

Environment, Health & Wellbeing Cabinet Advisory Committee

Health & Wellbeing Portfolio Post Meeting Update – Cabinet Member Cllr. Angela Harrison

At the Cabinet Advisory Committee meeting held on 25 January the update report from the Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing detailed a grant allocation that has been made to Sheppey Digital Cafes project run with oversight by Sheppey Matters as part of the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) grant received from Kent County Council (KCC) for the Digital Inclusion project. It was raised by a committee member (who is a Trustee) that Sheppey Matters had no knowledge of this project nor the grant allocation, so the Cabinet Member agreed to take this away and provide an update.

The grant allocation was made following discussions held between Swale's Community Engagement & Social Inclusion Officer and an officer representing Sheppey Matters. There had been an ongoing dialogue via email between these officers surrounding the potential for a project of this nature and how Sheppey Matters could assist with the delivery and a meeting was held at Swale Media Arts Centre at the end of November / beginning of December time. It was agreed that Sheppey Matters would formulate a detailed proposal for the scheme and Swale would make the grant allocation to avoid the funds being allocated elsewhere.

Since that time, Swale chased this proposal document so that we could finalise the grant allocation prior to the Community Engagement & Social Inclusion Officer leaving his role at Swale Borough Council at Christmas time. Swale discussed the lack of grant payment with KCC and they agreed to leave the allocation as it currently stands and await the proposal. We now know that the officer from Sheppey Matters hasn't been working and it appears the information regarding these discussions had not been shared with his colleagues.

Swale's Community Development Manager and Sheppey Matters Chief Executive Officer have been in discussion about the project and grant allocation over the last few days since it came to light that Sheppey Matters were not aware of the project plans and it was agreed that Sheppey Matters would look into what projects the fund could potentially support in place of the Digital Cafes. Swale agreed to approach KCC to gain approval for reallocating the funds and would make contact with each of the four existing grant recipients to identify how the now unallocated funds could further support the digital inclusion projects being delivered by each.
