

# **BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **DEARNE AREA COUNCIL**

**20<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

### **Report of the Dearne Area Council Manager**

#### **Environmental Priority**

##### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To provide the current position regarding the Dearne Area council environmental commission, funding, and contract timescales.
- 1.2 To provide information regarding recent member briefings discussing the future direction.
- 1.3 To provide several options for the Dearne Area Council to consider.

##### **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That members receive the background information set out in 3.0.
- 2.2 That members confirm their preferred option set out in 4.0.
- 2.3 That members agree funding aligned to the environmental priority.
- 2.4 That members agree timescales with regards agreed option.
- 2.5 That members are asked to delegate authority to the Executive Director of Public Health and Communities regarding the preferred option that is agreed at the Area Council.

##### **3.0 Back ground**

- 3.1 DAC identified the Environment as a priority from its' inception in 2013.
- 3.2 The priority has been met through a variety of methods including: working alongside environmental groups and support to environmental projects via the Ward Alliance.
- 3.1 In order to meet the environmental priority the Dearne Area Council have undertaken several competitive procurements exercises since 2015. Twiggs Ground Maintenance LTD have been operating in the area since 2015.
- 3.2 At the start of this contract in 2015 the budget aligned to the environmental priority was £75,000 per annum and in this financial year the service costs to the Area Council is £90,000, albeit with reduced capacity. The service now operates over 3 days and not 4.
- 3.3 In January 2021 members agreed to do a contract variation until the end of March 2022. The pandemic saw limited volunteers and groups and businesses operating, therefore those outputs were taken off the services targets. Elected members stated that as well as working with groups the team needed to also undertake a schedule of works directed by elected members.
- 3.4 A further extension was advised to take the contract to the end of March 2024.

3.5 Over the last twelve months several meetings have taken place with the area manager, elected members procurement and the current service provider. A Service specification was developed as part of this process.

#### 4.0 Options

It is clear that there is definite need from within the community for professional support to deliver on environmental projects. Although volunteers need to be central to the delivery on this priority, but members have also stated the need to have a service that can also be reactive and target hotspot areas.

4.2 Members are asked to consider the below options previously discussed at a members briefing on the 24<sup>th</sup> of July.

Type of service /support	Costings	Operational remit	Observations
Commission based on the last service specification that was developed.	Up to 90K	50/50 split working with volunteers and reactive work. Team leader and apprentice 3 days per week.	May not get anyone to tender for the service. observations over the last twelve months mean more work on the specification will need to be done. In order to keep costs down performance monitoring of the provider could be examined. The current provider already as established links with the community.
Buying in services from neighbourhood services	Yr 1 £84,139 Yr 2 £86,222 Yr 3 £94,175	50/50 split working with volunteers and reactive work. Team leader 5 days per week and Driver 3 days per week.	Includes 20% contingency. Performance monitoring to be done through the power Bi system.
Community grant	TBC	Working with local groups	Some of the established environmental groups are currently not operating. Groups would apply based on their area of interest and it would not be equal across wards.
Recruit an environmental project officer (sits within the area team)	£45k	Work directly with groups and have a schedule of litter picking activities	Would have cover over 5 days of the week. Would be more work for the area manager to manage the employee. May have problems recruiting on a short-term basis.

Professional environment delivery service (Landscape /garden maintenance company)	£40k	To work reactively informed by members.	Could use local businesses. May not have infrastructure for reporting purposes so may need initial help from the area team. Unsure how much time this amount would buy from a private business. Would reduce volunteer input.
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## 5.0 **Cost implications**

5.1 The Dearne Area Council have allocated £90,000 in the 2023/24 financial year. Because of other commitments and commissions this amount is the maximum that can be aligned to the environmental priority.

## 6.0 **Timescales**

6.1 The current contract finishes at the end of March 2024. Therefore, if members want continuation of a service a decision needs to be made at this area Council in order to progress with procurement.

6.2 Depending on the preferred option will depend on how long the area Council Agrees funding for.

6.3 If a full procurement exercise is undertaken, in order to appeal to more providers this could be done on a 1+1+1 basis.

6.4 All other options could be initially confirmed for 12 months and reviewed prior to the end of the first year, with a maximum commitment of 3 years.

## 7.0 **Next Steps**

The Dearne Area Council manager will progress with the preferred option with an update to be presented at the next Area Council

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