

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND DIRECTOR OF ADULT CARE & HEALTH SERVICES

|                  |   |              |  |
|------------------|---|--------------|--|
| TO:              | POLICY COMMITTEE                                    |              |  |
| DATE:            | 30 OCTOBER 2017                                     | AGENDA ITEM: | 9  |
| TITLE:           | NARROWING THE GAP COMMISSIONING FRAMEWORK           |              |  |
| LEAD COUNCILLOR: | COUNCILLOR LOVELOCK                                 | PORTFOLIO    | CORPORATE SERVICES   |
| SERVICE:         | POLICY & VOLUNTARY SECTOR/ WELLBEING                | WARDS:       | BOROUGHWIDE  |
| LEAD OFFICER:    | JANETTE SEARLE/<br>CLARE MUIR                       | TEL:         | 0118 937 3753<br>0119 937 2119   |
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report describes the engagement exercise which the Council is conducting with (primarily) third sector providers to shape a 'Narrowing the Gap II' community services commissioning framework, and seeks authority;

- to commission services through the Narrowing the Gap II framework from 2018;
- to award a series of contract extensions and interim contracts to ensure continuity of service pending completion of the Narrowing the Gap II commissioning exercise; and
- to award funding for the management of community buildings through the Community Buildings Transition Fund.

1.2 The Council - with the Reading Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and West Berkshire Council as our commissioning partners - has invited feedback on its 2018-22 community services commissioning proposals. A draft framework has been published and comments on this can be submitted up to 3<sup>rd</sup> November. Representations specifically on budgets were invited up to 13<sup>th</sup> October.

1.3 The following documents are appended:

- Appendix 1: Narrowing the Gap II schedule of bidding opportunities
- Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

2.1 That the Committee notes the likely equality impacts set out at Appendix 2 of adopting the Narrowing the Gap II framework containing a series of bidding opportunities as set out in the summary at Appendix 1.

2.2 That the Director of Adult Care and Health Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Health, be authorised to grant contract extensions to 31 May 2018 to:

- (a) The Breastfeeding Network for the provision of peer support to establish and maintain breastfeeding at a cost of £30k p.a. (pro-rated); and to
- (b) Thames Valley Positive for the provision of an HIV peer support and condom distribution service at a cost of £52k pa. (pro-rated).

- 2.3 That the Director of Adult Care and Health Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Adult Social Care, be authorised to negotiate and enter into contracts from 1 April 2018 to 31 May 2018 to:
- (a) Reading Your Way (Together for Mental Wellbeing) at a cost of £76k p.a. (pro-rated); and to
  - (b) the Reading and West Berkshire Carers Hub (Carers Trust East Midlands) at a cost of £95k p.a. (pro-rated).
- 2.4 That the Director of Adult Care and Health Services and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to negotiate and enter into:
- (a) a legally binding agreement with South Reading Clinical Commissioning Group and the North and West Reading Clinical Commissioning Group pursuant to Section 75 of the National Health Service Act 2006 to manage a pooled budget for commissioning a Social Prescribing Service, a Peer Support Service for Adult Mental Health, and a Carers Information Advice and Support Service, as described as specifications 3.2, 14.1 and 15.2 respectively in the Narrowing the Gap II framework; and
  - (b) appropriate funding agreements for 2018-22 with the organisation or organisations which succeed in each service area of the Narrowing the Gap II commissioning exercise.
- 2.5 That the Head of Customer Services, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to enter into agreements with individual organisations affected by the Community Buildings Transition Fund, apportioning the total fund as grant aid payments to these organisations as deemed appropriate, with the final agreed amounts to be published through the Decision Book.

### 3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Developing, promoting and supporting community services underpins the Council's plans to achieve many of its strategic priorities and statutory responsibilities. Experience has shown that investing in community support is key to narrowing the gaps between the quality of life enjoyed by different members of our communities.
- 3.2 Community based organisations in Reading have a proud history of supporting people to enjoy a better quality of life. Local groups support people to deal with the impacts of poverty and to improve their life chances. Services which reach into communities empower people to take care of and protect their health, and are an important source of help for residents with long term health conditions, those who may need extra support as they get older, and people who provide unpaid care to friends, family and neighbours.
- 3.3 Reading's voluntary and community sector is a significant part of this local support system, and sometimes better placed or more trusted than public agencies to provide help to some of the most vulnerable residents. Third sector providers also play a significant economic role in the borough. This includes their role in accessing external funding and providing paid employment, but also harnessing a wealth of time, skills and resources from local people and organisations to benefit the community as a whole.

3.4 The Council has been obliged to reduce its expenditure significantly over the past few years because of a reduction in funding from central government. A budget gap remains for the period to 2020, however, and the Council is working to a Financial Sustainability Plan based on managing demand, increases in productivity, strategic commissioning and reductions in service. Strengthening community resilience is an important part of managing demand for longer-term support and more expensive services, but with reducing resource available for community investment, it is important that this is targeted very effectively.

#### **4. THE 1<sup>ST</sup> NARROWING THE GAP BIDDING FRAMEWORK**

4.1 In November 2015, the Council published the Narrowing the Gap Bidding Framework, inviting community organisations to apply for funding to deliver services in support of corporate priorities. The framework was designed to bring together opportunities for third sector organisations to obtain funding from the local authority, and to award those funds through a fair and transparent process. Although the opportunities were not ringfenced to the voluntary sector, the majority of bids received were from third sector providers. All of the subsequent funding awards were to voluntary and community organisations with experience of delivering services in Reading.

4.2 The Narrowing the Gap Bidding Framework largely replaced the Council's annual grant allocation process which had been running for some years and shifted the emphasis from organisation based grant allocations to an outcome/service focused process of awarding funds. The implementation of that framework led to a reduction in spend on community (VCS) services from £1,566k p.a. in 2015-16 to £956k p.a. in 2017-18 and a stronger alignment between commissioning and corporate priorities.

4.3 Whilst the introduction of the new framework was a source of anxiety to voluntary sector providers, initially, an extensive period of stakeholder engagement over the summer of 2015 and early autumn allowed time for concerns to be raised and addressed. Voluntary and community groups said the most positive aspect of this was that it stimulated discussions which improved knowledge and understanding across local third sector organisations of each other's services. In many cases, organisations came together to submit funding bids in partnership. This was not a requirement under the framework, although all bidders were asked to demonstrate how they would harness other local assets to benefit their service users. Feedback on the Narrowing the Gap commissioning process was that it was equitable, transparent and addressed concerns raised by providers. Outcomes achieved from the first Narrowing the Gap Bidding framework have been good.

#### **5. PROPOSALS FOR NARROWING THE GAP II**

5.1 All services commissioned under the Narrowing the Gap framework were reviewed in the context of continuing severe pressure on the Council's budgets. This review was extended to cover all other commissioning of non mandatory services across the Wellbeing Team, plans for how to make best use of the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Grant, and Council support for managing community buildings. It took into account the latest information about local need including that drawn from the detailed monitoring reports provided by the Narrowing the Gap service providers and where there are inequalities to be addressed, as detailed in the Reading Poverty Needs Analysis and the Reading Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

5.2 Narrowing the Gap II proposals have been developed with the aim of prioritising the Council's community investment on services likely to make the greatest contribution to achievement of the Council's strategic aims from 2018 onwards, including the Council's priority to remain financially stable to deliver on its service priorities. The new framework focuses support on those who are vulnerable and in greatest need,

includes support to maintain a strong and sustainable voluntary sector, aims to eliminate duplication of services and to avoid using Council funding where alternative sources of funding are available.

5.3 Taken together, the funding allocations proposed in Narrowing the Gap II form a large part of the plans to deliver on the savings proposed under two of the Proposals for Change agreed by Policy Committee in July 2017:

- DACHS 2 - Preventative and non-prescribed (non-mandated) Public Health services
- CSS 11 - Realignment of commissioned Tackling Poverty, Thriving Communities and Community Buildings services from 2018/19.

5.4 There are some additional areas of community investment which were not included in the first Narrowing the Gap framework but which are recommended for inclusion in Narrowing the Gap II:

- social prescribing (including Making Every Contact Count training)
- peer support for adult mental health
- carers' information advice and support
- peer support and condom distribution to reduce HIV health risks
- peer support for breastfeeding

Each area represents additional opportunities for community providers to obtain Council funding to deliver local services. The social prescribing, mental health peer support and carers' information advice and support services are all to be commissioned jointly with the Reading CCGs. The carers' information advice and support service brings in West Berkshire Council as an additional funding partner.

5.5 Current Narrowing the Gap providers are commissioned to deliver services up to 31.05.2018, the day before the Narrowing the Gap II contracts are due to commence. In the case of new areas being brought into Narrowing the Gap II, however, the Council is currently contracting with provider organisations until 31.03.2018 which means there is a potential gap in provision. To avoid such gaps and provide for a safer transition to new contracts, it is proposed to exercise contract extension provision or to award new short term contracts to cover April and May 2018.

## **6. SUPPORT TO MANAGE COMMUNITY BUILDINGS**

6.1 Whilst not included in the proposed NTGII Commissioning Framework, the notional apportionments presented for consultation were aligned with a proposed reduction in the Community Buildings Transition fund from £82k to £60k from 2018/19.

6.2 The Council's Third Sector Premises Policy Statement applies to organisations that lease community buildings from Reading Borough Council. Leases are granted on a full repairing and insuring basis i.e. the organisation will be responsible for all internal, external and structural repairs to the building and its ongoing building insurance. In addition occupiers will need to have cover for public liability, be responsible for all property costs (all utility charges, business rates etc.) Organisations will also be responsible for ensuring that buildings are fit for purpose and will be responsible for complying with all statutory obligations relating to occupation including; Health & Safety, DDA, Planning, Environmental Health and Building Regulations.

6.3 To assist those managing community buildings, from 2016/17 recipients of core funding grants for community buildings received transitional funding over a 2 year period to enable them to establish sustainable business plans for the future. Within the available budget, a small Bidding Fund in the sum of £20,000 in 2016/17 and £13,000 in 2017/18 was set aside to allow bids for any third sector organisation to apply for grants of up to £500 or £1,000 according to specified criteria.

6.4 The following changes are proposed from 2018-19:

- The Bidding Fund which was established for groups responsible for a building to make bids for small amounts of money would be deleted since this has not been drawn on; and
- Discussion will take place with the individual organisations currently in receipt of the Community Buildings Transition funding to manage their transition to reduced support, e.g. via a tapering off. It is proposed that the Head of Customer Services in consultation with the Leader of the Council is authorised to apportion the amounts for individual organisations affected by the Community Building Transition Fund within a total allocation of £60k p.a. over four years.

## 7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 7.1 Changes to the Council's investment in community support - and that of our commissioning partners - could have far reaching impacts, and it is important to understand these. Community providers and other stakeholders were invited to join commissioners to discuss plans for Narrowing the Gap II at two half day events - on 17<sup>th</sup> August and 26<sup>th</sup> September. A dedicated inbox has been set up to receive further comments on the draft framework and a draft set of bidding questions. These comments can be submitted up to 3<sup>rd</sup> November, although stakeholders were asked to submit representations specifically on budgets by 13<sup>th</sup> October.
- 7.2 The approach to engaging with community groups has generally been well received. The NTGII engagement process has been described as 'inclusive from the outset'. The Council has been encouraged to recognise the need to support smaller groups to understand the changes proposed, and issued targeted mailings to currently funded organisations who did not respond to the initial notification about the consultation. Issuing discussion documents ahead of provider events has helped organisations to prioritise their time, and the option of engaging via email has been welcomed, particularly by smaller groups.
- 7.3 Much of the feedback to date has concerned the proposed reduction in the Council's spend on community services. A draft framework issued on 21<sup>st</sup> September included suggested baselines indicating the level of activity expected for proposed levels of funding from 2018. There has been some feedback proposing alternative baselines or costings which suggest the baselines need to be adjusted, and this feedback has been taken into account as the framework is being refined. The levels of funding for each service and for the framework in total have not been changed, however, in the absence of new evidence indicating that the as proposed budget is unachievable. Where budget cuts are proposed across services currently delivered by several partners, these cuts may be very difficult to manage within the local third sector. Where the rationale offered by the Council is the availability of alternative funding, the Council has considered carefully the precise terms of other funding streams.
- 7.4 Information and advice providers are particularly concerned about how to manage on reduced funding in light of the levels of demand they are seeing. This could perhaps be mitigated to some extent by their reviewing whether there is duplication of services and processes between the various organisations currently delivering these services, or any potential for co-location.
- 7.5 Narrowing the Gap II makes explicit reference to refugees whereas the first Narrowing the Gap round did not. Some local organisations see this as a significant change and have sought further clarification on the use of Syrian Vulnerable Persons (SVPR) funding, in particular. A submission has been made by Reading Refugee Support Group (RRSG) that rather than the SVPR funding being added to the Narrowing the Gap commissioning pot, it remains a separate fund and that RRSG is funded solely from the SVPR funding stream for the next 4 years, providing the identical set of service to those covered by NTGII and that the proposed NTGII Meeting Basic Needs pot is reduced by RRSG's proportion of the pro rata'd breakdown of the funding in

NTGI. They further, ask for £40,000 of SVPR programme funding per annum to be provided directly to the organisation over a 4 year period, which is more than they receive currently through NTGI or is available through the proposed NTGII proposal. To secure a service of the value suggested, a competitive procurement process would be required. This being the case it is recommended that the specification remains in the overarching NTGII framework, to retain cohesion of overall service to the community.

- 7.6 Regarding the suggestion on increasing the amount available, officers believe that the amount proposed in the specification is adequate. Current SLA monitoring information indicates that the specific support for refugees and asylum seekers is relatively high cost due to the low numbers of refugees and asylum seekers in Reading and that the current service has capacity for a further 3 families a year over the 4 year period. However, the contract will include periodic review and depending needs and demand there may be a future case for additional SVPR funding being directed to the contract.
- 7.7 Budget reductions have not been applied uniformly across the Narrowing the Gap II framework - which some local organisations have suggested would be the fairest way of the Council achieving necessary savings, although others see the proposals as a logical and rational approach to a difficult situation. Most of the services proposed for inclusion in Narrowing the Gap II do not have exact equivalents in current commissioning arrangements (e.g. Narrowing the Gap I), partly because of the need to reflect reduced budgets but also because refreshed needs analyses and monitoring information indicate that the Council's investment could be better aligned than it is currently to meet our strategic priorities. In addition, alternative funding streams are now available to support some areas (e.g. Building Better Opportunities funding for services very similar to those described under 'supporting steps to employment'). Reducing funding on this basis is contentious, however, with some organisations feeling they are being penalised for securing alternative income.
- 7.8 There was one request for the Council to consider funding alternative services not set out in the draft Narrowing the Gap II framework - a community interpreter and an interpreter supervision service. Although it is likely that a gap will emerge in relation to these services with the closure of Mothertongue at the end of 2017, the call on Mothertongue by other groups for translation support has been in decline and is not at a significant enough level to justify further reducing funding for other services in order to divert resources into these proposals.
- 7.9 Local providers are keen to see a new framework which gives bidders the opportunity to demonstrate a relevant track record, and the Council is consulting on the form of proposed bidding questions to reflect this. The questions are designed to test organisations' understanding of the context in which the services will be delivered, with references requested to demonstrate relevant experience. These references can be supplied by RBC officers.
- 7.10 Many Narrowing the Gap services are delivered by two or more organisations working together. There has been a lot of feedback about joint delivery arrangements under Narrowing the Gap II - as there was during the first Narrowing the Gap consultation. In 2015, most local voluntary sector groups had not delivered services under any formal collaboration previously and didn't feel ready either to form formal partnerships or to take on sub-contracting responsibilities. Almost all current Narrowing the Gap services are delivered by a provider directly contracted by the Council, although some of these contracts work together to deliver a Narrowing the Gap service as specified. In practice, the degree of collaboration between organisations is variable across different Narrowing the Gap partnerships, and there have been some disagreements about funding apportionments. The proposed approach in Narrowing the Gap II is to require successful joint bidders to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding or

similar to ensure respective responsibilities are agreed at the outset. Reading Voluntary Action has prepared a suitable template Memorandum of Understanding.

7.11 Narrowing the Gap funding agreements were for a period of two years. Providers appreciated the greater stability this gave and being able to focus more on delivery without the need for an annual funding application. The proposal to build on this by offering four year funding agreements under Narrowing the Gap II has been well received by potential providers.

7.12 Provider feedback on outline proposals has informed the development of the more detailed Narrowing the Gap II specifications, and led to several key changes:

- Self advocacy provision has been combined with support to reduce social isolation for adults with a learning disability so as to fund an integrated service, and combine funding streams to reflect the need for a casework approach with the target user group. The combined service will be for adults only, with Children's Services accepting full responsibility for commissioning support required for young people with a learning disability progressing through transition.
- The initial Narrowing the Gap II proposal included plans for a 'seed fund' pot of £20,000 p.a, to be managed by the organisation delivering a service to support participation and engagement. This has now been removed, as local organisations' reactions to the seed fund proposal were mixed, but several have commented that there are existing sources of small grants, and the Council's investment would be better used to ensure a service is in place to support new and small groups to understand how to access these funding sources.
- Services to support organisational development and then volunteering governance and brokerage have now been combined to offer funding for a more integrated third sector infrastructure support service since community groups are concerned about the wider implications of reducing funding for these services, as this could impact on representation of the third sector on strategic boards, and support for informal partnership working to enable and lead to more formal partnership arrangements.

7.13 Community groups have observed that the first Narrowing the Gap framework improved joint working and communication between VCS groups in Reading, and expressed the hope that NTGII will build on that. Providers have asked the Council to facilitate a networking event for successful providers on conclusion of Narrowing the Gap II, and to ensure frontline Council staff, particularly in Adult Social Care, are briefed about new services and how to use them to best effect.

## **8. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

8.1 The Council's Corporate Plan 2016-19 is based on six priorities:

- Safeguarding and protecting those that are most vulnerable
- Providing the best life through education, early help and healthy living
- Providing homes for those in most need
- Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active
- Providing infrastructure to support the economy
- Remaining financially sustainable to deliver these service priorities

8.2 In partnership with the local Clinical Commissioning Groups and through the Reading Health and Wellbeing Board, the Council is required under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to develop plans to:

- improve the health and wellbeing of the people in their area;
- reduce health inequalities; and

- promote the integration of services.

8.3 Reading's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017-20 is based on three underpinning commitments:

- Developing an integrated approach to recognising and supporting all carers
- High quality co-ordinated information to support wellbeing
- Safeguarding vulnerable adults and children

The Strategy then sets eight priorities:

- Supporting people to make healthy lifestyle choices (with a focus on tooth decay, obesity and physical activity)
- Reducing loneliness and social isolation
- Reducing the amount of alcohol people drink to safe levels
- Promoting positive mental health and wellbeing in children and young people
- Reducing deaths by suicide
- Making Reading a place where people can live well with dementia
- Increasing breast and bowel screening and prevention services
- Reducing the number of people with tuberculosis

8.4 The proposals for Narrowing the Gap II reflect corporate and Health and Wellbeing priorities as well as the Council's statutory obligations to promote and protect residents' health and wellbeing, and to provide or arrange services that reduce needs for support among people and their (unpaid/family) carers in the local area, and contribute towards preventing or delaying the development of such needs.

## 9. EQUALITY IMPACTS

9.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

9.2 The proposed Narrowing the Gap II framework offers reduced funding in a number of service areas, although some services would continue to be funded at the same or higher levels. Reducing the level of funding for any service aimed at vulnerable residents carries the risk of adverse equality impacts, and a full impact assessment is set out at Appendix 2.

9.3 In summary, the Framework concerns a range of services intended to benefit residents who are marginalised, at risk, or have care and support needs. There is likely to be a high correlation between this group of citizens and people in possession of 'protected characteristics' as defined by the Equality Act 2010. Narrowing the Gap II is a means of achieving reductions in Council spend whilst targeting the Council's investment to meet priority needs. Some adverse equality impacts are likely to result from the budget reduction, but the Narrowing the Gap II framework re-shapes investment to mitigate against these adverse impacts and so promote equality of opportunity.

## 10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There is a legal requirement on the Council to set a balanced budget each year. The Narrowing the Gap II proposals align with the Council's plans to bring in savings from



2018-19 in order to manage within reduced funding allocations from central government.

- 10.2 Although the local authority has a discretion over how to meet the requirements, there are statutory duties to ensure that preventative support for wellbeing is available to residents. These requirements are set out in Local Authority Circular 15.12.2016, which describes conditions attached to the Public Health ring fenced grant, and in Section 2 of the Care Act 2014 which describes the 'wellbeing' and 'prevention' duties. The Narrowing the Gap II proposals contribute to the Council meeting these requirements.

## 11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The first Narrowing the Gap Bidding Framework largely replaced the Council's annual grant allocation process which had been running for some years. The implementation of that framework led to a reduction in spend on community (VCS) services from a baseline of £1,566k p.a. in 2015-16.
- 11.2 The first Narrowing the Gap Framework led to funding awards in the total sum of £1,323k in 2016-17 and £1,038k in 2017-18.
- 11.3 The Narrowing the Gap II framework as per the appended schedule would have a total budget of £1,259k p.a. from 2018-19, of which £1,047k p.a. would come from RBC.
- 11.4 Because the proposals for the new framework cover a broader area of commissioning activity than the first, this means that RBC funding for NTGII would be £9k p.a. more than the value of the total awards made under NTGI. However, the new framework reflects a larger overall reduction in spend on community (VCS) services.
- The total proposed reduction in DACHS (Wellbeing) spend through the Narrowing the Gap II framework is £49k p.a. from 2018-19.
  - The total proposed reduction in commissioning budgets from Corporate Support Services would be £43k p.a. from 2018-19 which is the net position after Syrian Vulnerable Persons programme funding of £35k p.a. is incorporated into the Narrowing the Gap II budget.
  - The Community Buildings Transition fund will reduce from £82k p.a. to £60k p.a. from 2018-19.
- The combined effect of these proposals will deliver a saving of £149k from 2018-19.
- 11.5 The cost of granting contract extensions as set out at recommendation 2.2 would be £13,667, and the cost of issuing interim contracts as set out at recommendation 2.3 would be £28,500.

## 12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Bridging the Gap - medium term financial strategy

Policy Committee paper  
17.07.2017

## Appendix 1:

### Narrowing the Gap II SUMMARY OF BIDDING OPPORTUNITIES

| THEME  | Funding (£ 000s p.a.)       |
|--|-----------------------------|
| <b>1 TACKLING POVERTY</b>  |                             |
| 1) Meeting Basic Needs <sup>1</sup>  | 44                          |
| 2) Maximising income and managing debt   | 200                         |
| 3) Supporting steps towards employment.  | 27                          |
|  |                             |
| <b>2 THRIVING COMMUNITIES</b>  |                             |
| 1) Support for thriving neighbourhoods and communities   | 45                          |
| 2) organisational development, volunteering governance and brokerage                                     | 73                          |
| 3) Support for marginalised communities  | 40                          |
|  |                             |
| <b>3. CARE NAVIGATION</b>  |                             |
| 1) Targeted information & advice and guidance for people with current or emerging care and support needs | 57                          |
|  | 66                          |
| 2) Social prescribing  | (36 from RBC, 30 from CCGs) |
|  |                             |
| <b>4. ADULTS WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY</b>  |                             |
| 1) Self-advocacy and reducing social isolation   | 30                          |
|  |                             |
| <b>5. ADULTS &amp; FAMILIES AFFECTED BY DEMENTIA</b>   |                             |
| 1) Facilitating peer support & reducing social isolation   | 15                          |
|  |                             |

<sup>1</sup> £35k for this theme will be funded through SVPR

|   |    |
|---|----|
| <b>6. VISUALLY IMPAIRED ADULTS</b>  |    |
| 1) Facilitating peer support & reducing social isolation                        | 15 |
|   |    |
| <b>7. HEARING IMPAIRED ADULTS</b>   |    |
| 1) Facilitating peer support & reducing social isolation                        | 15 |
|   |    |
| <b>8. AUTISTIC ADULTS</b>   |    |
| 1) Facilitating peer support & reducing social isolation                        | 12 |
|   |    |
| <b>9. ADULTS &amp; FAMILIES AFFECTED BY MS</b>                                  |    |
| 1) Facilitating peer support & reducing social isolation                        | 12 |
|   |    |
| <b>10. ADULTS &amp; FAMILIES AFFECTED BY PARKINSONS DISEASE</b>                 |    |
| 1) Facilitating peer support & reducing social isolation                        | 12 |
|   |    |
| <b>11. ADULTS WITH A PHYSICAL DISABILITY</b>                                    |    |
| 1) Facilitating peer support & reducing social isolation                        | 12 |
|   |    |
| <b>12. ADULTS AT RISK OF ISOLATION BECAUSE OF LANGUAGE OR CULTURAL BARRIERS</b> |    |
| 1) Facilitating peer support & reducing social isolation                        | 20 |
|   |    |
| <b>13. ISOLATED FRAIL/ELDERLY</b>   |    |
| 1) Facilitating peer support & reducing social isolation                        | 67 |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  |   |
| <b>14. ADULT MENTAL HEALTH</b>   |   |
| 1) Facilitating peer support & reducing social isolation   | 161<br>(76 from RBC, 85 from CCGs)  |
|  |   |
| <b>15. CARERS</b>  |   |
| 1) Replacement care (respite) services delivered at home or in the community, which provide opportunities for unpaid carers of adults to take time away from caring or enjoy social contact. | 60  |
| 2) carers information advice & support   | Reading - 95<br>(70 from RBC, 25 from CCGs)<br>West Berkshire - 72.5<br>(47.5 from W Berks Council, 25 from CCGs) |
|  |   |
| <b>16. HOME FROM HOSPITAL</b>  |   |
| 1) Supporting people to re-settle at home following a period of hospitalisation  | 34  |
|  |   |
| <b>17. HIV</b>   |   |
| 1) peer support to maximise health and wellbeing, and preventing the spread of infection   | 45  |
|  |   |
| <b>18. BREASTFEEDING</b>   |   |
| 1) peer support to establish and maintain breastfeeding  | 30  |



## Equality Impact Assessment

### **Name of proposal/activity/policy to be assessed**

Adopting the Narrowing the Gap II Bidding Framework as a means of commissioning a range of community services for 2018-22 with a total budget of £1,259k p.a, of which £1,047k p.a. would come from RBC, and targeting investment whilst achieving savings.

**Directorate:** Adult Care and Health Services / Corporate Support Services

**Service:** Wellbeing / Policy & Voluntary Sector Support

### **Name and job title of person doing the assessment**

**Name:** Janette Searle / Clare Muir

**Job Title:** Preventative Services Manager / Policy Manager

**Date of assessment:** 17.10.2017

### **Scope of proposal**

#### **What is the aim of the policy or new service?**

*The proposal is to adopt the Narrowing the Gap II bidding framework (“NTG II” or “the Framework”) to commission a range of community support services from 2018 to 2022. The Framework has been developed through engagement with local stakeholders – predominantly third sector providers - to meet local priorities in relation to tackling poverty, supporting thriving communities, and promoting wellbeing to achieve social care and public health outcomes.*

*Given the nature of the services to be commissioned under the Framework, it is likely that most bids will be received from third sector organisations, and that most bidders will have a Reading connection.*

*The proposed budget allocations via the Framework represent a reduction in Council spend on commissioned services for wellbeing of £49,000 p.a. and a reduction in Council spend on commissioned services for tackling poverty and supporting thriving neighbourhoods of £43,000 p.a.*

*Decisions on the final level of resource to put into the Framework have not yet been taken. However, this analysis has been prepared on the basis of provisional allocations discussed during a public*

*consultation on the Framework. This approach has been taken to assist elected members in coming to a view on appropriate resource levels. The Council needs to review its spend across all service areas in the light of current budgetary pressures. The Framework is designed to re-shape Council investment so that the impact of a reduced budget is mitigated.*

### **Who will benefit from this proposal and how?**

*The services which would be commissioned via the Framework would be to benefit local residents who are marginalised on economic or other grounds, and local people whose wellbeing may be at risk with or who are at risk of care or support needs increasing because of age, frailty or long term health conditions.*

*Local residents generally would benefit from their Council having robust arrangements in place to meet statutory obligations at a time of very challenging budgetary pressures.*

*The proposed shift to offering four year funding agreements under the Framework rather than requiring organisations to re-apply for funding annually or bi-annually will provide successful community organisations with greater financial stability than they have had under Council funding arrangements previously.*

### **What outcomes will the change achieve and for whom?**

- targeting the Council's investment on meeting identified priority needs*
- providing successful bidders with more stable funding albeit at a reduced level in most cases*
- embedding a more strategic approach to commissioning services from the third sector*
- encouraging collaboration between community providers*
- supporting the Council's financial stability by contributing to agreed savings proposals*

### **Who are the main stakeholders in relation to this proposal?**

- local residents who are marginalised on economic or other grounds, and local people whose wellbeing may be at risk or who are at risk of care or support needs arising from age, frailty or long term health conditions.*
- community providers*
- local tax payers*

## Impact of proposal

### **Describe how this proposal could impact differently on some racial groups**

*Most of the services sought to be commissioned via the Framework, as well as community services commissioned currently, are intended to benefit local residents from any racial group.*

*Some of the community services that the Council currently commissions are targeted at members of minority ethnic communities. The reduction in Council funding available for commissioning community services potentially disadvantages any group with a higher need for community services. However, the Council recognises that some minority ethnic communities are at greater risk of being marginalised. For this reason, the Framework provides for services which target members of black and minority ethnic communities where the Council's analysis has identified a need to commission services in this way.*

*There is no proposed change to the funding for the support for marginalised communities' service, or to the element of 'Providing practical support for the most vulnerable in society to meet their basic needs' service which provides for refugees both of which target residents from black or minority ethnic groups as one of the beneficiary groups.*

*There is a reduction in proposed funding for the 'support for people to take steps towards employment' but the proposal is to target the service at those with English Language need which would benefit those from minority ethnic groups.*

**Is there a negative impact?**                      Yes                       No                       Not sure

### **Describe how this proposal could impact differently on men and women, or transgendered individuals (including any issues in relation to pregnancy, maternity or marriage)**

*Most of the services sought to be commissioned via the Framework, as well as community services commissioned currently, are intended to benefit local residents regardless of gender, including transgender, pregnancy, maternity or marriage.*

*There is no proposed change to the funding for the 'support for marginalised communities' service, which targets transgendered residents as one of the beneficiary groups.*

**Is there a negative impact?**                      Yes                       No                       Not sure

### **Describe how this proposal could impact differently on people with a disability**

*Many of the services sought to be commissioned via the Framework, as well as community services commissioned currently, are intended to be accessible to any local resident, regardless of disability. Across the 'wellbeing' themes within the Framework (themes 3 to 18), services are to be commissioned explicitly for people affected by various disabilities, including those at risk of developing long term health conditions and those providing unpaid care to others on account of disability.*

*The reduction in Council funding available for commissioning community services potentially disadvantages any group with a higher need for community services. During the course of the consultation, the Council received representations about the potential impact of funding cuts on adults with mental health needs, in particular. There has been an analysis of local need and current provision to inform how funding should be applied in targeted areas to address the needs of residents affected by particular disabilities. Peer support for adults with mental health needs will continue to be funded from 2018-19 at the same level as in 2017-18 (although this does represent a reduction in funding of 30% since 2016-17) and the Council and the Clinical Commissioning Groups have agreed to commission this service jointly via Narrowing the Gap II to streamline reporting and maximise the resource available for service delivery.*

*There is no proposed change to the funding for the 'support for marginalised communities' service, which targets disabled residents as one of the beneficiary groups.*

**Is there a negative impact?** Yes  No  Not sure

**Describe how this proposal could impact differently on people based on their sexual orientation (including civil partnership)**

*The services sought to be commissioned via the Framework, as well as community services commissioned currently, are intended to benefit local residents of any sexual orientation. The Framework proposes a reduction in funding for 'condom distribution and peer support to reduce health risks for people with an HIV diagnosis. Men who have sex with men are one of the target groups for this service, and the reduced funding may therefore have a disproportionate negative effect on gay men.*

*There is no proposed change to the funding for the 'support for marginalised communities' service, which targets gay, lesbian and bi-sexual residents as one of the beneficiary groups.*

**Is there a negative impact?** Yes  No  Not sure

**Describe how this proposal could impact differently on people based on their age**

*Most of the services sought to be commissioned via the Framework, as well as community services commissioned currently, are intended to benefit adults although some of the services take an explicit 'whole family' approach. Within the 'wellbeing' themes, older people tend to make up a higher proportion of the service user groups.*

*The reduction in Council funding available for commissioning community services potentially disadvantages any group with a higher need for community services. However, the Council recognises that older people may be at greater risk of being marginalised, and that in the past older people have tended to be more significant users of the community services funded by the Council. For this reason, the Framework provides for services which target older people as well as services targeted on the issues likely to lead to support needs arising - where the Council's analysis has identified a need to commission services in this way.*

*There is no proposed change to the funding for the 'support for marginalised communities' service, which targets people marginalised on age grounds as one of the beneficiary groups.*

**Is there a negative impact?** Yes  No  Not sure



**Describe how this proposal could impact differently on people on account of their religion or belief**

*The services sought to be commissioned via the Framework, as well as community services commissioned currently, are intended to benefit local residents of any religion or belief. No adverse or differential impact has been identified.*

**Is there a negative impact?**                      Yes                       No    X                      Not sure

## Assessment of the Equalities Impact of the proposal

- |           |  |                |                          |
|-----------|--|----------------|--------------------------|
| <b>1.</b> | <b>No negative impact identified</b>   | Go to sign off | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>2.</b> | <b>Negative impact identified but there is a justifiable reason</b>  |                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|           | You must give due regard or weight but this does not necessarily mean that the equality duty overrides other clearly conflicting statutory duties that you must comply with. |                |                          |
|           | <b>Reason</b>  |                |                          |
| <b>3.</b> | <b>Negative impact identified or uncertain</b>   |                | <b>X</b>                 |
|           | <b>What action will you take to eliminate or reduce the impact? Set out your actions and timescale?</b>  |                |                          |

*The services which would be commissioned via the Framework would be to benefit local residents who are marginalised on economic or other grounds, and local people who face risks to their wellbeing or of care or support needs increasing because of age, frailty or long term health conditions. There is likely to be a high correlation between residents who are marginalised or affected by care and support needs and residents who are in possession of 'protected characteristics' as set out in the Equality Act 2010.*

*The Framework is intended to target the Council's investment to meet priority needs and as such will re-shape the distribution of Council funds to community services to mitigate the adverse equality impacts of budget reductions. This re-shaping reflects the need to promote equality of opportunity and the Framework therefore includes a number of services targeted on different sectors of society.*

*Over the four year period covered by the Framework, the level of Council funding available for commissioning of community services is reduced. Community engagement has identified ways to mitigate the impact of this, including developing new collaborative ways of working, and the Framework has been refined to reflect this. The Council will also continue to support its local third sector to identify alternative funding opportunities.*

### **How will you monitor for adverse impact in the future?**

*Bids received under the Framework will be appraised against clear criteria notified to all bidders at the commencement of the process. Funding allocations will thereby be based on a fair and transparent process which benefits groups at risk of disadvantage.*

*Commissioned providers will be required to submit regular monitoring reports identifying the take up of their services by different sectors of society. These will be reviewed by Council officers for remedial action to be advised where necessary.*

*Activity data provided by commissioned providers will be used inform the development of subsequent frameworks, alongside further needs analyses undertaken by the Council to refresh our understanding of local priorities.*

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| Signed (completing officer) Janette Searle / Clare Muir | Date 17.10.2017 |
| Signed (Lead Officer)                                   | Date            |