

MAGHULL TOWN COUNCIL
VIRTUAL COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE
HELD 22nd FEBRUARY 2021 BY ZOOM

PRESENT - Councillor Carragher (In the Chair) and Councillors (Cllrs) Desmond, Ferguson, Mullen and Sharp.

ALSO PRESENT - P. Dillon (Community Services Manager) and S. Larking (Minutes)

The Chair welcomed everyone to the extra ordinary meeting of Community Services

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** None received.
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** None received.
3. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** None received.
4. **GRANT ADVISOR**

The Community Services Manager reported that he had done a review of Idox PLC, who provide, the Grant Advisor service, as requested by the Committee. He had established the following information

- Viable and legitimate company
- Idox PLC purchased Grantfinder Ltd in 2010. This was approved by the Office of Fair Trading
- Issues, reported in media, about a contract for postal voting in Glasgow had been resolved and Idox had been awarded a contract to manage postal votes across Scotland
- Signposted to Idox by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) whose Funding Central service is closing on 31 March 2021. Idox are their technical partners
- Idox have contracts with a number of organisations including public sector bodies
- Considered alternative services including the Directory of Social Change, based in Liverpool. This service is marginally cheaper but does not provide the same breadth of information as Idox
- Idox is subject to a potential buy out by Dye and Durham. Dye and Durham, a Canadian firm, have a record for aggressive acquisitions. Feedback from ex staff is not positive. Focus is on profit, they are not philanthropic
- In summary there is no evidence that Idox PLC have done anything illegal or immoral

In discussion Cllrs made the following:

- Reassured after some initial concerns/ reservations

- Contract is for 12 months; cost should be offset by benefits
- If take over happens and we do not get what we want, they we can leave after 12 months
- Need to look at what the Council will gain and impact of not working with Idox – Officers will spend hours trawling the internet for funding opportunities. Need to speculate to accumulate and sometimes you enter into contracts with some reservations

A recorded vote was requested on whether to appoint idox to assist Officers to locate funding for Council projects. The Vote was recorded as follows:

For: Cllrs Carragher, Desmond, Ferguson, Mullen and Sharp

On a recorded vote being taken, the Motion was unanimously carried with 5 Votes cast IN FAVOUR and no abstentions.

After the vote the following points were made:

- Sefton CVS are running a bid writing course on 11th March 2021.
- The Chair asked members to think about categories and descriptions for the Garden Competition for the next meeting.

RESOLVED THAT:

1. **idox be appointed to datasets to assist Officers to locate funding for Council projects**
2. **The verbal report be noted.**



CHAIRMAN