

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

BRIEFING NOTE: EXECUTIVE - NON-KEY DECISION

Community Worker - Trench

Community Worker - East Malling/Larkfield

Summary of Issue:

For several years the Council has had a Service Level Agreement (SLA) in place with both Tonbridge Baptist Church (Trench) and the East Malling Centre to provide a Community Worker (one per area).

This arrangement is due to end on 31 October 2025 (Trench) and 31 March 2026 (East Malling/Larkfield). I am now seeking agreement for a further 2-year SLA for each area.

Recommendations:

- (1) That the report **BE NOTED**
- (2) That a further 2-year Service Level Agreement to deliver community support **BE AGREED** at £8,000 per year (for two years) for each area (Trench and East Malling/Larkfield).

1 Background

There remains a need to deliver community initiatives and support for wards with higher levels of need. Whilst Tonbridge and Malling is an affluent borough, there remain pockets of deprivation including in the Trench ward of Tonbridge and in East Malling/Larkfield area.

Clarion Housing, East Malling and Larkfield Parish Council, the East Malling Centre and Tonbridge Baptist Church have indicated that they will again support these posts financially. From Clarion this is confirmed at £8,000 per year for each area in year one and £7,500 for each area in year 2 (plus allocated time from a Clarion staff member to support additional fund raising in year 2). In addition, the posts also

attract funding from each host organisation along with line management and employer liabilities for the Community Worker for their area.

2 Main Issues

The SLA for each area is coming to an end. The existing, experienced Community Workers have both indicated that they will continue in their roles subject to ongoing funding. Both host organisations (Tonbridge Baptist Church and the East Malling Centre) want to retain these posts to ensure that support work is delivered to the most vulnerable residents.

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 each post is £8,000 per year for a two-year period. There is also added value, with additional financial support from Tonbridge Baptist Church, the East Malling Centre and Clarion Housing Group.

The Council holds a budget for grants and payments to the voluntary and community sector for provision of funding in line with service level agreements. The proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

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 holders 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 Workers will be communicated to the Council via Tonbridge Baptist Church and the East Malling Centre with any shared publicity opportunities supported by our website and social media activity.

9 Conclusion

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

10 Annexes

None.