



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 25th July, 2013

7.00 pm

Town Hall, Watford

Publication date: 17 July 2013

CONTACT

If you require further information or you would like a copy of this agenda in another format, e.g. large print, please contact Sandra Hancock in Democracy and Governance on 01923 278377 or by email to legalanddemocratic@watford.gov.uk .

Welcome to this meeting. We hope you find these notes useful.

ACCESS

Access to the Town Hall after 5.15 pm is via the entrance to the Customer Service Centre from the visitors' car park.

Visitors may park in the staff car park after 4.00 p.m. and before 7.00 a.m. This is a Pay and Display car park; the current charge is £1.50 per visit.

The Committee Rooms are on the first floor of the Town Hall and a lift is available. Induction loops are available in the Committee Rooms and the Council Chamber.

FIRE/EMERGENCY INSTRUCTIONS

In the event of a fire alarm sounding, vacate the building immediately following the instructions given by the Democratic Services Officer.

- Do not use the lifts
- Do not stop to collect personal belongings
- Go to the assembly point at the Pond and wait for further instructions
- Do not re-enter the building until authorised to do so.

MOBILE PHONES

Please ensure that mobile phones are switched off before the start of the meeting.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Councillor K Collett (Chair)

Councillor A Khan (Vice-Chair)

Councillors J Aron, N Bell, S Greenslade, K Hastrick, S Johnson, A Lovejoy and R Martins

AGENDA

PART A - OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS (IF ANY)

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2013 to be submitted and signed. *(All minutes are available on the Council's website.)*

4. CALL-IN

To consider any Executive decisions which have been called in by the requisite number of Members.

5. UPDATE: REVIEW OF THREE YEAR GRANT FUNDING PROGRAMME (Pages 1 - 4)

On 22 December 2011 Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the called in Cabinet Decision "Review of three year grant funding programme to achieve savings". The Scrutiny Committee ratified Cabinet's decision but added that it wished to examine the long-term impact on the four organisations which had been subject to the largest cuts.

Corporate Services and Client Strategy have provided the attached summary on the impact of the funding cut on the four organisations.

6. PREVIOUS REVIEW UPDATE: VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR COMMISSIONING FRAMEWORK (Pages 5 - 12)

Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to review the report provided by Corporate Strategy and Client Services in response to the Voluntary and Community Sector Commissioning Framework Task Group's recommendations.

The following documents are provided –

- The Task Group's recommendations and Cabinet's response
- Appendix 1 – Update on the implementation of the commissioning process for the service priorities identified in the Commissioning Framework document
- Appendix 2 – Small Grants Fund update

7. TASK GROUPS (Pages 13 - 18)

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to review the appointment of Task Group Chairs and suggested guidance notes for members of Task Groups.

8. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

- Thursday 26 September 2013
- Thursday 24 October 2013 (For call-in only)
- Thursday 28 November 2013

Update on the long-term impact on the four organisations which would be subject to the largest cuts

This update provides a brief summary of the impact of funding cuts to Watford Women's Centre, Watford Muslim Community Project, Multi Cultural Community Centre and Watford African Caribbean Association.

Watford Women's Centre (WWC)

Funding situation

Funding to WWC was reduced by 50% for the period April 2013 to March 2014. The organisation receives a direct grant of £44,000 and accommodation costs of £26,000. WWC officers have continued to offer support and have met with WWC on a quarterly basis.

Impact of reduction in funding

WWC have been very proactive in addressing the situation through the following mechanisms.

1. Conducted an internal review of service provision to identify where savings could be made;
2. Working collaboratively with the Stevenage Women's Centre to jointly put forward proposals for future funding;
3. Approached the new Police Commissioner who has funding for community safety;
4. Secured new premises which was gifted to WWC;
5. Secured Big Lottery funding for a Volunteer Co-ordinator
6. Have launched a charity shop and an EBay shop to increase income
7. Using reserves to meet costs;
8. Negotiated a reduction in rent costs with WWC property services.

Watford Muslim Community Project (WMCP)

Funding situation

WWC have provided no funding to WMCP since April 2012. WWC officers continued to have contact through face to face meetings as well as email correspondence. The Resilience Officer also offered support to the organisation.

£30,000 was allocated to the Citizen's Advice Bureau to operate a culturally sensitive outreach session in West Watford to mitigate the impact on users of WMCP in the event that they ceased providing services.

Impact of reduction in funding

The decision to cease funding has had a significant effect on WMCP. As a result WMCP made the decision to close in mid March 2013.

Prior to the closure, they were receiving support from Watford and Three Rivers Trust particularly with regard to help with funding and dealing with assets and documentation when winding up a business.

One of their employees now works for Watford and Three Rivers Trust in a different capacity.

WBC officers are meeting with the Chair of WMCP's management committee on 15 July to finalise handing over of keys and confirm all financial liabilities have been met including outstanding use and occupation and utility payments.

Multi Cultural Community Centre (MCCC)

Funding situation

MCCC received transitional funding for the period April 2012 to March 2013 for redesigning their building to make it more sustainable for future service delivery. They were also awarded £2960 from the Annual Fund to develop a business plan. WBC officers and the Resilience Officer offered support and monitored progress with the renovations and business plan through the period April 2012 to March 2013.

Impact of reduction in funding

MCCC completed renovations to the building which included asbestos removal, improved signage and dividing the main hall into two usable spaces. They reported that these changes have had a positive effect in improving morale of staff and trustees and providing an opportunity for bringing in additional income.

A consultant assisted MCCC with the completion of a strategic plan for the period 2013-17 which included an action plan for 2013-14. The consultant identified key areas that MCCC needed to work on if they were to be successful in achieving a thriving and sustainable future. These key areas were financial management; governance and centre management; partnership working and improving quality.

Watford African Caribbean Association (WACA)

Funding situation

WACA received transitional funding for the period April 2012 to March 2013 to facilitate their ongoing outreach work, make redundancy payments and assist with their move from 16 Clarendon Road to the Holywell Community Centre and make rent payments to Watford and Three Rivers Trust. The organisation also wished to do some needs analysis work to inform the shape of their future services. They were also awarded £3000 to undertake a pilot project to set up a community cafe. WBC officers and the Resilience Officer offered support and monitored progress through the period April 2012 to March 2013.

Impact of reduction in funding

WACA used the funding as outlined above and are still in the process of reviewing their services. Despite recruiting last October, they have had further staff changes so have not made the progress anticipated with the review of their services. This has also impacted on their lack of progress with

the pilot project. WBC Officers are now seeking to claw back the unspent funds.

WACA have continued to operate and co-ordinate their existing projects, namely the Supplementary School, Luncheon Club, Sickle Cell & Thalassemia Support Group and the Carers and Befriending Project. The priority for the organisation is the needs analysis work and they are using the remaining transitional money, approximately £3,000 to use the services of a consultant to complete this task.

This page is intentionally left blank

Review Update

Review	Voluntary and Community Sector Commissioning Framework
Committee/Task Group	Voluntary and Community Sector Commissioning Framework Task Group
Chair	Councillor Jeanette Aron
Final report published	19 September 2012
Response	Cabinet 8 October 2012

Recommendation		Response
1.	The Small Grants Fund should be continued.	Cabinet agrees the continuation of the Small Grants Fund. <i>(resolution 3 – Cabinet minutes)</i>
2.	The total Small Grant Fund should be £50,000.	
3.	The limit for individual small grants should be £2,000.	Cabinet delegates responsibility to the Head of Community Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and the Chair of the Voluntary and Community Sector Commissioning Framework Task Group to approve the eligibility criteria for the Small Grants Fund. <i>(resolution 4 – Cabinet minutes)</i>
4.	Application criteria should include projects and ‘invest to save’ initiatives.	
5.	The process for Small Grant applications should encourage match funding.	

Recommendation	Response
<p>6. The priorities in the draft Commissioning Framework document as detailed below are supported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure support to the voluntary and community sector • Enabling people with physical mobility problems to access services in the town centre • Advice Services • Arts and Culture • Community Centres • Sport 	<p>Cabinet agrees the service commissioning priorities as identified in 3.4 of the Cabinet response.</p> <p><i>(resolution 2 – Cabinet minutes)</i></p>

Officers have provided updates on the implementation of the Commissioning Framework (Appendix 1) and the Small Grants Fund (Appendix 2)

Update on the implementation of the commissioning process for the service priorities identified in the Commissioning Framework document and approved by Cabinet on 8 October 2012.

1.0 OUTCOME

1.1 The implementation of the commissioning process was successfully completed by 31 March 2013. All the Service Level Agreements (SLA) were signed by both WBC and the commissioned organisations to commence on 1 April 2013.

2.0 DETAILED PROPOSAL

2.1 Background Summary

2.1.1 At the Cabinet meeting held on 8th October 2012, the following was agreed:

1. The service commissioning priorities as identified in 3.4 of the report
2. Delegated responsibility to the Head of Community Services to implement the commissioning process for the service priorities identified in 3.8 of the report to ensure services are in place from April 1st 2013, subject to Council approval of the Budget 2013/14'

2.1.2 Section 3.4 refers to the identified priorities:

- infrastructure support to the voluntary and community sector
- enabling people with physical mobility problems to access services in the town centre
- advice services
- arts and culture
- community centres
- sport

Additionally section 3.4 refers to domestic abuse service provision. Whilst it is acknowledged that domestic abuse services are not the commissioning responsibility of a District Council, the findings from the Equality Impact Analysis indicated a disproportionate impact on a protected characteristic group. The recommendation to mitigate these risks was to continue to fund the existing service provider for a further 12 months whilst long term support for these services were considered by the primary commissioning organisations.

Section 3.8 of the report to Cabinet outlined the services to be commissioned, namely:

- Community Centres in the following area, Meriden; Orbital; Radlett Rd; Holywell; West Watford; Leavesden Green
- Provision of motorised scooters to enable people to access shops, businesses and services including advice, health and leisure services in the town centre
- A quality accredited generic advice service with particular emphasis on benefits, immigration, debt and housing advice
- Infrastructure support to the voluntary and community sector to increase its capacity to promote and support itself
- Provision of a regional theatre and outreach programme ensuring a programme which meets the diverse needs of the community

- Support to develop the capacity of sports clubs and organisations to increase community participation in physical activity and sport to contribute towards a healthy town for Watford residents.

2.2 Details of Commissioning Process

2.2.1 Documentation

Service Level Agreement (SLA)

This document was reviewed to include greater emphasis on relationship and partnership working and management of performance issues. The SLA's for the outsourced Community Centres continue to have reference to TUPE clauses. The Service Level Agreement was approved by The Section Head, Legal Services In February 2013.

Service Specifications for each service area

Outcome focused service specifications were developed and discussed with the commissioned organisation. The purpose was to focus on the key areas of service delivery following a commissioning cycle process of service planning, delivery and review/evaluation. A key aim was to simplify the service specification and in turn allow for a less onerous reporting process.

Details of commissioning process in each service area

2.2.2 Letters were sent to the commissioned organisations on 14 November 2012 informing them of the budget allocation for 2013/14.

Community Centres

A generic service specification was developed for the community centres.

Three of the six community centres required new SLA's and service specifications, namely Holywell, Orbital and West Watford. Meriden already had an SLA in place, however it was agreed that they would move to the new service specification. Radlett Rd (Centrepoint Community Centre) and Leavesden Green already have existing SLA's which expire on 31 March 2013 following which, if funding continues, the new SLA and service specification will be applied in line with the other commissioned community centres.

Commissioned Organisation	Budget allocation 2013/14	Service specification/SLA discussions with organisation	SLA's signed
Holywell Community Centre	£76,680	4 January 2013 & 13. March.2013	28 March.2013
Orbital Community Centre	£72,965	15 January 2013	26 March.2013
West Watford	£23,415 (direct grant) and £10,920 (accommodation)	19 December 2012 & 12.March.2013	18 March.2013
Meriden	£72,159	11 January 2013. Updated service specification sent on 26 March 2013	n/a

Advice Services

Following a request from Watford CAB, it was agreed to include employment in the list of services to be provided. The rationale for this was due to the CAB providing evidence that they dealt with more employment enquiries than immigration and this was a key area of service delivery.

There has been an increase of £30k applied to the CAB's direct grant to mitigate the impact of significant welfare reforms changes being introduced during the 2013/14 year.

Commissioned Organisation	Budget allocation 2013/14	Service specification/SLA discussions with organisations	SLA signed
Watford CAB	£204,192 (direct grant) and £39,500 (accommodation costs)	12 December 2012 & 13 March 2013	26 March.2013

Provision of motorised scooters to enable people to access the town centre

Commissioned Organisation	Budget allocation 2013/14	Service specification/SLA discussions with organisation	SLA signed
Shopmobility	£36,459	11 December 2012 & 14 March 2013	20 March 2013

Infrastructure support to the voluntary and community sector

Commissioned Organisation	Budget allocation 2013/14	Service specification/SLA discussions with organisation	SLA signed
Watford CVS (now Watford & Three Rivers Trust)	£79,173	4 January 2013 & 13 March 2013	28 March.2013

Provision of a regional theatre and outreach programme

Commissioned Organisation	Budget allocation 2013/14	Service specification/SLA discussions with organisation	SLA signed
Palace Theatre	£257,730 (direct grant) and £32,500 (accommodation costs)	13 December 2012 & 11 March 2013	21 March 2013

Support to develop the capacity of sports clubs and organisations to increase community participation in physical activity and sport to contribute towards a healthy town for Watford residents.

This is already being commissioned through the current Sports Development Framework and this framework will be reviewed in 2013/14

Provision of a domestic violence abuse service for 12 months

Commissioned Organisation	Budget allocation 2013/14	Service specification/SLA discussions with organisation	SLA signed
Watford Women's Centre	£44,000 (direct grant) and £26,000 (accommodation costs)	18. December 2012 & 19 March .2013	19 March 2013

2.3 Feedback from commissioned organisations on the new documentation

2.3.1 Feedback has been extremely positive with the majority of organisations citing that they supported a clearer service specification and less onerous reporting schedule.

Monitoring

Monitoring templates for reporting have been developed and discussed with the commissioned organisations. There is greater emphasis on organisations providing summaries of planning and needs analysis including consultation with users to ensure that the planned service are appropriate. This is in line with a commissioning cycle process. Additionally organisations will be required to clearly demonstrate the collection and use of equalities data to ensure that the planning of services reach all sectors of the community. Operational and strategic monitoring meetings are currently being scheduled.

Small Grants Fund

The following eligibility criteria for the Small Grants Fund was approved by the Head of Community Services, Portfolio Holder and the Chair of the Voluntary and Community Sector Commissioning Framework Task Group.

The development of the eligibility criteria took into account the following::

- The findings of a phone survey conducted in January/February 2013 by Community Services with small/medium sized community organisations in Watford,
- Discussions and feedback from the Portfolio Holder and Chair of the Scrutiny Task Group
- Watford Council Corporate Plan 2013-17 priorities
- Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 5 October 2012

Small Grants Fund 2013 - 14

There will be one fund with a maximum amount of £2,000 per application. The fund will be for community initiatives and projects and help groups to not only thrive but provide benefits to the people of Watford.

Priority will be given to small grass roots organisations who are seeking to engage with their communities.

What need will the fund support?

Initiatives or projects that will enable a group to establish, thrive, or provide tangible benefits to the community.

The purchase of equipment in line with the above

What will the criteria be?

1. that there is a demonstrated need for the application
2. that there is a tangible future benefit for the people of Watford.

Who will not be able to apply to the fund?

- Individuals

What will not be funded?

- core funding (salaries/utilities/rates/rent/insurance)
- energy efficiency initiatives
- sports coaching qualifications/first aid and equity workshops
- Requests for equipment that are funded through another funding stream (this includes sports equipment and energy efficiency initiatives)
- loans of any description
- training costs
- ongoing hall hire costs
- costs of applying for external funding
- capital projects – e.g. structural buildings requiring planning permission
- any equipment that in the opinion of WBC could be perceived as being for a singular religious aim

- any equipment that in the opinion of WBC could be perceived as being used for a political purpose

Condition of funding

- no repeat application for the same item
- The equipment must remain within the organisation and must not be loaned out to external parties without the prior permission of WBC?
- The organisation must be a constituted body and provide a copy of their constitution.
- The organisation must provide a copy of their Equality and Diversity policy.

Monitoring

The organisation will be required to:

- Provide three quotes with their application
- Provide receipts of purchase
- Provide a one page report with photos and feedback from users within twelve months of receiving the grant payment

Marketing and Publicity

The Small Grants Fund has been extensively marketed to encourage maximum take-up. In particular councillors have been encouraged to promote the fund in their local area.

Publicity was sent to:

- Community Centres
- WBC website
- Watford and Three Rivers website to reach their members
- Posters in Cassiobury and Oxhey Parks, Whippendell Woods and North Watford Playing Fields
- Watford Museum
- Arts Space
- WBC Customer Service Centre
- Libraries
- Adventure Playgrounds
- Allotments sites
- Herts County Council
- Watford Community Housing Trust
- Posters and presentations at specific events (Fun Day at Cassiobury Park/Stronger Roots for Smaller Groups at Watford and 3 Rivers Trust)
- WBC commissioned organisations (CAB/Palace Theatre/Colosseum/Leisure Centres/Shopmobility/Watford Women's Centre)
- Members briefing

Summary of applications to date

There have been 16 applications received since the current fund was launched in May 2013. 7 have been approved, 3 are in consideration and 6 have been declined.

A more detailed breakdown will be provided at the Scrutiny Committee meeting.

*PART A

Report to: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 25 July 2013

Report of: Committee and Scrutiny Officer

Title: Task Groups

1.0 **SUMMARY**

1.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider appointing Task Group Chairs when the membership is agreed.

1.2 Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to review the guidance for Task Group members, attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 that Task Group Chairs are appointed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee when it agrees the Task Group's membership.

2.2 that the guidance for Task Group members be noted.

Contact Officer:

For further information on this report please contact: Sandra Hancock,
Committee and Scrutiny Officer
telephone extension: 8377 email: legalanddemocratic@watford.gov.uk

Report approved by: Carol Chen, Head of Democracy and Governance

3.0 **DETAILED PROPOSAL**

Appointment of Task Group Chairs

3.1 The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Committee and Scrutiny Officer have discussed the appointment of Chairs for Task Groups. The discussion highlighted the usefulness of the Task Group Chair being involved in preparatory discussions prior to a Task Group's first meeting. At the present time the Chair is appointed at the Task Group's first meeting.

3.2 Currently Democratic Services arranges to meet the Council service or external organisation being scrutinised prior to the first meeting. This enables officers to review the scrutiny proposal and identify any supporting information that can be produced for the Task Group's first meeting.

- 3.3 It is felt that if the Chair of the Task Group is appointed prior to the first meeting of the Task Group they will be able to participate in the early discussions with officers from the service or organisation under review.
- 3.4 It is important to note that the Chair of the Task Group will be expected to report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee during the review and once the final report has been produced. The Chair will also be expected to present the final report to the Executive as required.
- 3.5 Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider appointing Task Group Chairs when it agrees the membership.

Guidance for Task Group Members

- 3.6 Some guidance notes have been prepared (Appendix 1). These will be provided to Task Group members when they are appointed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The notes provide a guide to advise Councillors what to expect when participating in reviews and things they should make sure take place. The notes also include some additional guidance for Task Group Chairs.
- 3.7 Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to review the document and make any suggestions for additions or amendments.

4.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 **Financial**

- 4.1.1 The Head of Strategic Finance comments that there are no financial implications arising directly out of this report.

4.2 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)

- 4.2.1 The Head of Democracy and Governance comments that there are no legal implications in this report.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Guidance for Task Groups

Background Papers

There were no background papers used in the production of this report.

File Reference

None

TASK GROUPS – GUIDANCE NOTES

Set out below are some notes for members of Task Groups to consider when participating in a review and additional information for Chairs.

Prior to the meeting

- Democratic Services and Chair of the Task Group (if new proposals for the appointing the Chair are approved by Overview and Scrutiny Committee) to meet representatives from the service/organisation being reviewed.
- Democratic Services to liaise with the Chair on background information required for the Task Group and prepare the paperwork.
- Date of first meeting to be agreed.
- Copies of the review proposal form to be sent to all Task Group members.

Meeting 1

- Task Group to review the scope to ensure Members understand the matter being scrutinised.
- Task Group to discuss the way it wishes to carry out the review.
- Task Group to decide on any witnesses it wishes to involve in the review and how.
- Examples of how to involve external witnesses
 - survey/questionnaire
 - open meeting/drop in session
 - formal setting
- Task Group to assess the approximate number of meetings it wishes to hold. (This can be revised as the Task Group progresses.)

Final meeting

- Review draft report, findings and conclusions.
- Finalise recommendations.
- Confirm who the final report should be circulated to.
- Circulate draft report to all task group members for comment before finalising.

Additional information for Task Group members

- Prepare some questions in advance, drawing on information already provided and personal knowledge.
- Understand who the questions are being put to.
- Ask questions the public would want to ask.
- Don't be afraid to ask obvious questions.
- Ask ONE question at a time.
- Ask about policies and procedures rather than referring to specific cases/incidents.
- If something is unclear ask for further clarification.

Roles for the Chair

- Ensure the Task Group remains focussed on the scope.
- Ensure all members of the Task Group have had an opportunity to put all their questions to witnesses/officers.
- At the end of each meeting the Chair to summarise any findings or actions that may have arisen during the discussion and to discuss the next steps.
- The Chair of the Task Group will be expected to provide an update to Overview and Scrutiny Committee throughout the life of the Task Group.
- The Chair of the Task Group will be expected to present the final report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- The Chair of the Task Group will be expected to present the final report, as agreed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to the Executive if appropriate for the review.

This page is intentionally left blank