

BARNSLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Dearne Area Council Meeting

Date: 2nd February, 2015

Community Magazines

1. Purpose of Report

Seek Area Council support for the introduction of a twice-yearly community magazine for each Area Council.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- 2.1 The Area Council approve the production of a community magazine for their area as outlined in this report, for a trial of two editions for one year.**
- 2.2 The Area Council note the human and financial resource requirements linked to this approach, including officer and member time and the distribution cost of approximately £3,000 per area council per year (exact costs to be determined through negotiation).**
- 2.3 The Area Council note the process and timescales for signing off the publications.**

3. Background

- 3.1 Open Door, the council's magazine, has been delivered to homes across the borough since Spring 2009. Research shows us that the publication is not well received or well read. Our residents have told us that they like to access information electronically. This is in line with national research showing that more people are accessing information online, and view spending on printed publications by local authorities as not a good use of public money.**
- 3.2 The decision to cease publication of Open Door magazine was made by cabinet in August 2014, as part of the council's budget proposals. The final issue will be distributed in March 2015.**
- 3.3 This gives us an opportunity to look at how we can make our communication more community focussed, telling people about what's happening where they live, and encouraging them to get involved.**

- 3.4 Business intelligence data has highlighted that residents living in the areas of Central, North, North East and South would welcome news in the form of a community newsletter through their door.
- 3.5 Community newsletters would work alongside existing council communication activity to keep residents informed of the work of Area Councils.
- 3.5 It is viable to produce a community magazine for each of the six areas twice a year. Each magazine would let local residents and businesses know about the great things happening locally through our Area Councils, Ward Alliances and neighbourhood networks, and how they can be a part of it.
- 3.6 The communications and marketing team would commission this contract with a supplier at no cost to the council. The costs of the magazine would be funded by advertising. The communications and marketing team would continue with traditional and new approaches to keeping residents informed, such as issuing news to media, posting on Facebook and Twitter, informing employees, and producing Open News, the Chronicle supplement.
- 3.7 The intention is for the first issues to be published in October 2015.

4 **Funding the magazine**

- 4.1 A number of options have been considered to deliver a high quality newsletter straight to peoples' doors at minimal or nil cost by producing a magazine that is supplemented through advertising.
- 4.2 The best options have been outlined below, with the recommended option identified.

Company	Number of magazines per Area	Space for editorial content	Cost per Area, per issue
Barnsley Chronicle	5,000 copies A5, 24 page magazine	14 pages	£1546.33 +VAT
Barnsley Chronicle	5,000 copies A5, 16 page magazine	7 pages	£1,121.54 + VAT
CIS Group RECOMMENDED METHOD	17,500 copies A5, 24 page magazine	12 pages	Free

- 4.3 The best option for producing the magazines at no cost is the proposal from CIS Group Ltd.
- 4.4 Specifications:
- Number of copies 15,000 – 17,500 for each Area Council.
 - Size of publication A5, 24 pages.
- 4.5 Content:
- Front cover - different for each of the Area Council.
 - 12 pages editorial - set aside for Area Councils. Different content for each area council.
 - 12 pages sold to local advertisers including partners.
- 4.6 Area Managers, in consultation with Area Chairs, would create the content for the magazines, and approve the intended advertisements.

5. Distribution

- 5.1 Some area councils have expressed a desire to distribute the magazine to people’s homes, although this isn’t essential. Other options could be pursued, such as having copies for collection in community venues and local businesses.
- 5.2 If areas councils wish to pay for door to door distribution, indicative figures are provided below. The costs would rise if different methods of distribution were chosen by different areas. The most cost effective solution would be to arrange the same method across all areas.

Method	Household coverage each	Distribution type	Estimated annual cost per area for 2 issues
Royal Mail	99.5%	Door to door	£4,000
Solus (independent distributor) RECOMMENDED METHOD	98.4%	Door to door	£2,600
Inclusion in free newspapers & Royal Mail	98.09%	Door to door	£2,800
Inclusion in free newspapers and Solus	97.7%	Door to door	£2,000

6 Working with other council services

6.1 Features focussing on other council services that apply to all areas such as waste, school admissions, cultural events may be included if it is viewed to be relevant and considered appropriate by Area Managers. The communications and marketing team would provide this content.

7 Working with partners

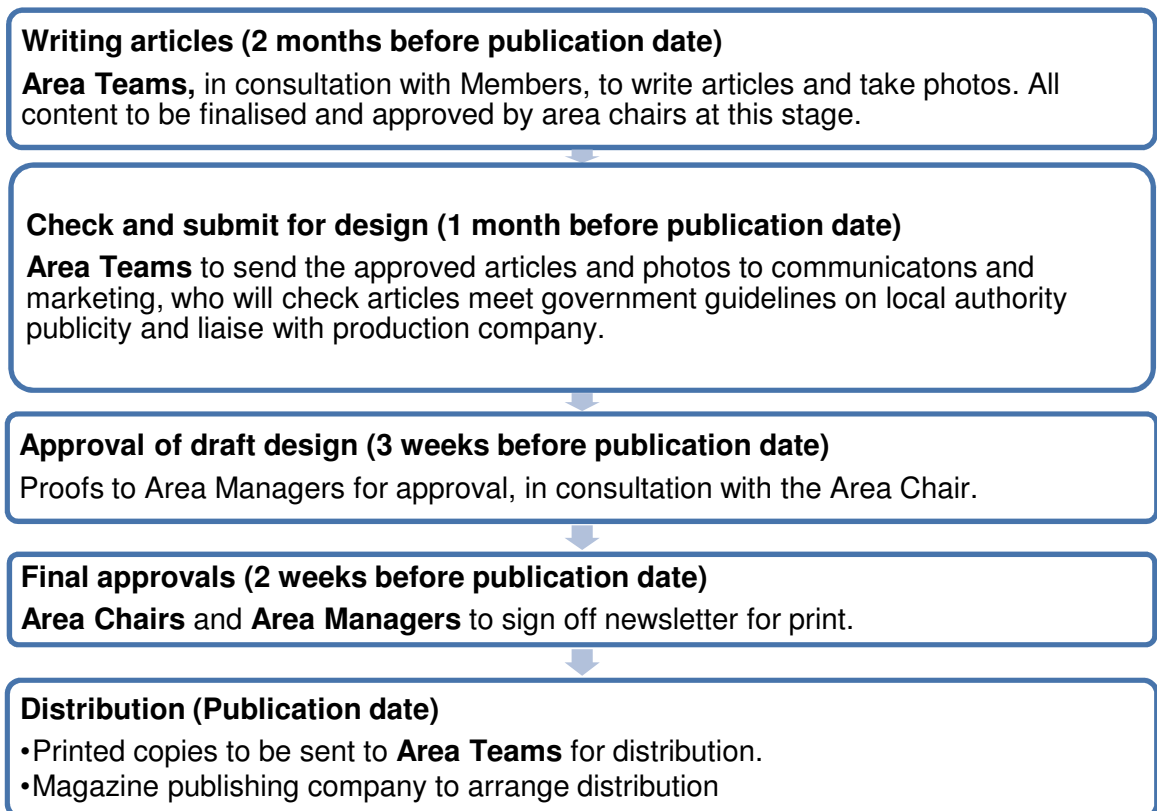
This approach is a step away from the one size fits all approach previously adopted. Its focus needs to be on local news and as such the partners involved may vary between areas. As the drivers/ facilitators of a lot of this community action, Area Councils can influence the desire to advertise in the publication at a local level. The Communications and Marketing team will talk to borough-level partners such as the college and police about the advertising opportunity this presents.

8 What would be involved in producing each issue?

8.1 Each area would need to provide enough stories to fill 12 pages of A5. The following word counts are suggested as a guide:

- Full page = 200 words plus pictures or 250 words without pictures.
- Half page = 150 words.

8.2 In order to produce and deliver each magazine, clear roles and responsibilities will need to be agreed. These are outlined in the flow chart below:



9 Risks

9.1 **Risk:** Failure of company to sell the advertising space.

Mitigation: All the companies identified in this report are experienced at funding the production of producing a magazine through selling advertising space. They understand the market and this is reflected in their offer. As part of the contract the company are liable for the cost of unsold advertising space.

9.2 **Risk:** Inappropriate advertising sold

Mitigation: Area managers have sign off of all advertisements to avoid any potential risks of unwanted association. It would be made clear in the magazine what content was an advertisement and what were Area Council articles.

9.3 **Risk:** Area councils unable to generate enough content.

Mitigation: Area Councils and Wards Alliances are now well established. The production of the Area Reviews have highlighted that there is a lot of activity happening out in the areas. Discipline and planning will be required to create articles and get images ahead of deadlines. Communications and marketing will provide a clear schedule to work to.

9.4 **Risk:** Delays in approval process. The news will be generated from a number of sources, both internal and external.

Mitigation: The flow chart shows that articles will be approved by area chairs before being sent to the communications and marketing team for the check against local authority publicity guidelines and submission to the company for design. The production schedule will make the deadline clear for approved articles to be submitted.

9.5 **Risk:** Magazines aren't distributed.

Mitigation: Effective distribution methods will need to be agreed and established by the Area Chairs and Area Teams. This report highlights options if the Area Councils wished to pay for distribution. Other options could be pursued, such as having copies for collection in community venues and local businesses.

10 Proposed timescales

- **Consultation with Area Councils:** January to March
- **Sign contracts with preferred suppliers:** March/April
- **Work commences on the Autumn edition:** July
- **Approved articles submitted for the Autumn edition:** Mid August
- **Artwork from designers:** End of August
- **Final approvals:** Mid September
- **Print:** End of September
- **Distribution starts:** October

11. Links to example magazines produced for other areas

<http://www.threerivers.gov.uk/Default.aspx/Web/A-To-Z-Directory-Of-Services>

<http://www.rutland.gov.uk/pdf/Rutland%20Council%20Tax%20Booklet%202014-15-L%5B1%5D.pdf>

http://www.rugby.gov.uk/downloads/download/1341/council_tax_leaflet

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Date: 20/1/15