

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES ADVISORY BOARD

10 June 2015

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 TO PROVIDE AN UPDATE ON ONGOING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORK IN TRENCH AND EAST MALLING AND TO SET OUT NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR SUCH WORK IN SNODLAND.

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 For approximately 15 years, the Borough Council has delivered community development support to our three most deprived communities (Trench, Snodland and East Malling). Our decision to focus on these three communities has been informed by the Government's 'Index of Multiple Deprivation' which indicates that these three wards contain higher numbers of people on lower incomes, higher levels of employment and lower skills and poorer health than elsewhere in the borough.
- 1.1.2 To co-ordinate this work, three community workers for each local community were put in place, originally employed by the Beat Project (a local charity originally based in Sittingbourne). The advantage of this approach has been the ability of those workers to better engage with those who are harder to reach within those communities. The costs of these three workers have been met by funding from the Borough Council and from partners including Circle Russet Homes, the Community Safety Partnership and East Malling Parish Council.
- 1.1.3 In recent years, however, this partnership funding has been under pressure. Kent Police have had to withdraw their contribution due to funding constraints and the public health contribution has also ceased. Faced with difficulties, it was agreed with the Beat Project Director that the costs of the Snodland worker could be funded independently as the Beat Project had been successful in securing 3 year funding for community work via a local charitable trust (the Dedrick Fund) linked to the former Townsend Hook paper works. In 2014, that funding came to a close and since then, there has been no dedicated community worker present in Snodland.
- 1.1.4 To address this, we now propose to adopt a new approach to delivering community work in Snodland and the details of this are set out later in this report.

1.1.5 The only other recent change to note is that the Beat Project has now withdrawn from its work in the Borough. Contracts for service have therefore been issued to the two existing community workers for Trench and East Malling to ensure continuity of service in those two areas. Funding for these contracts continues to be provided by the Borough Council with the financial support of local partners.

1.2 East Malling

1.2.1 Angela Borsos has been the local community worker in East Malling for many years and has worked tirelessly to engage and support the local communities with a focus on residents of the Stepstile and Winterfield estates. The former St James The Great School has now been developed into a successful local community centre and Community Arts Café. The St James Centre Trust was created to manage and run the centre.

1.2.2 Angela's work is guided by the East Malling Partnership which is a long standing community regeneration partnership. Currently, a sub-group focusing on dealing with local ASB issues is in place. The Partnership is a wide ranging, multi-agency group which meets twice a year with representatives from the parish, borough and county councils, health, local schools, police and voluntary organisations.

1.2.3 In addition to the East Malling Partnership, working groups are also set up where necessary, to take forward specific projects. Much of the work is undertaken from the St James Centre which has a number of useful meeting rooms, the hall and the Café. Angela is based at the centre and acts as a point of contact for local people and co-ordinates the activities of the Partnership.

1.2.4 The Partnership agrees an annual Action Plan, which includes many cross cutting projects, including work with young people, health projects, projects offering life skills coaching aimed to raise confidence and aspirations. A copy of this is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. Much of the planned activities will need to be funded by external sources and a range of funding bids are now being made to facilitate this.

1.3 Trench

1.3.1 Yasmin Logronio has been the Trench community worker for a number of years and works closely with the Trench Partnership, another local community regeneration partnership. Yasmin has delivered a number of valuable projects with a wide range of local partners including Hugh Christie School, Longmead and Trench Residents Association and the Baptist Church.

1.3.2 The Trench Partnership also endorses an annual action plan which includes several cross cutting themes and key priorities, including: promoting physical and mental well-being, tackling worklessness and promoting employment, engaging and building community confidence, promoting and delivering positive activities for

children and young people, and engaging and supporting elderly people and isolated groups. Several successful community engagement events have been held with representatives from a variety of local support agencies as well as community fun days aimed to encourage community cohesion and to increase awareness of the work of the Partnership. A copy of the current Trench Partnership action plan is attached at Appendix 2.

1.4 Snodland

1.4.1 As noted above, a new approach is now needed to enable community development issues to be fully addressed in Snodland.

1.4.2 With the large number of existing groups and organisations in the Town, there is perhaps less need for a dedicated community worker to generate new 'social' activity and engagement. Instead, we need to work more closely with those agencies who are already delivering services in the town and build on existing initiatives which have proved to be successful. We therefore propose to address community development issues via two new initiatives:

- To form a new co-ordinating group of all key local service partners (including housing providers, health, Job Centre Plus, KCC early help services, local schools, etc) to assess gaps in services within the area and to identify how existing agencies could work together more effectively to address local needs using their combined resources. The group could be made a sub-group of the long-standing Snodland Partnership which continues to attract funding support from the private sector and is thus able to support local groups and initiatives;
- To build on the success of existing programmes which have engaged residents such as the Love Where You Live campaign and build on the considerable existing 'social capital' (ie existing clubs and organisations) which are already present in the town. One possible outcome would be the creation of a neighbourhood forum for Snodland to support the work of the co-ordinating group and help publicise community initiatives and available support programmes.

1.4.3 We are currently exploring suitable Government funding streams including the 'Our Place' initiative to help support the development of this new approach.

1.4.4 Subject to the Board's endorsement of this approach, we will commence work on the engagement with service providers as an initial step.

1.5 Legal Implications

1.5.1 None.

1.6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.6.1 Funding for community development work in the Borough depends upon the continued support from key partners and external funding bids.

1.7 Risk Assessment

- 1.7.1 As above.

1.8 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.8.1 Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups. The work of each of the three regeneration partnerships takes full account of the need to promote equality of opportunity and seek to focus support on those most in need.

1.9 Recommendations

- 1.9.1 That the proposed approach to community development work in Snodland , as set out in this report, **BE SUPPORTED**.

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:

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Nil

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Chief Executive