

BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

South Area Council Meeting:

17th October 2014

Agenda Item: 6

**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.

2. Recommendations

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

3. Introduction

3.1 Since September 2013, the South Area Council has been working to commission projects from its Area Council budgets against the four priorities identified within its Area Plan.

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

3.2 Following South Area Council approval, three main projects were developed to meet locally identified needs:

- A 'One Stop Shop' approach to offer enhanced levels of community based Welfare Rights and Citizens' Advice support
- A team to provide Environmental Enforcement activity around the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices for dog fouling, littering and parking offences, to complement existing mainstream enforcement provision
- A locally based 'Tidy Team' which would provide a range of small scale environmental services to complement existing mainstream provision

3.3 The development of a fourth project to support local businesses is currently underway, with an extensive survey of local businesses across the South Area being conducted between September and Xmas 2014, which should inform the development of localised business support requiring Area Council funding.

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 – the successful contractor, Kingdom Security, are now delivering the contract at a cost of £135,092.53 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 £107,092.53 to go to Kingdom for the provision of 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 went 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 localised team & was awarded to Forge Community Partnership/Anvil CIC.
- Support to local business project – the cost of delivering a face-to-face survey with businesses will be £4,000 to pay for 17 hours per week of South Area Team staff time plus postage and other incidental costs.

4.2 This now leaves a sum of £38,407.47 of uncommitted spend from the first year's allocated South Area Council budget of £400,000. It was agreed at the meeting on 24th July, 2014 that this should be retained as a contingency fund for any additional costs arising from the projects already approved.

5. Progress to date for commissioned activities

5.1 Since approval at Area Council, all four 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 A full time Welfare Rights Adviser (Phil Beer) and a full time Citizens' Advice Generalist Adviser (Zoe Ellis-Georgiou) began work on 16th June, 2014 working from the Hoyland Centre, Wombwell and Darfield Libraries.

5.2.3 Between 16th June and end of September 2014, the two advisers have seen 205 clients (CAB – 111, Welfare Rights – 94) which is an unusually high number for a new outreach service launched during the peak summer holiday season.

5.2.4 This work has resulted in £94,560 of benefits gained by the clients seen by the advisers; all of which will now be spent within our local economy. Around 75% of this gain went to clients who were in work and claiming in-work benefits because of low pay. This also means that the advisers have more than covered the cost of their own salaries within the first quarter.

5.2.5 In addition, 15 financial settlements have been negotiated for clients in debt, which have led to £136,189 worth of previously unmanageable debt being managed.

5.2.6 44% of those seen were in full/part time work or self- employed, with 7% retired, 7% caring for a relative and 26% disabled/sick. Only 8.5% of those seen were registered as unemployed. Over 35% of those seen were homeowners.

5.2.7 The advisers report that the largest groups seen to date have been those on low pay, those who have had hours/pay reduced, those working part time and those with a disability or caring for others.

5.2.8 The advisers have also been working hard to build up their profile within the local community and have visited 19 community groups to raise awareness of the service offered. They will be continuing these networking visits throughout the contract.

5.2.9 After much consideration, the Steering Group decided that the service in Darfield would have to be moved from the Library, where the project was dependent on volunteers for staffing reception. Whilst the project had no trouble in attracting volunteers to take part, it has proved impossible to retain them; partly because the work is so boring and partly because the volunteers felt unsafe sitting alone in a large empty building. There was also a growing concern that this was also putting these individuals off volunteering as a whole; a situation which is clearly not desirable.

5.9.10 From week commencing 6th October, 2014, the Darfield sessions will now be run from Darfield Childrens' Centre, who are happy to provide the project with reception facilities, a suitable confidential space, and internet access. The new venue is less than 2 minutes' walk from the old one and a sign has been placed in the Library directing the public to the Childrens' Centre. The promotional poster has also been re-printed and re-distributed to reflect the change in venue and is attached at Appendix 1.

5.2.11 As part of the move towards phase 2 of this project, which will see careers advice, IT training and other support offered, the Area Council Manager has been working with Prospects and has secured a day per week of free Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) support for the South Area. This is initially being attached to the Workclub at Hoyland, with a view to extending this to the jobsearch sessions at Wombwell at a later date.

5.2.12 This project is spending against its financial profile, and is currently coming in on budget.

5.3 Tidy Team

5.3.1 This project has been commissioned to employ local people to deliver small scale environmental projects and clean-ups, and to recruit and work alongside volunteers, schools and local businesses to involve them in improving their own local environment.

5.3.2 The 6 new local workers started on 4th July, 2014 and have now begun work in earnest in 2 teams of 3 (Wombwell/Darfield and Hoyland/Rockingham):

Hoyland Milton/Rockingham – Andrew Lakin & Chris Hopkinson
Wombwell/Darfield – Hazel Woods, David Walshaw & Daniel Johnson

Darren Bailey from the Hoyland/Rockingham team has now left to go to another job, and is currently being replaced. Martyn Hall, the supervisor of the team is stepping in to cover Darren's work whilst recruitment for his replacement is underway.

5.3.3 In their first 2 months of operation, the Tidy Teams have tackled over 80 separate jobs reported into the Steering Group through the email address, including litter picks, clean-ups, pruning & weeding. They have collected over 250 bags of rubbish, 2-3 tonnes of metal and glass for recycling and 46 bags of leaf mould; the latter of which was collected on Kirk Balk Lane alone! In addition, they have reported in 8 incidents of fly tipping, strimmed and cleaned back over 2 miles of verge, resulting in 3-4 tonnes of tree cuttings which will be chipped and returned to the ground at problem sites to impede the regrowth of weeds. Feedback from the public has been overwhelmingly positive.

5.3.4 The Tidy Team Steering Group is continuing to allocate the teams' workloads, and will be focusing throughout October on the cleaning up of the cenotaphs and war memorials in preparation for Remembrance Sunday events. They are also starting to work with schools and community groups – for example, supporting the work done by volunteers at the canal site at Hemingfield.

5.3.5 The teams are already starting to engage with local people wanting to volunteer with them, and will be building on this over the next few months. There are currently problems in gaining agreement with training providers for the number of apprentices Forge/Anvil would like to recruit, and this is currently under negotiation.

5.3.6 Members have already been advised that work can be reported to the Tidy Teams by emailing Martyn Hall using the relevant email, but Members are reminded that this is **not** a contact to be given out to the general public. Work will be logged by Martyn and the job will be tasked in as part of the team's rounds as soon as resourcing allows.

5.3.7 Now the teams are established and becoming familiar figures within the community, the Steering Group have approved the next phase of promotion and publicity for the teams. The focus is very heavily on 'we can help YOU to...' rather than asking the public to email in problems for the teams to tackle directly. The elected members represented on the Steering Group also felt that the flier should also encourage people wishing to report in problem areas to do so through their local councillors, whose contact details will be included. The flyers which will be distributed across the local area are attached at Appendices 2 & 3.

5.3.8 This project is spending against its financial profile, and is currently coming in on budget.

5.4 Environmental Enforcement

5.4.1 This project provides an additional 4 Environmental Enforcement Officers to be employed by an external provider (Kingdom Security) across the South Area, to complement the existing work done by BMBC Community Safety and Enforcement staff.

5.4.2 The 4 Environmental Enforcement Officers began work on 4th August, 2014 and are now on operational patrol across the South Area. There have been some recent changes to the staff within the South team, which now comprises:

Glenis Kelly (team leader), Martin Scholey, Josh Mills, Chris Buckle.

5.4.3 The teams are currently focusing on dog fouling and littering, whilst awaiting their parking enforcement training. BMBC Community Safety and Enforcement have previously used a good quality external provider (Alpha Parking) but the first available date for this provider would be 11th November, 2014. Because of this, an alternative provider who could offer training more quickly is currently being sought.

5.4.4 From 12th August to the end of September, 2014, 132 Fixed Penalty Notices were issued; 126 for litter and 6 for dog fouling. The main hotspot for litter is currently Wombwell High Street and for dog fouling Milton Road/Milton Ponds. A plain clothes operation at Milton Road/Ponds led to the issues of 3 of the dog fouling tickets. 7 incidents of fly tipping have also been reported in to BMBC staff; 4 of which contained evidence which could lead to a prosecution.

5.4.5 Kingdom staff are now reporting that (as expected) the numbers of tickets being issued is starting to fall, as members of the public become more aware of their presence and start to be more cautious. Word is clearly spreading!

5.4.6 Kingdom staff remain keen for members, staff and the public to continue letting them know about known dog fouling and littering hotspots requiring targeting. The chances of being able to ticket individuals for dog fouling specifically is greatly improved if places and times of regular offenders are passed on. Please email Fiona Tennyson, who is tasking the new Officers alongside her existing team. Members of the public should be encouraged to report issues in through their local Connects Centre as protocols are already in place for this information to be passed to Fiona for tasking purposes.

5.4.7 Through Fiona's attendance on the Tidy Team Steering Group, joint working with the Tidy Teams is currently being planned, with enforcement activity following cleanup work completed, to keep areas looking good once

5.4.8 This project is spending against its financial profile, and is currently coming in on budget.

5.5 Support to Local Businesses

5.5.1 In August 2014, the local business working group for the South Area Council recommended that a full survey of local small & medium sized businesses needed to be conducted to ascertain their current and future support needs. It was felt that better quality information would be gathered if the survey was conducted mainly face-to-face, rather than online or by post.

5.5.2 As a result, £4,000 of expenditure was approved by the South Area Council at its meeting on 5th September 2014 to enable Tanya Dickinson and Amanda Bradshaw from the South Area Team to conduct this survey over 3 months on a 17 hour per week basis.

5.5.3 Tanya and Amanda started the survey on 15th September, 2014 and have already completed 15 questionnaires with businesses. A further 14 companies have been visited and questionnaires left behind for completion at the owner's request. Response to the survey has been extremely positive across all four wards. To ensure that the whole of the South Area is equally covered, Tanya and Amanda are setting aside 'slots' each week to visit by area. A copy of the questionnaire being used is attached at Appendix 4.

5.5.4 To identify a broadly random sample of small/medium sized businesses, they are working from the Barnsley Development Agency and Chamber of Commerce databases, but are also conducting their own 'on the ground' research to include companies not included in existing research.

5.5.5 If members are aware of specific companies they would like included in the survey, please contact Tanya (Tanyadickinson@barnsley.gov.uk or 355867) or Amanda (Amandabradshaw@barnsley.gov.uk or 355868) to let them know as soon as possible.

5.5.6 The working group will meet again just before Xmas to consider the results of the survey, and to make recommendations about what kinds of business support the Area Council should be looking to fund. There is already some emerging interest in a local business forum, so this could be a possibility if there is sufficient interest amongst those surveyed.

6. Other work to meet South Area Council priorities

6.1.1 South Area Team staff have been working closely with management staff from the new Hoyland Tesco, which opened in mid-September, 2014. With the help of our 'popup' recruitment sessions, all of the 140 jobs on offer have been filled by people living within a 3 mile radius, with 85% of those taken on living within Hoyland. The store were extremely pleased with this result, and felt that the popup sessions had greatly increased the local takeup, particularly amongst those without access to the internet or a computer.

6.1.2 The 'Cheese and Wine' event held in early September, 2014 was attended by over 50 people.

6.1.3 The 'DIY SOS' at Milton Hall will now be held in early October, 2014, with 25+ Tesco staff attending.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Promotional material for the One Stop Shop

Appendix 2 – Tidy Team flyer

Appendix 3 – Tidy Team flyer

Appendix 4 – Copy of business questionnaire being conducted

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Date: 1st October 2014