

**BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**South Area Council Meeting:**

**25<sup>th</sup> April 2014**

**Agenda Item: 7**

**Report of South Area Council  
Manager.**

**Area Council priorities and commissioning update**

**1. Purpose of Report**

1.1 To inform the South Area Council of progress to date around the development commissioned activity against agreed priorities in the South Area Council Plan.

1.2 To update the South Area Council about spend committed to date against the allocated £400,000 per year devolved budget.

**2. Recommendation**

2.1 That the South Area Council receive the report and note the progress made against agreed commissioning work.

2.2 That the South Area Council receive and note the updated version of the South Area Plan, which reflects the inclusion of an additional priority.

2.3 That the South Area Council receive the information about spend committed to date.

2.4 That the South Area Council supports the development in principle of a 'Thought Bubble Fund' to commission small projects using remaining uncommitted spend and that interested Area Council members put themselves forward for inclusion in a working group to develop the details of the scheme.

**3. Introduction**

3.1 The South Area Council has held a series of meetings and workshops to explore the priorities for its Plan in more detail. At the meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2013, the three key priority themes for the Plan were identified, and were formally agreed at the Area Council meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> September. These were:

- Opportunities for young people
- Business and the local economy
- Information and guidance

Following further discussions and feedback from Ward Alliances and community consultations, a fourth priority was formally agreed at the meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2014:

- Improving our local Environment

The South Area Council Plan has now been revised to reflect this additional priority and is attached at Appendix 1.

3.2 At the Area Council workshop held on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013, it was agreed that two short term working groups would be established to examine local needs and possible responses in more detail. As a result of this and subsequent meetings and workshops, it was agreed that three main activities would be commissioned by the Area Council in the first instance:

- Developing a 'One Stop Shop' approach to offer enhanced levels of community based Welfare Rights and Citizens' Advice support – approved 28<sup>th</sup> February 2014
- Establishing additional Environmental Enforcement activity around the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices for dog fouling, littering and parking offences, to complement existing mainstream enforcement provision – revised tender specification approved 7<sup>th</sup> April 2014
- Creating a locally based 'Tidy Team' which would provide a range of small scale environmental services to complement existing mainstream provision, including a basic gardening service for elderly or disabled residents – revised tender specification approved 7<sup>th</sup> April 2014

#### **4. Commissioning costs and spend committed to date**

4.1 The following costs have been agreed by the South Area Council for the three activities to be commissioned detailed in Section 3.2:

- One Stop Shop - £72,500 per year over 2 years (total contract cost £145,000) to be paid 50/50% to Barnsley Citizens' Advice Bureau and BMBC Welfare Rights Service
- Environmental Enforcement - £128,000 per year for one year in the first instance. This to be paid as £28,000 per year to BMBC Community Safety and Enforcement Services as part of a Service Level Agreement to provide support, training, equipment, uniforms and administrative support the remaining £100,000 to go out to open tender to provide 4 Environmental Enforcement officers
- Tidy Team - £150,000 per year for one year in the first instance but extending to 2 years on satisfactory completion of year 1. This to go out to open tender as 2 separate contracts of £75,000 each (one for Darfield/ Wombwell and one for Hoyland Milton/Rockingham) to provide a local team

4.2 For a full financial profile of committed and uncommitted spend, see Section 6.

#### **5. Progress to date for commissioned activities**

5.1 Since approval at Area Council, all three agreed activities are progressing well, despite a number of holdups which have arisen from the pioneering nature of this way of working.

##### **5.2 One Stop Shop**

5.2.1 This project focussed on the recruitment of an additional full time Citizens' Advice Generalist Adviser and a full time Welfare Rights Adviser to provide a wide range of advice in community based venues across the South Area.

5.2.2 Because of the specialist nature of the service, we were able to successfully argue that the service should not go out to open tender. However, other legal processes had to be undertaken to ensure that this was done robustly.

5.2.3 As a result, a Waiver to Standing Orders was agreed to enable a contract to be offered to Barnsley Citizens' Advice Bureau to recruit and provide a CAB Generalist Adviser who would provide 50% of the service offer, including support with debt, finance, housing, relationships, legal issues, consumer issues, Employment issues, at a cost of £35,000 per year including oncosts.

5.2.4 Interviews for the Generalist Adviser post were held on 11<sup>th</sup> April and the preferred candidate (who is a highly experienced Adviser) has accepted the post subject to references. Cllr Mick Stowe sat on the interview panel to represent the South Area Council.

5.2.5 To enable the creation of an additional full time fixed term (2 year) post within the BMBC Welfare Rights team, a Delegated Powers report was written and signed off on 10<sup>th</sup> April, 2014. This will allow the Welfare Rights Service to do a BMBC internal recruitment for a worker to be seconded to the team. The recruitment process is now underway. This post will offer in-depth help with any issues around state benefits, tax credits or state pension at a cost of £35,000 per year including oncosts

5.2.6 The remaining £2,500 of the contract cost is to cover promotional and marketing costs.

5.2.6 Whilst awaiting this, the Area Chair and Area Council Manager have been working with Welfare Rights and Citizens' Advice Bureau to identify suitable venues for the provision and to scope out the details of when the service should be offered. Work has also taken place to decide on the approach to promoting and marketing the service, using a range of methods including Ward Alliances, Neighbourhood Networks and promotion through elected members' surgeries.

5.2.7 Although the service is being provided by two different and complementary organisations, it was agreed by the Area Council that it should be marketed and promoted as one 'seamless' service. To enable both recruitment processes to take place, it has been agreed that the two postholders will start at the same time, with a planned start date of early/mid June. A full timeline for the development of this project is attached at Appendix 2.

5.2.8 Working in conjunction with members, the following venues have been identified:

- Hoyland Centre for Hoyland Milton and Rockingham clients. Rockingham members have confirmed that they are happy for their area to use the Hoyland Centre, which is the reason for the extra sessions there.
- Darfield Library. Because of the lack of a suitable confidential space when open to the public, it has been agreed that the Darfield sessions will be offered on a Wednesday, when the Library is closed to the public.
- Wombwell Library, initially in the glass booths in the main Library, but possibly moving to a room in the new extension when completed in November 2014.

5.2.9 In agreeing rotas for the service, consideration also had to be taken of existing provision and availability of space. The timetable has now been agreed with the providers and those offering the use of a venue as below. It has been agreed and written into the contract with CAB and the Service Level Agreement with Welfare Rights Service that all remaining time not allocated to the sessions below will be used for:

- Administration and follow up of existing casework
- Other booked or follow up appointments with clients
- Referral and signposting of clients to other specialist provision or support
- Networking with a range of local organisations and groups to encourage takeup of the services offered
- Supervision and casework support from manager

Day	Morning session 9.00 – 12.30	Afternoon session 1.00 – 4.30	Twilight session 3.00 – 7.00
<b>Mondays</b>			Citizens' Advice & Welfare Rights at the Hoyland Centre
<b>Tuesdays</b>	Citizens' Advice at the Hoyland Centre	Welfare Rights at the Hoyland Centre	
<b>Wednesdays</b>	Citizens' Advice at Darfield Library	Welfare Rights at Darfield Library	
<b>Thursdays</b>	Citizens' Advice at Wombwell Library	Welfare Rights at Wombwell Library	
<b>Fridays</b>			

### 5.3 Tidy Team

5.3.1 This project focusses on the recruitment of an outsider organisation to provide a small community based team to focus on both reactive and proactive work.

5.3.2 The development of this project has been slightly delayed because although an initial specification had been developed and agreed at South Area Council on 28<sup>th</sup> February, it had become clear from subsequent briefings by BMBC Neighbourhood Services that this initial tender would not work well with their proposed new levels of service from 1<sup>st</sup> April, and would be in danger of duplicating remaining mainstream provision.

5.3.3 As a result of this, members from Hoyland Milton and Rockingham reviewed the initial tender at an additional workshop on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2014. As a result, a new tender was developed in conjunction with Neighbourhood Services and Berneslai Homes which focussed more on activities no longer undertaken by Neighbourhood Services,

upon support to community groups undertaking environmental activities and to provide a basic gardening service to elderly/disabled residents.

5.3.4 At the extra meeting of the South Area Council held on 7<sup>th</sup> April, 2014, members from all four wards decided that they would like to adopt this new tender specification.

5.3.5 The Area Council Manager is working closely with Jenny Grant in Norfolk Property Services (NPS - our advisers on procurement and tendering) and the Area Chair to prepare for the service to go out to tender; a process which takes a minimum of three or four months depending on the complexity of the commission. Work is progressing well and it is hoped to place the advertisement for the Tidy Team on Yortender on 29<sup>th</sup> April, with a closing date of 20<sup>th</sup> May.

5.3.6 Members of the South Area Council have decided that they do not want to take an active part in the tendering processes. We have approached the three Ward Alliances in the South Area to see if a community representative would like to come onto the tender panel and are awaiting responses.

5.3.7 This means that the contract should be ready to start at the end of July 2014 if there are no further delays. A full timeline for the tendering of this service is attached at Appendix 3.

#### **5.4 Environmental Enforcement**

5.4.1 This project requires an external provider to employ 4 additional Environmental Enforcement Officers across the South Area, to complement the existing work done by BMBC Community Safety and Enforcement staff.

5.4.2 The development of this project has been slightly delayed because although an initial Service Level Agreement had been developed and agreed at South Area Council on 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2014, which would allow BMBC Community Safety & Enforcement Service to tender on Area Councils' behalf, it became evident on further investigation that this approach would be likely to be vulnerable to challenge.

5.4.3 Because of this, it became clear that it would be more appropriate for all of the Area Councils interested in this approach to tender directly and separately for these contracts. As a result, a group of Area Council Managers worked with NPS and others to develop a revised tender specification, which was approved at the extra South Area Council meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> April, 2014.

5.4.4 The Area Council Manager is working closely with NPS and the Area Chair to prepare for the service to go out to tender; a process which takes a minimum of three or four months depending on the complexity of the commission. Work is progressing well and it is hoped to place the advertisement for the Environmental Enforcement tender onto Yortender on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2014.

5.4.5 As with the Tidy Team contract, members of the South Area Council have decided that they do not want to take an active part in the tendering processes. We have approached the three Ward Alliances in the South Area to see if a community representative would like to come onto the tender panel and are awaiting responses.

5.4.6 This means that the contract should be ready to start in mid July 2014 if there are no further delays. A full timeline for the tendering of this service is attached at Appendix 4.

## 6. Financial Profile to date

6.1 From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014, the South Area Council was given an allocation of £400,000 per year to spend on commissioning local services

6.2 To date, commissions worth a total of £350,500 per year are under development for 2014/15. The Tidy Team and Environmental Enforcement contracts have been agreed for one year in the first instance, although these could clearly be extended if found to be successful. The One Stop Shop project has been approved for 2 years because there is a need to run this kind of project for longer before long term impact can be assessed.

6.3 However, because none of the projects have commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2014 some of this spend will need to be carried forward into 2015/16 for the full twelve month contracts to be completed. Of the £129,584 balance remaining at the end of 2014/15, £80,084 of this will need to be carried forward to complete the full twelve months for each of the three contracts.

6.4 This leaves **£49,500** of spend uncommitted for 2014/15, which does not include the carry forward outlined in 6.3 and a decision is required from the Area Council in the near future about how it will be spent.

6.5 The table below outlines the committed spend profile for South Area

Service to be procured	Length of contract & anticipated start date	Total contract cost	Anticipated Expenditure 2014-2015	Anticipated Expenditure 2015-2016	Anticipated Expenditure 2016-2017
'One Stop Shop'	2 years-June 2014	£145,000	£60,416	£72,500	£12,084
Tidy Team	2 years – July 2014	£300,000	£112,500	£150,000	£37,500
Environmental Enforcement	1 year-July 2014	£130,000	£97,500	£32,500	-
<b>Totals: Projected Expenditure</b>		<b>£575,000</b>	<b>£270,416</b>	<b>£255,000</b>	<b>£49,584</b>
<b>Balance remaining</b>		<b>£225,000</b>	<b>£129,584</b>	<b>£145,000</b>	<b>£225,000 still to be allocated as of Mar 14]</b>

## **7. Proposal for the introduction of a 'Thought Bubble Fund'**

7.1 There is a clear need to ensure that any further activity commissioned using the remaining £49,500 of uncommitted spend for 2014/15 is clearly helping to meet the priorities outlined in the revised South Area Council Plan attached at Appendix 1.

7.2 There is also an opportunity for the South Area Council to use this remaining budget to offer smaller local groups, organisations and businesses more of a role in helping it to meet its priorities; particularly because it is widely recognised that the complexities of the Yortender process may mean that smaller concerns would often not want to become involved in the delivery of larger tenders.

7.3 If offered to small concerns, it would be vital to ensure that the money is not seen as a local 'slush fund' to support local groups or organisations to continue their existing work unless they are able to offer additional or different activities.

7.4 Of the four South Area Council priorities identified, only two ('Locally available Information & Advice' and 'Improving our Local Environment') are currently directly addressed by provision already being commissioned.

7.5 The remaining priorities ('Business & Local Economy' and 'Opportunities for young people') have not yet been developed and could be candidates for the development of small local projects to help meet local need using remaining underspend.

7.6 To avoid being seen as a 'slush fund' it is proposed that we do not promote the availability of funds to the public as a 'small grants' type provision, but to make clear that we are seeking new and innovative ideas to help tackle the issues outlined in the South Area Council Plan under the 'Business & Local Economy' and 'Opportunities for Young People' priorities – hence the name 'Thought Bubble Fund'.

This is also vital to avoid further confusion with Ward Alliance Fund, Devolved Ward Budget and Community First funding.

7.7 It is therefore recommended that the South Area Council approves in principle the development and promotion of a 'Thought Bubble Fund' by the South Area Team working with a small working group, to include representatives from the South Area Council.

7.8 It is requested that members of the South Area Council interested in joining a short term working group to develop the Thought Bubble Fund in more detail approach the Area Council Manager.

## **8. Appendices:**

- Revised South Area Council Plan (Appendix 1)
- Timeline for development of One Stop Shop Project (Appendix 2)
- Timeline for development of Tidy Team Project (Appendix 3)
- Timeline for development of Environmental Enforcement Project (Appendix 4)

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**Date: 14<sup>th</sup> April 2014**