

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 TROUBLED FAMILIES PROGRAMMES – UPDATE

To provide an update on the ‘Progress’ projects reported to your March meeting and to outline proposals for a second ‘Troubled Families’ programme now launched by the Department of Communities and Local Government.

1.1 The Progress Project

1.1.1 I reported to the March meeting of this Board on the launch of a new programme aimed at addressing the complex needs of ‘troubled families’. This programme is funded by the European Social Fund and involves local partners identifying suitable families to take part and then encouraging them to sign up to the programme. Once signed up, contactors have been appointed to work with the families to provide coaching and support for a period of up to 12 months. Whilst the focus is on addressing issues of worklessness within such families, the programme is intended to meet the wider needs of the families involved which might include issues of poor health, inappropriate housing, criminality/ASB, drug and alcohol abuse and general disaffection.

1.1.2 The programme has now been launched locally. The Borough Council is working with local partners including our community development workers employed by the Beat Project to identify and engage suitable families. To date, only slow progress has been achieved. Many suitable families require considerable support and encouragement to sign up to this programme so that they feel fully comfortable with it. This is proving to be a long process. TBG Learning, the contractor appointed to support families in Tonbridge and Malling, has recently appointed a local case worker for the Borough who is helping other partners with the engagement process. It is expected that, with this support now in place, more referrals will begin to come forward.

1.2 CLG Troubled Families Programme

1.2.1 Government has recently launched a second programme also aimed at dealing with Troubled Families. This new programme is being led by CLG. The Programme is aimed at Upper Tier and Unitary Authorities. KCC is leading on this locally and has recently produced a 'Business Case' setting out how they believe the programme should operate locally.

1.2.2 The CLG programme differs from the 'Progress' project in a number of respects:

- Government is prepared to make up-front payments to Authorities to help deliver the programme. For Kent, the aim is to target over 1,000 families which could result in an initial payment of nearly £3M.
- The Business Case suggests that the programme needs to be operated locally (at the district level) supported by guidance and policies produced county-wide.
- There is an expectation that considerable resources will be needed locally, for example, to set up a 'Local Project Board', produce a local action plan and, presumably, deliver the support to nominated families. Local Project Boards will also be the 'accountable' bodies for the programme.
- For Tonbridge and Malling, an initial list of c100 'troubled' families has been produced centrally at the County level and work is underway with local partners to verify this list. Initial indications suggest that few of the troubled families well known to local partners have been included on this initial list.
- There is no clear indication in the Business Case that the considerable level of financial resources that will be released by CLG will be 'passported' on the Local Partnerships where all the delivery is expected to take place. Indeed, the Business Case suggests that such money would be held centrally by KCC and could be bid for by local boards to provide 'gap' funding or alternatively, used achieve 'service design and transformation', presumably this being controlled at the county level.

1.2.3 Local Partners, including the Borough Council, are unlikely to be able to resource this programme locally without additional resources. Co-ordination of the Project Board and the activities of local partners, along with the actual delivery of support to families would represent a considerable commitment in staff time.

1.2.4 Given the above resourcing issues, I believe that the Borough Council should not commit to the delivery of this programme until reassurances have been received from the County Council that a proportion of the available 'up-front' Government funding will be devolved to the Local Project Boards to assist with local delivery. The Borough's Local Strategic Partnership which includes a number of partners likely to be involved in delivery of the programme, has endorsed this view. It is understood that funding issues for the programme are currently being discussed

at a high level group established to oversee the programme. I will report verbally to the Board on any further developments.

1.3 Legal Implications

1.3.1 As set out in the attached Business Case.

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.4.1 As set out above. The Borough Council has no resources of its own to commit to the delivery of this programme. Our future involvement is therefore dependent on financial support being made available from the County Council to fund local delivery.

1.5 Risk Assessment

1.5.1 As set out above.

1.6 Equality Impact Assessment

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

1.7 Recommendations

1.7.1 That the County Council **BE INFORMED** that the Borough Council and its local partners will be unable to participate in the DCLG Troubled Families Programme unless sufficient funding is devolved to local agencies responsible for the delivery of support to families.

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 programme, subject to being adequately funded at the local level, aimed to address the needs of local families in most need of support.

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.