

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
27 JANUARY 2016

BOROUGH INSIGHT

<u>Report of the:</u>	Chief Executive
<u>Contact:</u>	Mark Rouson/Riquita D'Souza
<u>Urgent Decision?</u>	Yes
<u>If yes, reason urgent decision required:</u>	Current contract ending March 2016
<u>Annexes/Appendices (attached):</u>	Annexe 1: tender results
<u>Other available papers (not attached):</u>	None

REPORT SUMMARY

This report sets out the benefits of producing the Council's magazine Borough Insight for our community. It seeks approval from the Committee to continue with the production of the magazine, for the next two years following a successful tender process to secure an experienced supplier.

<u>RECOMMENDATION (S)</u>	<i>Notes</i>
<p>The Committee agrees that:</p> <p>(1) Borough Insight continues as a printed magazine delivered to households and venues in the Borough three times a year.</p> <p>(2) If (1) is agreed, the contract for the production, delivery and advertising management of the printed magazine is awarded to Frontline.</p> <p>(3) We continue to produce e-Borough Insight in-house and endeavour to increase residents' subscription numbers.</p>	

1 Implications for the Council's Key Priorities, Service Plans and Sustainable Community Strategy

- 1.1 Communications with residents about the work of the Council, especially in the context of service delivery changes, is highly important.
- 1.2 The Council's key priorities include 'quality of life', 'safer and stronger communities' and 'economic vitality' all of which require messages to the community. The printed Borough Insight magazine is one of the main communication channels that the Council uses to accomplish this.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

27 JANUARY 2016

- 1.3 Another of our core value is 'openness and honesty'. Appropriate and transparent communications, eg Borough Insight, allow the Council to address this value in a visible way.
- 1.4 Many of our service plans include a communications aspect with residents – Borough Insight is used to satisfy this requirement.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity (the 'Publicity Code') sets out a range of provisions in relation to our publicity. These provisions include the seven principles of local authority publicity, namely that it should be lawful, cost effective, objective, even-handed, appropriate, have regard to equality and diversity, and be issued with care during periods of heightened sensitivity.
- 2.2 The provisions also include statements of the actions a local authority should or should not take in order to comply with the principles, including the principle of objectivity, a statement that a local authority should avoid anything likely to be perceived by readers as constituting a political statement, or in relation to the appropriateness principle statements about the frequency, content and appearance of local authority newssheets or similar communications. The code was updated by the Secretary of State, Department for Communities and Local Government, in 2014. Borough Insight meets these requirements and stipulations of the Publicity Code.
- 2.3 Borough Insight has been produced in different formats since 1992. Since that time we have introduced a colour magazine, recycled paper and advertisements. The printed magazine is delivered to the majority of homes in the Borough¹. Additional copies are bulk delivered to the Borough's community hubs (Council venues, Libraries, GP surgeries, etc). Advertising is accepted as a way of decreasing costs to the Council.
- 2.4 We deliver the printed version to 32,000 addresses. The magazine is printed and distributed three times a year.
- 2.5 Recent surveys on various Council services have included questions on where residents find Council information – the printed version of Borough Insight is regularly quoted as the main information source.

¹ Delivery target is 98%. Some homes specify no junk mail, etc so Borough Insight is not delivered to those properties. The most effective and cost efficient delivery method has proven to be via postcodes areas. There are a few streets where the postcode is shared between this Borough and another. Where the majority of households in these streets lie outside the Borough, the magazine is not delivered to this Borough's residents due to the high cost – this applies to less than 50 identified households (where the majority of households are within this Borough we deliver to the whole street, including the non-Borough residents, as this is the cheapest option). We have a small mailing list of residents who have requested the magazine from the areas not receiving it which are posted.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

27 JANUARY 2016

- 2.6 Information given to third parties for residents (eg the press) is likely to be interpreted and edited – Borough Insight content is totally within our control.
- 2.7 The current contract for the design, production, printing, delivery and advertising marketing and management has been in place for three years. A formal tender process has been undertaken for a new initial two year contract – details in Annex one.
- 2.8 A monthly electronic version of Borough Insight was introduced three years ago with four core objectives:
 - 2.8.1 To be able to provide up-to-date information around the tri-annual printed version
 - 2.8.2 To accommodate the volume of information provided by partner agencies which we do not have room for in the printed copy
 - 2.8.3 To meet the growing requirement for digital communications from some demographics
 - 2.8.4 To position a digital replacement for the printed magazine for some time in the future
- 2.9 The e-version has 645 subscribers and is issued 11 times a year.
- 2.10 It is Officers considered opinion that e-Borough Insight has insufficient subscribers at this time to fully replace the printed version.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 To appoint Frontline to design, produce, print, deliver and manage and market advertising of the printed magazine for two years (with the option to extend this for an additional year, under Local Government procurement rules).
- 3.2 Officers monitor and evaluate the printed magazine's contribution to information dissemination over the contract period to assess whether it continues to serve its purpose and provide value for money; this to be accomplished via a residents' survey and via feedback from Members.
- 3.3 To continue to produce e-Borough Insight in-house and to endeavour to increase residents' subscription numbers within current resources.

4 Financial and Manpower Implications

- 4.1 The cost of Borough Insight going forward is detailed in Annex 1. Whilst the cheapest supplier has been selected, costs are in excess of the provisional budget for 2016/17. Overall costs are in the region of £32,000 the provisional budget is £28,000 (a shortfall of £4,000).

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

27 JANUARY 2016

- 4.2 **Chief Finance Officer's comments:** *The anticipated cost for the tender is included in Annexe 1. The total net cost of Borough Insight in the financial year 2014/15 was £23,000. The budget allocated to delivering Borough Insight in 2016/17 is £29,000. Therefore any additional costs from retendering will need to be found from within existing budgets. As detailed in the report it is important to regularly review usage and platforms for delivery as users continue to move to embrace online/electronic publications.*

5 Legal Implications (including implications for matters relating to equality)

- 5.1 The illustration of the discharge of accountability for performance with public money, which allows the Council to be held to public account and which enables proper comparisons to be made with other organisations delivering the same or similar services, is covered by the annual report produced in the Autumn issue of Borough Insight – the report has been highlighted as best practice by the independent citizen body Surrey Tax Action group (STAG).
- 5.2 Text in Borough Insight is minimum 11pt and the magazine is reproduced on-line on the Council's website in a format that allows the document to be increased in size by 200%. These factors are considered minimum best practice for ease of reading for those with sight difficulties.
- 5.3 **Monitoring Officer's comments:** *No further comment*

6 Sustainability Policy and Community Safety Implications

- 6.1 The magazine is produced within a sustainable ethos; waste is kept to a minimum, stock has Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) accreditation, inks used are environmentally friendly and alcohol free, and the magazine is recyclable.
- 6.2 Borough Insight is one of the channels for Council information, including community safety communication.

7 Partnerships

- 7.1 None

8 Risk Assessment

- 8.1 If the magazine was not printed and delivered to each household in the Borough we would need to ensure that our signposting to other channels, including digital are very clear. Whilst this is something that we already do, some of our residents may find it difficult to only access information in these other formats.

9 Conclusion and Recommendations

- 9.1 It is important to offer a number of channels, including digital, to deliver the Council's messages. Borough Insight offers an opportunity to ensure appropriate communication with each household in the Borough.
- 9.2 Content (copy and images) and basic layout will continue to be provided by the Council, with the selected supplier contracted to provide, design, produce, print and deliver the magazine plus market and manage the advertising.
- 9.3 To continue to produce e-borough Insight in-house and to endeavour to increase residents' subscription numbers.
- 9.4 Officers are mindful that the use of print form is diminishing nationally. With that in mind we will monitor feedback and continue to evaluate the printed magazine's contribution to information dissemination over the contract period to assess whether it continues to serve its purpose and provide value for money.

WARD(S) AFFECTED: All