

**Tonbridge & Malling Local Strategic Partnership
Minutes of Meeting – 14th December 2012**

Present: Cllr Nicholas Heslop – Leader, TMBC
 Cllr Brian Luker, TMBC
 Cllr Chris Smith - KCC
 Mark Raymond – TMBC
 Peter Robinson – T&M District Cricket Partnership
 Jay Edwins – West Kent PCT
 Sheila West – Kent Libraries
 James Harman – KCC
 Angela Newey – Tonbridge CAB
 Henry Swan – KCC
 John Handley – Bridge Trust
 Julie Askew – K College
 Liz Rikaby – RBLI
 Bernadette Gillow – Ightham Mote
 Eddie Kemsley – The Hop Farm
 Garon Hawkes - Treejumpers
 Jackie Wilkinson – Russet Homes

Apologies: David Hughes - TMBC
 Cllr Liz Simpson - TMBC
 Julie Beilby – TMBC
 Father Brendan Grady - The Friars
 Bishop Brian Castle - Bishop of Tonbridge
 Bev Cleaves – Hadlow College
 Angela Painter – Kenward Trust
 Jon Kirby – Kent Police
 Paul Temple – Age Concern
 Denise Reeves - Russet Homes
 Chris Hare – K College

		ACTION BY
1. Introductions		
Cllr Nicolas Heslop welcomed all to the meeting and expressed his thanks to K College for hosting the meeting.		
2. Declarations of Interest		
No declarations were made.		

<p>3. Minutes of the meeting held on 14th September 2012</p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record. It was noted that an action for Chris Hare and Paul Temple to address apprenticeship issues with the Skills Group of the LEP was outstanding and an update would be reported to the next meeting.</p>	<p>C. Hare/ P. Temple</p>
<p>4. Presentation – Treejumpers Youth Programme</p> <p>The Chairman welcomed Eddie Kemsley and Garon Hawkes to the meeting. A presentation on the Treejumpers youth programme run at the Hop Farm was given by Eddie Kemsley. It was agreed that a copy of the presentation would be circulated with the minutes.</p> <p>The Treejumpers programme aimed at providing support, leadership and challenge to more vulnerable young people including those at risk of offending, those excluded from school and NEETs. Courses were flexible and could run from a 5 day course to a 40 day course depending on the requirements of the commissioning agency. The Hop Farm were able to cross-fund the costs of such courses with their corporate and leisure business linked to the Treejumpers facility.</p> <p>Whilst it was noted that several similar activity courses for young people were available, including the local Challenger Troops, it was agreed that a more consistent and co-ordinated approach to the planning of future courses and the referrals made to them could widen the considerable benefits that such support gave to young people in terms of improved motivation, self confidence and social responsibility. There was a need to identify gaps in referrals to ensure that all young people in need could be offered support.</p> <p>Members of the LSP welcomed the opportunity to explore how collectively additional support from Treejumpers for local young people could be commissioned by partners and what might be available to fund such provision. James Harman offered to set up a meeting of interested partners to explore these issues and report back to the next meeting of the LSP on a way forward.</p> <p>Eddie Kemsley invited the LSP to view the facilities at the Hop Farm and offered to host the next LSP meeting.</p>	<p>J. Harman</p> <p>E. Kemsley</p>
<p>5. Young Leaders in Cricket Update – Peter Robinson</p> <p>Peter Robinson referred to the previous discussions at the LSP concerning the development of a Young Leaders in Cricket programme for Tonbridge and Malling. The following update was given.</p> <p>The following agencies/groups had been engaged so far: The Malling Holmesdale Federation Trust, Institute of Groundmanship, Town</p>	

<p>Malling & Addington Cricket Clubs. East Malling CC had also been engaged and were keen to link the initiative to their own youth section.</p> <p>The Malling School has offered free use of their premises as a venue for the programme. Both Malling School and Holmesdale School are keen to make nominations to the programme.</p> <p>Sportivate funded activity has been set up at Aylesford and Judd Schools to accommodate coaching opportunities. Indoor facilities have been booked and Coaches identified.</p> <p>Tonbridge School has agreed to integrate the 2013 Primary Schools Cricket Festival with YL opportunities and are offering their facilities at no cost.</p> <p>KCB Staff (Alex Farmer and Tash Newman (for Girls only opportunity)) have been enrolled in T&M initiative CC 10th December – enrolled and keen to link with Malling School.</p> <p>The aim was to launch the Young Leaders in Cricket programme in the Spring of 2013. Indoor coaching at the Judd School would also commence in January.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked Peter for his update and congratulated him and his team on the considerable progress achieved in a very short period of time.</p> <p>Future funding of the programme was discussed. The LCTB community chest was a possible source and James Harman reported that the Trust's Chairman, Jonathan Shaw, was considering future funding priorities for 2013/14. Opportunities to link to this funding would be explored further.</p> <p>It was agreed that a further report back on the programme would be made in six months time and would explore how the programme might be extended to other parts of the Borough.</p>	<p>J.Harman</p> <p>P.Robinson</p>
<p>6. The Impact of Universal Credit – Jackie Wilkinson (Russet Homes)</p> <p>Jackie Wilkinson outlined to significant impact welfare reforms would have on Russet tenants. She pointed out the combined financial impact of such changes at a time when the economy was in recession but made the point that many tenants affected were those who were in paid employment and not wholly dependent upon benefits.</p> <p>The more significant changes proposed were: the overall cap on benefits (£500 for couples, £300 for single people); the 'bedroom tax' which would reduce 'eligible rent' by 14% for one unoccupied</p>	

bedroom and by 25% for two unoccupied bedrooms; and the payment of universal credit direct to recipients requiring those to take responsibility for paying individual bills and manage their own finances.

Russet Homes had estimated that rent arrears arising from those reduced benefit payments and from those unable to manage their own finances could rise significantly from at least 3% to possibly 11%. Russet Homes currently enjoy low relative level of rent arrears due to direct benefit payments (c£650,000 pa) but this could rise to between £1.6M and £6M. Such increased levels of debt would impact on the organisation's business plan and make it very difficult for them to be able to invest in repairs/modernisation of their existing housing stock, undertake new build schemes or invest in community initiatives.

Jackie reported that Russet Homes are investing in providing more resources to help tenants with income/benefits issues and are working with the CAB regarding financial inclusion and with RBLI Aylesford on training and employment. All potential new tenants are subjected to an 'affordability check' prior to them being accepted. Work was also underway to identify which tenants would be most affected by the changes and to provide targeted information to support to them. However, recent engagement events had been poorly attended and the fear was that those affected would not be aware of, or ready to deal with, the changes when they were implemented.

The Chairman commented that both the private rented and voluntary sectors would be similarly affected by these issues and there was a need to work jointly to address them. He referred to the on-going lobbying of local MPs over the direct payments issue. With regard to Council Tax changes, there was to be an 18.5% reduction in benefit for those of working age. Empty home relief would now apply to 3 months rather than 6 and second homes discounts would be ended. The Secretary of State had recently announced grant support for year 1 of the changes that could reduce the impact from 18.5% to an 8% reduction. It was not clear what would happen in future years.

Members of the LSP raised a number of concerns about the issue:

- 'vulnerable' tenants could be excluded from direct payments but there was no clear definition of who would be classed as 'vulnerable'
- Direct payments would be made monthly not weekly making it more difficult for some to manage their finances
- Private landlords and some housing providers could be further deterred from accepting tenants on benefit leading to a possible increase in homelessness
- The lack of detail in the changes has made it very difficult for the CAB to train their advisers

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Payday lending' is likely to increase as a result of these changes - Credit Unions such as Kent savers need to be promoted more widely. <p>The Chairman thanked Jackie Wilkinson for her informative presentation. Given the importance of this issue to many partners attending the LSP, he suggested that this matter should be an agenda item for the next meeting of the LSP to enable further exchange of information and views to be undertaken.</p>	M.Raymond
<p>7. Making Kent Quicker Campaign</p> <p>James Harman gave an update on the Kent-wide campaign to promote the take up of high speed broadband in areas of particular need. Considerable local promotion had enabled the target of 14,000 registrations to be exceeded, the Kent total now standing at 17,000.</p> <p>It was noted that some wards in the Borough with a poor broadband service (Snodland, Hadlow) had had low registration numbers. A traffic light map showing areas of particular need had been prepared and would be circulated. It was agreed that further promotion with Parish Councils would be undertaken and a letter would be drafted by J. Harman. Russet Homes also offered to assist.</p> <p>Reference was made to the DEFRA rural broadband initiative which could provide funding for community led solutions in rural areas. A further community broadband initiative that covered parts of Sevenoaks district and the areas of Ightham, Plaxtol and Shipbourne was also highlighted.</p>	J.Harman
<p>8. Community Covenant Update</p> <p>Liz Rickaby (RBLI Aylesford) referred to progress being made with the development of partnership projects based on the terms of the community covenant signed at an LSP meeting earlier that year. This included a health and well-being initiative aimed at veterans and families addressing issues of isolation and inclusion.</p> <p>Liz reported that a recent meeting with the MOD community covenant co-ordinator had indicated that grant support for local projects would only be available for projects with a focus on the serving armed forces community and not specifically for veterans. There was an emphasis on projects which sought integration of armed forces personnel in anticipation of the likely redundancies taking place in April/May.</p> <p>It was agreed that Liz Rickaby and Mark Raymond would meet further to discuss these issues and explore what projects might be pursued to address the points raised by the MOD.</p>	L.Rickaby/ M.Raymond

<p>9. Family Focus (Troubled Families) Initiative</p> <p>M .Raymond gave an update on the development of a Troubled Families programme for Tonbridge and Malling.</p> <p>The LSP had agreed to delegate responsibility for the management of the programme to the Local Children’s Trust Board and Jonathan Shaw, its Chairman, had agreed to act as project sponsor.</p> <p>Meetings of the Local Project Board and the Operational Group had taken place. A decision had been taken to name the programme the Family Focus Initiative instead of the Troubled Families Programme.</p> <p>It was reported that additional resources had been made available by KCC to assist with local delivery. Two family intervention workers would be appointed in early 2013 and a Programme Manager had also recently been appointed. A further funding pot had been made available for the local teams to draw on if gaps were identified in local service provision in the future.</p> <p>Work had progressed with regard to the further refinement of the Families list and its prioritisation. A lead agency for each higher priority case had been identified for them to gain the consent of the family to take part in the initiative. Delivery of support would commence in 2013.</p>	
<p>10. Any Other Business</p> <p>Henry Swan drew attention to a new KCC business portal (www.kentbusinessportal.org.uk) which aimed to encourage the use of local county-based contractors for public sector works. It would also allow larger companies to subcontract with local firms to deliver contracts.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked all those for attending. It was noted that the next meeting would be on 22nd March 2013 at the Hop Farm.</p>	