

<b>Bath &amp; North East Somerset Council</b>	
<b>MEETING:</b>	Wellbeing Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel
<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> November 2012
<b>TITLE:</b>	Local Involvement Network (LINK) position update
<b>WARD:</b>	ALL
<b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>	
<b>List of attachments to this report:</b>  Specification for the delivery of the Local Involvement Network (LINK) Host service in Bath & North East Somerset	

## **1 THE ISSUE**

This report outlines the plans for the procurement of a Host service for the B&NES LINK (Local Involvement Network) to run from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2012 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013. The new service provider will replace the previous one, Scout Enterprises Ltd., which ceased trading on 29 September 2012 and formally went into liquidation on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2012. A formal update is being presented today to ensure the Panel has current and comprehensive information on the way forward for the LINK, and the way in which we will carry out our statutory duty in providing a LINK Host service.

## **2 RECOMMENDATION**

Members are asked to consider the information presented within the report and note the key issues described.

## **3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The tender for the procurement referred to in section 1 above is for a maximum of £10,000. This is due to a reduction in the services to be provided, as agreed between the Council and the Chair and Deputy Chairs of the LINKs. This amount can be met from within the existing revenue budget that was established for Policy & Partnership commissions and thus there will be no funding pressure as a result'.

## **4 THE REPORT**

- 4.1 Under the *Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007*, every local authority are required to procure a Host organisation to enable, support and facilitate the Local Involvement Network (LINK) in its activities, under the direction of the LINK. The Host service to the B&NES LINK was, from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2008 until 19<sup>th</sup> October 2012, provided by Scout Enterprises Ltd. On the latter date this company was formally wound up and went into liquidation, with the concomitant loss of staff. Consequently, their provision of the Host service to the LINK ceased on that date. A contract variation to end their contract to 31 January 2013 had been negotiated with the Scout Enterprise but no formal contract had been signed.
- 4.2 As there continues to be a statutory obligation under the above Act for the Council to make provision of a LINK Host service until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013 (after which all LINKs will cease to exist and Local Healthwatch will come into existence), we have invited 4 organisations from the south west who are currently delivering a LINK Host role or have extensive knowledge of working with volunteers, to tender for the provision of a Host service to the B&NES LINK from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2012 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013.
- 4.3 In the interim, Policy and Partnerships' Funding and Programmes team have provided administrative support to the LINK, including the minuting of the LINK meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2012, and making arrangements for the LINK meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2012. This support will continue until a preferred supplier has been indemnified and commences delivery of the Host role.
- 4.4 The specification for this service is contained in the Appendix to this report.

## **5 RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 5.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.
- 5.2 Following the liquidation of Scout Enterprises Ltd, various options regarding the provision of the LINK Host service were examined, including no Host service being provided, and the service being taken in-house. However, the advice from the Council's legal department was that the service must continue to be provided until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013, as failure to do so would mean the Council would be in breach of its statutory obligations; and that the Council could not provide the service in-house, as that would be in contravention of the Act cited in section 1 above.

## **6 EQUALITIES**

- 6.1 An EqlA has been completed. No adverse or other significant issues were found.

## **7 CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 Cllr Simon Allen, Cllr Vic Pritchard, Chair- overview & Scrutiny Panel; Service Users. Chair and Vice Chairs of the current LINKs governance.
- 7.2 Face to face meetings.

## 8 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION

Other Legal Considerations statutory obligation to provide a LINKs

## 9 ADVICE SOUGHT

- 9.1 The Council's Monitoring Officer, Paul Hiscott, Leader Support Services (Director of Finance – Sick Leave). Have agreed by email in support if this report for publication.

<b>Contact person</b>	Susan Bowen 01225 477278
<b>Background papers</b>	Specification for the delivery of the Local Involvement Network (LINK) Host service in Bath & North East Somerset
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