

## BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

North Area Council Meeting:  
22<sup>nd</sup> July 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.

#### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1. **Members note the progress on the procurement process for the Youth Resilience Fund Round 2, full details can be found in Agenda Item 5.**
- 2.2. **Members note the update in relation to young people summer activities, section 7.3 of this report.**
- 2.3. **That a workshop is held to confirm Area priorities and discuss investment for 2025/26. This will help determine future investment options.**

#### 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.

The service is 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.

Financial Commitment for 2024/25 totals: £119,979.60, covering:

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

The contingency budget is £19,996.60 (20% of the resource requirement £99,983.00).

***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.*

**The Reds Connect project, delivery by Barnsley FC Community Trust (formerly Reds in the Community) ended at the end of June 2024.**

***N.B. It is recommended that the Grant Panel meet to review the grant programme establishing if additional funding can be identified to advertise a small grants programme that is designed to address similar priorities.***

### 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.

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 helped to enable the existing providers to support students adversely affected by Covid-19 and support them in their educational transitions, primarily the move to senior school.

**Current position: The grant opportunity closed on the 14<sup>th</sup> June 2024. Grant applications were assessed at a Moderation Day on 10 July 2024. Full details are included in Item 5.**

**NB: At £208,593, the received applications exceed the scheme allocation of £200,000 by £8,593.**

### 3.6 Sports Van 2024

The North Area has benefitted from the Sports Van for the past two summers. This summer activity provision has been coordinated via the Sport and Recreation Team who are unable to provide this service for summer 2024.

The provision and refreshments for 2023 cost £2,700.

At the June 2024 meeting, Members agree £3,000 for summer sports provision. The Area Manager has secured Grass Roots Sports Academy to deliver 3 sessions in each ward over the summer holidays.

## 4. Financial Position

4.1. The forecast for 2023/24 was profiled to reduce the underspend (including underspend from previous years) to £25,451 at year end. The forecast included full annual cost for the Housing and Cohesion Officer and Environmental Caretaker Team.

4.2. Following year end re-charged the underspend for the financial year 2023/24 is £77,150.00. This is due to recruitment delays for the projects identified in 4.1.

4.3. Outlined annual commitments for 2024/25:

<b>Contract</b>	<b>Proposed Spend 2024/25</b>
Anti- Poverty – Community Outreach	£106,750
Environmental Community Caretaker Contingency	£105,850.00 £21,170.00
Housing Cohesion Officer – Grade 6 (+laptop and phone)	£42,500
Children and Youth People Resilience Grant 1& 2	£86,667
Connecting Communities Grant 2021-2024 £100,000 per annum for 2 years	£75,000
Summer Sports Van	£3,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£440,937</b>

4.4. Provided that the Area Council continues to commit funding as outlined in Appendix 1, the total spend profiled for 2024/25 is predicted to be £440,937.00. This includes the contingency budget for Neighbourhood Services.

4.5. Based on the funding profiled above the Area Council is predicted to have an underspend of £36,214 at the end of the 2024/25. This means that the North Area Council has the flexibility to invest in further provision to add to the suite above.

## **5. Risks**

5.1. The proposed budget would take the Area Council approximately £40,937.00 over budget per annum for 2024/25. However taking into account the current under spend, the investment profiled in Appendix 1 has been feasible.

## **6. Next Steps**

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

6.2. The projected underspend of £36,214 at the end of the 2024/25, means that the North Area Council has the flexibility to invest in further provision to add to the suite listed in 4.3.

6.3. Suggested investment options include:

- Connecting Communities Grant extension (Previously reviewed in a workshop on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023, two provider programmes were extended)

- Small Grants Opportunity – Autumn / Winter 2024/25

6.4. It is recommended that the Area Council hold a priority workshop to review priorities and consider the commissioning programme for 2025/26.

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**Date:**  
**8<sup>th</sup> July 2024**

## Appendix 1: North Area Council - Proposed expenditure April 2023-March 2025

Project / Service		
	2023/24	2024/25
Anti- Poverty – Community Outreach <i>Retender Anti- Poverty - Waiver in place Sept 2023 - June 2025</i>	104,720.00	106,750.00
Environmental Contract	100,803.00	105,850.00
Environmental Contingency	21,160.60	21,170.00
Housing and Cohesion Officer – Grade 6 (+laptop and phone)	40,000.00	42,500.00
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	75,000.00
Sports Van 2023	2,700.00	3,000.00
Cost of Living - Communal Eating	10,000.00	
Youth Resilience Fund 2 (November 2024 - October 2026)		41,667.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	451,883.60	440,937.00