

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member (Community Safety and Equalities)
held at 2.00 pm on Thursday, 1 May 2014

Present:

Members: Councillor P Townshend (Cabinet Member)
Councillor A Andrews (Shadow Cabinet Member)

Employees (by Directorate):

C Goodwin, Resources Directorate
M Metcalf, People Directorate
J Morley, People Directorate
C Parker, People Directorate
U Patel, Resources Directorate
D Williams, Resources Directorate

Public Business

103. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

104. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the items of business indicated in Minutes 111 and 112 below headed “Magistrates Court Building” and “Coroner’s Service Update” respectively, on the grounds that the reports involve the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in Schedule 12A of that Act, in particular those paragraphs of parts 1, 3 and 5 of that Schedule.

105. Minutes

The minutes of the Cabinet Member (Community Safety and Equalities) held on 27th March 2014 were signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

106. Community Grant Fund Criteria

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director, People which sought approval for amendments to the criteria for applicants and also to move to a process of two set funding rounds. The Cabinet Member noted that the total Community Grant Fund was £100,000 (and not £165,000 as quoted in the report).

The Community Grant Fund was launched in September 2013 and was managed initially by Neighbourhood Action on a ‘first come, first serve’ basis. There was a significant demand for the grants resulting in the fund being oversubscribed.

The fund for 2014-15 would be managed by the Community Development Team within the People Directorate and would build on the lessons learned from Neighbourhood Action's evaluation of processes and procedures.

In order to maximise the impact of the grant, it was recommended that the maximum grant payment be reduced from £10,000 to £5,000. The Community Development Team would seek to support groups requiring additional amounts to apply for alternative funding streams, to reduce the potential for on-going dependency on Council grants.

The total fund for 2014/15 was £100,000 from core funding. It was recommended that £80,000 maximum be allocated in August 2014 and the remainder of the fund be allocated in February 2015.

Allocating funds via the two rounds would ensure that the process was clear to applicants who want to plan for events or projects over the year. It would also enable the Council to allocate funds to those projects that most closely meet the criteria and objectives, through being able to scrutinise all applications that meet the deadline.

RESOLVED that, the Cabinet Member (Community Safety and Equalities):

- 1. Approved the changes to the criteria for funding and application process, key points being:**
 - a. Reducing maximum grant payment from £10,000 to £5,000**
 - b. Changing from a "first come first served basis" to two funding rounds**
 - c. Organisations only being eligible for one grant from this fund in a single funding round.**

107. Reporting of requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998 and complaints to the Information Commissioner

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director, Resources which provided information on the reporting of requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998 and complaints to the Information Commissioner.

The Information Commissioner (ICO) is the independent authority, which upholds information rights in the public interest, promotes openness by public bodies and data privacy for individuals.

The report outlined proposals for reporting the number of request for information received under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) and complaints made to the ICO about Coventry City Council to elected Members.

RESOLVED that, the Cabinet Member (Community Safety and Equalities):

- 1. Approved that the Assistant Director for Legal and Democratic Services prepares an annual report to the Cabinet Member (Policy and Leadership) on the number of requests received under the FOIA and DPA including the number and outcome of reviews requested and complaints made to the ICO; and**
- 2. Approved that the Assistant Director for Legal and Democratic Services prepares a 6 monthly report to the Cabinet Member (Policy and Leadership) regarding the number, outcome of complaints and actions to be taken to ensure service improvement where the ICO serves practice recommendations, information notices and/or issues undertakings to the Council.**
- 3. Where the ICO issues an enforcement notice, a “stop now” order or takes any other enforcement action, the Assistant Director for Legal and Democratic Services (in conjunction with the relevant Assistant Director to which area the complaint relates) will report to the Cabinet Member (Policy and Leadership) the details of the complaint, the Council’s actions, the OCO’s actions/recommendations and actions taken to ensure service improvement; and**
- 4. Requested that the reports referred to in recommendations 1-3 above are also submitted to the Audit and Procurement Committee.**

108. Magistrates Court Building

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director, Resources which provided an update on the Magistrates’ Court Building.

When the Council constructed the Coventry Magistrates’ Court Building in the 1980s, the premises included a “Probation Suite” whose construction cost of approximately £1.2 million was to be met by the Council initially but repaid by the Probation Service over a period of some 40 years. Annual repayments were made until 2007. However, the Probation Service no disputes liability to make any further payments.

This matter was considered by Cabinet on 11th December 2012 where authorisation was given to commence legal proceedings to recover the outstanding loan monies (their Minute 91/12 refers). The Cabinet Member (Community Safety and Equalities) was given delegated authority to determine alternative strategies or decisions as the matter progresses. This report provided an update as to the progress of the proceedings to date and consider the options going forward.

RESOLVED that, the Cabinet Member (Community Safety and Equalities):

- 1. Noted the progress made since the last report dated 24th February 2014 and directed that a further report be submitted for consideration at the first Cabinet Member meeting available after the proposed**

evaluation mediation process has taken place or 31st August 2014, whichever shall occur first.

2. Authorised the Assistant Director for Legal and Democratic Services to agree a further stay of the proceedings with the other parties and the Court, if necessary to accommodate the evaluative mediation process.

3. There were no further recommendations to make.

109. Outstanding Issues Report

The Cabinet Member noted a report of the Executive Director, Resources that identified those issues on which further reports had been requested and were outstanding, so that progress could be monitored.

RESOLVED that item 4 headed “Improving Employment Services for Drug and Alcohol Users in Coventry and Warwickshire” be deleted from the Outstanding Issues Report as this matter was due to be considered by the Alcohol Strategy Group which is chaired by the Cabinet Member Health and Adult Services.

110. Any Other Business

There were no other items of public business.

Private Business

111. Magistrates Court Building

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director, Resources which provided an update on the Magistrates’ Court Building.

When the Council constructed the Coventry Magistrates’ Court building in the 1980s, the premises included a “Probation Suite” whose construction cost of around £1.2 million was to be met by the Council initially but repaid by the Probation Service over a period of some 40 years. Annual repayments were made until 2007. However, the Probation Service now disputes liability to make any further payments.

This matter was considered by Cabinet on 11th December 2012, where authorisation was given to commence legal proceedings to recover the outstanding loan monies. The Cabinet Member (Community Safety and Equalities) was given delegated authority to determine alternative strategies or decisions as the matter progresses. The report provided an update as to the progress of the proceedings to date and consider the options going forward.

RESOLVED that, the Cabinet Member (Community Safety and Equalities) approved the recommendations as set out in the report, together with an additional recommendation.

112. **Coroner's Service Update**

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services which provided an update on the Coroner's Service.

The City Council shares the services of the Coroner with Warwickshire County Council. The report provided proposals and options in order to facilitate an efficient and resilient service for Coventry.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member (Community Safety and Equalities) approved the recommendations as set out in the report.

113. **Any Other Business**

There were no other items of private business.

(Meeting closed at 2.50 pm)