

BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

North Area Council Extraordinary Meeting:

21st February 2017

Agenda Item: 2

Report of North Area Council Manager

North Area Council's Proposal to commission Private Sector Housing & Environmental Support

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update the Area Council on the workshops that have taken place in relation to private sector housing and environment issues and outline the proposal for these issues to be addressed by commissioning tailored support.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **That members note the workshop updates regarding private sector concerns and the appendices to this report.**
- 2.2 **That members note the financial implications of commissioning private sector housing support for the North Area.**
- 2.3 **That members reach a decision to agree that they wish to proceed with the commissioning of private sector housing support.**

3. Background & progress to date

- 3.1 The North Area Council invited Safer Communities officers to the North Area Council Meeting on the 19 September 2016. Safer Communities officers Jane Brannan and Cath Fairweather provided Members with an overview of the Private Sector Housing and Environment Service. It was explained that the service proactively deals with all issues capable of having a detrimental impact on others in the community, including anti-social behaviour and criminal activity, environmental issues, property/housing conditions, fly-tipping and littering. This is done in conjunction with other agencies such as SYP, SYFRS, Social Care, Landlords/letting agents and local residents.
- 3.2 Following the presentation on the 19th September the Area Council elected not to proceed with any further consideration of this specialist area until Safer Communities completed its restructure and confirmed what its core service offer would be from April 2017.
- 3.3 A further workshop was held on Monday 6th February 2017. It was attended by Cllrs Leech, Platts, Grundy, Howard, Tattersall, Charlesworth, Cherryholme and Lofts. Invited officers included Jane Brannan, Cath Fairweather, Jeanette Millward (Private Sector Housing and Environment Officer – North East Area) and Paul Jolley.

3.4 The core private sector housing offer was confirmed which clarified that there will only be three private sector housing officer from April 2017 and it is anticipated that the vast majority of their work will be relative. An informative and lively discussion followed which enabled the councillors present to learn more about the breadth and volume of issues that officers are required to deal with. Case studies were provided to help explain these in more detail. It was highlighted that often the intervention required is supportive in nature rather than enforcement focussed. This leads to the empowerment of individuals plus intervening at the right level can prevent a costly escalation process being required. The Tasking Officer explained that this type of private sector support was immeasurably helpful in delivering coordinated pieces of work which can involve a whole street. Three locations were referenced that would benefit from this type of intervention.

3.5 At the conclusion of the workshop the Members were in agreement that they wished to proceed and commission private sector housing support for the North Area without delay. The Area Manager was requested to arrange for an extraordinary meeting of the North Area Council to formally make the decision and enable the commissioning process to get underway. The meeting was arranged for the 21st February 2017.

4. Private Sector Housing Support Outline

4.1 Based on initial findings the project cost would be in the region of £32,000 plus equipment and a small working budget to enable larger projects to proceed without delay.

Project	Outline costings
<p>Private Sector Housing Management & Enforcement</p> <p>This programme provides a full time worker at Grade 7 to be employed within the BMBC Safer Communities Service to tackle issues surrounding private landlords & their tenants in identified hotspot areas across the North Area.</p> <p>This programme has already been funded by 4 out of the 6 Area Councils Central, where the impact has been substantial.</p> <p>Please see Appendices 1 – 5 of this report for further details of the proposal & the associated costings.</p>	<p>£32,000 per year to fund 1FTE worker plus their on-costs. There is no management fee. Additionally purchase of a personal bodycam is recommended plus a small working budget to ensure larger projects can be realised.</p> <p>It should be noted that although the worker would be employed by BMBC, this is not ‘buy back’ activity, as it is work which has never been undertaken by the Council and is additional.</p> <p>There is a possibility that this post could eventually become mainstreamed if BMBC choose to introduce selective licensing schemes for private landlords.</p>

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The North Area Council considered the financial implication of this project at the Area Council Meeting on the 23rd January 2017. Based on the Area Council's existing commitments and the provisional budget allocation of £90,000 per ward totalling £360,000 per annum this would have left £100,572 uncommitted.
- 5.2 The Area Manager is aware that the decision to reduce the Area Council budgets has been rejected and the same budget will be retained until further notice (£400,000 per annum for the North Area). If this project goes ahead this will leave an unallocated balance of **£140,572**.
- 5.3 Members should also consider that they have indicated that they wish to redefine projects to address the anti-poverty priority and the environmental (clean and green) priority. Both of the existing contracts conclude in September 2017 and a continuation of either would require the commitment of further funding.

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Date: 7th February 2017

Appendices 1 – 4: Further details of the Private Sector Housing Management and Environment Provision

- Appendix 1 Private Sector Housing and Environment Officer – Context, practicalities and suitability for the North Area. (To follow)**
- Appendix 2 Private Sector Housing and Environment Officer Role Profile**
- Appendix 3 Examples of Milestones, Outcomes and Intervention Performance Monitoring Template (NE Area)**
- Appendix 4 Central Area Council early performance report**