



District Regeneration Working Party

Draft Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 28 August 2014 at 2pm in The Kasen Room

Present:

Councillors:	Councillor Steven North (Chair)	Cllr SN
	Councillor Glenn Harwood MBE	Cllr GH
	Councillor Roger Glithero	Cllr RG
	Councillor Richard Lewis	Cllr RL
Officers:	Sharn Matthews, Executive Director	SM
	Mike Deacon, Head of Environmental Services	MD
	Mike Greenway, Community Partnerships Manager	MG
	Su Davies, External Funding Manager	SD
	Sean Silver, Community Partnerships Officer	SS
Minutes:	Barbara Wiggins, Democratic Services Officer	BW

ACTION

1. **Apologies**

1.1. Apologies had been received from:-

- Councillor David Brackenbury
- David Oliver, Chief Executive
- Katy Everitt, Head of Resources & Organisational Development
- Lisa Hyde, Head of Customer & Community Services
- Jenny Walker, Environmental Protection Manager
- Glenn Hammons, Chief Finance Officer

2. **Minutes of previous meeting held on 5 June 2014 and matters arising**

- 2.1. The minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 June 2014 were agreed as a true record. These minutes had been approved by the Policy & Resources Committee at its meeting 28 July 2014. There were no matters arising.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

3.1. **Councillor Richard Lewis**

Item:	Item 6 – Community Facilities Fund 2014/15
Nature of interest:	Councillor Lewis is a member of Rushden Town Council
DPI/Other Interest	Other

Councillor Glenn Harwood MBE

Item:	Item 6 – Community Facilities Fund 2014/15
Nature of interest:	Councillor Harwood has an interest in relation to St Mary the Virgin Church, Higham Ferrers.
DPI/Other Interest	Other

4. **Revised Terms of Reference**

4.1. SM tabled the revised Terms of Reference for the Working Party. The changes were agreed.

5. **Future of the Empty Homes Project**

5.1. A report was tabled to update Members on the current status of the project and to request further funding from the Council's New Homes Bonus (NHB) allocation, to allow its continuation in 2015-16.

5.2. Working alongside Corby Borough Council (CBC), the Empty Homes Project was originally set up in March 2011 as a result of central government funding given to selected local authorities. The project was successful but was no longer jointly financed with CBC; however the Empty Homes Specialist continued to work with Corby and Wellingborough and shared best practice.

5.3. Since commencement, 138 properties had been brought back into use. There was a rolling Top 50 properties list which was the key information the project worked from. These properties had been empty for the longest time. From the 138 properties noted in the report, 59 from the Top 50 list had been brought back into use. Those properties brought back into use would result in a minimum of £828,000 of additional NHB income to the council over 6 years.

5.4. The Council had been praised for its work on Empty Homes and had featured in the best practice guide produced by the Homes and Communities Agency. It had also been featured on the former BBC's National Empty Homes Loan Scheme, which had since ended.

5.5. Empty properties were a continuing problem and the project had been well received by members and the public. There was a risk that if funding was not forthcoming, empty properties in the district would increase. Previous funding of £13,000 per year over 4 years had generated £800,000; a 1500% return. To continue the project, the provision of funding on a year-by-year basis was needed. Funding to continue through to 2015/16 would be £13,000 from Stream 3 of the fund.

5.7. Members agreed to **Resolve to recommend** to Policy & Resources Committee approval for the allocation of additional funding, firstly from the Homelessness Grant and then New Homes Bonus receipts as required, as stated in section 6.1 of the Empty Homes Project.

SM and MD left the meeting prior to discussion on the following item.

6. **Community Facilities Fund 2014/15 – 2nd stage applications**

6.1. A report was tabled detailing the Second Stage Applications for the Community Facilities Fund 2014/15. Sixteen applicants had been invited to apply and from that, 13 completed applications had been received by the deadline. Following an administrative error, one further application was accepted.

6.2. Members noted that the NHB reserve allocation for the CFF in 2014/15 was £302,534 and the total amount requested by the 14 applications was £439,420.

6.2. Members discussed each of the applications noting that application numbers 13 and 14 had not been received by the deadline. Members agreed the following:

App. No.	Applicant/project	Funding requested	Proposed award	Rationale (where applicable)
1	Raunds Town Council Install wooden ramps to replace existing skate park at Amos Park, Raunds	7,000	7,000	
2	Diamonds Gymnastic Club Purchase of equipment to improve facilities and safety	6,300	6,300	
3	Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Higham Ferrers Installation of a new sound system	3,000	No award	Members felt that the proposed sound system would be more beneficial to the church congregation rather than the wider community.
4	Higham Ferrers Town Council Installation of Skateboard Park including CCTV at Saffron Road Recreation Ground	35,000	35,000	
5	Rushden & Higham Ferrers RUFC Improve Clubhouse, kitchen and changing facilities and car park	50,000	40,000	The applicant indicated they would accept a £10K reduction.
6	Rushden Historical Transport Society Purchase of Victorian Goods Yard and shed. Development of Heritage Centre and car park	50,000	40,000	The applicant indicated they would accept a £10K reduction.
7	Rushden Town Council Redesign and replace existing skate ramp	35,000	35,000	
8	Oundle Town Rowing Club Develop Clubhouse facilities for wider community use including use by Northants Disability	50,000	No award	Members had concerns about the ability to secure other funding,

	Rowing Assoc.			some of which the applicant had not yet applied for. Members also had concerns about accessibility of the clubhouse by the wider community.
9	Kings Cliffe Community Sports Build 3 tennis courts and 2 netball/basketball courts	50,000	35,000	The applicant indicated they would accept up to a 50% reduction.
10	Kings Cliffe Parish Council Create pocket park from 10 acres of 'village field'	50,000	40,000	The applicant indicated they would accept a reduction but did not specify an amount.
11	Ringstead Community Group Park re-development to enable access and improve play equipment	27,000	27,000	
12	Nassington Pre-School Extension of existing property to offer space to community group	44,000	No award	Members felt there was sufficient provision with existing facilities in the village.
15	Higham Ferrers Town Council Build storage facility including toilets and outdoor seating alongside existing pavilion	30,000	No award	Members felt that a storage facility did not fully fit the purposes for a community facility.
16	Headway East Northants Upgrade toilets and women's restroom	2,120	2,120	
Totals		439,420	267,420	

Amount requested by projects as a total	439,420	
NHB reserve available for CFF 2014/15	302,534	
Total amount of awards proposed	267,420	
Surplus	35,114	

6.3 Councillor Lewis stated that he considered it wrong, when allocating certain amounts of money, that Members did not take the opportunity of awarding the full amounts. He said that this was not a cost reduction exercise and there would be some hardship to those who had taken a reduction.

6.4 Members agreed to **Resolve to Recommend** to the Policy & Resources Committee that the proposed grant awards are approved as follows:-

1. Application numbers: 3, 8, 12 and 15 are **not awarded** funding from the CFF 2014/15, the reasons set out in table 6.2 above.
2. Application numbers: 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11 and 16 are **awarded** funding from the CFF 2014/15, the amounts per individual project as set out in table 6.2 above.

7. **Any other business**

7.1 No items were raised.

8. **Date of Next Meeting**

8.1. The date of the next meeting would be arranged in due course; SP to finalise date with Members and Officers.

SP

The meeting closed at 3.50 pm.

DO/BW 29.8.14