

Update on the implementation of the commissioning process for the service priorities identified in the Commissioning Framework document and approved by Cabinet on 8 October 2012.

1.0 OUTCOME

1.1 The implementation of the commissioning process was successfully completed by 31 March 2013. All the Service Level Agreements (SLA) were signed by both WBC and the commissioned organisations to commence on 1 April 2013.

2.0 DETAILED PROPOSAL

2.1 Background Summary

2.1.1 At the Cabinet meeting held on 8th October 2012, the following was agreed:

1. The service commissioning priorities as identified in 3.4 of the report
2. Delegated responsibility to the Head of Community Services to implement the commissioning process for the service priorities identified in 3.8 of the report to ensure services are in place from April 1st 2013, subject to Council approval of the Budget 2013/14'

2.1.2 Section 3.4 refers to the identified priorities:

- infrastructure support to the voluntary and community sector
- enabling people with physical mobility problems to access services in the town centre
- advice services
- arts and culture
- community centres
- sport

Additionally section 3.4 refers to domestic abuse service provision. Whilst it is acknowledged that domestic abuse services are not the commissioning responsibility of a District Council, the findings from the Equality Impact Analysis indicated a disproportionate impact on a protected characteristic group. The recommendation to mitigate these risks was to continue to fund the existing service provider for a further 12 months whilst long term support for these services were considered by the primary commissioning organisations.

Section 3.8 of the report to Cabinet outlined the services to be commissioned, namely:

- Community Centres in the following area, Meriden; Orbital; Radlett Rd; Holywell; West Watford; Leavesden Green
- Provision of motorised scooters to enable people to access shops, businesses and services including advice, health and leisure services in the town centre
- A quality accredited generic advice service with particular emphasis on benefits, immigration, debt and housing advice
- Infrastructure support to the voluntary and community sector to increase its capacity to promote and support itself
- Provision of a regional theatre and outreach programme ensuring a programme which meets the diverse needs of the community

- Support to develop the capacity of sports clubs and organisations to increase community participation in physical activity and sport to contribute towards a healthy town for Watford residents.

2.2 Details of Commissioning Process

2.2.1 Documentation

Service Level Agreement (SLA)

This document was reviewed to include greater emphasis on relationship and partnership working and management of performance issues. The SLA's for the outsourced Community Centres continue to have reference to TUPE clauses. The Service Level Agreement was approved by The Section Head, Legal Services In February 2013.

Service Specifications for each service area

Outcome focused service specifications were developed and discussed with the commissioned organisation. The purpose was to focus on the key areas of service delivery following a commissioning cycle process of service planning, delivery and review/evaluation. A key aim was to simplify the service specification and in turn allow for a less onerous reporting process.

Details of commissioning process in each service area

2.2.2 Letters were sent to the commissioned organisations on 14 November 2012 informing them of the budget allocation for 2013/14.

Community Centres

A generic service specification was developed for the community centres.

Three of the six community centres required new SLA's and service specifications, namely Holywell, Orbital and West Watford. Meriden already had an SLA in place, however it was agreed that they would move to the new service specification. Radlett Rd (Centrepoint Community Centre) and Leavesden Green already have existing SLA's which expire on 31 March 2013 following which, if funding continues, the new SLA and service specification will be applied in line with the other commissioned community centres.

Commissioned Organisation	Budget allocation 2013/14	Service specification/SLA discussions with organisation	SLA's signed
Holywell Community Centre	£76,680	4 January 2013 & 13. March.2013	28 March.2013
Orbital Community Centre	£72,965	15 January 2013	26 March.2013
West Watford	£23,415 (direct grant) and £10,920 (accommodation)	19 December 2012 & 12.March.2013	18 March.2013
Meriden	£72,159	11 January 2013. Updated service specification sent on 26 March 2013	n/a

Advice Services

Following a request from Watford CAB, it was agreed to include employment in the list of services to be provided. The rationale for this was due to the CAB providing evidence that they dealt with more employment enquiries than immigration and this was a key area of service delivery.

There has been an increase of £30k applied to the CAB's direct grant to mitigate the impact of significant welfare reforms changes being introduced during the 2013/14 year.

Commissioned Organisation	Budget allocation 2013/14	Service specification/SLA discussions with organisations	SLA signed
Watford CAB	£204,192 (direct grant) and £39,500 (accommodation costs)	12 December 2012 & 13 March 2013	26 March.2013

Provision of motorised scooters to enable people to access the town centre

Commissioned Organisation	Budget allocation 2013/14	Service specification/SLA discussions with organisation	SLA signed
Shopmobility	£36,459	11 December 2012 & 14 March 2013	20 March 2013

Infrastructure support to the voluntary and community sector

Commissioned Organisation	Budget allocation 2013/14	Service specification/SLA discussions with organisation	SLA signed
Watford CVS (now Watford & Three Rivers Trust)	£79,173	4 January 2013 & 13 March 2013	28 March.2013

Provision of a regional theatre and outreach programme

Commissioned Organisation	Budget allocation 2013/14	Service specification/SLA discussions with organisation	SLA signed
Palace Theatre	£257,730 (direct grant) and £32,500 (accommodation costs)	13 December 2012 & 11 March 2013	21 March 2013

Support to develop the capacity of sports clubs and organisations to increase community participation in physical activity and sport to contribute towards a healthy town for Watford residents.

This is already being commissioned through the current Sports Development Framework and this framework will be reviewed in 2013/14

Provision of a domestic violence abuse service for 12 months

Commissioned Organisation	Budget allocation 2013/14	Service specification/SLA discussions with organisation	SLA signed
Watford Women's Centre	£44,000 (direct grant) and £26,000 (accommodation costs)	18. December 2012 & 19 March .2013	19 March 2013

2.3 Feedback from commissioned organisations on the new documentation

2.3.1 Feedback has been extremely positive with the majority of organisations citing that they supported a clearer service specification and less onerous reporting schedule.

Monitoring

Monitoring templates for reporting have been developed and discussed with the commissioned organisations. There is greater emphasis on organisations providing summaries of planning and needs analysis including consultation with users to ensure that the planned service are appropriate. This is in line with a commissioning cycle process. Additionally organisations will be required to clearly demonstrate the collection and use of equalities data to ensure that the planning of services reach all sectors of the community. Operational and strategic monitoring meetings are currently being scheduled.