced to ensure this funding is not used to cross subsidise services provided in other

districts, especially if the amount of grant support provided by other district authorities differ from those provided by the Borough Council; and,

- The need to ensure that any performance data collected by these bodies, for example, the number of clients dealt with, as may be required by an adopted service level agreement, is disaggregated to district level.

1.3.2 It is suggested that the process of developing new service level agreements with the six key voluntary bodies should commence as soon as possible and that these be reported for adoption to a meeting of this Board in March 2012, along side grant offers to those bodies for 2012/13.

1.4 Legal Implications

1.4.1 To be assessed as part of any revised service level agreements.

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.5.1 As above.

1.6 Risk Assessment

1.6.1 The services provided by the six voluntary sector bodies have been judged to be of vital importance to Borough residents and therefore worthy of continuing Borough Council grant support. Changes to the delivery of those services need to be assessed to ensure the risk of any diminution of those services are minimised.

1.7 Equality Impact Assessment

1.7.1 See 'Screening for equality impacts' table at end of report

1.8 Recommendations

1.8.1 That recent changes to the delivery of key voluntary sector services in the Borough **BE NOTED** and that revised Service Level Agreements be prepared and **REPORTED** to a meeting of this Board in March 2012.

The Chief Executive confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

contact: Mark Raymond

Nil

David Hughes
Chief Executive

Screening for equality impacts:		
Question	Answer	Explanation of impacts
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community?	No	Such issues will need to be assessed at a later stage when revised service level agreements are formulated.
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality?	N/A	As above
c. What steps are you taking to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		

In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above.