

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
COMMUNITIES and HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

15 February 2022

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 WORK IN EAST MALLING

To provide an update on the proposed Community Development Worker for East Malling

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 For several years the Council has funded a contractor to deliver part time community work in both the Trench area of Tonbridge and in East Malling (£7,500 per year, for each area). Ongoing community development work which is focussed on our more deprived communities is a vital part of the Council's agenda, with strong links to our health improvement programmes, welfare initiatives and community safety partnership. Having independent community workers within the communities has worked well and will be even more important as restrictions hopefully ease and community outreach work can assist those who need it most.
- 1.1.2 This Committee approved changes to the way the community work was delivered in Trench, at its meeting in July 2021. This enabled a Service Level Agreement to be put in place between the Borough Council and Tonbridge Baptist Church (TBC) for a Community Worker. The SLA for Community Work in Trench is attached for information at **Annex 1**. Within this agreement, the Council awards a grant of £7,500 per year for two years (which is match funded by Clarion Housing Group). TBC support the post, being the overall "employer" providing office space, line management and funding of £3,750 per year for two years.
- 1.1.3 A Community Worker has been in post since November 2021 in Trench and we are already seeing significant benefits, including the establishment of a fuel bank, a successful clothes recycling scheme, a shoe project to provide free end of line new shoes to families in need, a Christmas food hamper scheme and additional support for the food bank.

1.2 Proposed changes for East Malling Community Work

- 1.2.1 Based on the success in Trench so far, it is suggested that this model is replicated in East Malling, with the East Malling Centre taking on a similar line management role as TBC.
- 1.2.2 East Malling and Larkfield Parish Council (EMLPC) currently contributes an additional £5,000 towards the community worker contractor per year to cover East Malling. Discussions have taken place and EMLPC would be willing to continue with this grant, paying it directly to the EMC. It is suggested that the Council provide a grant of £7,500 per year. Clarion Housing Group have agreed to match this amount and provide a grant of £7,500 per year. This would be for an initial period of two years to enable the role to develop.
- 1.2.3 To further enhance the Community Worker role, Snodland Town Council have been approached to also contribute £5,000 per year. This would enable community work to expand out to the Snodland area. However, Snodland Town Council would like to see how the role develops in East Malling before committing funds to this initiative, so they do not want to contribute at this time.
- 1.2.4 With funding in place from the Borough Council, Clarion HG and EMLPC, it will be possible to recruit a Community Worker to deliver support in East Malling for 3 days per week.
- 1.2.5 The proposed Community Worker would support vulnerable residents in the East Malling area. Based at the EMC, the Community Worker would have greater synergy between the work at the Centre, linking in with the volunteers and the Digital Inclusion facilitator and other services provided at the Centre such as the Community Supermarket. Support would be targeted and responsive to local needs. There would be greater opportunities for volunteering, improved signposting to specialist support and a greater range of services and activities such as training opportunities, resident engagement in health and wellbeing initiatives, activities for young people and engagement with isolated residents.

1.3 Legal Implications

- 1.3.1 This would be a different arrangement than our previous “Contract for Services”, which was in place for the Community Development Worker. The East Malling Centre would be the employer and we would pay a grant to EMC with a Service Level Agreement, which would be set at £7,500 per year for a two-year term.

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.4.1 This is not growth to the Council budget, but it will be a commitment for a two-year period. By adopting the suggested model outlined in the report, there would be additional financial contributions of £5,000 per year from EMLPC as well as £7,500 per year from Clarion Housing Group.

1.5 Risk Assessment

1.5.1 N/A

1.6 Equality Impact Assessment

1.6.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

1.7 Policy Considerations

1.7.1 Community

1.7.2 Crime & Disorder Reduction

1.7.3 Healthy Lifestyles

1.8 Recommendations

1.8.1 That Members **NOTE** the arrangements for the proposed Community Development Worker for East Malling, and;

1.8.2 That Members **ENDORSE** the grant funding of £7,500 per year, for two years, to be paid to the East Malling Centre.

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