

South Area Council – Procurement and Financial Update

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide a procurement update and recommendations for consideration. To inform and provide a steer on intentions for:
- A social isolation commission
 - Anti-social behaviour and off-road biking pilot
 - Post office – costs for additional opening hours

2. Recommendations

Social Isolation commission

- 2.1 That Members consider the recommendations in section 3 and the preferred option C that a social isolation and loneliness service is retendered and that the opportunity is advertised on YOR tender as an open and transparent and competitive tender.
- 2.2 That Members approve a maximum contract value of **£60,000 per year for a 3 year (1+1+1) contract** and approve the procurement timescale set out at 3.9 and also **nominate two Members to take part in the tender process, scoring and sit on the tender interview panel.**
- 2.3 That Members approve the recommendation that the **South Area Council Manager pulls together a specification for consideration by Members** taking into account feedback from the workshop.
- 2.4 That Members are asked **to delegate authority to the Executive Director Communities to agree the final specification and tender information for all commissioning work outlined in this report following consultation with Members of South Area Council.**

Anti-social behaviour and off road biking pilot

- 2.5 That members consider the request outlined at section 5 to run a pilot to better tackle off road bikes / quad biking across the South and if recommended approve the costs to purchase a Wide Lens, Long Range Camera, SD card and carry bag for £2500.

Post office – costs for additional opening hours

- 2.6 That Members consider the request outlined at section 6 for extending the opening hours of the Post Office currently based at the Wombwell Library and if approved agree the recommendation to fund the £1414 costs.

3. Social Isolation contract

- 3.1 The South Area Council currently commission Age UK Barnsley to deliver a social isolation and loneliness contract called the 'Better Together' service across the South Area.

- 3.2 The service was commissioned to tackle loneliness and isolation and increasing independence and health and wellbeing. The service actively supports people who may be vulnerable through loss of income, mobility and employment or partner bereavement. The service has adapted its delivery to target people in need throughout the Pandemic and changing Government guidance.
- 3.3 The service is a two-year contract delivering from 1st September 2019. The contract value is £59,560 per year, total = £119,120. The contract will be completed on the 31st August 2021. There are no extensions on this contract.
- 3.4 The South Area Council held a virtual workshop on the 31st March 2021 in order to consider the performance of the contract to date, ongoing demand and whether there are continued needs for a service.
- 3.5 In the last 12 months the 'Better Together' service has:
- Supported 168 people with one to one support delivered by the social inclusion workers
 - Supported 295 people to access other support services and signposting
 - Increased the number of people assessing local community groups and activities (449)
 - Encouraged 135 new people to get involved in physical activity and encouraging use of the outdoors
 - Helped 42 people dealing with fuel poverty and access help and advice
 - Made referrals to Social Prescribing, Berneslai Homes, Social Services, Memory Team, Carers Service, GPs, Community Matrons, Private sector Housing service, Tidy Team, CAB and self-referrals.
 - Helped groups to become more Dementia Friendly and supported Age Friendly Barnsley through approaches to delivery and building understanding and awareness.
 - Helped develop 43 Good neighbour relationships
 - Facilitated 36 community car journeys
 - Delivered 12 intergenerational projects
 - Supported 16 new groups in activities that have been identified by service users as gaps
 - Supported 23 existing groups and 8 groups specifically to become more inclusive
 - Engaged 71 new volunteers
 - Supported 132 volunteers in the delivery of activities and projects with over 1000 volunteer hours.
 - Offered a range of support with issues around social care, health, consumer advice and support with benefits claims. They carry out benefits assessments, help with fuel poverty, pension credit, council tax support, Blue Badge applications, and much more tailored to individual circumstances.
£130,365 Benefits Gain
- 3.6 Below is a few examples of the work carried out by Age UK Barnsley and customer feedback:

Project Feedback:

"I really look forward to my visits from the Social Inclusion Worker even though she has to stand outside. I hadn't seen anybody in months, as my nephew lives in Herefordshire

so it was a lovely surprise when she first visited. I look forward to the day when she can come inside and sit with me for a chat like normal.” JH - Elsecar

Social Inclusion worker:

In partnership with Barnsley Carers Service the project was able to offer a tablet device complete with internet accessibility for a service user in Wombwell

This free provision has given a whole new lease of life to someone who has never used the internet before or any social media platforms. This lady has started to read the news online, check the weather, play games and even keep in touch with her Granddaughter via messenger. For someone with limited mobility, it has prevented social isolation & loneliness in a whole different way whilst remaining safe in her home during the difficult Covid times.

Social Inclusion Worker:

The “Activities at Home” programme in the South Area was a great success so Social Inclusion Workers decided to help service users remain as active as possible both physically and mentally. We had **72** people from the South Area take part in a range of interactive activities. The activities on offer ranged from Art therapy, Local History, puzzles and crosswords, and tea tastings. We understand that some individuals are unable to carry out activities due to health complications so wanted the activities to be inclusive, hence the formation of the Food Tasters Club.

Feedback:

“Thank you for sharing this activity with mum. As she is partially sighted and has osteoarthritis there are many things she can no longer take part in but she has a great appetite and has enjoyed her weekly pie tasting, and I have then wrote the score on the card for her. What a clever idea, carry on the good work”

Elsecar Walking Group, Social Inclusion Worker:

Two volunteers attended a one day course with NHS walking For Health, which enabled them to be walk leaders. **18** people registered their interest in attending weekly sessions which was due to begin January 5th 2021, however due to lockdown this has been postponed. Once restrictions are lifted, they can commence. This group is predominantly aimed at the 50 and over age bracket however we aim for this to be inclusive and welcome family members and their well-behaved pets.

3.7 At the workshop the challenges below were highlighted:

- That social isolation was an issue in Barnsley and in the South area before COVID and remains an issue
- That it has been exacerbated through COVID – all the usual support networks (friends, family and other interactions) have been reduced
- Through the establishment of the Emergency Contact Centre we have seen an increase of different people needing support due to being socially isolated
- That case studies for the South show a lot of people worked with don't have meaningful connections in their communities and this has become more difficult during the pandemic
- That social isolation has impacted on mental and physical health and befriending support needs have increased in the South through Covid.
- Through the CAB contract the following disability/health problems were declared: Long term health condition = 368, Physical impairment (non-sensory) = 34, Mental health = 92, Multiple impairments = 35, Learning difficulties = 7, Other disability/type not given = 163
- There are almost 5,000 older people in Barnsley who do not see or speak to other people from one week to the next (Age UK).

- Anecdotal evidence that people are fearful of getting back out and socialising even when we are able to.

3.8 At the workshop Members were asked to consider the information presented and provide a steer on how to proceed. Potential options:

- **Option a)** Contract to be terminated on the 31st August 2021, all support provided as part of this contract would cease from this date and Members consider alternative priorities and use of commissioning budget
- **Option b)** Recommendation that a different service with a different specification and model (i.e grants, all age group focus) is tendered for and that the opportunity is advertised on YORtender as an open, transparent and competitive opportunity
- **Option c)** Recommendation that the same / similar service is retendered and that the opportunity is advertised on YORtender as an open, transparent and competitive opportunity.

3.9 Option C was the preferred option at the workshop with the following being recommended in this report:

- **Maximum contract value of £60,000** per year with a contract length of **3 years on a 1 + 1+ 1 basis**. Members felt it was important that there is an opportunity at the end of the first year to re-evaluate what the needs in the community are and to have flexibility throughout all the stages of the contract to change delivery and interventions
- Working alongside the procurement team the following timescale has been developed. In previous years Members have always been keen to allow sufficient time between contract award and start date to allow a new provider or existing contractor to manage staffing arrangements and prepare for the contract start date. **Members are asked to agree the recommended timescale below:**

EVENT	DATE
Publication of Tender	26th May 2021
Deadline for Clarifications – through YORtender only	18th June 2021
Submission Deadline	25th June 2021
Evaluation of Tenders	28th June 2021 – 20th July 2021
Bidder Presentations	TBC
Notification of Intent to Award (Start of Standstill period)	20th July 2021
Contract Award – Issue of Contract for signature	2nd August 2021
Contract Start Date	1st September 2021

- Previously two Members have formed part of the tender interview panel alongside the South Area Council Manager and an additional officer. Tender interviews and presentations will be carried out by Microsoft teams

and tender scoring and paperwork will need to be completed individually and submitted prior to the tender panel meeting. Informal training through the procurement team will be available. **It is recommended that two Members are nominated to sit on the tender interview panel.**

- 4.0 Developing a specification: During the pandemic the South Area Council contracts, including the Social Isolation contract, have been able to flex their contracts in order to continue to offer appropriate and emerging support across the community. A new specification is going to have to take into consideration that we are still working through a Covid 19 recovery stage which has impacted on how all our contracts are able to deliver services.
- 4.1 Any new specification will need to reflect social distancing and anticipate / provide flexibility in how services can be delivered and follow the up to date Government guidelines.
- 4.2 Members were keen to ensure the specification:
- Recognises that a lot has changed through Covid including needs and methods of delivery and a new contract will need to be flexible to these changes
 - Recognises that communities will be living with Covid for some time to come and a specification will need to reflect this.
 - That any specification and provider is able to be flexible throughout all stages of a contract. Year one may need to look vastly different to year three. The suggestion is that an annual review takes place where the Area Council would work with the provider to look at needs to be addressed for year two and three and that there is flexibility even within this to respond quickly and swiftly to changing needs and demands, particularly as society opens up and people's needs will become apparent. The provider will need to have a proactive and adaptable approach. A three-year contract was discussed but with the approach of a yearly review and resetting of outcomes.
 - Reflects that we are in a recovery stage and this must be clear in the providers response e.g. many people are reporting a loss of confidence in getting out and about. Activities need to support this through activities such as gentle walking routes and supportive groups, activities that are easy to join in, are encouraging and supportive and look to engage people at their pace through a gentle reintroduction to the community, an emphasis will be needed on activities that take into account people with limited mobility / struggling with a loss of mobility or strength as a result of being less active during Covid.
 - Takes into account that isolation and loneliness affects all age groups. Whilst this commissioned service has delivered several projects working with young people to promote positive messages of older people, the service does not offer one to one intervention for people under 50. A specification should take this into consideration through improved signposting to support for all.
 - Plays a role in 'changing the relationship between the council and the community' which is a South Area Council priority. All providers need to better promote that services are funded through the South Area Council.
- 4.3 This report is recommending that the **South Area Council Manager pulls together a specification for consideration by Members** following details from this meeting.

5. Tackling Anti-social behaviour and off-road biking

- 5.1 The Hoyland Milton Rockingham Ward Alliance have been discussing the issues of quad biking and anti-social behaviour in Jump for some time, particularly as more concerns have been raised locally throughout the pandemic. A number of options to tackle the issues have been discussed resulting in meetings with key partners including BMBCs Community Safety team, SY Police, Early intervention and Prevention Team, Berneslai Homes and South Area Team.
- 5.2 Although the initial discussions were regarding quad bikes in Jump Valley, during the discussions it was suggested by partners that a South Area wide approach would be more effective in tackling the wider issues rather than taking an approach looking at individual access points. Darfield, Wombwell and Hoyland Milton and Rockingham wards have all seen an increase in reporting locally of off-road bikes across the area and continues to be raised as an issue.
- 5.3 SY Police and BMBCs Community safety team have confirmed that tackling off road biking across the South Area Council is a key priority for their teams and are committed to working locally to look at addressing these issues.
- 5.4 In order to tackle the issue partners identified the need to:
- Increase reporting of incidents
 - Build a better picture of local intelligence and incidents
 - Clarify how and when to report incidents
 - Increase number of seizure notices locally and identify hot spot areas where notices can be placed
 - Make best use of the SY Police and off-road bike team through the purchasing of a Wide Lens camera. Other Authorities have used similar equipment to better identify off road bikers and can be used at a distance which will help when unable to pursue and for seizures after the fact.
- 5.5 The following is a suggested way forward for Members to consider as a pilot for the South Area:
- Signage in hot spot areas, this will allow bike seizure in hotspot area and help increase reporting. SY Police will be producing and funding these signs.
 - Purchase a Wide Lens Long Range camera, this would be kept with the South policing team and used in the South Area. It would also be made available to BMBCs community safety team to tackle other issues across the South Area Council including for out of hours and weekend patrols.
 - Communication campaign jointly between SY Police, BMBC and Berneslai Homes. The campaign would include key messages about reporting, where and how to report, reporting on seizures and successes leading from increased intelligence and a photo gallery.
- 5.6 Partners confirmed that there is evidence that the combination of increased reporting, improved intelligence and use of a wide lens camera provides sufficient evidence to increase the number of bike seizures which can be after the fact. The local policing team will also be in a better position to request the off-road bike team and to better target this resource.

5.7 If the above recommendation is agreed the costs to purchase a Wide Lens, Long Range Camera, SD card and carry bag would be £2500.

6. Wombwell Post Office – request for additional opening times

6.1 Wombwell Post Office moved out of Heron Foods on Wombwel High Street into Wombwell Library on 29th January 2021. The Post Office is delivered on an outreach basis from Birdwell Post Office and with two staff present. The Post Office is currently operating during library opening times in the extension as follows:

Monday 1.30pm – 4pm

Tuesday 10am – 4pm

Friday 12 noon – 4pm

6.2 The Post Office are working with local businesses to try and identify and secure a permanent solution on the High Street and take over the Post Office function in the longer term.

6.3 A request has been made to the Libraries service regarding the feasibility to open the Post Office on a Wednesday when the library is closed. Facilities Management are able to open and close the building and provide the additional cleaning. The charges to open the library are £54.38 per week, total cost of £1414 for a 6 month period.

6.4 Any training delivered to a potential interested business must be completed face to face, however due to Covid 19, this has delayed the opportunity to fully explore this. It is hoped that this can move on in the next 6 months however there is the possibility that this could take longer or that a longer term option on the High street is not found.

6.5 'Improving the Local Economy' is one of the South Area Council priorities. As part of this priority the South Area Council are asked to consider the request for extending the opening hours of the Post Office currently based at the Wombwell Library and if approved agree the recommendation to fund the £1414 costs.

7. South Area Council Finances

7.1 The South Area Council currently have a commissioning budget of £24,800 which is unallocated and an additional £60,000 which has been ringfenced for a social isolation commission service if approved or will be added to the unallocated commissioning budget for further consideration.

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