

CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY PLANNING AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

**Venue: Town Hall, Moorgate
Street, Rotherham.**

Date: Friday, 18 March 2005

Time: 10.00 a.m.

A G E N D A

1. To determine if the following matters are to be considered under the categories suggested in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.
2. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.
3. Minutes of the meeting held on 18th February, 2005 (herewith) (Pages 1 - 4)
4. Equip Project - Positive Action Training for B.M.E. Communities (report herewith) (Presentation by Simon Cooper, Strategic H.R.) (Pages 5 - 10)
5. Update on Rotherham R.E.C. (Update by Zafar Saleem, Equalities and Diversity Manager)
6. Exclusion of the Press and Public
That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 5 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (financial assistance provided by the Council).
7. Grant Aid Funding Issues - Update (report attached) (Pages 11 - 14)
(Exempt under Paragraph 5 of the Act – report contains information relating to financial assistance provided by the Council)
8. Date of Next Meeting - Friday, 15th April, 2005 at 10.00 a.m.

**CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY PLANNING AND SOCIAL INCLUSION
FRIDAY, 18TH FEBRUARY, 2005**

Present:- Councillor Robinson (in the Chair); Councillors Ali and Burton.

An apology was received from Councillor Sangster.

29. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet Member for Community Planning and Social Inclusion held on 21st January, 2005 be received.

30. ROTHERHAM CREDIT UNION DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

The Chairman welcomed Jane Woodford from the Rotherham Credit Union Development Agency who gave a short presentation. The presentation and report submitted drew specific attention to:-

- Support from the Council.
- Key Achievements – Credit Unions.
- Key Achievements – Training.
- Key Achievements – Funding.
- Overview – National Profile.
- Overview – Policy.
- Case Studies.
- Key Challenges.
- Future Plans.

A question/answer session ensued and the following issues were raised:-

- Collation of statistics of “bad” risk.
- Financial exclusion.
- Level of charged interest.
- Awareness raising.
- Use of local volunteers and perception of this by members.
- Accessibility for members.
- Sustainability of the Credit Unions.
- Screening process.
- Competitive interest rates.

Resolved:- That Jane Woodford be thanked for her very informative presentation and the leaflets circulated.

(Councillor Ali declared a personal interest, being a member of a Credit Union.)

31. DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN - PROGRESS

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Head of Policy and Partnerships, which detailed progress to date towards the development of a new Corporate Plan for the Authority, set out further work needed and the other areas of work this would impact on.

Background information was provided on the new Vision and Corporate Plan and how the format of the Corporate Plan, with emphasis on performance and measurability, would contribute to re-enforcing a performance management culture.

The Corporate Plan would need high input from Members, staff and the public in general and would be done within a phased and systematic process prior to the final version of the Corporate Plan being presented to the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee for scrutiny on 11th March, 2005

Consultants were originally engaged to provide advice on the consultation process. As they were unable to complete the work to the agreed specification, the work had been brought back "in house". Verification of the objectivity and correctness of the consultation would be undertaken by Sheffield Hallam University.

Attention was drawn to the context of the Corporate Plan, proposed consultation programme and how the whole document must reflect ambition, but within a realistic and achievable framework.

Members noted the plans for making Rotherham safe and Rotherham fair and requested that racism and how to tackle racial discrimination should be included, in addition to the equalities standards.

Members acknowledged the amount of ground to be covered within the Corporate Plan, how this would be disseminated via the M3 Managers and then down to staff for input, and how this would be fed into the bigger picture.

Resolved:- That the current draft Corporate Plan be noted.

(2) That the format and direction of the Corporate Plan and its proposals for the consultation process be endorsed.

32. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:- That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (information relating to financial assistance provided by the Council).

33. GRANT AID FUNDING ISSUES - UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Partnership Officer (Regeneration), which provided an update on the grant aid levels for 2005/06 for a number of initiatives.

Further consideration had been given to the current budgets with a recommendation that the existing arrangements for the community element of CERB and the mainstream grant budgets remain in force.

Progress with the Service Level Agreements was provided, which had been sent out to organisations during January. There would be effective monitoring of the Service Level Agreements over the funded period and expected to be signed off in March, 2005.

Approval was also being sought for the elements of a three year Service Level Agreement to enable Voluntary Action Rotherham to concentrate on specific project activity following an alternative organisation structure, including a reduction on the community development staffing requirement. This was clearly identified in the report submitted along with the current funding costs and the proposed funding levels for 2005/06, 2006/07 and 2007/08.

Members raised various issues in relation to Voluntary Action Rotherham and were informed that the funding proposed was linked to the sub-regional investment plan, previously submitted. The proposals to reduce the numbers of Community Development Workers formed part of Voluntary Action Rotherham's own re-organisation and were indicative of where they could attract alternative funding.

A review had also been suggested into support provided to the B.M.E. voluntary/community sector with a view to establishing an overarching strategy dealing with various issues. Following further meetings it was suggested that an independent consultant be appointed to carry out this work. Member involvement may also be proposed in the Steering Group that would oversee this work.

Consideration should be given to other agencies and organisations in the area who could assist with the Strategy.

Work had also been contracted to the Community Legal Services Partnership via the Rotherham Advice and Information Network. A working brief had been agreed and a Working Group established to ensure the work was completed within the required timescales.

Resolved:- (1) That the contents of the report and the work being undertaken on the Service Level Agreements with organisations be noted.

(2) That the existing arrangements for grant budgets with some internal administrative adjustments as required by agreed.

(3) That the funding to Voluntary Action Rotherham over the next three years at the levels 2005/06 - £180,000, 2006/07 - £200,000 and 2007/08 - £200,000 be approved.

(4) That the progress with the B.M.E. Voluntary/Community Sector review and Councillor Ali's involvement in the Steering Group be noted.

(5) That the Legal Advice Sector Strategy be noted and that a presentation on the work undertaken by agreed to take place at the May meeting with a full report and funding recommendations at the meeting in June, 2005.

34. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved:- That the next meeting be held on Friday, 18th March, 2005 commencing at 10.00 a.m.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member (Community Planning and Social Inclusion) and Advisors
2.	Date:	18th March 2005
3.	Title:	Equip Project – Positive Action Training
4.	Programme Area:	Resources

5. Summary

The Equip project is aimed at providing twelve month training placements in the Council's Programme Areas for individuals from Black and Minority Ethnic communities. The training and experience gained during the placements will increase the chances of the trainees entering mainstream employment.

A presentation will be given at the meeting, this report provides useful background information.

6. Recommendations

That Members note the contents of this report and welcome progress being made with the Equip project.

7. Proposals and Details

The Race Relations Act permits positive action in relation to training where over the previous twelve months no-one from a particular racial group, or only very few persons from that racial group, have been doing a certain type of work. In such circumstances it is lawful to offer training only for people from those racial groups. The overall representation of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) workers in the Council is below that of the working age population from BME communities in Rotherham and representation amongst individual Programme Areas is variable, it will therefore be possible to offer positive action training to individuals from BME communities.

Funding has now been secured from the PSA, ODPM Capacity Fund Bid and the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund to support 10 placements across the Council.

The project will provide 12 month placements commencing in May 2005. Continuation of the project beyond this period will be dependent on Programme Areas providing mainstream funding or securing funding from external sources. A plan of activity needed to move the project forward from October 2004 to the commencement of placements in May 2005 is attached at appendix 1. The success of the project will depend on Programme Areas identifying appropriate training placement opportunities. Suggested criteria for assessing placement opportunities include:

- Areas of work where BME people are under-represented
- Areas of work where recruitment difficulties are being experienced or which are likely to offer opportunities for future employment
- Areas of work where adequate support can be provided to trainees

During their 12 month placement trainees should receive learning opportunities relevant to the work area or job in which they have been placed as well as core employability skills such customer service, ICT and job seeker skills which will enhance future employment prospects. Trainees will be paid an allowance of £7000 to help facilitate their attendance for 37 hours per week. A learning contract will be developed which will set out the Council's and the trainee's obligations during the placement.

The project will be supported by the recruitment of a part-time Co-ordinator and the formation of a management group including representatives of the Council's Black and Minority Ethnic Worker's Network and Rotherham Ethnic Minorities Alliance. The group will offer a forum for discussion and resolution of any issues arising during the development and operation of the project.

The Black Workers Network and REMA have supported the development of the project. The Network will provide a potential source of mentors who will support trainees during their placement whilst REMA will play a vital role in linking with local communities to market the scheme, attract candidates and help to search for future funding opportunities.

It is hoped that 80% of the trainees secure employment before the end of their placement or upon the completion of the placement.

8. Finance

A total of £120,000 is available to fund training allowances, the creation of a part-time Co-ordinator post, marketing and evaluation costs, administration and core skills training.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The success of the project will be judged on the numbers of trainees able to access employment as a result of their placement. Successful job outcomes will be dependent on the availability of appropriate job vacancies. The success of the project will therefore be dependent on some factors beyond the quality of training provided.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The scheme will help to overcome barriers to employment faced by BME communities thereby contributing to increasing diversity in our workforce which is an important element of our core value of becoming a better employer. Diversity is an increasingly important theme in service inspections and the CPA process itself and positive action measures such as the Equip project demonstrate the Council's commitment to diversity in the workforce.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

A plan of activities leading to the commencement of placements in May 2005 is attached at appendix 1. The project has been the subject of discussions with the Council's Black and Minority Ethnic Workers Network, Rotherham Ethnic Minority Alliance, the Corporate Equalities and Diversity Strategy Group and was a workshop topic at a consultation event on the BME Housing Strategy.

Carol Mills

Executive Director, Resources

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Appendix 1 - Equip Project Plan

Oct 04	Report to CMT Feedback to CEDSG – 6/10/04 Agree funding code structure								
Nov 04	Identify link officers in Programme Areas								
Dec 04	Identify Programme Area traineeships								
Jan 05	Begin Production of traineeship JDs & PSs and application packs								
Feb 05					Discuss location of Project Co-ordinator post with HR SMT Finalise Job description and Person Spec for Co-ordinator				
Mar 05					Advertise Co-ordinator post				
Apr 05					Advertise traineeships Run roadshows & other outreach activities		Appoint Co-ordinator Commencement and Induction of Co-ordinator		
May 05									

Oct 04	Meet with Riley's to discuss recruitment and marketing – 22/10/04						
Nov 04							
Dec 04	Produce marketing materials						
Jan 05					Commence Design of induction process for managers and trainees		
Feb 05							
Mar 05							
Apr 05	Hold workshop for potential applicants Receive applications Undertake selection process, appoint trainees, complete pre-traineeship checks (into May)						
May 05	Placements commence				Run induction for trainees and managers		
						Internal advert to attract mentors Appoint mentors Deliver mentor training	

By virtue of paragraph(s) 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted