

BARNSLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

North Area Council Meeting:
16th January 2023

Agenda Item: 6

Report of North Area Council
Manager

Commissioning, Project Development and Financial Update

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report provides the Area Council with a financial position and forecast for expenditure based on the projects that have been proposed.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. **The North Area Council should note the existing budget position the existing the funding commitments.**
- 2.2. **Councillors note the discussion regarding the Clean and Green Contract, section 3.1. Full details are available in Item 5 of the agenda.**
- 2.3. **Councillors note the update regarding the recruitment for the Housing and Cohesion Officer role.**
- 2.4. **Following two workshops in October, the North Area's Cost of Living Crisis response is on hold, sect 5.2.**
- 2.5. **Councillors are requested to note the updated projected spend, appendix 1.**

3. Background highlighting all significant financial commitment

- 3.0 The Anti-Poverty Community Outreach Project
Contract 1 commenced on the 14th September 2015. This is a one-year (plus one year) contract valued at £149,000 in total. The initial contract has now concluded.

Contract 2 commenced on the 14th September 2017 for a two-year term at a contract value of approximately £95,000 per annum. On the 25th March 2019 the Area Council took the decision to utilise the contract extension clause and extend the contract until the 13th September 2020.

The Area Council agreed to continue to fund this project in September 2019. Due to procurement pressures during Covid-19 the decision was taken to submit

a waiver in the summer of 2020 and extend the existing contract by 12 months until 13th September 2021.

CURRENT POSITION: The Area Manager requested a contract extension to the existing waiver. This has been approved but only for 9 months at this stage until the 30th June 2023. Value £79,033.

Options for how welfare services can be more consistently commissioned, and contract managed, whilst maintaining local provision and oversight of delivery, are still being explored by officers. It is recommended that the North Area Council participate in any development opportunity provided to shape the future Welfare IAG provision in the North Area.

N.B. A decision regarding extension / retendering this opportunity will need to be made at the March NAC meeting at the latest.

3.1 The Clean and Green Service

Contract one was delivered by Forge Community Partnership commenced on the 14th September 2015. Prior to the end of the contract the tender opportunity was advertised.

The second environmental contract commenced on the 2nd October 2017 at a value of £85,000 per annum. The provider, Twiggs Grounds Maintenance Ltd, commenced service delivery on the 2nd October 2017. On the 25th March 2019 the Area Council took the decision to utilise the contract extension clause and extend the contract until the end of September 2020.

CURRENT POSITION: The current contract was tendered in autumn 2020. Twiggs Grounds Maintenance Ltd secured a two-year contract with the opportunity for a final one-year extension. The contract commenced on 1st April 2021 and is now in it's second year of delivery.

To help manage the expectations of this contract and tailor delivery to the needs of individual wards a steering group will meet on the 3rd Tuesday of the month to help programme delivery. Each ward prioritise two work streams for delivery:

- *Working with existing voluntary group*
- *Generating new active volunteers*
- *Aiming to form new community groups*
- *Working with businesses*
- *Working with schools*

The Steering Group has devised a process for requesting work. All Twiggs work is now required to be considered at the Steering Group prior to inclusion in the calendar / work programme. All persons requesting work are requested to submit their request to the North Team for collation: northteam@barnsley.gov.uk

Update: At the November 2022 NAC meeting, Members made the decision to conclude the current contract.

N.B. At this time the future direction of the this priority is being reviewed. Based on the rate of inflation the contract value for this provision will need to be increased. Full details are available in Item 5 of the agenda.

- 3.2 Housing and Cohesion Officer (Private Sector Housing) – At the November meeting 2017 it was agreed that the North Area would fund a private sector housing officer post at Grade 6 for 12 months fixed term. The successful candidate started on the 22nd January 2018 and proved to be a great asset to the area. The officer left the North Area council at the end of June 2019 for a promotion within BMBC.

The current Housing and Cohesion Officer started in post on Monday 19th October 2020. The officer now has a permanent contract and the role forms part of the Safer Communities structure.

In addition to the salary fees the Area Council agreed to fund uniform, PPE including IT, phone and bodycam, plus a £5k annual working budget.

N.B.: Contractually the position is covered by a permanent contract to ensure employment rights for individuals. If the Area Council agreed to cease funding the position a 6-month notice period will be required.

UPDATE: The position is currently vacant. Bradley Beatson the previous officer is assisting with urgent enquiries whilst there is a vacancy. The post has been advertised. The interview process conducted on the 22nd December proved to be unsatisfactory and the post has been readvertised.

- 3.3 Health and Wellbeing – Connecting Communities Grant

At a series of workshops in 2021 the Area Council discussed the loneliness and isolation and the impact of Covid-19. In July 2021 it was agreed to fund a grant program for two years with a budget of £100,000 per annum.

The grant opportunity was advertised at the end of September 2021 and the final date for submission was the 22nd October 2021. A total of 9 applications were received before the deadline totalling £615,710.39.

Stage one moderation took place on the 1st November and 4 organisations were invited back to present their projects on the 8th November. 3 applications were recommended for funding. The total allocated amount for these 3 projects was £186,766.44.

Successful Projects:

- Age UK Barnsley – North Area Social Inclusion Service - £79,600.20
- DIAL Barnsley – Connection Hubs - £66,450.00
- Reds in the Community – Reds Connect - £40,716.24

N.B.: £13,233.56 remained unallocated and has been recirculated into the main Area Council budget for forthcoming delivery allocation.

3.4 Stronger Communities Grant 2022/23

The total funding allocated for 2022/23 is £40,000. Each grant has an upper limit of £10,000. A total of 4 applications were received, totalling £23,716.34.

At the Grant Panel on Thursday 17th February 2022, two projects were recommended for funding. Pending receipt of further information the applications have been approved.

Successful projects:

- Mother Runners – Stronger Mums – £9,950.00
- Mapplewell and Staincross Greenspace and Recreation Group – Mapplewell Park – Children’s Cycle Path – £8,761.00

3.5 Devolved Funding to Ward Alliances

The Area Council has profiled £20,000 to be devolved to Ward Alliances during 2022. This means a £5,000 allocation per ward where the end of year balance is less than £10,000.

Members are confirmed at the January 2022 meeting that they wish to make this allocation in 2022/23.

N.B. The decision was taken in 2020/21 that the funding devolved to Ward Alliances from the North Area Council would cease from 2022/23. This was due to ineffective expenditure within previous years and an accumulated surplus.

3.6 Health and Wellbeing – focus on Young People

In November 2019 the North Area Council agreed to fund a project for up to three years. The project entitled ‘An Empowerment Programme Enabling Resilient Transitions for Children and Young People Aged 8-14 Years’ was advertised as a competitive grant in early 2020. The process was unsuccessful. It was agreed in on the 16th March that the opportunity should be chunked down to allow the VCS to respond.

N.B. This opportunity has been tailored to help address the fall out of COVID-19 lockdown and aid in the delivery of the COVID-19 Recovery Strategy. The grants went live on the 1st November 2020, delivered by YMCA and Ad Astra.

The Area Council has committed to fund this work for up to three years. Covid-19 Lockdown restrictions caused delays and for a time schools would not permit external partners into schools. The providers are now working within 5 schools.

The grant funding originally ran from November 2020 to October 2022.

Current Position: At the March 2022 meeting the Area Council agree to fund the project for a further 2 years, until October 2024, at £90,000p.a. Providers received a 3% financial uplift which was feasible within the current financial envelope. This security will enabling the existing providers to support students adversely affected by Covid-19 and support them in their educational transitions, primarily the move to senior school.

4. Financial Position

- 4.1. At the end of 2021/22 there was a significant **underspend**. **The budget was varied considerably during Covid-19, period 2020/21-2021/22.**
- 4.2. **The forecast for 2022/23 shows that the underspend** (including underspend from previous years) **was profiled to reduce to £76,211**. This is because the in-year balance is projected to exceed the annual budget by approximately £37,000.
- 4.3. Outlined annual commitments from April 2022:

Contract	Proposed Spend 2022/23
Anti- Poverty – Community Outreach	£95,000
Creating a Cleaner, Greener Environment in Partnership with Local People	£85,000
Housing Cohesion Officer – Grade 6 (+laptop and phone)	£35,000
Stronger Communities Grant	£20,000
Children and Youth People Resilience Grant	£90,000
Devolved funds to Ward Alliances (£5k per WA)	£20,000
Connecting Communities Grant 2021-2024 £100,000 per annum for 2 years	£92,000
Summer Sports Van	£2,000
TOTAL	£439,000

- 4.4. Provided that the Area Council continues to commit funding as outlined in Appendix 1, plus additional activities including the Summer Sports Van and Cost of Living Workshops, the total spend profiled for 2022/23 is predicted to be £434,958.
- 4.5. The underspend at the end of 2022/23 will be approximately £68,954. This will increase the longer the Housing and Cohesion post remains vacant.

5. Commissioning Programme from April 2023

- 5.1. Appendix 1 lays out the proposed spend. The Area Council is asked to note the proposed spend for 2023/24 and 2024/25. The Area Manager has recommended that these will need to be re-profiled due to the cost of living crisis. Ensuring that allowances are made due to inflation, for the current contracts at the point of renewal / retender.
- 5.2. Due to current cost of living pressures the Area Council had hoped to provide a tailored response for the North Area following workshops held in October 2022. However due to increase costs of existing provision it is likely that previous underspend will be required to sustain services currently commissioned. Alternatively, the Area Council will need to reprioritise. The funding allocations are constantly under review. In the meantime the Area Council will work with existing service providers to support residents during a challenging financial time.

6. Risks

- 6.1. The proposed budget would take the Area Council approximately £33,354.00 over budget per annum for 2022/23. However taking into account the current under spend, the investment profiled in Appendix 1 has been feasible.

7. Next Steps

- 7.1. Ensure that the Area Manager is alerted to any proposed commissioning profile variations so that feasibility considerations can be made at the earliest opportunity.

Officer Contact:
RosemarieAdams@barnsley.gov.uk

Date:
5th January 2023

Appendix 1: North Area Council Proposed expenditure April 2022-March 2024

Project / Service	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Anti- Poverty – Community Outreach <i>Retender Anti- Poverty - Waiver in place Sept 2021 - Sept 2023</i>	95,000.00	100,000.00	100,000.00
Creating a Cleaner, Greener Environment in Partnership with Local <i>People Contract Start - April 2021 (Retender Sept 2023)</i>	85,000.00	85,000.00	85,000.00
Housing and Cohesion Officer – Grade 6 (+laptop and phone)	35,000.00	35,000.00	35,000.00
Stronger Communities Grant Reduced to £20,000 in 2022/23	20,000.00	-	-
Youth Resilience Fund (November 2020 - October 2022 - YMCA & Ad Astra)	90,000.00	90,000.00	45,000.00
Connecting Communities Social Isolation Grant (£100,000 pa for 2 years)	92,000.00	82,500.00	100,000.00
Devolved funding to Ward Alliances (<i>where March 2019 balance is less than £10,000</i>)	20,000.00	-	-
2023 - New Project or Grant - £68,954 Alternatively use underspend to address inflation of existing contracts.			
TOTAL	437,000.00	392,500.00	365,000.00