

ST EDMUNDSBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

GRANT WORKING PARTY

**Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 11 December 2012 at 5.00 pm
in Room GFR12, West Suffolk House, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds**

PRESENT: Councillor Thorndyke (Vice-Chairman in the chair)
Councillors Clifton-Brown, French, Hale, Mrs Mildmay-White
(substituting for Mrs Broughton), Nettleton and Mrs Rushen

BY INVITATION: Councillor Everitt (Portfolio Holder for Tourism and
Community Services)

10. Substitutes

The following substitution was declared:

Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White for Councillor Mrs Broughton.

11. Apology for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mrs Broughton.

12. Minutes

The record of the meeting held on 12 June 2012 was confirmed as correct.

13. Declarations of Interests

Members' declarations of interests are recorded under the item to which the declaration relates.

14. Annual Reports from Council Appointed Representatives

The Working Party noted a report (Paper D218) from Councillor Christopher Spicer, the Council's appointed representative on the Brecks Partnership Core Management Group. An amended report indicating that it was for the year 2011/2012 was tabled. The Working Party also noted a narrative which advised that the grant to this organisation was not due for review this year, since the Council entered into a new longer-term funding agreement in 2012/2013, as it had done with most voluntary and community organisations. A new partnership agreement for the Brecks Partnership had been entered into by the Council until 2015 with a grant contribution of £10,489. The Council had worked with the organisation prior to the new agreement to achieve a mutually agreed reduction of funding. Councillor Spicer's annual report was for information only on this occasion. It was explained in response to a member's question that Councillor Spicer had been unable to attend the Brecks Partnership Core Management Group meetings because of other commitments as 2011/2012 had also been his Mayoral year.

The Working Party also raised a question as to whether it should receive reports from other representatives on organisations which the Council grant aided. It was also understood that in previous years reports were sought from representatives on all outside bodies and the information received made available to the Council. Officers undertook to investigate whether this arrangement was being continued. The Working Party also suggested that as an addition to the current format for the Annual Report Form it would be helpful if representatives provided a short narrative on the work/activities of the organisation concerned.

15. Rural Initiatives Grant Scheme (RIGS): Applications for Project Funding: 2012/2013

The Working Party considered Report D219 (previously circulated) which sought decisions on applications for grant from Hopton Community Swimming Committee and St Edmund's Archers, Whepstead. Officers advised that the estimated cost of the project in both cases was inclusive, and not exclusive, of VAT as stated in the report.

Hopton Community Swimming Committee had applied for a grant of £10,000 towards the refurbishment of the swimming pool and changing room facilities at Hopton Primary School. The project would include replacing the internal fabric of the pool, and cleaning and re-using a cover sourced from a closed pool in the area. The project had been greatly helped by the acquisition of a second hand enclosure, pool cover and various other pieces of equipment saving the applicants in the region of £50,000. These would provide a facility that had all year round use with heating. Until 2010 only the primary school had held swimming lessons during six weeks of the Summer term and the rest of the year the facility had lain dormant. Suffolk County Council had cut its funding since swimming was not a curricular activity for four to nine year olds and thus the swimming pool had fallen into disrepair. As part of the school reorganisation in September 2013, Hopton Primary School would accommodate Year 5 and subsequently Year 6 pupils in the local pyramid whose curriculum did include swimming. The applicants had the support of all the pyramid schools, along with agreement from the County Council, to refurbish the pool and run it accordingly. With the current economic climate and ongoing funding cuts, the feedback was that a more local facility would be very attractive. The Hidden Needs Report presented in 2011 by the Suffolk Foundation had highlighted that there were hidden pockets of need. Deprivation and inequality went beyond income poverty and included other forms of disadvantage such as loneliness and social isolation. By refurbishing and covering the existing swimming pool, the project would not only be able to create a welcoming local and accessible facility for individuals in the area, but also provide a life skill to the schoolchildren in Hopton and neighbouring schools. Officers gave an oral update on grants being sought from other sources for the project and also the possibility that Abbeycroft Leisure might be involved to run sessions at the pool. It was understood that the applicants had been advised by Suffolk County Council's External Funding Team to undertake the project in phases and submit applications accordingly.

Members in discussing the application raised a concern that there was no indication as yet of the County Council's intentions in relation to the project, e.g. whether it would be providing financial assistance. There was also a need for formal agreement to be entered into regarding the applicants' tenure of the facility. It was understood that currently the applicant body was a Committee formed by the School Governors. In the absence of a lease, clarification was required, in view of the intended wider use by the

community, as to who would be legally responsible for holding and managing the facility. Additionally it was felt that an estimate of the annual running costs and how these were to be met was needed. Confirmation was also required as to whether swimming would be part of the curriculum for 4 to 9 year olds. Further information was also required on how the facilities would be managed, in view of the proposed use by adults and children, and on the type of canopy to be installed. It was also noted that the project might be phased and as a consequence there would be a re-submission to the Council of amended costs.

RESOLVED:

That consideration of the application from Hopton Community Swimming Committee be deferred for further detailed information to be submitted as outlined by the Working Party (Members having additional questions were asked to pass these on to the officers).

St Edmund's Archers had applied for a grant of £10,000 towards an indoor range at Whepstead with a clubhouse and associated amenities, including kitchen and toilet facilities and parking. The building would be 40 metres x 15 metres to allow shooting indoors of up to 27 metres (30 yards). Planning permission had been granted by the Borough Council. The applicants' current facilities were basic and limited and their poor standard had been the main reason why new members were not being sustained. A 25 year lease for the land required had been agreed. In order to develop the club and continue to serve the community, the applicants needed to retain more members and be able to accommodate more people on beginners' courses. The current membership was up to 50 archers. The applicants had had over 100 individuals attending the beginner courses and several hundred people tried the sport every year at a number of 'have-a-go' opportunities that were provided at local fetes during the Summer. Two beginner courses a week were being run to try to meet demand. The applicants' objective was to provide the premier archery facility in Suffolk with both permanent indoor and outdoor shooting ranges, which would allow access at any time. This would give archers the shooting time necessary to improve standards quickly and allow them the opportunity to progress and compete at the highest level. The facility would cater for all ages, current members' ages ranged from eight to 78, and for able bodied, and disabled archers and for those with special needs. The cost of the project was £210,000. Confirmed funding of £2,000 from local donations, £10,000 from Havebury Housing Partnership and £10,000 from the Bernard Sunley Trust had been obtained. The applicants had to date raised over £6,400 from local fundraising but this had been spent on enabling work for the project. Officers advised that the applicants were hoping to link up and make the facilities available to local schools.



RECOMMENDED:-

That a grant of £8,000 be awarded to St Edmund's Archers, Whepstead towards the cost of providing an indoor range with a clubhouse and associated amenities.

16. Streamlined System of Rural Grant Applications

The Working Party considered a request from the Cabinet for it to look at ways of further streamlining the current process of handling applications for rural grants, perhaps making more use of the electronic system and reviewing delegations. A report would be brought to the next meeting of the Working Party who would be asked to report back to Cabinet with suggestions to be implemented in 2013/2014. In the meantime Members' views were being sought on how a new streamlined system might work.

Members noted that there was scope for increased delegation to officers to deal with applications but were of the preliminary view that the Working Party should continue to consider applications perhaps up to an increased level of grant. It was also suggested that if applications entailed 'one-off grants', rather than continuous funding of projects over 2 to 3 years, these might be determined by the Working Party. Members having other suggestions were asked to pass these on to officers so that these could be put forward in the report to the Working Party in March 2013.

17. Core Funding Applications from Voluntary Organisations 2013/2014

The Working Party considered Report D220 (previously circulated) which sought consideration of five recommendations in respect of 2013/2014 core funding applications from voluntary organisations. Core Grants Scoring Matrices in respect of new applications were attached as Appendix A to the report.

In line with the Grants Policy, each year the Council awarded core funding grants to a variety of organisations. The bulk of the funding had been allocated to organisations for a 4 year period (Report C252 refers). However, some organisations who were not considered to be making a direct contribution to Council service delivery were given notice that they would be provided with funding for a final year in 2012/2013. This approach had given limited opportunity for some new applicants to apply for Core Funding.

The report brought to the Working Party all the applications received for funding for 2013/2014.

To assist the Working Party in considering applications and the contribution organisations made to achieving the Council's responsibilities, applicants had been divided into categories. Last year the following headings had been applied to assist members in making decisions, however, this year there were not applications for every category:

- (a) those that make a direct contribution to Council service delivery;
- (b) voluntary infrastructure organisations;
- (c) Countryside and 'In Bloom' organisations;
- (d) organisations with general charitable objectives; and
- (e) organisations which support Substance Misuse projects

The Working Party noted that due to a number of organisations not receiving year-on-year funding this year up to £6,050 was available to be allocated to new applications. A total of three new organisations had come forward requesting financial support totalling £18,300 for 2013/2014, one of which had requested £42,000 over three years.

The Working Party also noted that funding of £5,000 had been allocated to projects which supported Substance Misuse issues (Report C254 refers). No applications for this funding were received in 2012/2013, however one organisation had come forward for 2013/2014.

The Working Party then considered each recommendation contained within the report and the Working Party made comments and sought clarification on a number of issues.

Recommendation 1: Voluntary Infrastructure Organisations

The Working Party noted that the Council currently supported Bury Volunteer Centre, Haverhill Volunteer Centre and Haverhill Association of Voluntary Organisations (HAVO), and that these organisations were working with other partners across Suffolk to create a single county-wide infrastructure organisation. This was work in progress but there was a detailed programme plan in place to ensure that the new organisation was established and operating from 1 April 2013.

The three partner organisations that operated in St Edmundsbury and the Transforming Local Infrastructure – Suffolk Project Team were all keen to ensure that the new organisation was able to continue to carry out work in St Edmundsbury that would provide much needed services and support to frontline organisations and communities.

In the previous financial year, the Council had provided a total grant of £21,000 out of which rental income for the shared office space in Haverhill was recouped from Haverhill Volunteer Centre and the costs of accommodation for HAVO were covered by the Council by internal transfer.

This year the new organisation, now known as Community Action Suffolk (CAS), had requested the same level of funding but had also requested the Council consider providing some office space free of charge to enable them to have a base in Bury St Edmunds.

In considering this application members were of the view that because of the proposed merger of these three organisations it could be anticipated that the running costs of the new organisation would reduce and therefore the level of funding should also be decreased. The Working Party was advised that £3,125 was the amount of rent payable by the Haverhill Volunteer Centre for 2013/2014.

Recommendation 2: St Edmundsbury Newstalk

Newstalk provided weekly audio recordings of news taken from local newspapers for blind and partially sighted listeners in the St Edmundsbury area enabling them to keep in touch with what was happening in their local communities. It also provided bi-monthly audio magazines featuring interviews, short stories and articles of local interest. Around 110 St Edmundsbury residents benefited from the free service. St Edmundsbury Newstalk was requesting a grant of £2,700 to assist with core funding expenses. Whilst the Working Party considered the work of this organisation very laudable it noted that it did not contribute directly to the Council's service delivery. It was also felt that it would be appropriate for the organisation to seek funding from Town and Parish Councils in view of the localised service it provided and that the applicants should be advised accordingly.

Recommendation 3: Out and About

Out & About enabled disabled children and young people, aged from 5 to 25 years, to become fully included in local activities such as Cubs, Brownies, sports clubs and after school clubs by recruiting young people as volunteers and training them to provide support to their disabled peers within leisure activities. Out & About was requesting a grant of £14,000 per year for 3 years to recruit a part-time Inclusion Coordinator. Over the course of the project it expected 100 children and young people would have benefited from the project. The Working Party noted that although Out & About provided a valuable local service, it did not contribute directly to service delivery.

Recommendation 4: Bury St Edmunds Foodbank

An existing recipient of grant funding for a recycling scheme, Gatehouse Caring in West Suffolk, were also looking to set up a foodbank in Bury St Edmunds in response to increasing demand from families who were experiencing hardship. There was currently no town-wide foodbank and this project sought to build on the ad-hoc provision by various churches in the town. The project would provide a co-ordinated approach and link into necessary public sector and other services. Gatehouse Caring had sought the bulk of the funding for the project from elsewhere, but was asking the Council for a grant of £1,600 to make up the shortfall. The project would support a number of clients who came into direct contact with services provided by the Council including through Homelessness and Benefits. Currently there was no means of referral in place for those in need to receive help and Gatehouse Caring would introduce such a system. The Working Party was of the view that as this was a localised project the applicants should seek funding at the local level including from Bury St Edmunds Town Council.

Recommendation 5: Open Road

Open Road were proposing to offer drug and alcohol recovery services to people living within Haverhill and the surrounding area. The services would:

- (a) reduce and prevent use of illegal drugs and alcohol and minimise their harm;
- (b) provide treatment and recovery for service users and improve their self-care and living skills;
- (c) increase community well-being, by developing meaningful social networks; and
- (d) reduce anti-social behaviour related to drug and alcohol misuse.

As part of the structured day programme, service users would participate in a range of activities including healthy eating workshops, basic cooking and nutritional skills, IT and computing workshops and skills to develop and enhance their education, qualifications and employability

The majority of the funding for the project was being sought through Suffolk Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) and would be supported by volunteer time. Open Road were requesting a grant of £2,500 from the Substance Misuse allocation.

The Working Party discussed whether the Community Safety Partnership might be able to provide funding for this project. This had been

considered previously and it was understood that any funding from this source would be limited for one year only. Councillor Everitt reported that the Open Road Project was providing a worthwhile service in Bury St Edmunds. The Working Party was of the view that grant from the Council should be initially for one year, subject to a review at the end of that time when more financial information and evidence of other funding should be provided.



RECOMMENDED:-

That subject to the approval of full Council and the budget setting process for 2013/2014:

- (1) Community Action Suffolk be awarded a grant of £18,000, subject to a review after one year, to provide infrastructure support to the voluntary sector in St Edmundsbury and the grant be inclusive of the sum required to cover the cost of the rent of accommodation in Haverhill;***
- (2) no award of core funding be made to St Edmundsbury Newstalk but this organisation be advised to seek funding from Town and Parish Councils;***
- (3) no award of core funding be made to Out and About (inclusion of disabled children and young people in local activities);***
- (4) no award of core funding be made to Bury St Edmunds Foodbank but the applicants be advised to seek funding from Bury St Edmunds Town Council; and***
- (5) Open Road be given a grant of £2,500 for drug and alcohol recovery services in Haverhill, subject to a review after one year in respect of which more financial information and evidence of other funding should be provided.***

18. Dates of Future Meetings

The Working Party confirmed the following dates for future meetings in 2013:

5 March; and
1 December.

Both meetings would be held on Tuesdays commencing at 5.00 pm.

The meeting concluded 6.10 pm.

CHAIRMAN