

South Area Council

Friday 23rd April 2021

Procurement and Financial update

**South Area Council Briefings:
23rd April 2021**

Report of South Area Council Manager

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

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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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.

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

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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 who 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).

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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.

Option C was the preferred option at the workshop

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.

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- 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.

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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.**

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.

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- 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.

2. Recommendations

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.

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.

2. Recommendations

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.

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