

To:	Des Keers, Cabinet Member for Community Services
From:	Gill Fox, Policy, Scrutiny & Communities Manager
Director:	Adrian Stanfield, Interim Chief Executive

BRIEFING NOTE: EXECUTIVE - NON-KEY DECISION

Community Worker for East Malling and Larkfield

Summary of Issue:

For the last two years the Council has had a Service Level Agreement in place with the East Malling Centre to provide a Community Worker. This arrangement is due to end on 31 March 2024, and I am now seeking agreement for a further 2-year SLA.

Recommendation:

That the report **BE NOTED**

That a further 2-year Service Level Agreement to deliver community support **BE AGREED** at £8,000 per year for two years.

1 Background

There remains a need to deliver community initiatives and support for East Malling. Clarion, East Malling and Larkfield Parish Council and the East Malling Centre (EMC) have indicated that they will again support this post financially (£8,000 per year from Clarion, in addition to funding from the Parish Council and the EMC have also confirmed they are able to commit funds and provide line management and employer liabilities).

2 Main Issues

The existing SLA is for £7,500 per year, however as there is also money set aside so support this post from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF), it is proposed that this is increased to £8,000 per year for the two years. It is worth noting that the Community Worker has been invaluable over the past two years, a summary of some of the activities over the last year is provided below (sent Nov 2023):

- *SOS work: Since January this year, my work has become more focused on supporting local residents with a range of issues. The cost of living crisis has increased the demand for support with finances and debt, housing issues, domestic violence and mental health. Since January this year, we have helped **956** individuals and families in the ME19 area with SOS food parcels. Many of these people need support with other issues as well as needing food, which is where my role comes in*
- *Energy Vouchers: The fuel voucher scheme has been invaluable to residents. TMBC provided £10,000 of funding last December and we have used nearly £4000 of this by allocating energy vouchers for gas and electric to local residents. I'm sure that the demand for support with energy will only increase due to dropping temperatures and financial pressures over the coming months.*
- *School uniform support – provided uniforms for several families who would otherwise have been unable to afford them.*
- *Planning and Delivering events – Summer event for Ukrainian families and host families, holiday events for children and warm spaces events.*

3 Legal Advice

The matters set out in this briefing note are considered routine or uncontroversial and a legal opinion has not been sought.

4 Financial and Value for Money implications

The cost to support the post is £8,000 per year for a two-year period (£500 each year will be met from the COMF). There is also added value, with financial support from EMC, the Parish Council and Clarion HG.

5 Risk Assessment

There is no perceived risk associated with the recommendations set out in this report.

6 Public Sector Equality Duty

In providing funds to support this post, the post holder will ensure that there is due regard to the need to achieve the objectives set out under s149 of the Equality Act 2021.

7 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

We do not consider that this matter needs to be considered by O&S/ SSC before a decision is made.

It is not a key decision as it continues an agreement that has been in place for the previous two years. The decision does not cut across 2 or more portfolios nor does it propose a new or amended strategy. We are therefore of the view that this decision can be taken by the Cabinet Member.

8 Communications

Projects or initiatives that are delivered by the Community Worker will be communicated to the Council via the EMC with any shared publicity opportunities supported by our website and social media activity.

9 Conclusion

Supporting the funding of the Community Worker post, attracts additional investment from partner organisations and helps meet the Council's objective to support vulnerable people in more deprived communities.

10 Annexes

None