

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 TONBRIDGE AND MALLING SENIORS' FORUM (TAMS) – UPDATE

To provide an update of the work undertaken by the TAMS Forum since its launch in September 2010.

1.1 The Forum

1.1.1 Many areas nationally have established independent groups to champion the needs of older people. The Tonbridge and Malling Seniors' Forum was established in September 2010 following some local consultation events. The process was supported by Age UK, Age Concern Malling and the Borough Council. A Management Committee was established by those wishing to help organise the Forum and Barry Hughes, an ex Tonbridge and Malling councillor and Chairman of Borough Green Parish Council, was elected as its Chairman. Other key appointments were Anthony Hayward as Vice Chairman and David Metcalf as Treasurer. To give support to the Forum, the Borough Council has continued to provide secretarial support, helps with publishing posters etc and hosts the meetings of the Management Committee.

1.1.2 The original intention of the Forum was to hold meetings in various locations in and around the Borough. Although an initial public meeting was held for the Walderslade/Blue Bell Hill area, all further public meetings have since taken place in Tonbridge, based at the Age Concern Hall, Bradford Street. The TAMS Forum has been unable to attract Management Committee members from the Malling area. Given that the organisation of meetings depends upon the willingness of its members to organise and attend its public meetings, the Management Committee has agreed to concentrate on organising meetings only for the Tonbridge area for the time being.

1.2 TAMS meetings

1.2.1 The Annual General Meeting of the TAMS Forum was held at the Borough Council offices on 1st June 2012. This included a presentation from Age UK on

their support for older people. All existing members of the Management Committee were re-elected.

1.2.2 The Chairman's report to the AGM drew attention to the activities undertaken by the Forum since its launch. The Management Committee has organised open meetings in Tonbridge every two months and attendance has steadily increased over this period. These open meetings now attract between 35 – 45 older residents mainly from the Tonbridge area and nearby villages.

1.2.3 Open meetings have involved invitations to a wide variety of guest speakers to attend and talk about issues of importance to older people. These have included the commissioning of the new hospital at Pembury, public transport to and from the hospital and local bus services generally, support for carers, volunteer driver schemes, support for the elderly at home and the digital switchover scheme. In addition, councillors from the County and Borough Councils have regularly attended TAMS open meetings.

1.3 TAMS Finances

1.3.1 The TAMS Forum currently enjoys a healthy financial position. Initial grants were offered by both the Borough Council and the County Council. Further annual grants have been given by the County Council. The AGM reported that the TAMS Forum had a working balance of just in excess of £7,500. Expenditure to date has mainly related to the costs of open meetings including hall hire and catering. In addition, the Forum is in the process of purchasing its own mobile PA system for use at open meetings and discussions are underway within the Management Committee about funding small grants to local older person's groups and organising visits and social events.

1.4 Conclusions

1.4.1 The TAMS Forum is now well established in Tonbridge, is operating effectively and has a sound financial status. The need to continue to extend meetings to cover the Malling area remains a longer term objective which is dependent upon volunteers coming forward from that area to help organise and promote such events. It has been acknowledged that, within the Malling area, there are already a number of active retirement groups and other older person's groups in place and that, potentially, TAMS Forum activity in the area might merely duplicate existing provision. This is being kept under review.

1.4.2 Given the above initial success of the TAMS Forum in engaging older people in the wider Tonbridge area, it is recommended that the Borough Council continues to support the Forum 'in kind' through continued officer support and other means such as printing of publicity material and hosting management meetings.

1.5 Legal Implications

1.5.1 None

1.6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.6.1 As set out above

1.7 Risk Assessment

1.7.1 N/A

1.8 Equality Impact Assessment

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

1.9 Recommendations

1.9.1 That the Borough Council **CONTINUES** to support the Tonbridge and Malling Seniors' Forum in the ways as set out in the above report.

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	
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality?	Yes	The TAMS Forum provides an opportunity to engage older residents in the Borough
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.