

## COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE - 6 FEBRUARY 2001

**Agenda Item No: 4**

**Title: THE FRIENDS OF BRIDGE END GARDENS – REPRESENTATION**

**Author: Mick Purkiss (01799) 510430**

### **Summary**

- 1 This report advises Members of an invitation to appoint a representative to serve on the Executive Committee of the Friends of Bridge End Gardens and recommends that an appointment be made.

### **Background**

- 2 Charles Goldie, the Chairman of the Friends of Bridge End Gardens has invited the Council to appoint a representative to serve on its Executive Committee.
- 3 The Constitution of the Friends provides for the Council to be represented along with Saffron Walden Town Council, the Essex Gardens Trust and the Council for the Protection of Rural Essex. The representative will have the right to participate fully in the work of the Committee but will not have a vote in decisions. The reason for this is that under current charity law all full Members of the Committee with a right to vote must also be trustees of the charity with liability for all the decisions it takes. In addition, if they became trustees it would be necessary to notify the Charity Commission of a new appointment whenever a representative came to be changed by his or her nominating body.
- 4 The Friends is a voluntary body, registered as a charity in November 2000, with the objective of supporting the restoration, presentation, maintenance and further development of the Gardens and to encourage public knowledge, use and enjoyment of the Gardens.
- 5 The Chairman states that the Friends can only make the contribution that they wish to make to the future of the Gardens in full co-operation with the Council and knowledge of its plans. He adds that the Friends have greatly valued the advice and assistance which it receives from Council officers. He very much hopes that this co-operation will continue in what he hopes will be a new and exciting period of restoration and development of Bridge End Gardens.
- 6 Members will be aware of the recent progress which has been made in the restoration of the Gardens and in attracting external funding. The work of the Council's Bridge End Gardens Working Party has been particularly valuable. Officers consider that the proposed appointment will help strengthen co-operation between the Council and the Friends of Bridge End Gardens.

RECOMMENDED that an appointment be made to the Executive Committee of the Friends of Bridge End Gardens.

Background Papers: Letter from Friends of Bridge End Gardens dated 16 January 2001.

**Agenda Item No: 5**

**Title: FUTURE COMMISSIONING ARRANGEMENTS FOR SUPPORTING PEOPLE**

**Author: Helen Frost and Rod Chamberlain (01799) 510543 and (01799) 510508**

### **Summary**

- 1 This report advises Members of the progress being made with regard to the implementation processes which needs to be undertaken in order to successfully deliver “Supporting People “ arrangements from April 2003. It recommends as to how the implementation grant money should be committed.

### **Background**

- 2 It is Government policy to introduce, in April 2003, “Supporting People”. This is a new statutory integrated policy and funding framework for support services for vulnerable members of the community. A single revenue pot of money will be allocated to Local Authorities in the form of an annual grant. The Department of the Environment, Trade and the Regions (DETR) has suggested that the budget be formally held at County level and administered by a joint commissioning arrangement between the County and District Local Authorities, Health and Probation Services. Although, not ‘in control’ of the funds the County Council will act as the lead authority with responsibility to ensure compliance with the framework of the scheme. The DETR will audit the use of the funds before finally deciding the scale of allocations in subsequent years. It is important to note that it would appear that there is no new money for “Supporting People” and that the funding will be moved mostly from the care element currently included within Housing Benefit.

3 The aim of the “Supporting People” programme will be to provide housing support services to a wide range of vulnerable people including:

- (i) Older people
- (ii) People with mental health problems
- (iii) People with learning difficulties
- (iv) People with physical disabilities
- (v) Rough sleepers
- (vi) Ex-Offenders
- (vii) People with drug or alcohol problems
- (viii) Victims of domestic violence
- (ix) People with chronic illness, eg HIV/AIDS
- (x) Young people leaving care

This would enable them to remain, or establish themselves independently, in the community. This may be in a tenancy, their own home, or specialized supported housing.

4 By separating the support costs from the housing costs it is possible to forecast the true costs of the support services and fund accordingly. It is proposed that, after 2003, any financial help given to Housing Benefit claimants for counselling and support services will be withdrawn from their Housing Benefit and will need to be funded via the “Supporting People” grant. This will mean that Housing Benefit will from that date onwards only pay for housing costs, i.e. the ‘roof over your head’, and “Supporting People” will pay for support services needed in order for people to continue to live independently. It is expected that there will be a significant impact on the Council’s warden services although details are not yet clear.

5 Transitional Housing Benefit arrangements have been introduced to pay for support services until the introduction of “Supporting People”. Before 2003 there is a need to gather vital information, which will be used to inform long-term funding requirements. It will be necessary to undertake a local needs assessment and map the supply of all “supporting people” services already established in the district to ensure funding is available to maintain all current services. This mapping exercise is an extensive piece of work.

### **Implementation Funding**

6 The DETR has made available funds to assist with the implementation of “Supporting People”. At the beginning of November 2000 the implementation allocations for each Local Authority were announced. The figure for Uttlesford is £18,000. The DETR has stressed that in shire counties the Government is expecting a single co-ordinated response, made by the County Council on behalf of all the local authorities in that county, on how the funding will be utilized.

7 A countywide commissioning team will be established much of the groundwork will have to be undertaken at district level in order to properly reflect variations in needs and gaps in service whilst creating a realistic and

comprehensive “Supporting People” purchasing plan for the whole of Essex. It is envisaged that the work involved in mapping existing services and assessing local needs will be very labour intensive and there is no spare capacity within the existing housing services team to undertake this work.

- 8 There are three options open to the Council regarding the use of the funds.
- (a) A “go alone” proposal – this is thought to be unrealistic for Uttlesford as the funds available would not be adequate to recruit someone suitable.
  - (b) Uttlesford could join a group of Councils and the funding jointly available could result in recruiting a team of more junior staff supervised by a jointly approved senior officer.
  - (c) Uttlesford could work in partnership with a neighbouring Council.
- 9 Following discussions, Braintree DC has indicated, that it is in a similar position. It has been suggested that by combining both Council’s implementation allocations it would be possible to recruit somebody suitable to undertake the work on behalf of both Councils. This will need careful consideration to ensure that all costs associated with this appointment are covered within the allocation funding available and that no further costs are incurred by this Council. Provisional similar local agreements have been reached between authorities across Essex and this has formed the basis for the initial funding bid made by the County Council. It is intended that such arrangements will be reviewed in due course.
- 10 Should Members agree to this partnership arrangement with Braintree DC more detailed proposals would be submitted to a future meeting of the Internal Services Sub-Committee. It is however essential that progress is made on this issue.

RECOMMENDED that the joint approach with Braintree DC, to implementing “Supporting People” be approved.

Background Papers: Supporting People Consultation Documents – DETR and Essex County Council

**Agenda Item No:** 6  
**Title:** Large Scale Project Grant – Extension  
**Author:** Katrina Robinson (01799) 510563

### **Summary**

- 1 This report gives details of a request that has been received from a recipient of the Large Scale Project Grants. It recommends that payment be carried forward into the 2001/2002 financial year.

### **Background**

- 2 In 1995 Members approved the Large Scale Project Grant Policy which provides funding to properly constituted organisations towards the provision of facilities or equipment for the community. The policy states that “Grants will be made in respect of works completed after 1 April 2000 and before 9 March 2001. Projects completed outside of these dates will not be considered”.

### **Details of requests**

- 3 A request has been received from one recipient of the Large Scale Project Grant for its award to be carried over to the next financial year due to the following circumstances:-

**Newport Cricket Club** – Members made a grant of £1,000 to the club in order for it to increase its playing square thus enabling more matches to be played throughout the cricket season.

Unfortunately, due to the adverse weather conditions last year, the Cricket Club did not manage to carry out the necessary work to bring its project to fruition. In its letter of the 7 December 2000, the club states that work will not be able to commence until September 2001 and has requested an extension to March 2002. (The request from Newport Cricket Club is appended).

### **Opinion of the District Grants Advisory Panel**

- 4 The opinions of the Members of the District Grants Advisory Panel have been sought and it is in favour of the recipient’s grant being carried forward into the next financial year.

RECOMMENDED that the grant awarded to Newport Cricket Club be carried over into the 2001/2002 financial year in respect of its 2000/2001 Large Scale Project Grant awards.

Background Papers: Letter from Newport Cricket Club

**Agenda Item No: 7**

**Title: HATHERLEY HOUSE/COURT – FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS**

**Author: R Chamberlain (01799) 510508**

### **Summary**

- 1 This report advises the Committee of the current position in relation to Hatherley House/Court and recommends that Officers embark on negotiations with Essex County Council, on the issues contained within the report.

### **Background**

- 2 The County Council's policy with regard to Older Peoples' residential homes has been to transfer the majority of these establishments into the regulated private sector.
- 3 The County Council consulted agencies, including District Councils, in 2000 on the "Age Matters" proposals. Accordingly this Council raised a number of concerns about the document, and stressed that Hatherley House should remain as a County run scheme.
- 4 It has been suggested that if the Council's tenants at Hatherley Court were prepared to transfer to a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) along with the residents of Hatherley House, the whole complex may be viable for a RSL to continue to provide a mix of sheltered and residential accommodation. These proposals have been discussed with the tenants of Hatherley Court at meetings on two separate occasions. Also each tenant has been visited individually. On all three occasions there were overwhelming objections to this proposal as the tenants have expressed that they have no wish to transfer from the Council.
- 5 The Committee, at its meeting in December 2000 requested a further report on Essex County Council's proposals for Hatherley House once a decision had been made on its future.

### **The current position**

- 6 The County Council has now resolved that Hatherley House should be sold or leased as a going concern to the independent sector and expressions of interest are now being sought. Clearly this policy decision means that there are going to be some significant changes with regard to Hatherley House.
- 7 There now appears two possible options available regarding the future of Hatherley.

(a) Acceptance that Hatherley House and Hatherley Court operate as two separate schemes.

or

(b) Endeavour yet again, to try and transfer both Hatherley House and Court to a RSL in order to try and guarantee the joint facility as a whole. However as previously outlined in the report there was significant opposition to this from existing tenants of Hatherley Court when the earlier consultations took place last year.

8 It should be noted that to separate the facilities between Hatherley House and Hatherley Court is likely to incur substantial costs and this will need to be carefully planned.

9 Quite separate from the issue of the future of Hatherley House the County Council has indicated that it is likely that it can not continue to provide the Warden service for the tenants at Hatherley Court for much longer. Currently Uttlesford pays the County Council an agreed annual sum to provide this service. This will result in Uttlesford taking over the direct provision of this service which will incur further costs in upgrading the warden call equipment and to link the scheme to the Council's Control Centre.

10 Based on the County Council's decision Members advice is sought on a number of issues raised in this report in advance of negotiations with Officers with the County Council.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee note the current position regarding Hatherley House/Court and advises Officers in advance of negotiations with Essex County Council and report back to a future meeting of the Committee.

Background Papers: Age Matters Consultation Document.  
Correspondence from Essex County Council  
Dated: 6/12/00  
16/1/01