

To: Members of the Special Sub-Group

Councillors D Clews, Farrow, Hayfield, Jenns, Parsons and Smith

For the information of the other Members of the Council

For general enquiries please contact Democratic Services on 01827 719221/719226 or via email – democraticservices@northwarks.gov.uk

For enquiries about specific reports please contact the officer named in the reports.

This document can be made available in large print and electronic accessible formats if requested.

SPECIAL SUB-GROUP

9 March 2021

The Special Sub-Group will meet on Tuesday, 9 March 2021 at 6.30 pm via Teams. An email invite will be sent to all Members and the meeting will be live streamed on the Council's YouTube channel, accessible from the home page of the Council's website or at <https://www.youtube.com/user/northwarks>

AGENDA

- 1 Apologies for Absence / Members away on official Council business.**
- 2 Disclosable Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**

3 **Public Participation**

Up to twenty minutes will be set aside for members of the public to put questions to elected Members. Questions should be submitted by 9.30am two working days prior to the meeting. Participants are restricted to five minutes each.

PLEASE BE AWARE THAT THIS MEETING WILL BE TAKING PLACE REMOTELY.

Members of the public wishing to address the Board must register their intention to do so by 9:30am two working days prior to the meeting. Participants are restricted to five minutes each.

If you wish to put a question to the meeting, please register by email to democraticservices@northwarks.gov.uk or telephone 01827 719221/719226.

Once registered to speak, an invitation will be sent to join the Teams video conferencing for this meeting. Those registered to speak should dial the telephone number and ID number (provided on their invitation) when joining the meeting to ask their question. However, whilst waiting they will be able to hear what is being said at the meeting. They will also be able to view the meeting using the YouTube link provided (if so they made need to mute the sound on YouTube when they speak on the phone to prevent feedback).

4 **Extension of Temporary Contract – Report of the Corporate Director Resources**

Summary

This report asks the Sub-Group to consider extending the temporary contract of the Financial Inclusion Support Officer.

The Contact Officer for this report is Rachael Dobson (719338)

5 Exclusion of the Public and Press

Recommendation:

To consider whether, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business, on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Schedule 12A to the Act.

6 Proposed Restructure of a Council Service Area – Report of the Chief Executive

The Contact Officer for this report is Steve Maxey (01827 719438).

STEVE MAXEY
Chief Executive

Agenda Item No 4

Special Sub Group

9 March 2021

**Report of the Corporate Director
Resources**

Extension of Temporary Contract

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report asks the Sub-Group to consider extending the temporary contract of the Financial Inclusion Support Officer.

Recommendation to the Sub Group

That the contract of the Financial Inclusion Support Officer be extended from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

2 Consultation

- 2.1 Consultation has taken place with the relevant Members and any comments received will be reported at the meeting.

3 Introduction

- 3.1 The Council is currently undertaking a Financial Inclusion project, alongside Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council. This has involved the employment of a Financial Inclusion Support Officer on a temporary basis, which commenced in January 2019 and currently runs up to 31 March 2021. Funding for the post was provided by Warwickshire County Council through the Warwickshire Local Welfare Scheme for the period January 2019 to March 2020 and from North Warwickshire BC from April 2020 to March 2021.
- 3.2 The Financial Inclusion Support Officer (FISO) has carried out some excellent work in North Warwickshire during this time, working with customers with the most complex needs. The referrals come from several different sources, with a significant number referred from our Housing Team. A holistic approach is taken to assist with and improve the overall welfare of the customers and can assist a variety of needs such as the management of debt, housing difficulties and assistance with life skills.

3.3 This holistic approach has achieved a number of very positive outcomes, both in collecting and reducing debt and dealing with wider customer problems and issues. As you will understand the impact of Covid-19 caused a significant increase in need for this direct support for many of our customers. Having the on-call availability of this specialist support for our vulnerable residents has proven most invaluable in this period.

4 Current Position

4.1 The Financial Inclusion Support Officer (FISO) has carried out some excellent work in North Warwickshire during this very difficult year, working with all customers who with the most complex needs and who have had extra difficulties due to Covid.

5 Proposed Action

5.1 It is proposed to extend the contract of the FISO for a further twelve months, to March 2022. This will allow the valuable work currently being undertaken to continue.

5.2 The Council has received New Burdens funding towards the administration of benefits, and this could be used to fund the post.

6 Report Implications

6.1 Finance and Value for Money Implications

6.1.1 The salary and associated costs of the FISO amount to £36,000 for a full year. Use of the New Burdens funding ensures there will be no impact on the General Fund balance in 2021/22.

6.2 Safer Communities Implications

6.2.1 Better access to advice and assistance has many direct and indirect benefits that contribute to a greater feeling of wellbeing and community cohesiveness. This can only have a positive impact on the communities we serve.

6.3 Environment, Sustainability and Health Implications

6.3.1 The Council's ongoing commitment to assist in helping people address or improve their financial circumstances or well-being has positive impacts. It is hoped that by providing this level of support, it will ensure that residents can learn new skills to enable them to rely less on our help going forward and help keep collection rates in terms of rent, council tax and housing benefit overpayments as high as possible by providing the correct levels of help and support.

6.4 Human Resources Implications

6.4.1 The FISO post is currently being filled by a Benefits Officer, with her substantive post backfilled. This will need to continue if the FISO contract is extended.

6.5 Risk Management Implications

6.5.1 Providing appropriate levels of customer support enables the Council to be proactive, as well as reactive. This assists with the collection of monies due.

6.6 Equalities Implications

6.6.1 A wider range of financial inclusion activity assists with ensuring that no group or individual is denied access to help or advice in respect of both Council and other complementary services.

6.7 Links to Council's Priorities

6.7.1 Financial Inclusion activities support in particular the three corporate priorities of tackling poverty, improving health and well-being and promoting education, skills and employment.

The Contact Officer for this report is Rachael Dobson (719338).

Background Papers

Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D, as substituted by the Local Government Act, 2000 Section 97

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date

Equality Impact Assessment Summary Sheet

Please complete the following table summarised from the equality impact assessment form. This should be completed and attached to relevant Board reports.

Name of	
Officer Responsible for assessment	Rachael Dobson

Does this policy /procedure /service have any differential impact on the following equality groups /people?

- (a) Is there a positive impact on any of the equality target groups or contribute to promoting equal opportunities and improve relations or:
- (b) could there be a negative impact on any of the equality target groups i.e. disadvantage them in any way

Equality Group	Positive impact	Negative impact	Reasons/Comments
Racial	Yes	No	The work is open to all groups to assist with financial support. Access to the support is available in many ways that do not discriminate any customer.
Gender	Yes	No	The work is open to all groups to improve financial support. Access to the support is available in many ways that do not discriminate the customer.
Disabled people	Yes	No	The work is open to all groups to improve financial support. Access to the support is available in many ways that do not discriminate the customer.
Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual people	Yes	No	The work is open to all groups to improve financial support. Access to the support is available in many ways that do not discriminate the customer.
Older/Younger people	Yes	No	The work is open to all groups to improve financial support. Access to the support is available in many ways that do not discriminate the customer.
Religion and Beliefs	Yes	No	The work is open to all groups to improve financial support. Access to the support is available in many ways that do not discriminate the customer.

People having dependents caring responsibilities	Yes	No	The work is open to all groups to improve financial support. Access to the support is available in many ways that do not discriminate the customer.
People having an offending past	Yes	No	The work is open to all groups to improve financial support. Access to the support is available in many ways that do not discriminate the customer.
Transgender people	Yes	No	The work is open to all groups to improve financial support. Access to the support is available in many ways that do not discriminate the customer.
Armed Forces Covenant	Yes	No	The work is open to all groups to improve financial support. Access to the support is available in many ways that do not discriminate the customer.

If you have answered **No** to any of the above please give your reasons below

Please indicate if you believe that this document

Should proceed to further Impact assessment

Needs no further action

Risk Management Form

**NORTH WARWICKSHIRE
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Division

Cost Centre or Service

Risk Ref	Risk: Title/Description	Consequence	Likelihood (5 = high, 1 = low)	Impact (5 = high, 1 = low)	Gross Risk Rating	Responsible Officer	Existing Control Procedures	Likelihood (5 = high, 1 = low)	Impact (5 = high, 1 = low)	Net Risk Rating
	Absence of FISO due to Absence	Requirement to cover appointments while officer on Annual Leave	5	1		Sally Roberts	Pre-booked visits/calls arranged	5	1	
		Requirement to cover appointments while officer on sick leave (short Term)	2	3		Sally Roberts	Rearrange all visits/calls where necessary. If urgent Partners are called to assist in Visits, for E.G. CA	2	3	
		Requirement to cover appointments while officer on sick leave (medium/Long Term)	1	4		Sally Roberts	Would need to consider arrangements around new temporary FISO	1	4	
Risk Ref	Options for additional / replacement control procedure						Cost Resources	Likelihood (5 = high, 1 = low)	Impact (5 = high, 1 = low)	Net Risk Rating

Completed By: Rachael Dobson

Date: 02.12.19

Agenda Item No 5

Special Sub-Group

9 March 2021

**Report of the
Chief Executive**

Exclusion of the Public and Press

Recommendation to the Sub-Group

To consider whether, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business, on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Schedule 12A to the Act.

Agenda Item No 6

Proposed Restructure of a Council Service Area – Report of the Chief Executive

Paragraph 2 - Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual.

In relation to the item listed above members should only exclude the public if the public interest in doing so outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, giving their reasons as to why that is the case.

The Contact Officer for this report is Amanda Tonks (719221)