

**BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**NORTH AREA COUNCIL**

**3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2013**

1. **Present:** Councillors Burgess (Chair), Cherryholme, Duerden, Howard, Leech, Lofts, Miller, Platts and Spence.

2. **Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests.**

After welcoming Members to the meeting the Chair asked those present to introduce themselves before asking for any declarations of pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests. No declarations were received.

3. **Terms of Reference, purpose of the Area Councils and the role of Elected Members and supporting officers.**

By way of introduction the Chair, supported by the North Area Council Manager, gave a brief presentation about the new area arrangements.

The meeting considered the relationship between the Area Council and the Corporate Plan and the three Corporate priorities; growing the economy, changing the relationship between the Council and the community and improving people's potential and achievement. A reminder was given that the vision and priorities of the Council needed to be considered in conjunction with the current situation of reducing levels of finance. However, it was recognised that the situation also provides a new role for Members; working together with communities to find solutions.

The Chair drew attention to the Role Descriptions, specifically mentioning a number of areas which were key to the area arrangements. These included providing community leadership; representing their ward at area level and undertaking performance management.

The meeting noted the role of the Area Councils as set out in the Terms of Reference which included setting priorities; publishing an area plan; commissioning services from 2014/15 and undertaking a performance management role. It was noted that six meetings of each Area Council were scheduled for the year, with minutes being reported to Council. The meeting acknowledged that although meetings would be held in public there would be no direct public participation. Some discussion took place on the wording of elements of the Terms of Reference as it was felt important to ensure all members had a shared understanding.

The amount of finance available was then considered, which included £400,000 per annum for the North Area Council to commission against the Area Plan across the area from 2014/15. From 2013/14 £30,000 per annum had been allocated per ward to increase social action. It was thought that finance was in place for 3 years for both and that underspend could be carried forward, though it was agreed to confirm whether this was the case.

With regards to commissioning, the meeting discussed the need to establish a list of approved providers with information about their location. It was suggested that the

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opportunity to be part of this list should be widely promoted throughout the borough. A number of questions were raised with regards to the commissioning process and whilst it was acknowledged that this was still in development it was suggested that a session on this issue be held to raise the awareness of Members.

Ward Alliances were discussed, focusing on their importance in engaging communities and facilitating action. Part of the role will be to determine ward priorities and agree a measurable action plan. The practicalities associated with organising the Ward Alliances were discussed including the need to find a secretary, which had the potential to be problematic. Support from the Locality Support Officers was available in short term for the secretary and for the establishment of the Ward Alliances.

Support was also available from the Locality Support Officers to develop wider neighbourhood networks. In order to assist this process a calling notice had been sent out to a wide range of community groups inviting them to take part. It was noted that a database would be compiled from respondents. The meeting heard how a small amount of finance is available within the first year to support engagement and whilst details of this had been circulated, it was agreed to re-circulate this to Members.

The recurrent devolved budgets were then considered by the meeting; the Devolved Ward Budget of £20,000 per ward and the Ward Alliance Fund of £10,000 per ward per annum. With regards to the latter it was noted that applicants needed to 'give something back' to the community to be successful. All relevant application forms are available from the Locality Support Officers.

As the area arrangements are in their infancy, the Chair encouraged feedback from all Members. Assurances were given that any concerns would be fed into review meetings with other Area Chairs, with the Cabinet Spokesperson for Adults and Communities, and with the Leader of the Council.

### **Resolved that:-**

- i)** the Terms of Reference and related paperwork be noted.
- ii)** clarity be sought on whether area and ward finance is in place for 3 years and whether underspend can be carried forward
- iii)** a list of approved vendors be circulated to Members when available.
- iv)** details of the financial support available to develop wider neighbourhood networks be re-circulated to members.
- v)** Members provide feedback to the Chair in order to feed into the review process of the area arrangements.

## **4. North Area Council work programme**

### **a) Programme for 2013/14, including key milestones**

The North Area Council Manager introduced the item. The report considered each of the six Area Council meetings for 2013/14, proposed what the focus of these meetings would be, and suggested associated outcomes.

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It was proposed that the next meeting of the Area Council in July considers a range of data and information about the area, in order to discuss and arrive at a number of draft priorities.

By the end of September it was hoped that a clear vision for the area and associated priorities could be agreed. Members recognised that timescales were tight and that additional meeting may be required to achieve milestones.

A number of Members questioned whether certain workstreams, such as plans associated with highways maintenance and gritting/snow, would be part of the business of Area Councils or Ward Alliances, or best dealt with by other means. It was agreed that clarity would be sought on this.

### **b) Deadlines for papers**

Attention was drawn to the document which contained deadlines for circulation of papers for the Area Council and when minutes would feed into Full Council.

**Resolved** that: -

- i) the work programme be agreed and be used to form the basis of future agendas of the North Area Council.
- ii) additional meetings be arranged as necessary.
- iii) clarity be sought on the most appropriate fora to deal with the workstreams mentioned.
- iv) the deadlines for papers and submission to Full Council be noted.

### **5. Suggested agenda format for Area Councils.**

The meeting noted the draft agenda format, which had been previously circulated. It was stressed that the meetings should be led by members and therefore any items should be forwarded to the Chair, to the deadlines previously mentioned where possible.

After some discussion a consensus was reached to include a welcome and introduction on the agenda and also an item to discuss any items for future agendas.

**Resolved:-** that the standard agenda format be used as a basis for future meetings, taking into account suggestions made and tailored to suit the needs of the North Area Council.

### **6. Future agenda items**

Following on from the discussion under item 4, it was agreed that the next meeting of the North Area Council considers data and information pertaining to the Area in order to arrive at a number of draft priorities. It was suggested that this should include the basic levels of Council service provision which could be expected in the area in future years.

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In addition, as discussed previously on the agenda, the procurement processes associated with the area arrangements was agreed as an item for a future agenda.

A suggestion was made that future meetings should, where possible, be concluded within 2 hours, with which all Members were in agreement.

**Resolved that:-**

- i)** the next meeting of the North Area Council considers data and information to discuss and agree a number of draft priorities for the area.
- ii)** a future meeting considers the procurement processes to be utilised at both Area and Ward levels.

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Chair