



TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Democratic Services

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Date: 23 May 2013

Dear Councillor Hyman,

Topic Group B: Review of Community Asset Framework

I wish to take this opportunity to thank you and your officers for their attendance at a meeting of the above Topic Group on 16 May 2013.

The Topic Group very much welcomed the opportunity to explore the issues raised in the draft report which related to formalising a range of partnership and commissioning arrangements between the Council and voluntary and community sector organisations, as well as fulfilling our obligations in relation to the Localism Act 2011. We felt that the overall approach to revisit the terms in which Council property is rented and maintained by community groups is one which is long overdue. It is with this in mind that we support, in principle, the proposals to refresh and put on a more formal footing the relationships between the Council and community organisations for the benefit of all parties involved.

You will recall that Members of the Topic Group questioned whether any consultation had taken place and Members were advised that Third Sector partners had made comments on the proposals at an early stage. Members expressed the view that, in relation to the nature of the report and recommendations presented to them on 16 May 2013, there was scope to enhance the approach to consultation. Members would like to be assured that an appropriate level of consultation has taken place which is proportionate to the significance and impact of the proposals. It was suggested in the meeting that advice be sought on this point from appropriate colleagues within the Council. On behalf of the Topic Group, I am confident that the Executive and officers would also welcome this level of assurance too. Whilst on the theme of providing assurance, and as a result of the recommendations' wide-ranging impact, the Executive Member may wish to ensure that matters relating to equalities have been considered and risks appropriately mitigated.

The Topic Group identified that the work generated as a result of agreeing the report and the recommendations would have a significant impact on officers within EGP and the wider

organisation. We are concerned that there appears to be no clearly defined resource/s within EGP in particular to deliver this project to a high standard.

In summary, the Topic Group were of the view that it may be helpful for the Executive to take a decision, at its meeting on 24 June 2013, which concentrated on the overarching principles of the refreshed approach and the need to meet legislation to include:

1. Refreshed approach to formalising partnerships with community groups to include flexibility for exceptions to be made;
2. Agreement of a Community Right to Bid procedure;
3. Agreement of the overall approach to community asset transfer.

Members felt that more detailed information on the impact of such changes should take the form of a further report to the Executive at a later date. By doing this, the Topic Group felt that the report could be further enhanced with information relating to an indicative implementation plan and, if appropriate, further consultation with stakeholders. When this was raised at the meeting, it was clear to the Topic Group that consideration would be given to this request.

Once again, I wish to thank you and your officers for the enabling the Topic Group to consider this report prior to its agreement by the Executive. We applaud the spirit of the approach taken in order to bring both structure and clarity to the ways in which the Council uses its estate for the benefit of the Trafford community.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor John Reilly
Chairman of Scrutiny Topic Group B

Cc Helen Jones
Rachel Crawshaw-Roberts
Cllr Mrs Dixon
Cllr Higgins
Cllr Bowker
Cllr Cordingley