

## BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

North Area Council Meeting:  
11<sup>th</sup> March 2024

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 during a challenging financial period.

#### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1. **Members note the Youth Resilience Fund Review overview and summary. Full details can be found in**
- 2.2. **The Young People's Priority Working Group have recommended a continuation of the funding stream but wish to readvertise the opportunity as a competitive grant.**
- 2.3. **Financial commitment required for this grant is £100,000.00 p.a. for two years plus (plus the option to extend for one year).**
- 2.4. **That responsibility for finalising the outcomes and objectives; advertising the opportunity, and arranging the moderation panel for the grant opportunity is devolved to the Priority Working Group and the Area Manager.**
- 2.5. **The North Area Council should note the existing budget position the existing the funding commitments. Section 4 of this report.**

#### 3. Background highlighting all significant financial commitment

##### 3.0 The Anti-Poverty Community Outreach Project

Contract 1 commenced on the 14<sup>th</sup> 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 14<sup>th</sup> September 2017 for a two-year term at a contract value of approximately £95,000 per annum. On the 25<sup>th</sup> March 2019 the Area Council took the decision to utilise the contract extension clause and extend the contract until the 13<sup>th</sup> 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 13<sup>th</sup> March further funding was agreed for two years July 2023 – June 2025. A waiver has been submitted that includes the option to extend the current contract for a further 12 months until 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 14<sup>th</sup> September 2015. Prior to the end of the contract the tender opportunity was advertised.

The second environmental contract commenced on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2017 at a value of £85,000 per annum with provider, Twiggs Grounds Maintenance Ltd. Twiggs continued to provide an environmental education contract in the North Area until March 2023.

From July 2023 the North Area Council entered into an SLA with BMBC Neighbourhood Services, introducing an 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 £21,160.60 (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 and apprentice commenced in post from 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2023. The driver role was filled from the 14<sup>th</sup> August.*

*The North Area apprentice is due to start in the area from 6<sup>th</sup> November.*

***Following an injury sustained by the Team Leader on the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023 the post has been backfilled by a BMBC employee on secondment from the 7<sup>th</sup> August. From the end of January 2024 this arrangement will concluded. This period of cover has impacted on the contingency budget. The extend to which will be know at the end of the financial year.***

*N.B.: Contractually this SLA is fulfilled by staff on permanent contracts to ensure employment rights for individuals. If the Area Council agreed to cease funding the SLA, a 6-month notice period will be required.*

- 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 North Area has had two officers in post (22<sup>nd</sup> January 2018 – June 2019 and 19<sup>th</sup> October 2020 – December 2022 respectively). Both officers were successful in securing a promotion within the Safer Communities Service.

The current post holder commenced his duties in the North Area on the 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023. 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.***

- 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 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2021. A total of 9 applications were received before the deadline totalling £615,710.39.

Stage one moderation took place on the 1<sup>st</sup> November and 4 organisations were invited back to present their projects on the 8<sup>th</sup> 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

***UPDATE:*** The Connecting Communities Grant Panel met to review the providers delivery; their performance and consider if the North Area was receiving good value for money. Following which they recommended that two of the provider grant agreements are extended for a period of 12 months, to the maximum value of £75,000. (Age UK - £40,875.00, DIAL Barnsley - £34,125.00). This would mean that all the current provision would conclude by March 2025.

***N.B. The Grant Panel will review the performance and budget availability in early 2024/25 to establish if additional funding can be identified to advertise a similar grant opportunity with revised aims and objectives, dependant on local need.***

### 3.4 Devolved Funding to Ward Alliances

From 2014/15 to 2021/22 the Area Council devolved £10,000 to each of the Ward Alliances. This was reduced to £5,000 for the year 2022/23.

**N.B. The decision was taken in 2020/21 that the funding devolved to Ward Alliances by the North Area Council would cease at the end of 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 tender opportunity in early 2020. The process was unsuccessful. It was agreed in on the 16<sup>th</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> November 2020, with programmes 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. A preliminary workshop was held on the 7<sup>th</sup> November 2023. Following which a review programme has been devised. This commences with a joint provider session on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024, followed by observation and engagement opportunities and subsequently a data presentation and needs assessment. Full details are accessible in Item 6 of today's agenda.**

**At a workshop on the 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024 the priority working group discussed the findings of the review. They unanimously agreed that this programme is difficult to quantify but it is extremely valuable to the beneficiaries. The recommendation following the review is to continue with the funding stream but to re-advertise the grant opportunity for a further two years, plus one, at a value of £100,000.00 per annum.**

**It is also recommended that, responsibility for finalising the outcomes, objectives, advertising and moderation panel for the grant opportunity is devolved to the Area Manager.**

### 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 10<sup>th</sup> 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 provide communal eating opportunities during autumn/winter 2023/24.

### 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.

4.2. Outlined annual commitments for 2023/24:

<b>Contract</b>	<b>Proposed Spend 2023/24</b>
Anti- Poverty – Community Outreach	£104,720
Environmental Community Caretaker Contingency	£100,803 £21,160.60
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
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£451,883.60</b>

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 £451,883.60. This includes the contingency budget for Neighbourhood Services. **The Area**

**Manager has requested that the Caretaker recharge is aligned with the financial year to help with budget forecasting.**

- 4.4. The underspend at the end of 2023/24 was projected to be £25,451 at the beginning of the year. 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 in-year savings of up to £23,100.

## **5. Commissioning Programme from April 2024 – Workshop Outcomes**

- 5.1. A workshop was held on Friday the 23<sup>rd</sup> 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 has been 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 literacy, self-regulation 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: Following a extensive review process, the young people priority working group met on the 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024 and made the**

**recommendations in A decision on if this grant funding stream continues will be required in 3.5 of this report.**

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. Due to the delayed start at the beginning of the programme Barnsley FC Community Trust (Reds in the Community) will continue to deliver until the end of June 2024.

**NOTE: The Connecting Communities Grant Panel met for a review workshop on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023. Following which a financial commitment of £75,000 per annum was agreed to allow for a further 12 months of intervention by the two providers.**

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. Following the extensive review of the Youth Resilience Fund, the young people's priority working group have recommended that the funding stream continues and requested that the grant opportunity is re-advertised. Provided that the Area Council agree to this recommendation it will require the Area Manager to work with the Young People's Priority Working Group to re-design the grant opportunity framework with precedence over other workstreams.

**Officer Contact:**  
RosemarieAdams@barnsley.gov.uk

**Date:**  
29<sup>th</sup> February 2024

## 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
Environmental 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> )		-
<b>TOTAL</b>	451,883.00	421,270.00