

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

LOCAL COMMITTEE (GUILDFORD)

DATE: 08 DECEMBER 2015



SURREY

LEAD OFFICER: MICHELLE COLLINS, COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS TEAM LEADER

SUBJECT: LOCAL COMMITTEE (GUILDFORD) CLUSTERS - END OF YEAR REPORT 2015/16

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 its second year, a Cluster Fund of £70,000 was agreed to support projects identified by local communities. This fund comprised £35,000 from the Surrey County Council Highways delegated budget which was equally matched by Guildford Borough Council.

The first purpose of this report is to review how Cluster funding was used for locally derived initiatives during the financial year 2014-15 and to summarise the ways in which councillors have allocated the Cluster funding in the second year of operation in 2015/16.

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 for both authorities to consider how to allocate funding to a Cluster Fund for the next financial year 2016/17 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 2015/16.
- (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 2016/17 at the first full Council meeting of the municipal year.
- (iv) Note that Highways funding may only be spent against highways projects as set out in the recommendations within the Highways Budget report 8 December 2015 (Item 14).
- (v) Agree that the guidelines and criteria at **Annexe 3** can be applied to the Guildford Borough Council funds during 2016/17.

- (vi) Agree that any Cluster Fund for 2016/17 be delegated for approval as discussed by the Cluster groups to the Surrey County Council Community Partnerships Team Leader (West Surrey).

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 supported by the Community Partnership Team at Surrey County Council. The meetings were held during October and November 2015.
- 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 discussion session 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 and local community groups and charities. A web page, posters and flyers were published and both councils promoted the meeting via Twitter. Guildford Borough Council also used all of their communication channels e.g. social media and radio to promote the event.
- 2.5 In the evening, feedback was given on the progress of previous projects supported by the Cluster in 2014/15; 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. Projects currently being delivered included: the Guildford Rowing Club - building of the new clubhouse would start in 2016, Guildford Library – tablets allowing staff to support Surrey residents getting to grips with the fast changing digital world, Underwater Hockey Club – equipment for a 2nd base in Guildford, Charlotteville Jubilee Trust, Spike Community Centre, work on the new Terrace will be completed in July 2016 and new furniture purchased, Freedom Programme - Support for victims of domestic abuse - to date 21 victims have attended the Freedom programme, it is followed by sessions from a life coach, to help victims with making decisions about their future, Saturday Activities Centre (SAC) – storage and furniture, to purchase banners, storage cupboards and furniture for a move to new premises.

- 2.6 Community Groups, charities, residents and a school present at the meeting discussed a number of issues of local concern which included: signage to community venues, advice centres and places on interest, a gap in provision of services in the borough of Guildford for sufferers of dementia particularly for people with a physical need and their carers', support for vulnerable adults searching for employment and aiming to be financially independent, regeneration of a school play area, better use of the Guildhall for the community, poor pedestrian facilities particularly for those with walking difficulties e.g. in the area of St Luke's GP Surgery and handrails for the steps on North Street down to Market Square, a poor stretch of road on Sydenham Road and a dip which floods on York Road to the side of Sandfill Primary School.
- 2.7 Members then considered all the bids following the meeting, and agreed how best to use the funding to support the groups see Annex 2, including agreeing to champion issues within their respective authorities to find a resolution to the issue.

Guildford Neighbourhoods Cluster

- 2.8 The Neighbourhoods Cluster agreed to hold an evening meeting that was open to all. Information about the meeting was circulated to local resident associations, stakeholders and agencies. A website, posters and flyers were published; both councils promoted the meeting via Twitter and Guildford Borough Council also used their communication channels.
- 2.9 In the evening feedback was given on the progress of previous projects supported by the Cluster in 2014/15. The goalposts in Bannisters Field had received well by residents who had been asking for more of the same, the new scout hut for 2nd Guildford Scouts had been underway and feedback was supportive and ditching and drainage works in Merrow were due to take place before the end of December 2015.

More groups attended this year than last and there were a variety of projects put forward, some including benches were taken forward individually by councillors, highways projects that had been raised by residents (including Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) along Northway) and improved pavements along Manor Way. It also included funding for some projects for adults with dementia. A full list is in Annex 2.

Eastern Parishes Cluster

- 2.10 The Eastern Parishes Cluster meeting was held on the 28 October 2015, in the evening feedback was given on the progress of previous projects supported by the Cluster in 2014/15. An update on the highways jetting to address localised flooding that was carried out in 2014 was given the work was still ongoing this year in addition to programmed washes. Jetting would be available for a week in November, December, January and March.
- 2.11 Parish Council representatives present discussed a number of issues of local concern which included potholes, monitoring speed, access to community facilities, localised flooding issues, drainage, and public footways/pavement. Consideration is currently being given to the options for the Cluster Funding and costs including: speed and volumes of cars measurement equipment and reconstruction of pavements.

Western Parishes Cluster

- 2.12 The members of the Western Parishes Cluster agreed that they would meet with Parish Council representatives to discuss the key local issues in the cluster area in advance of a meeting of the Members on the Cluster group. From this discussion projects that would support the delivery of those key local issues would be funded where possible.
- 2.13 Feedback on the projects from 2014/15 was very positive. Map boards in Ash had been well received by residents and funding for jetting and drainage of the cluster area had taken place over the spring. The two projects being taken forward by Pirbright Parish Council were coming into fruition and had been gratefully received.
- 2.14 The main areas that were discussed were: Parking solutions along The Oval, Wood Street, a vehicle activated sign (VAS) for Kings Road, Shalford, Pavement reconstruction along Wentworth Crescent, Ash, improvements works - Tree cutting back - Tongham Recreation Ground, toilet facilities, Tongham Recreation Ground, an arrangement between the Stag pub and the adjacent business park to help provide parking during non business working hours, anti skid works along White Lane, Ash Green.
- 2.15 Members considered all the bids at the meeting, and agreed how best to use the funding to support the parishes, see Annex 2, including the Surrey County councillors agreeing to look at their own Members' Allocation Funding to resolve issues.

Cluster Funding Summary

- 2.16 For 2015/16 all of the available £70,000 of joint funding will be allocated across the four clusters areas subject to further information and costing on some projects.
- 2.17 The members of the four cluster groups supported the projects and initiatives that were identified as priorities to local people. The details of the projects can be found at **Annexe 2**.
- 2.18 For next year Guildford Borough Council has allocated £35,000 for a Cluster Fund.
- 2.19 In the financial year 2015-16 there was 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 23 March 2016 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 2016/17.
- 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 would not run during 2016/17.

4. CONSULTATIONS:

- 4.1 Members of the Guildford Local Committee will review the cluster meetings for 2015/16 in private session in early 2016.
- 4.2 The formal meeting 23 March 2016 is intended as consultation for the members to agree to the running of the Cluster initiative in 2016/17.

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 this 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 2016/17.
- 5.4 Funding allocated from the Highways budget may only be spent on highways related works.

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.

ITEM 16

- 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 and second year of operation
- (ii) Note the projects at **Annexe 2** supported by the Cluster Fund 2015/16.
- (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 Budget report 8 December 2015 (Item 14), 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 2016/17 be delegated for approval as discussed by the Cluster Groups to the Surrey County Council Community Partnerships Team Leader (West Surrey).

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

- 10.1 Funding from Guildford Borough Council will be agreed within the Borough Council budget for 2016/17 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 Group members will be arranged.

Contact Officer:

Joanna Long, Community Partnerships Team, Surrey County Council
01483 517336
joanna.long@surreycc.gov.uk

Consulted:

Members of the Guildford Local Committee

Annexes:

Annex 1: Cluster Area Map

www.surreycc.gov.uk/guildford

Annex 2: Table of projects supported 2015/16

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
-

This page is intentionally left blank