

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET 23.2.12

A CO-OPERATIVE APPROACH TO WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY

REPORT OF THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To update Members on progress in relation to the revised working arrangements for the Priority Action Team, their role in developing a cooperative approach to working with the community and changes in relation to the voluntary sector and future management of Council run community centres.
- 1.2 To update Members on the delivery of the 'Your Money Your Projects' scheme and seek agreement for the development of a 'Ward Cooperative Fund' for 2012/2013.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To note the information relating to revised working arrangements for the Priority Action Team, Strategic Lead for the Voluntary Sector and future management of the Council's community centres.
- 2.2 To agree that a 'Ward Cooperative Fund' is developed for 2012/2013 in consultation with the Cabinet Member for The Environment, Cooperative Council and Partnerships.
- 2.3 That delegated authority is given to the Community Engagement, Equalities and Action Manager in consultation with the relevant ward member to approve and implement applications for funding pursuant to the 'Ward Cooperative Fund' established in accordance with recommendation 2.2 above.

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	Yes	The revised focus of the Priority Action Team will specifically support our priorities relating to Improving life chances for all and People feeling safe and proud of where they live, however, there is potential to contribute to all Council priorities through the work of the team and through the Ward Cooperative Fund.
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	The proposals relating to 'narrowing the gap' will have a positive impact on those experiencing inequality in relation to employment, skills, education and training, this may be within specific geographic areas or specific groups of people, such as Young People Not in Employment Education or Training.
TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY	Transfer of responsibility of Council Community Centres from 1.4.12 Implementation of Ward Cooperative Budget 1.4.12 onwards	

DATE		
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	<p>£54k has been allocated in the 2012/13 budget for “Your Money Your Projects” schemes. The provisional net budget for Community Centres for 2012/13 is £271.9k which includes an income target of £109.8k. The Priority Action Co-ordinators are funded from base budget within Community Engagement.</p> <p>£34.6k has been secured by Donnington Partnership to fund the capital and revenue costs referred to in paragraph 4.3.2. This will be paid directly to Donnington Partnership. MLB 25.01.12</p>
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	<p>The Council has the power to do anything which it considers is likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of the area. Before exercising this power the Council must have regard to its Sustainable Community Strategy. It will also be necessary to ensure that individual projects and activities are also within the Council’s powers and within Council policy before they are finally decided upon.</p> <p>Ongoing legal advice will be provided in respect of the development of the scheme and advice can also be provided in respect of individual projects if required.</p> <p>It would also be advisable for the criteria for assessment of applications for funding to be drawn up shortly and the criteria and project to be assessed pursuant to the Council’s Equalities duties.</p>
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	No	
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes	The main focus of the Priority Action Team will be within the target Wards of Brookside, College, Cuckoo Oak, Donnington, Woodside and Malinslee. The Ward Cooperative Fund will benefit all wards.

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. INFORMATION

4.1 Background

- 4.1.1 Proposals to develop the Council and Local Strategic Partnership's priority to tackle disadvantage were discussed with Policy Review Group in September 2011. These proposals outlined the role of the Priority Action Team in supporting the delivery of this priority in relation to employment, skills, education and training, and an initial focus upon the wards of Brookside, College, Cuckoo Oak, Donnington, Woodside and Malinslee. This initial geographic focus is based upon the wards with the greatest concentration of residents within the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods nationally on the overall Index of Multiple Deprivation. The other strand of delivering this priority will involve targeting specific groups that are identified as experiencing significant inequalities in comparison to other groups in the Borough, this will mean that the team may also carry out some targeted work in other wards or neighbourhoods.
- 4.1.2 The Senior Management review launched by the Interim Chief Executive in October 2011 set out the proposed operational arrangements for working in the community. This report included information relating to the role of the Priority Action Team in supporting the Council's priority to tackle disadvantage at a local level, along with the team's role in building the capacity of communities and local voluntary organisations to fully engage in Telford and Wrekin becoming a co-operative Borough.
- 4.1.3 This report provides an update on the work programme for the Priority Action Team and outlines the proposed changes in relation to the Strategic Lead for the Voluntary Sector and future management responsibility for Council run community centres.
- 4.1.4 The revised arrangements for the delivery of the Community Fund for 2011/2012 were agreed by Cabinet in June 2011. The report provides an update on the delivery of the 'Your Money Your Projects' scheme for 2011/2012 and outlines proposals for a revised 'Ward Cooperative Fund' for 2012/2013.

4.2 Working in Partnership to 'narrow the gap'

- 4.2.1 A key role of the Priority Action Team is to coordinate the relationships between local services, communities, Town and Parish Councils and the voluntary sector. In order to strengthen relationships at a local level and to support a more targeted work programme, members of the Priority Action Team have been located within the following community bases; Park Lane Community Centre, Woodside, Brookside Community Centre, and Donnington Lifelong Learning Centre. The team had previously been based at Civic Offices. The Priority Action Co-ordinators are able to work from a variety of community bases across the Borough, allowing the team to have a more flexible approach.
- 4.2.2 The focus within the initial target wards is on addressing inequalities in relation to Education, Training, Skills and Employment. The starting point for this work has been within Brookside, the Council's co-operative pilot ward. A lifelong learning plan is currently being developed in partnership with relevant services across the Council, Job Centre Plus and other public and voluntary sector partners. The delivery of this plan will be monitored through the Brookside Steering Group and will be key to supporting the wider regeneration proposals for Brookside. A number of initiatives are being considered for Brookside including opportunities for pre-employment training and the development of a range of volunteering opportunities on the estate.

4.2.3 The 'ward profiles' produced by the Delivery and Planning Team are being used to develop interventions for the other target wards. The team are working closely with colleagues across the Council and partners such as Wrekin Housing Trust and Job Centre Plus to coordinate activity within the 6 target areas. The work of the Priority Action Team will support the Local Strategic Partnership arrangements outlined in the Senior Management Review report. The work will mainly support the priorities of the following Boards and their task groups; Children and Families Board (Families with Complex Needs Task Force), Housing, Economy and Regeneration Board (Skills and Employment Task Force), and Safer Cohesive Communities Board (via revised Neighbourhood Delivery Groups). Although it is likely that the work of these boards may have an element of geographic focus, their priorities will be issue based and therefore the work of the Priority Action Team won't solely be restricted to the 6 wards outlined above.

4.3 Working with the Community and Voluntary Sector

4.3.1 The Council's cooperative approach involves developing a new partnership between local people, the private and voluntary sector and public services. The Community Engagement and Priority Action Teams have a key role in supporting the delivery of this approach. The Priority Action Team's role involves supporting individuals, residents and small voluntary organisations to develop their skills and capacity to fully participate in a cooperative approach and where appropriate support groups to access external funding. This involves working closely with the Council's External Funding team and colleagues within CVS. Currently this element of the team's work isn't targeted at specific wards and involves supporting a number of groups across the Borough.

4.3.2 The Priority Action Team has been working with a number of residents and voluntary sector organisations to support them to develop and access grant funding opportunities. Ongoing support is provided by the team to Donnington Partnership, and recently the focus of this work has involved supporting them to become a registered charity and develop the Community Cafe into a social enterprise. With the support of the team the Partnership has secured funding to refurbish the kitchen and to employ an Assistant Manager to help to develop the social enterprise. The team has also supported groups to access funding to support voluntary Youth Activities, and they have been working closely with residents and local organisations to develop volunteering activities and to promote volunteering, this has involved working with colleagues to support the establishment of 2 voluntary Youth Groups and to promote volunteering opportunities in Brookside and at the Park Lane Centre.

4.3.3 There are a number of voluntary sector and Council run community centres across the Borough, the Council currently manages 6 community centres within Arleston, Brookside, Donnington, Leegomery, Priorslee and Sutton Hill. The role of Community Centres within our neighbourhoods is seen to be an important aspect of developing our approach as a cooperative council and Scrutiny have identified a review of the existing arrangements for the Council run community centres as part of their work programme. In order to encourage more community involvement within the existing Council run community centres, the management of these centres will transfer to the Community Engagement Equalities and Action Team from 1st April 2012. The team will then have responsibility for taking forward any changes that are agreed in relation to the future operation of Council run community centres. The team currently supports residents and partners to develop community facilities and have been working on projects within Dawley (Dawley Town Hall) and College ward.

- 4.3.4 The team also work closely with colleagues from across the Council including the Arts and Culture team to support community groups to organise community events. With support from the team a number of successful community and cultural events have been organised including a range of 'community fun days', and exhibitions and events to commemorate Black History Month and Holocaust Memorial Day. The aim is to support community groups to develop their skills to organise their own community events, this will be supported by the development of a Community Events tool kit that has been developed through the Events Safety Advisory Group.
- 4.3.5 The strategic responsibility for the voluntary sector now sits within the Community Engagement Equalities and Action Team. A number of strands have been identified to take forward this agenda including the development of a 'voluntary sector agreement' as part of the cooperative council settlement. Initial feedback from the Cooperative Council commission has also identified that there is a need to gain more clarity on the funding arrangements that the Council has with the voluntary sector. The initial focus for working with the voluntary sector will be on these 2 key areas. A report will be brought to Cabinet when these areas have been developed.

4.4 Further Developing Your Money Your Projects

- 4.4.1 The 'community fund' for 2011/2012 has been delivered through the 'Your Money Your Projects' scheme. The approach for the scheme involved the funding being allocated to each ward on the basis of £1,000 per ward member. Members developed proposals with their local community and in consultation with their local Town and Parish Councils, with a deadline being set for proposals to be submitted. Proposals were assessed against a broad set of criteria to ensure that the projects met the Council's legal and financial duties. Proposals have been received from the majority of ward members and the final funding agreements are currently being sent out, and payments being made.
- 4.4.2 Over 100 proposals were received under the scheme for a wide range of projects. The projects being supported through the scheme include environmental improvements, community activities and events, and funding to support local community groups. In some wards Town and Parish Councils have also made a financial contribution towards the projects. It is proposed to celebrate the achievements of some of the community based projects as part of a wider cooperative council event later in the year.
- 4.4.3 £54,000 has been set aside within the Council's 2012/2013 budget to further develop the scheme. There has been general support for the scheme in relation to the role that ward members have had in identifying local projects that should receive funding. However, feedback has identified that the scheme would work more effectively if members had more flexibility around when the funding could be allocated. It is therefore proposed, subject to confirmation of the Council's budget, that the scheme be developed into a 'Ward Cooperative Fund'. The principles of the scheme would be as follows;
- Funding be allocated to each ward on the basis of £1,000 per ward member
 - Broad criteria would be set out to ensure the funding was allocated within the Council's financial regulations, it is envisaged that the criteria would be similar to that of the 'Your Money Your Projects' scheme
 - Ward members would work with their communities to identify local priorities or issues to receive funding
 - Delegated authority for allocating funding would be given to the Community Engagement Equalities and Action Manager in consultation with the relevant Ward Member
 - Funding could be allocated at any time during the financial year 2012/2013

It is proposed that the Community Engagement Equalities and Action Manager develop the revised scheme in consultation with the Cabinet Member for The Environment Cooperative Council and Partnerships based on the principles outlined above.

5 IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010 has been used to identify the 6 target wards that will be used as an initial focus in relation reducing family poverty and 'narrowing the gap', analysis of local data will also identify if specific groups, such as Young People, need to be targeted across the Borough. It is therefore envisaged that there will be a positive impact within both specific wards and groups across the Borough in relation to reducing family poverty.

6 PREVIOUS MINUTES

Cabinet – 21st June 2011 – Report – Delivery of a Revised Community Fund

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Report of the Interim Chief Executive, Review of Senior Management Structure & Operational Arrangements to Progress the Development of the Cooperative Council

Briefing Note Delivery and Planning Manager for Local Strategic Partnership – Performance, Poverty and Narrowing the Gap

Report prepared by Rachael Jones, Community Engagement Equalities and Action Manager, Telephone: 01952 382135