

## REGENERATION AND CITIZENSHIP SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

8<sup>th</sup> February 2007 at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Mead (Chair); Councillors R. J. Davis and Hoyle

### 10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (REF: 1)

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors Bailey, Hinkley and Skepelhorn.

### 11 MINUTES (REFS: 2.1 AND 2.2)

**Resolved:** (i) That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2006 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

(ii) That, subject to the following amendments, the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2007 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair:

Minute No: 4/07 – the following wording to be added to the end of resolution (ii):

" ... as follows:

- That the Executive requests officers within the Regeneration Section to investigate the Medway option as a possible way forward to help support and encourage new businesses in the town and avoid duplication of service provision and identify a lead agency to take on this role.
- That the Executive recognise that access to funding is the main barrier faced by new businesses and that this is an area where the Council can only act in cooperation with specialist financial agencies.
- That the Council website and other media be utilised to provide information on local initiatives that could assist new businesses.
- That the Executive requests officers within the Regeneration Department to look into the viability of providing services through the Council's call centre/one stop shop facility. The Executive should note that this could potentially have resource implications in providing specialist knowledge in certain areas. A possible way forward would be to include this as part of the Service Level Agreement."

Minute No. 4/07 – Inclusion of the following additional resolution:

"(vi) That the first contact for potential businesses should be at a single well advertised location, which needs to include a meaningful assessment of their needs by a knowledgeable individual, as should be the first step in mentoring. The success of the initial contact being dependent upon being able to access, or be directed to all the relevant services, advice and information from that first contact point."

## **12 RECOMMENDATIONS OF GRANT OFFICERS (REF: 9.1)**

The Policy and Performance Manager reported on the procedure undertaken in respect of the proposed recommendations of the Grants Officers in respect of the Corporate Grant Aid Programme 2007 – 2008.

He advised that the grants officers considered grant applications received by their services. The Policy and Performance Manager, grants officers and accountants then met to consider the grant officers' recommendations (within the parameters of the budget allocated).

Members enquired why proposed grant allocations differed in the Policy and Performance Manager's report against the figures in the yellow pages supplied to Members. The Policy and Performance Manager responded that this was because the yellow pages contained individual Grant Officer recommendations, whilst the information detailed in the report reflected the outcome of the wider meeting with grant officers, accountants and the Policy and Performance Manager.

The Policy and Performance Manager advised that information in respect of recommended grant applications was placed in each of the Group Rooms at the end of January 2007.

A Member enquired where the decision was taken to set the budget at £76,000 in respect of the 2007/08 Corporate Grant Aid Programme. The Policy and Performance Manager did not have the information available and the Director of Scrutiny advised that he would obtain this information and pass on to Members.

With regard to inconsistencies in the layout of the grant application forms received, Members requested that in future years the same form layout should be used for all applications.

The Committee considered each application. (Please see the Committee's recommendations attached at Appendix 3/07 to these Minutes).

Concern was expressed with regard to Application CG82 (Luton Equality Agency). The Committee considered that as the Luton Equality Agency had been set up as a result of the scrutiny that had taken place in respect of Community Cohesion, it should be recognised as a mainstream function and not as an adjunct to the Council. The Policy and Performance

Manager was requested to include in his report the Committee's recommendation that Application CG82 be met from mainstream funds accordingly. The Committee agreed that should the Executive not be minded to fund the application as requested by the Committee, the grant would be met from the Corporate Grant Aid Programme – 2007/2008 in recognition of the importance of the work undertaken by the Luton Equalities Group.

**Resolved:** (i) That report (Ref: 9.1) be noted.

(ii) That the Director of Scrutiny be requested to clarify to Members where the decision was taken to allocate £76,000 to the Corporate Grant Aid budget for 2007 – 2008.

(iii) That the Policy and Performance Manager be requested to include in his final report to the Executive on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2007 the Committee's recommendations as set out in Appendix 3/07 to these Minutes.

(iv) That the Policy and Performance Manager be requested to include in his final report to the Executive on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2007 the Committee's recommendation that grant application CG82 (Luton Equality Agency) be met from mainstream funding and not via the Corporate Grant Aid Programme 2007 – 2008.

**(Note: The Group Support Officer – Liberal Democrat - disclosed a personal and prejudicial interest in the above item (in respect of Application CG49 only) in that he would benefit from any grant made to the Group as he attended events held by the Group. He left the meeting during discussion of the item.)**

### **13 FEASIBILITY OF A SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT FOR THE SOUTH BEDFORDSHIRE ALZHEIMER'S SOCIETY (REF: 9.2)**

The Policy and Performance Manager reported on the feasibility of a Service Level Agreement for the South Bedfordshire Alzheimer's Society, as requested by the Committee at its meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2007.

He reported that consultation with the Housing and Community Living service had indicated no funding was available for the development of a Service Level Agreement, and he further reported that no essential services had been identified by the department that they would wish the South Bedfordshire Alzheimer's Society to provide outside of those associated with the Partnership for Older People's Project. (A separate Service Level Agreement had been established in respect of the Partnership for Older People's Project).

The Policy and Performance Manager advised that it was not therefore feasible to develop a Service Level Agreement with the South Bedfordshire Alzheimer's Society.

**Resolved:** That the report (Ref: 9.2) be noted.

#### **14 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME (REF: 9.3)**

The Scrutiny Officer updated the Committee on the details of the latest version of its work programme.

He drew the Committee's attention to the planned agenda for the 15<sup>th</sup> March 2007, and advised that the presentation by the Behaviour Awareness Group in respect of Grants Monitoring had been moved to the Committee's June meeting.

**Resolved:** (i) That the report (Ref: 9.3) be noted.

(ii) That the Scrutiny Officer be instructed to incorporate the relevant changes to the Committee's Work Programme.

**(Note: The meeting ended at 7.35 p.m.)**