**BOROUGH OF KETTERING**

**RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**Meeting held: 18th June 2012**

**Present:** Councillor Paul Marks (Chair)

Councillors Linda Adams, Duncan Bain, Paul Corazzo,

Cliff Moreton and David Soans.

**Also Present**: Councillor Maurice Bayes (for item A1)

**12.RD.01 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Margaret Talbot and Jonathan West. Councillor Adams was acting as substitute for Councillor West.

**12.RD.02 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Research and Development Committee held on 21st March 2012 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**12.RD.03 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chair declared a personal interest in Item A1 as he was a member of the Northants Equality Rights Council.

**12.RD.04 PUBLIC SPEAKERS**

Simon Mutsaars of Groundwork Trust and Carole Stephenson and Trish Dewar from the Kettering Volunteer Network were present at the meeting and indicated that they wished to speak on item A1 on the agenda.

**12.RD.05 FINAL REPORT OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR TASK AND FINISH GROUP (A1)**

Members of the Committee received the conclusions and recommendations of the Voluntary Sector Task and Finish Group for their consideration and in order to formulate a reference to the Council’s Executive Committee at its meeting to be held on 18th July 2012.

Councillor David Soans, the Chair of the Task and Finish Group was present at the meeting and presented the report. Members were appraised of the Group’s objectives, the frequency of its meetings and the national and local context in terms of changes to voluntary sector provision. Members were also informed as to who provided evidence to the Group and the timetable in which the Group’s recommendations needed to be considered. It was further noted that there was a minority view on some of the recommendations detailed in the covering report. Notwithstanding that, the Group’s final recommendations were submitted to the Committee for approval. It was noted that the Group had graded each area of voluntary sector activity in order of importance as follows:-

* Grade One – Needing a significant increase in resource
* debt and money advice and financial inclusion
* housing support
* Grade Two – New areas
* employment and enterprise
* Grade Three – maintenance of service
* independent living
* community safety
* inter-personal violence
* access and equality
* Grade Four – no longer a relative priority
* local infrastructure
* access to green services
* core grants and specialist advice

The Task and Finish Group had also attempted to put a range of values on each area of activity in order to demonstrate that it was possible to fund the priorities within the budget in a coherent way. It would be for the Executive Committee to determine exact sums for each activity.

There were three public speakers present at the meeting. Simon Mutsaars (Executive Director of Groundwork Trust), Carole Stephenson (Kettering Volunteer Network) and Trish Dewar (Kettering Volunteer Network). All addressed the Committee in relation to the impact of the Group’s recommendations on Groundwork and the Volunteer Network in particular, in the context of partnership work undertaken with the Borough Council and other organisations in the locality.

In response to the speakers, Councillor Soans recognised the contribution their organisations had made and explained the depth of consideration the Group had given to their proposals. In discussing this matter, members also questioned Councillor Soans in relation to the impact of the Groups proposals on enterprise and employment, in particular relating to young unemployed people and the potential impact on the amount of voluntary work that would be available.

Further to the above, Councillor Corazzo, whose minority view had been reported, indicated the reasons for his concerns and proposed the following amendment to the Group’s recommendations, which was seconded by Councillor Adams:

1. that Recommendation 7 (i) be removed;
2. the following new recommendation should be added :

*‘remove Grade 2 and re-instate Grade 4, and endorse the Grades thereafter’* ; and

1. re-label the reserve fund to become a transition fund that will enable groups who lose their funding to survive for a further year.

For the Amendment 2, Against 3, Not Voting 1

The amendment having been lost, it was

**RESOLVED** that the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group as detailed below be presented to the Council’s Executive Committee :

1. Increase the Small Grants budget by considering options including the following:-

* + - allowing councillors to put some or all of their Ward Initiative Funds into the programme
    - not allowing rollover of Ward Initiative but put any annual under-spend into the Small Grants programme

2. Revise the Small Grants form to make self help easier

3. Continue with the current policy for mandatory and discretionary rate relief until there is greater certainty about the future regime and what the options and implications are for the Council.

4. Investigate all those suggestions for In Kind Support that are practical and can make a difference as long as they don’t have an adverse impact on the medium term financial strategy (MTFS).

5. Continue to respond to opportunities for co- location and use of council buildings for where there is a business case.

6. Set the budget for affordability of Service Level Agreement grants at a maximum of £300,000.

7. Adopt the descriptions for future commissioning as set out in the table at Appendix D of the report.

1. Endorse the four grades
2. Agree to the key outcomes described

(For the Motion 3 Against 2 Not Voting 1)

**12.RD.06 ANIMAL WELFARE POLICY (A2)**

A report was submitted that provided members of the Committee with further information regarding the Council’s Animal Welfare Policy. The report examined the following topics as a result of representations received at the Committee’s previous meeting:

* Micro-chipping of Cats and Dogs
* Identification of Cats and Dogs
* The Council’s role in dog-on-dog attacks

A copy of the Council’s Information sheet relating to the latter was also supplied to members as part of the report. When considering the report further queries were discussed and advice provided for members relating to the following:

* The sale of animals to children under 16 years of age
* Other types of licensing issues relating to horse-riding establishments, dog breeding, animal boarding and pet shops
* The keeping of ‘working’ pets such as chickens
* Promotional and awareness work undertaken
* The numbers of cats and dogs that have been micro-chipped in recent years
* The recording of reported incidents relating to dog-on-dog attacks in particular, and the process for alerting owners
* The costs in terms of resource and finance of the Council’s current policies and the anticipated costs that the introduction of enhanced services might bring
* The workload of the Council’s Generic Wardens in relation to animal welfare issues
* Incidents of attacks on Guide Dogs in the Borough
* The dissemination of the information sheet and how its content was phrased
* The recording of the location of attacks in order to build up intelligence as to where attacks might be happening in particular areas
* How matching of chips with records was undertaken and the use of other items and information to aid identification
* Dealing with wild animals on the highway and on private land

**RESOLVED** that the Executive is requested to

* + 1. continue to promote the service of chipping of cats and dogs
    2. makes all attempts to identify found animals in order to alert the owner (whether the animal be alive or dead)
    3. develop and publicise guidance for dog owners regarding the law and best practice associated with ‘dog on dog’ attacks.

**12.RD.07 WELFARE REFORMS NEWSLETTER (A3)**

A copy of the Borough Council’s Welfare Reforms Newsletter was supplied for members’ information. Members noted that the Newsletter could be supplied in either hard copy or electronically, and were informed of the outlets and organisations to which copies were supplied, as well as its availability to the general public.

**RESOLVED** that the matter be noted.

**12.RD.08 IMPACT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE ACT 2012 (A4)**

A report was submitted that outlined the national, regional and local changes in public health and how it will effect the Borough of Kettering.

The report detailed the role of the Public Health Board, the Northamptonshire Clinical Commissioning Group (‘Nene Commissioning’), the introduction of Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for each area, the introduction of Health and Wellbeing Boards and the Kettering Heath and Wellbeing Partnership, as well as the new Public Health Outcomes Framework which sets out the desired outcomes for public health and how these will be measured.

Members discussed the role and the proposals for the representation on the Health and Wellbeing Board in terms of local Councils’ membership. The impact on the new arrangements on existing provision, in particular the phlebotomy unit situated at the Council Offices was also discussed.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

**12.RD.09 WORK PROGRAMME (A5)**

The Committee’s work programme was submitted for consideration. The following item would be added to those already listed for consideration at the next meeting.

* Policy on Houses in Multiple Occupation

**RESOLVED** that the above be noted.

*(The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 8.42pm)*

Signed­: …………………………………………………….

(Chair)

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