

Title: BetterPoints 'Choose How You Move' Sustainable Travel Incentive-
Contract Extension

Lead Officer: Graham Folkes-Skinner Ex 6337 & Chloe Wiltshire Ex 6324

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Ian Davison

Wards of the District directly affected: All

Approvals required	Date	Name
Portfolio Holder	04/01/24	Cllr Ian Davison
Finance	04/01/24	Andrew Rollins
Legal Services		
Chief Executive	04/01/24	Chris Elliot
Director of Climate Change	04/01/24	Dave Barber
Head of Service(s)	04/01/24	Dave Barber
Section 151 Officer		
Monitoring Officer		
Leadership Co-ordination Group		
Final decision by this Committee or rec to another Cttee / Council?	Yes	
Contrary to Policy / Budget framework?	No	
Does this report contain exempt info/Confidential? If so, which paragraph(s)?	No	
Does this report relate to a key decision (referred to in the Cabinet Forward Plan)?	Yes, Forward Plan item No. 1,402 scheduled for 8 February 2024	
Accessibility Checked?	Yes	

Summary

The report seeks approval to extend the current contract with BetterPoints from 8th May 2024 to 8th November 2024, with a total cost for extending the contract being £17375 + VAT and will be funded by the Climate Change Action Fund.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- (1) Approves a 6-month extension to the contract with BetterPoints, after which a further report will be brought to Cabinet to consider the most effective means to utilise spending on Active Travel, as suggested in Section 2 of this report.
- (2) Agrees an exemption from the code of procurement practice to enable the extension of the contract for a further six months between May and November 2024, making the total contract value £17375+VAT.
- (3) Delegates to the Programme Director for Climate Change to approve and sign the Service Level Agreement between Warwick District Council and BetterPoints in line with Council policy.

1 Reasons for the Recommendation

- 1.1 BetterPoints is a sustainable travel initiative that aims to encourage residents of Warwick District to travel in a sustainable fashion (e.g., walking, cycling, public transport). Users of the smartphone app track their sustainable journeys and receive BetterPoints in return, which can be exchanged for rewards. These include money-off vouchers for local businesses and gift cards for national businesses. Points can also be donated to local charities.
- 1.2 The platform also runs partnerships with various local events and businesses at different times of the year to offer limited-time rewards and prizes. Users who travel sustainably to a partnered event usually receive 1000 extra BetterPoints, and partnered businesses will usually give a sponsored prize, to be won by any user who completes a sustainable journey in a certain time window.
- 1.3 Warwick District Council's contract with BetterPoints is currently in a period of extension (August 2023- May 2024). It is funded by the Climate Change Action Plan Budget. This proposed recommended extension between May and November 2024 will continue the relationship with Better Points within the permitted financial exemption parameters and provide the opportunity to consider the longer-term options for the initiative. A further report will be brought to WDC's Cabinet Committee in Q3 of 2024/25 that will recommend that WDC build on the work undertaken over the last 4 years and procure through open competition a similar contract lasting an appropriate number of years to provide value for money and stability. The extension time between May and November 2024 will be used to plan what sort of contract would be optimal going forward.
- 1.4 Warwick District Council has used BetterPoints to engage with Warwick District residents and encourage them to travel in a sustainable fashion. The work

focuses both on sustainable travel to meet the Council's Climate Change ambitions, and on the Council's Health and Well-Being agenda. The scheme aims to mitigate the climate emergency by reducing traffic congestion in key areas around the district (including high-volume areas like town centres), to improve the air quality of the area by reducing the emissions released each day, and to engage local businesses. Equally by engaging with local health prescribers both internally and externally the initiative can drive forward the Council's Health and Wellbeing agenda.

- 1.5 A Year 2 Evaluation Report for August 2022- August 2023 can be found in Appendix 1. A summary of the statistics can be found in Section 1.6 below alongside the promotions run throughout the past year in Section 1.7.
- 1.6 Statistics for Warwick District from 1 July-18 December 2023 include: 221 users that had downloaded the app, bringing the total number of participants that have downloaded the app since the beginning of WDC's contractual relationship with BetterPoints to 1842 (approximately a 60% increase on Year 1); 66785kg CO2 avoided; 293597 miles travelled sustainably and a 31% engagement rate on average (from August-December 2023), which is well above the industry average of 5.7% after 30 days. Any user who is active (records at least one trip per month) is said to be engaged and therefore becomes part of the engagement rate - so 31% of all registered users record at least one trip per month. In the "Choose How You Move" Warwick District (CHYMW) Exit Survey for 2023, 130 of 226 participants either agreed or strongly agreed that they were less likely to use a car because of using the BetterPoints app.
- 1.7 Seven local businesses were available on the app from August 2022- August 2023. Four major events (including EcoFest) have partnered with the scheme and ten app-based promotions, nine of which included prizes, have been offered.
- 1.8 Following on from the evaluation report referenced in Section 1.5, this report therefore suggests that we build on the recommendations and extend the contract with BetterPoints until November 2024. This will be achieved via a procurement exemption (please see Section 4.2).
- 1.9 If the permission for the extension between May and November 2024 is granted, there will be Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) agreed for the contract and these will be used to facilitate a review of the relationship that WDC have had with BetterPoints over the last 4 or so years. This review can then help with a decision as to whether we should continue with another contract post November 2024.
- 1.10 A more detailed summary of what the app does can be found in Appendix 2.
- 1.11 As part of the ongoing promotion of Better Points we engage with schools. As an example, we worked with Simon Storey that runs the Whitnash Bicycle Bus and the Head Teachers of three Whitnash Primary Schools to promote cycling to school and offered up book vouchers as prizes to the school that recorded the most cycling miles over the prescribed period. We have worked with Myton School to produce incentive schemes for sustainable travel and alongside Clean Air Warwick and WDC's Air Quality Officer partnered with Coton End School to promote sustainable travel using quizzes.

- 1.12 We are currently working with Warwickshire County Council's Road Safety Education and Safe and Active Travel teams, as well as Kenilworth Town Council (KTC) to promote BetterPoints through a Clean Air Day event in June 2024. Alongside the author of this report, WDC's Air Quality Officer and representatives of KTC, colleagues from WCC have been invited to be involved in a Working Group that is organising the event and it will involve approaching local schools, using BetterPoints as an incentive to think about sustainable travel in a similar way potentially to the way we have engaged with the Whitnash Schools mentioned above.
- 1.13 We have also been engaging with the Leamington Primary Care Network (PCN) social prescribing and lifestyle clinic lead, to provide Better Points promotional material within GP Surgeries and Health Centres within the area.

2 Alternative Options

- 2.1 The alternative to granting an exemption to the procurement code of practice in relation to the contract with Better Points would be for Cabinet to recommend that officers do not extend this contract and instead pause the relationship that we have with BetterPoints. Granting the exemption allows for continuation and development of the initiative.
- 2.2 As of January 2024, Warwick District Council, has a Bicycle Mayor, recognised by the global Bicycle Mayor Network (BYCS). Consideration could be given to provide funding to this initiative as a one-off cost to promote active travel in collaboration with the Bicycle Mayor, rather than the extension to the Better Points scheme. However, providing permission and hence the funding to extend the current initiative with BetterPoints will provide the time to look at all the options available for funding of active travel.

3 Legal Implications

- 3.1 There are no legal implications for the proposal.

4 Financial Services

- 4.1 The total cost would be £17375+VAT. The funds for this can come from the Climate Change Action Fund. The suggested further extension of the contract between May and November 2024, has in principle been agreed with Procurement colleagues as it financially falls under the permitted financial ceiling. Any further potential involvement with BetterPoints or similar app based active travel incentive schemes after November 2024 will have to follow a fresh procurement process such as a competitive tender or a call off from a compliant Procurement Framework Agreement.
- 4.2 This final contract extension requires a further exemption from the Code of Procurement Practice, and a Procurement Exemption Form has already been completed. The total aggregated spend with BetterPoints since 2020 will be less than £170,000 which is below the current Public Contracts Regulations threshold for Goods & Services of £179,087 (£214,904 including VAT).

- 4.3 A contract was initially awarded in August 2020 for a period of 2 years under an exemption from the Code of Procurement Practice. It was then extended again on two separate occasions under the procurement exemption between August 2022 and August 2023 and then between August 2023 and May 2024.

5 Corporate Strategy

- 5.1 **Delivering valued, sustainable services:** The proposal will have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of Warwick District residents, as well as increase the feeling of community in the area. The proposal seeks to increase the health and wellbeing of residents by encouraging active travel such as walking, wheeling, or cycling.
- 5.2 **Low cost, low carbon energy across the district:** The proposal will help Warwick District Council to use modes of transport that emit less carbon and use clean energy sources, such as electricity. The current user base saves between 280 and 550 kg of CO₂ per day through their sustainable journeys, and we would aim to increase this daily figure before November 2024. This links to the Climate Change Action Plan and Warwick District Council's own Corporate Strategy, both of which aim to "[implement] Green Travel Incentives – e.g Better Points" (CCAP Cabinet Report Page 3) and "[p]romote and implement active travel choices as a priority – public transport, walking and cycling" (WDC Corporate Strategy Page 4). Using BetterPoints therefore aids in the fulfilment of this aim, as it is a sustainable transport project.
- 5.3 **Creating vibrant, safe, and healthy communities of the future:** This proposal would continue to create and strengthen ties between the community and local businesses by signing them up to the app. The scheme aims to encourage users to visit businesses in town centres.

6 Environmental/Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 Extending the contract with BetterPoints from May-November 2024 will contribute to Warwick District Council's Climate Change Action Programme. The two outcomes it will positively affect are:
- Ambition 1: to be a net zero carbon organisation by 2025 and that services provided through contractors include carbon reduction targets to deliver net zero by 2030.
 - Ambition 2: to reduce net carbon emissions from across the District by a minimum of 55% by 2030 and alongside this, plan how to further reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2050. (both from CCAP Cabinet Report)

7 Analysis of the effects on Equality

- 7.1 An EIA is not applicable for this proposal.

8 Data Protection

- 8.1 BetterPoints is the data controller on the "Choose How You Move" programme, with all users of the app registering with BetterPoints rather than Warwick District Council. BetterPoints control and manage the servers upon which all user data is stored and will only provide Warwick District Council with aggregated and anonymized data. BetterPoints use strict procedures and security features to ensure the confidentiality and security of each user's personal information. This includes using third party hosting services that meet the highest international security and resilience standards. Data is kept by BetterPoints for up to seven years after a user deactivates their account.

9 Health and Wellbeing

The proposal has the potential to increase the health and wellbeing of Warwick District residents as we will aim to encourage sustainable travel from a health perspective. We are currently speaking with the Health and Wellbeing team at WDC and have successfully secured a partnership between BetterPoints and South Warwickshire NHS Trust for a bespoke offering on the app specifically aimed at their staff.

10 Risk Assessment

The relationship between WDC and BetterPoints is greatly enhanced through the employment of a Project Management Apprentice since June 2023, which solely concentrates on the BetterPoints contract. This post is funded through to 2025 and therefore will be a resource throughout this proposed contract extension. There is ongoing support from WDC's Media Team.

11 Consultation

N/A

Background papers:

None

Supporting documents:

None