

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES ADVISORY BOARD

23 July 2012

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 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

To set out recent activities undertaken by the three community development workers covering the communities of Trench, East Malling and Snodland and to outline funding issues related to the costs of these posts.

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 The Borough Council, with support from local partners, established a Borough Community Development Partnership in 2010 to provide funding for three community development workers based in Snodland, East Malling and Trench. These three workers are employed by the Beat Project, a local community-based charity. Funding contributions from local partners are collected annually by the Borough Council to reimburse the costs of their employment by the Beat Project. The annual cost of this work is £75,000. Each local partnership has the strong support of the relevant Borough Council's local Members, many of whom are directly involved in local groups and activities.
- 1.1.2 Over the past years, the involvement of the Beat Project community workers in our three most deprived communities have proved to be an invaluable resource. The fact that the three workers are employed by an agency who is independent of any funding partner means that they are able to engage local residents more readily. Being part of a larger charitable organisation also means that the three workers can call on additional resources and expertise within the organisation and can bid independently for external funding from sources not normally accessible to mainstream partners.
- 1.1.3 The purpose of this report is to provide an update of activities undertaken by the three local partnerships for East Malling, Snodland and Trench and then to address funding issues for the Borough Community Development Partnership will be come into effect in the second half of this financial year.

1.2 The Trench Partnership

- 1.2.1 In 2010/11, a decision was made to merge the activities of the Trench Neighbourhood Action Group (TNAG) with those of the newly-formed Tonbridge Federation, an educational grouping of Hugh Christie Technology College and Long Mead County Primary School. In forming a Federation, the two schools committed to wider working within the local community. As the community objectives of the Federation and those of the Trench Partnership were very similar, it was agreed that a formal merger was a sensible option. Community resources from both schools could then provide support to the Beat Project worker employed by the Community Development Partnership and led by a common action plan.
- 1.2.2 The Trench Partnership is now formed and comprises three groups: a high level Partnership group which meets once a year to review and agree the plan for the coming year, a strategy group which meets four times a year to review progress etc and an Implementation Group involving front-line staff from local organisations who deliver the actions set out in the plan.
- 1.2.3 The existing Beat Project worker, Luci Napleton, resigned from her post in the Autumn of 2011 to pursue other career options. Unfortunately, it has taken some time to appoint a replacement worker and so community activities in Trench have been on hold over the winter months. However, a new worker, Oliver De Cet, has recently been appointed and the Partnership is currently in the process of drawing up a new action plan to guide his work. The likely focus of this is to be on engagement within the Trench community focusing on young people, with the possibility of establishing a new youth group for the area, and also engagement with older residents, many of whom are vulnerable and isolated.

1.3 The East Malling Partnership

- 1.3.1 Significant progress has been achieved in East Malling, largely due to the activities organised and undertaken by Angela Borsos, the community development worker for that community. The main recent focus of activity has been on the further development of the St James Community Centre, based at the former St James the Great Primary School. The Beat Project has now committed to relocating its operations to the Centre and has agreed to manage the facility on behalf of the Trust set up to operate the centre. Considerable additional investment in the community centre is now being made with the help of successful external funding bids made by the Beat Project. The current focus is on establishing the community café at the Centre as a much needed social facility for the area. It is anticipated that this much needed facility will be operational by the end of the year.
- 1.3.2 A recent workshop has been held with local partners to review the current East Malling Partnership action plan and to identify new issues to be included in a refreshed plan for the coming year. The likely focus points for the new plan will be

developing engagement projects to deter young people from crime and anti-social behaviour, improving health, developing projects to help raise aspirations of local residents and promote positive publicity related to local events and achievements.

1.4 The Snodland Partnership

- 1.4.1 The Snodland Partnership is the Borough's longest running community partnership, originally established in 1989. There is a single partnership group which meets quarterly and which is administered by the Town Council. The partnership continues to receive some funding from local partners and this enables support to be offered to local good causes.
- 1.4.2 Community development work is led by Nicky Delacey of the Beat Project. Her main role has been to focus on the hard to reach groups in the local community and those who might not freely engage with existing community activities available locally. A good example of this is the Coffee and Chat Group, established by Nicky, which engages a number of local residents and involves both a social element and the provision of advice and support from various agencies invited to attend those meetings. Nicky also organises a wide range of community events including a recent Jubilee event at the Recreation Ground attended by over 100 local residents. The Beat Project has recently been successful in bidding for funding from a local charitable trust to enable a variety of projects to be undertaken to address themes of youth and community, poverty, older people, disability and health.

1.5 Current Funding issues

- 1.5.1 There is currently a shortfall in funding for the Borough Community Partnership for the latter half of 2012/13. Kent Police has been unable to provide support funding to the Partnership this year due to budgetary constraints. In addition, part of the funding for the Partnership has previously been provided by the Local Strategic Partnership using performance reward grant. That funding pot is now used up and no further PRG is available. There is therefore a funding gap of £25K to address in the current financial year.
- 1.5.2 I am currently in discussion with the Beat Project's Director to explore options to rectify this shortfall. Options likely to be explored include:
- Securing additional funding from external sources
 - Seeking additional contributions from existing partners or from new partners
 - Reviewing the extent of community development work that can be undertaken within available resources.
- 1.5.3 Given the important role being played by all three community development workers in those deprived communities, the preference will be to find additional

funding to enable all three workers to continue in post with no reduction in working hours. I will report back to this Board at its next meeting in November with an update on the above options. Local members will also be kept fully informed.

1.6 Legal Implications

1.6.1 None

1.7 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.7.1 As set out above in Section 1.5.

1.8 Risk Assessment

1.8.1 As set out above in Section 1.5.

1.9 Equality Impact Assessment

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

1.10 Recommendations

1.10.1 That the extent and positive impact of community development work in the Borough **BE NOTED** and that a further report on funding options **BE MADE** to the next meeting of this Board.

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	The current objective is to seek to retain community development resources at their current level. A future impact assessment may be required if this cannot be achieved and the service needs to be reduced or reconfigured.

Screening for equality impacts:		
Question	Answer	Explanation of impacts
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality?	Yes	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.