

## BARNSLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

**North Area Council Meeting**

**Date: 1<sup>st</sup> June 2015**

**Agenda Item: 8**

**Report of the**

**North Area Council Manager**

### **A Community Magazine for North Area Council**

#### **1. Purpose of Report**

Seek Area Council support for the introduction of a twice-yearly community magazine to complement the work proposed in North East, South, Dearne and Penistone areas.

#### **2. Recommendations**

**It is recommended that:**

- 2.1 The Area Council approve the production of a community magazine for their area as outlined in Appendix 1, for a trial of two editions for one year. This details the funding, process and specification for the magazines.**
- 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 was 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 issue to be published in December 2015.

#### **4 Magazine Specification, funding and process**

- 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. Appendix 2 provides the potential costs that would be incurred for an option that did not include advertising.
- 4.2 The Area Council would need to commit to funding the distribution costs with should be no more than £3,000 for both editions of the publication
- 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 Working with other council services**

5.1 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.

### **6 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. The editorial team will have the opportunity to object to adverts as part of the drafting process.

### **7 What would be involved in producing each issue?**

7.1 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.

7.2 The North Area has agreed if the publications goes ahead, the content for each ward area will be the responsibility of the Ward Councillors and

their Ward Alliance. This must be submitted to the editorial team at 8 weeks prior to submission.

## **8** **Risks**

8.1 **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.

8.2 **Risk:** Inappropriate advertising sold

**Mitigation:** The editorial team will 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.

8.3 **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.

8.4 **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.

8.5 **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.

8.5 **Risk:** The proposal fails due to lack of buy in the Area Councils: -  
To ensure that this proposal is deliverable at no cost for production the identified supplier specified that at least 5 of the Area Councils must commit to the project.

**Mitigations:** At this time North East, South, Deame and Penistone areas have all agreed in principle. Central have declined the offer. The decision by North area is pivotal to the viability of this project proposal.

## 9. 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](http://www.rugby.gov.uk/downloads/download/1341/council_tax_leaflet)

## BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Area Chairs Meeting**

**Date: 1<sup>st</sup> June 2015**

**Report of Head of Communications**

### **Community Magazines**

#### **1. Purpose of Report**

Confirm Area Councils' commitment to produce a twice-yearly community magazine for five out of six area councils, the first issue to be produced in the first week of December 2015.

#### **2. Recommendations**

**It is recommended that:**

**2.1 On behalf of their Area Council, Area Chairs give support for a one year contract for the production of a community magazine for their area, as outlined in the report circulated to Area Councils in December-March 2015. It is expected that this contract could be signed in June 2015.**

**2.2 Area Chairs note the human and financial resource requirements linked to this approach, including officer and member time and the distribution cost which are now accurate based on the number of households in each area. There is no design or print cost for the magazine. This will be paid for by advertising income.**

**2.3 Area Chairs note the process and timescales for producing the publications in time.**

#### **3. Magazine specification**

**3.1 Supplier – Community Information Services**

**3.2 Number of copies:**

Penistone	11,000 (10,575 households)
Dearne	11,000 (10,668 households)
North	19,500 (19,387 households)
South	21,000 (20,860 households)
North East	21,000 (20,820 households)

**Total: 83,500**

**3.3 Size of publication: A5, 24 pages. Full colour gloss finish.**

### 3.4 Content:

- Front cover - different for each Area Council.
- 12 pages editorial - set aside for Area Councils. Different content for each area council.
- 12 pages reserved for advertising.

## 4. Cost of distribution

4.1 Area Councils have expressed a desire to distribute the magazine to people's homes. The numbers of copies above allow for additional copies to allow distribution in community venues.

4.2 The cost for distribution to every household using a reliable independent distributor is £58 + VAT per 1,000 households. The breakdown per area is:

Area	Number of copies	Cost per issue	Cost per year
Penistone	11,000 (10,575 households)	£638	£1,276
Dearne	11,000 (10,668 households)	£1,276	£1,276
North	19,500 (19,387 households)	£1,131	£2,262
South	21,000 (20,860 households)	£1,218	£2,436
North East	21,000 (20,820 households)	£1,218	£2,436

## 5 Content from council services

5.1 Editorial Features focusing on council services that apply to all areas such as waste, school admissions and cultural events may be included if it is viewed to be relevant and considered appropriate by Area Council editorial teams. The communications and marketing team would provide this content.

5.2 If council services wanted to buy advertising space in the magazines, communications and marketing would facilitate this. The service requesting the advert would pay.

## 6 Time commitment required from Area Councils

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

- Full page = 200 words plus pictures.
- Half page = 150 words

6.2 The roles and responsibilities are outlined in the flow chart below:



## 7 Next steps

### 7.1 Area Chairs to form area editorial teams

Possible approaches are the Area Chair and Area Manager form the editorial team liaising with the wards as appropriate, or one member representative from each ward and the area manager forms the editorial team. Editorial team should meet to discuss story ideas and plan workload in line with above time schedule.

### 7.2 Communications and marketing to sign contract with supplier

This commits us to provide content by the agreed deadlines.

### 7.3 Reminder of timescales

- **Sign contract:** June
- **Work starts on October issue:** June-October
- **Approved articles submitted:** 31 October
- **Artwork back from designers:** 14 November
- **Final approvals:** 18 November
- **Print:** 18 November
- **Distribution starts:** 1 December

Second issue will be planned for May 2016. April will be avoided due to Purdah.

Officer Contact: Rachel King or Katie Rogers Tel. No: 774586 or 772442

Appendix 2:

## **Cost Implications of a community magazine which does not include advertising.**

**What would be the cost of the area council just working directly with local design/printing firms and having no advertising in the publication?**

### **Response from Corporate Communications**

The following costs are an estimate based on our contract framework with external providers.

- Design for a 12 page magazine = £600.
- Print for 17,500 copies as outlined in the original proposal = £2,742.
- Total £3,342 per issue.
- Plus distribution.

*This is cost prohibitive, and not a recommended use of area council funds when a no-cost option is available.*