

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**LOCAL COMMITTEE (GUILDFORD)****DATE: 25 MARCH 2015****SURREY****LEAD OFFICER: JAMES PAINTER, COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS MANAGER****SUBJECT: LOCAL COMMITTEE (GUILDFORD) CLUSTERS - END OF YEAR REPORT 2014-15****DIVISION: ALL****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

In March 2014 Guildford Local Committee agreed to create a new Cluster initiative to apply a greater local focus to community engagement as part of wider moves to strengthen and extend the remit of the existing Local Committee arrangements between Surrey County Council (SCC) and Guildford Borough Council (GBC).

In support of this initiative for 2014/15 a new Cluster Fund of £70,000 was established to support projects identified by local communities. This fund comprised £35,000 from the Surrey County Council Members Allocation which was equally matched by Guildford Borough Council.

The first purpose of this report is to review the activities of the Clusters in the first year of operation and to highlight the ways in which councillors allocated the Cluster Funding toward locally derived initiatives during the financial year 2014-15.

The second purpose of this report is to ask the Local Committee to agree that the Cluster initiative should continue to operate for the next municipal year and to allocate funding to a Cluster Fund for the next financial year 2015-16 in support of this initiative.

RECOMMENDATIONS:**The Local Committee (Guildford) is asked to:**

- (i) Note the activities undertaken by the Clusters in the first year of operation
- (ii) Note the projects at **Annexe 2** supported by the Cluster Fund in 2014-15.
- (iii) Agree that the Cluster initiative should continue in operation in the next municipal year and request that Guildford Borough Council nominate members to the relevant Cluster Fund Steering Groups for 2015-16 at the first full Council meeting of the municipal year
- (iv) Note that, subject to committee approval of the recommendations set out within the Highways Update report 25 March 2015, Highways funding may only be spent against highways projects.
- (v) Agree that the guidelines and criteria at **Annexe 3** can be applied to the Guildford Borough Council funds during 2015-16.
- (vi) Agree that any Cluster Fund for 2015-16 be administered by the Surrey County Council Community Partnerships Manager.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The recommendations support both councils duty to be fully accountable regarding the expenditure of public funding. In addition, support the members to fully evaluate both the value to local communities and value for money of the Cluster Fund approach.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 The creation of the Member Cluster Steering Groups and the Cluster was agreed at the formal meeting of the committee on the 12 March 2014. This proposal was one of a number of recommendations relating to the operation of the Guildford Local Committee facilitating closer joint working by both councils. The detail was further agreed at the formal meeting 17 June 2014.
- 1.2 The aim of the Cluster meetings was to provide a forum for representatives of both Councils to work together in engaging with their communities, identifying local priorities and potentially providing funding support to local projects.
- 1.3 Each Steering Group included the local county councillors from the cluster and an equivalent representation of borough councillors. Borough councillors were nominated by Guildford Borough Council.

2. ANALYSIS:

- 2.1 It had been agreed that each Member Steering Group would decide how to engage with local residents and each group decided to convene a local cluster meeting. The meetings, venues, agendas and publicity were planned and delivered by the members themselves. The meetings were held during October and November 2014.
- 2.2 Local residents with projects requiring support were invited to attend the cluster meetings to present their ideas.
- 2.3 It was the intention of the meetings to provide a joint council member 'surgery' where issues of local concern could be addressed. A summary of the activities of the Clusters is set out below:

Town Centre Cluster

- 2.4 The Town Centre Cluster agreed that they wanted the cluster to be open to all residents in the cluster area. Key organisations were invited including residents organisations who were asked to distribute the invite to their residents.
- 2.5 In the evening, time was set aside for all attendees to raise their local concerns, and to put forward suggestions for projects that could either alleviate or contribute to solving the issue. Members then considered all the bids following the meeting, and agreed how best to use the funding to support the groups, including agreeing to champion issues within their respective authorities to find a resolution to the issue.

Guildford Neighbourhoods Cluster

- 2.6 The Neighbourhoods Cluster agreed to hold an evening meeting that was open to all. Information about the meeting was circulated to local resident association's stakeholders and agencies. A website, posters and flyers were designed and both councils promoted the meeting via Twitter.
- 2.7 There were two local presentations at the meeting and, in addition, the councillors described the needs of their local communities. In summary, the Cluster Funding was divided three ways to support young people, community recreation and cohesion and environmental work.

Eastern Parishes Cluster

- 2.8 The Eastern Cluster meeting was held on the 13th of October 2014, Parish Council and Resident Association representatives present discussed a number of issues of local concern which included HGVs in Villages, Speed Limits, access to community facilities, localised flooding issues and road closures relating to cycling.
- 2.9 Localised flooding was identified as the most pressing priority and it was agreed that the Cluster budget for 14/15 would be utilised to purchase the use of an additional Highways Jetting vehicle for a period of weeks to conduct additional jetting work on priority works. These works were conducted through February 2015.

Western Parishes Cluster

- 2.10 The members of the Western Parishes Cluster agreed that they wanted to meet with Parish Council representatives to discuss the key local issues in the cluster area. From this discussion projects that would support the delivery of those key local issues would be funded where possible

The main areas that were discussed were the need to support communities in becoming more cohesive. This included flood resilience work, including flood forums (which could be funded through other funding streams and were directed accordingly), and increased gully clearing and jetting to ensure that areas of concern were clear, and also the need to support local groups in some map boards to promote community identity.

Cluster Funding Summary

- 2.11 For 2014/15 all of the available £70,000 of joint funding was allocated across the four clusters areas
- 2.12 The members of the member Steering Group supported the projects and initiatives that were identified as priorities to local people. The details of the projects can be found at **Annexe 2**.
- 2.13 For next year Guildford Borough Council has allocated £35,000 for a Cluster Fund.
- 2.14 For the financial year 2015-16 there will be no capital portion to the Members Allocation Fund. Members of the Local Committee will be asked by the Area Highways Manager in his Highways Update report 25 March 2015 to agree to transfer £35,000 to match the borough council allocation.

3. OPTIONS:

- 3.1 The Members of the Guildford Local Committee may decide if they wish the Cluster initiative to continue in operation in the next municipal year either with or without Cluster Funding
- 3.2 If the members of the Guildford Local Committee wish to continue with Cluster Funding they should agree to allocate £35,000 of the Highways budget to match fund the Borough Council allocation to create a Cluster Fund for 2015-16.

- 3.3 Should the Guildford Local Committee not agree that the Cluster initiative should continue in operation in the next municipal year, then Local Cluster meetings would not proceed and the Cluster Fund will not run during 2015-16.

4. CONSULTATIONS:

- 4.1 Members of the Guildford Local Committee have reviewed the cluster meetings held last year in private session.
- 4.2 The formal meeting 25 March 2015 is intended as consultation for the members to agree to the running of the Cluster initiative in 2015-16.

5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 The two councils agreed that identifying issues for local communities at an early stage through the cluster meeting and addressing the issues jointly was a sound approach for providing value for money.
- 5.2 The cluster funding, in many cases, was used to provide preventative interventions or encouraged self-reliance. The members agreed was a sound way to apply the funding because it may avoid greater future costs.
- 5.3 No Cluster Funds from either council will be carried forward to 2015-16.
- 5.4 Funding allocated from the Highways budget may only be spent on highways related works. It may be observed that over £38,000 of the 2014-15 budget was allocated to highways and highways related work.

6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 Both councils operate under a duty of public sector equality as laid out in the Equality Act 2010.
- 6.2 It is important for both councils to know and better understand their communities, the needs of local residents and to encourage individuals to engage with us. The cluster meetings are intended to increase this understanding, to listen and to improve our responses.

7. LOCALISM:

- 7.1 The local committees have a remit to provide decision making and monitoring at a local borough level.
- 7.2 Through the cluster meetings and funding the Guildford Local Committee has sought to bring the members even closer to residents and communities.

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 None

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Local Committee (Guildford) is asked to:

- (i) Note the activities undertaken by the Clusters in the first year of operation
www.surreycc.gov.uk/guildford

- (ii) Note the projects at **Annexe 2** supported by the Cluster Fund' 2014-15.
- (iii) Agree that the Cluster initiative should continue in operation in the next municipal year and request that Guildford Borough Council nominate members to the relevant Cluster Fund Steering Groups for 2015-16 at the first full Council meeting of the municipal year
- (iv) Note that, subject to committee approval of the recommendations set out within the Highways Update report 25 March 2015, Highways funding may only be spent against highways projects.
- (v) Agree that the guidelines and criteria at **Annexe 3** can be applied to the Guildford Borough Council funds during 2015-16.
- (vi) Agree that any Cluster Fund for 2015-16 be administered by the Surrey County Council Community Partnerships Manager.

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

- 10.1 Funding from Guildford Borough Council has been agreed within the Borough Council budget for 2015-16 to the amount of £35,000.
- 10.2 The Guildford Local Committee will decide if it wishes to contribute to next year's Cluster Fund through its Highways budget.
- 10.3 Subject to 10.2 Guildford Borough Council will be asked to nominate members to the Member Cluster Steering Groups 2015-16
- 10.4 Subject to 10.2 initial meetings with Cluster Steering Group members will be arranged.

Contact Officer:

Carolyn Anderson, Community Partnerships Team, Surrey County Council
01483 517336
Carolyn.anderson@surreycc.gov.uk

Consulted:

Members of the Guildford Local Committee

Annexes:

Annex 1: Cluster Area Map
Annex 2: Table of projects supported 2014-5
Annex 3: Guidelines and Criteria applied to Guildford BC funds during 2015-16.

Sources/background papers:

- 12 March 2014, Guildford Local Committee report: JOINT WORKING THROUGH THE GUILDFORD LOCAL COMMITTEE (LOCAL COMMITTEE PLUS)
 - 25 June 2014, Guildford Local Committee report: JOINT WORKING UPDATE
-