

BARNSLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

South Area Council Meeting:

24th April 2015

Agenda Item: 3

**Report of South Area Council
Manager.**

South Area Council Community Magazine

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To provide further information about the proposed Community Magazine for Area Councils previously discussed at the South Area Council meeting on 27th February 2015, to enable the South Area Council to decide on the approach it wishes to adopt.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the South Area Council receives the information contained within this report which it requested at the previous meeting on 27th February 2015

2.2 That the South Area Council approves one of the options for the production and distribution of the South Area Council Community Magazine outlined in section 4.5 of this report

3. Background

3.1 At the meeting of the South Area Council held on 27th February 2015, Phil Hollingsworth presented a paper on behalf of the BMBC Communications Team regarding the future production of a Community Magazine to replace the current Open Door newspaper. It had been recognised that the public would prefer to read about issues closer to home than the current boroughwide newspaper allowed, and that a move towards a more tailored publication for each Area Council would be more relevant and accessible.

3.2 The paper offered a number of options for the production and delivery of a twice yearly Community Magazine for 17,500 copies to go to all households within the South Area.

3.3 The recommended option was to opt for a 24 page Magazine (12 pages of content and 12 of adverts) which could be produced by CIS Group at no cost to the Area Council, since the cost of production would be covered by advertising revenues.

3.4 The paper also offered a number of options for delivery of the Magazine, all of which included a cost to the Area Council, ranging from £4,000 per year down to £2,000 per year. The recommended option was Solus, an independent distributor who would charge Area Councils £2,600 per year.

3.5 The Area Council felt that it could not make a decision without further clarification on two key issues:

- Concern about wages levels for those distributing the Magazine if the recommended company (Solus) was used. It was recognised that this type of work was often underpaid and assurances were sought that a living or minimum wage would be paid to all staff. It was also felt that this would reduce the risk of the Magazines being dumped rather than delivered.
- There was also a concern that the weight of the advertising could distract from the content of the Magazine itself. The South Area Council asked for costs to produce an 'advert –free' Magazine with 12 pages of content alone.

3.6 It was agreed that clarification would be sought from the Communications Team over these issues and that the matter would be discussed at the next South Area Council meeting on 24th April 2015.

4. Further information

4.1 Rachel King from the BMBC Communications Team has provided clarification on both of the issues raised at the previous Area Council meeting. This information is outlined below.

4.2 The Communications Team have received assurances from Solus (the recommended distributor for the Magazine) that all of their delivery staff are paid the minimum wage and that staff are treated in accordance with BMBC policy. Further evidence for this can be seen on the Solus webpage, which can be found at: <http://www.letterboxconsultancy.com/solus-door-drop-prices/>

4.3 The Communications Team has also received assurances from CIS Group (the recommended provider for the production of the Magazine, including the generation of advertising) that all advertisements contained in the Magazine would be vetted to ensure that they meet all BMBC standards.

4.4 The costs for producing a 12 page Community Magazine without advertising would be £3,342 per edition (£6,684 for 2 editions per year). The Communications Team feel that this would be "cost prohibitive, and not a recommended use of Area Council funds when a no-cost option is available"

4.5 This would bring the total cost of producing and distributing a 12 page 'advert-free' Community Magazine to £9,284 per year (£6,684 for production and £2,600 for distribution) against a cost to Area Councils of £2, 600 per year for the cost of a 24 page Magazine with 12 pages of adverts and 12 of content.

4.6 This leaves the Area Council with three options for approval:

- Option 1 – approve the funding for a 24 page Community Magazine with 12 pages of adverts at a cost of £2,600 per year for 2 editions per year
- Option 2 – approve the funding for a 12 page Community Magazine with no advertisements at a cost of £9,284 per year for 2 editions per year
- Option 3 – not to proceed with the production of a Community Magazine

4.7 If the South Area Council decides to proceed with the production of the Magazine, the first edition will now be produced in December 2015.

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Date: 8th April 2015