

BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

North Area Council Meeting:
10th July 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.
- 1.2 It highlights the need to agree a clear plan for commissioning against the priorities.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. **Members note the progress on the Environmental Community Caretaker Service recruitment.**
- 2.2. **The North Area Council should note the existing budget position the existing the funding commitments. Section 4 of this report.**
- 2.3. **Members note section 5 of this report following the Priorities, Budget and Commissioning workshop held on the 23rd June 2023.**
- 2.4. **That the Connecting Communities Grant Panel meet to review the outcomes of the grant delivery projects and consider the continuation of the funding from January/April 2024.**
- 2.5. **That the priority working group for Young People meet with the Area Manager and Senior Link Officer to review the Youth Resilience Grant.**

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 during the Covid-19 Pandemic and subsequently during the Cost of Living Crisis.

CURRENT POSITION: At the Area Council meeting on the 13th March further funding was agreed for two years July 2023 – June 2025. A waiver has been submitted with the option to extend for a further 12 months to June 2026. A maximum budget of £107,500 has been agreed for the initial two years, totalling £215,000.

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. Twiggs continued to provide an environmental education contract in the North Area from 2019 to March 2023.

From April 2023 the North Area Council entered into an SLA with BMBC Neighbourhood Services, introducing a Environmental Community Caretaker Model.

Neighbourhood services proposal costings = £120,963 to include:

- Team Leader (G6)
- Development and Demand Team (G4)
- Apprentice
- Vehicle, training, fuel, waste license, tools and contingency budget.

The contingency budget is £20,160 (20% of the resource requirement £100,803.00).

The service will be 80% scheduled maintenance, with priorities identified by the Ward Alliances. 20% will provide volunteering and community engagements support. Volunteering activities will be identified by the Ward Alliances and programmed into the Caretaker Team's schedule.

Update:

The Environmental Caretaker Team Leader G6 has been recruited and is due to commence in post from 3rd July 2023. An apprentice has also committed to the opportunity.

At the time of writing the driver post G4 has been readvertised, closing date 30th June 2023.

- 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.

The current post holder commenced their duties in the North Area on the 15th May 2023.

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.

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

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. If the grant is be re-advertised for 2024/25 the opportunity will need to be agreed in September 2023 for advertising autumn 2023.

3.4 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.

N.B. The decision was taken in 2020/21 that the funding devolved to Ward Alliances by the North Area Council would cease from 2022/23.

3.5 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.

N.B. It will be necessary to confirm if this funding stream will continue beyond October 2024 at the January 2024 Area Council meeting.

3.6 Cost of Living Crisis – North Area Support

Due to the unspent Housing and Cohesion allocation whilst the post has been vacant it is possible to reallocate this funding. £10,000 was earmarked for a Cost of Living based project. As a result, a workshop was held on 10th May to explore opportunities. At the area Council meeting in May 2023 it was agreed that the funding would be used to enable the Connecting Communities Grant providers to provided communal eating opportunities during autumn/winter 2023/24. Please refer to Item 8 for further information.

3.7 Sports Van 2023

The North Area has benefitted from the Sports Van for the past two summers. At the May 2023 meeting the Area Council agreed funding of £2,700 for fund the sports van and purchase refreshments for summer activities.

4. Financial Position

- 4.1. **The forecast for 2022/23 showed that the underspend (including underspend from previous years) was profiled to reduce to £76,259.** This is because the in-year balance is projected to exceed the annual budget by approximately £27,653.

However, this was not the case, the amount profiled for the Housing and Cohesion post was £35,000 however the internal recharge was £27,695 due to the post being vacant for several months.

4.2. Outlined annual commitments for 2023/24:

Contract	Proposed Spend 2022/23
Anti- Poverty – Community Outreach	£104,720
Environmental Community Caretaker Contingency	£100,803 £21,160
Housing Cohesion Officer – Grade 6 (+laptop and phone)	£40,000
Children and Youth People Resilience Grant	£90,000
Connecting Communities Grant 2021-2024 £100,000 per annum for 2 years	£82,500
Summer Sports Van	£2,700
Cost of Living – Communal Eating	£10,000
TOTAL	£451,883

- 4.3. Provided that the Area Council continues to commit funding as outlined in Appendix 1, the total spend profiled for 2023/24 is predicted to be £451,883. However this includes and the contingency budget for Neighbourhood Services.
- 4.4. The underspend at the end of 2023/24 is projected to be £25,451. However this includes the annual charge for both Environmental Caretaker Team and Housing and Cohesion which will not have been filled for the whole financial year. This may result in savings of approximately £23,100.

5. Commissioning Programme from April 2024 – Workshop Outcomes

- 5.1. A workshop was held on Friday the 23rd June. Attended by Cllr Leech, Cllr T Cave, Cllr Lofts, Cllr Denton, Cllr Tattersall and Cllr Wright.
- 5.2. Attendees were briefed on the current priorities & link with Barnsley 2030, timeline for existing commissioning and the current financial position.
- 5.3. A discussion took place regarding the future commissioning, assessment of need and measuring impact of early intervention and prevention models.
- 5.4. The Area Manager explained that the current level of investment into services is not sustainable. It may be possible to maintain current provision during

2024/25 due to the points identified in 4.4 of this report. However, the commissioning commitments would need to be reduced in line with budget constraints for 2025/26.

5.5. The group also considered the two grant funding streams:

5.6. Youth Resilience Grant

Members questioned whether the Area Council should be funding provision in schools. The Area Council Manager advised this funding stream had been developed in order to help reduce anti-social behaviour and risk-taking behaviour in the community. Workshop participants advised working with young people between the ages of 8 and 13, with attention to the transition to senior schools. The providers have been working with young people on: emotional intelligence and improving children's ability to communicate effectively, building confidence and self-esteem, advising them on where to go should they need help, relationships and choosing healthy friendships, discussing the importance of consequences and the impact of sound decision making. The providers use buddy training and/or peer support models to build resilient networks and improve outcomes.

The Area Council Manager also stressed that it has taken the providers considerable time to build positive working relationships with schools, particularly during the pandemic and subsequent recovery period.

This grant commitment will be reviewed with the help of scrutiny from Education, Early Start and Prevention colleagues.

NOTE: A decision on if this grant funding stream continues will be required in January 2024.

5.7. Connecting Communities Grant

This grant was devised to help support the communities of the North Area to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic by reducing isolation and encouraging social interaction. Designed to facilitate the building of strong, resilient, and cohesive communities so that the health impacts associated with being lonely and less mobile during the pandemic can be addressed through positive engagement at in neighbourhood settings.

This funding provision is delivered by three providers currently. It delivers some very valuable soft outcomes for local residents. Often supporting people who do not meet the threshold for statutory support but are still in need of social connection and enriching activities; whilst managing a on a tight budget.

This grant programme comes to an end at the end of March 2024. Age UK's provision will come to an end at the end of December 2023.

NOTE: It is recommended that the Connecting Communities Grant Panel meet to discuss the options. A decision on the continuation of this funding stream is required at the September 2023 meeting.

5.8. The Area Manager urged the workshop participants to refer back to a couple of earlier performance reports which will provide greater insight regarding project delivery for both grant funding streams

North Area Council 2022/23 Q1 Performance Report:

<https://barnsleymbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s99738/Item%207b%20-%20Performance%20Report%202022%20-%202023%20Q1.pdf>

North Area Council 2022/23 Q4 Performance Report:

<https://barnsleymbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s106702/20230522%20Q4%20-%20NAT%20Performance%20Report%202022%20-%202023.pdf>

6. Risks

- 6.1. The proposed budget would take the Area Council approximately £51,883 over budget per annum for 2023/24. 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.
- 7.2. It is recommended that the Connecting Communities Grant Panel meet to review the outcomes of the grant delivery projects and consider the continuation of the funding from January/April 2024.
- 7.3. It is recommended that the priority working group for Young People meet with the Area Manager and Senior Link Officer to review the Youth Resilience Grant.

Officer Contact:

RosemarieAdams@barnsley.gov.uk

Date:

27th June 2023

Appendix 1: North Area Council - Proposed expenditure April 2022-March 2025

Project / Service	2023/24	2024/25
Anti- Poverty – Community Outreach <i>Retender Anti- Poverty - Waiver in place Sept 2021 - June 2023 (9 Months)</i>	104,720.00	106,750.00
Environmental Contract	100,803.00	105,850.00
Envrionmental Contingency	21,160.00	21,170.00
Housing and Cohesion Officer – Grade 6 (+laptop and phone)	40,000.00	42,500.00
Stronger Communities Grant Reduced to £20,000 in 2022/23	-	-
Youth Resilience Fund (November 2022 - October 2024 - YMCA & Ad Astra)	90,000.00	45,000.00
Connecting Communities Social Isolation Grant (£100,000 pa for 2 years)	82,500.00	100,000.00
Sports Van 2023	2,700.00	
Cost of Living - Communal Eating	10,000.00	
Devolved funding to Ward Alliances (<i>where March 2019 balance is less than £10,000</i>)		-
TOTAL	451,883.00	421,270.00