

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Date: 31 March 2016

Time: 6:00 pm

Place: Shimkent Room, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage

Present: Members: S Mead (Chair), M Notley (Vice-Chair), L Bell, E Connolly, L Harrington, J Mead and C Saunders.

Start/End Time: Start Time: 6:00 pm
End Time: 7:45 pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from of Councillors S Hearn, G Snell, P Stuart and Executive Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities & Equalities, Councillor S Batson CC.

2. MINUTES – 7 MARCH 2016

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Community Select Committee held on 7 March 2016 are agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. THE SOSAFE COMMUNITY SAFETY ACTION PLAN AND EMERGING PRIORITIES FOR 2016/17

The Chair informed the meeting that report had not been circulated to Members five clear days before the meeting nor had it been made available for public inspection, however she accepted it as urgent on this occasion as it was the last opportunity in the current Municipal Year for the performance of the SoSafe Safety Partnership to be recorded and for the Committee to consider the emerging priorities for 2016/17.

The Head of the Chief Executive's Unit gave a presentation on the Community Safety Action Plan.

Members received an update on the progress of the agreed priorities and the various initiatives employed. The priorities discussed included domestic abuse, reassurance, health/mental health, children and young people.

On the issue of domestic abuse, the meeting was advised that the annual strategic assessment recorded an increase of 35.4% in the last year and that SoSafe Partnership would continue addressing this issue through the

Herts Change Perpetrator and OP Acorn programmes. Members were informed that 14 out of the 17 perpetrators had completed the programme this year and that there were plans to continue as it was deemed successful.

Members were advised that at the meeting of the Responsible Authority Group (RAG) in January it was agreed that all the actions identified in the action plan with regards to domestic abuse had been completed and signed off.

In response to a question on the success of the initiative 'No More project' with regards to mental health, the Senior Corporate Policy Officer (Community Safety & Strategic Partnerships) indicated that she would circulate the report from the ASB Team to Members together with an update on how many people had gone through the project.

On the issue of Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) especially amongst young people, the Senior Corporate Policy Officer (Community Safety & Strategic Partnerships) advised the meeting that the Operational Development Group using its ASB tools and powers, would quickly target hot spot areas.

In response to a question on the effectiveness of the Community Protection Notices issued to ASBO perpetrators, the Senior Corporate Policy Officer (Community Safety & Strategic Partnerships) informed the meeting that she would provide statistics showing its impact especially with SBC housing tenants.

The Chair thanked the Head of the Chief Executive's Unit for his presentation.

With regards to the emerging priorities for 2016/17, the Head of the Chief Executive's Unit advised that due to a delay with data from the County Community Safety Unit, the 2016/2017 SoSafe Community Action plan would be brought before Committee as a policy development item for Member input after its approval by RAG in June.

Members were advised that the likely priorities for 2016/17 were anti social behaviour; safeguarding; reassurance; violent crime; serious organised crime and drugs and information sharing.

It was **RESOLVED** that the performance of the various actions highlighted in the SoSafe Community Safety Action Plan 2015/16 is noted.

4. REVIEW OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY BUDGETS

The Chair informed the meeting that although the above report had not been circulated to Members five clear days before the meeting nor had it been made available for public inspection, she accepted it as urgent on this

occasion as the recommendations needed to be considered by the Executive Portfolio Holder and Officers prior to the new LCB funding scheme starting on 1 July 2016.

The Committee were asked to consider the report and recommendations of the review into Local Community Budgets.

Members commented that they were content that the report reflected the review findings but made a number of changes to the report and recommendations.

Members requested more detailed questions be included in the application process as this would assist Members in their consideration of bids, as a number of applicants fail to contact Members before making a bid. For example questions could be included such as Who is the project targeted at? What will the project do for the community? What Equalities and Diversity Policy does the organisation have?

It was considered that a sum of £100 should be the minimum bid as this would help to reduce the scheme overheads.

Members considered the report and made a number of changes to the recommendations that are reflected in the following resolutions.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the findings of the review, contained within the report and the recommendations below be presented to the Neighbourhoods and Co-operative Council Portfolio Holder and the Strategic Director (Community) be noted and that a response be provided from these and any other named officers and partners within two months of the publishing of this report.
2. That Members be reminded annually of the LCB scheme rules and responsibilities of both Members and Officers and that there also be an annual seminar for Members to share best practice and ideas for Members to work together with their LCB funding. At this seminar, Officers should issue updated guidelines as to how LCB monies could be spent.
3. That an online LCB application process be included in a training session to all Members.
4. That consideration be given to a minimum level of bid to reduce scheme overheads.
5. That communications between the applicant and Members be established prior to any bid being made, and that consideration be given to making pre bid communications a mandatory requirement

6. That more detailed questions should be included in the application process as this would assist Councillors in deciding whether to fund a project, especially when applicants fail to contact the Member before bidding to provide some information about their bid.
7. That applicants be required to declare their own interests in the bid to promote transparency.
8. That a mechanism for improved liaison between Members (including HCC Members) to determine whether bids should be supported at a ward / area level be investigated by officers.
9. That Officers assess the practicality of undertaking checks on bids suitability of meeting the scheme rules before passing to Members for authorisation. If the outcome of this is positive and it is accepted by the Portfolio Holder, the flow chart diagram would need to be changed to address this issue.
10. That consideration be given to the establishment of a method of determining whether organisations were potentially overbidding for funds in the expectation of receiving a reduced amount that would actually meet their requirements.
11. That a process be documented detailing the steps to be taken in the event of a bid being undersubscribed, particularly when the amount of funding awarded would not support a scheme's full requirements.
12. That all successful bidders be required to submit receipts and evidence of the event either in written or photographic form. The council officers can audit a required sample but will archive the evidence for future scrutiny by members and photographs may be used in council publications and training purposes.
13. That currently six months after the completion of a project, all applicants are sent a feedback monitoring form which is published online. Members request that a notification link of the six month monitoring form be sent to the relevant member(s) that funded the bid to keep those Members aware of the outcomes.
14. That applicants who receive only a partial amount of the original bid should receive an electronic message that reads 'Your application for funding has achieved the following amount ...' and that in this instance the applicant be invited to re-submit a bid.
15. That during the audit process, repeat and high bidders should be focussed on in addition to the usual 10% random checks.
16. That the communications leaflet should be updated, to include best example schemes and ideas to encourage minority groups/group that currently do not access the scheme.

17. That consideration be given to new and innovative methods of promoting LCB awareness to young people.
18. That a summary of LCB spends be published in the Chronicle (or other SBC publications) on a quarterly / yearly basis to celebrate successes of LCB funding.
19. That consideration be given to the timescales for LCB approvals being made more flexible, especially around the summer and Christmas holiday periods.
20. That Officers consider the possibility of allowing LCB funds to be carried over from one financial year to another as an accrual for identified specific named projects as Member research had shown that other local authorities appear to do so

5. URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS

As noted in items 3 and 4

6. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Not required.

7. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None.

CHAIR