

<b>MEETING:</b>	Penistone Area Council
<b>DATE:</b>	Thursday 9 February 2023
<b>TIME:</b>	10.00 am
<b>VENUE:</b>	Council Chamber, Penistone Town Hall

## MINUTES

**Present** Councillors Barnard (Chair), Greenhough, Hand-Davis, Kitching and Lowe-Flello

### 29 Declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests

No Members declared an interest in any item on the agenda.

### 30 Minutes of the Penistone Area Council meeting held on 1st December, 2022 (Pac.09.02.2023/2)

The Area Council received the minutes of the previous meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2022.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Penistone Area Council meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2022 be approved as a true and correct record.

### 31 Notes from the Penistone Ward Alliance held on 12th January, 2022 (Pac.09.02.2023/3)

The meeting received the notes from the Penistone Ward Alliance meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2023.

**RESOLVED** that the notes from the Penistone Ward Alliance meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2023 be received.

### 32 CAB Update Presentation

David Andy from Barnsley's Citizen's Advice Bureau was welcomed to the meeting and provided members with a comparison of work carried out pre pandemic, currently and what the future is expected to entail.

Members were reminded that prior to the pandemic, face to face appointments had been held on the second and fourth Wednesday of every month with a steady stream of clients wishing for help and advice for a range of issues including law, benefits, debts, employment, relationships, education and housing plus anything else they wished to discuss.

Once the pandemic had commenced in March 2020, everything had switched to remote working by delivering the advice service via telephone and online, which is how it remains to operate post pandemic. There were three channels that clients could use in order to contact an adviser. The first being telephone, if there is a high

volume of calls then they are redirected to the national citizens advice call centre to pick up. If it is deemed that the local office needs to deal with the issue then it is referred back. The benefits of the phone line were that whilst there could be a delay to being answered, everyone would eventually be answered.

The secondary channel that the service provided was email advice, on the webpage there is a contact us section for clients to fill in which then automatically generated an email to CAB and clients would be responded to within 48 hours. This provision provided those with out of operational hours jobs the ability to contact someone about an issue. Members were informed that if further information was required then the Advisor would call the client or email back, depending on the contact information they had provided, in order to ensure the client is fully supported.

The third channel was via the CAB website which contained an advice section covering a variety of issues and links to other trusted agencies and websites. These advice pages were updated on a monthly basis in order to ensure information was always correct.

Members were provided with a number of statistics comparing the 9 months prior to lockdown and the 9 months from April to December 2022, in order to show the vast increase in clients assisted but to also to show that the amount of Debt managed and Benefit gain had decreased. It was felt that the offer of telephone, email and the website was required and had been a success but it was acknowledged that there was a need for a blended service going forward with the additional offer of face to face appointments, particularly to aid people in filling in forms.

Members were provided with a number of case studies to demonstrate the types of issues being dealt with and their positive outcomes.

Members were informed that a mixture of paid and volunteer advisers were used within the service who were all trained to resolve clients' issues. There were a number of benefits to using volunteers as more clients were able to be attended to and it also gave the individual volunteer the confidence to then go back into paid employment and further education, over 50% of volunteers had left to gain employment.

There were added values of the CAB Service in that it was part of the Barnsley Food Bank Partnership and a referral agency for food parcels. The service also had access to the fuel vouchers scheme so could help people struggling on a pre-payment metre. A recent funding pot from Barnsley Council had been received in order to hand out shopping vouchers, for a wide range of shops, where these were deemed a better fit for the client, as opposed to food parcels, after being seen by an adviser. Food vouchers enabled the client to buy anything they wished including dog food and fuel logs, but it was noted that there were restrictions on the vouchers being used for alcohol, gambling and tobacco.

Members enquired as to how the fuel vouchers were distributed to clients. In response, members were informed that a code would be generated for the client to use for a pre-payment metre and that these could not be used for someone who pays by direct debit.

The future forecast was that the service would see an increase in demand for help and advice due to the cost of living crisis, the economy, increase in energy costs and the possibility of businesses having to downsize or close due to those pressures, impacting on a wide range of people.

**RESOLVED** that thanks be given for the presentation and the hard work undertaken by the Barnsley Citizens Advice Bureau.

### **33 Quarter 3 Performance Report (Pac.09.02.2023/5)**

The Area Council Manager provided members with an overview of performance for Quarter 3 and all contracted Services.

It was highlighted to members that following the publication of the report a number of figures in the statistics table required updating including: Activities involving Young People under the age of 18 had changed from 25 to 43, People Achieving a Qualification/Accreditation had changed from 0 to 5, this was as a result of a number of students from Angel Voices who had received The Associated Board of the Royal Schools Music (ABRSM) qualification and People Receiving Training should be 25, all of whom were from Penistone Grammar School who had put 15 students through peer support mentor training.

Twiggs Grounds Maintenance continued to meet their targets with 12 groups worked with, all of which were established, there had been 22 individual projects worked on which were either independent projects or requests from Councillors, 14 social action initiatives and 20 activities with businesses. There had been an improvement to work with schools as more were opening up to visitors following the pandemic and further work had taken place around the Take a Seat Campaign. There had been a number of staffing changes but regular meetings were being held and a fortnightly update was provided to the Area Manager.

Age UK had commenced their new contract with some new staff members and there had been 28 regular volunteers with 2 new ones being trained up. There remained a challenge with recruiting drivers for the Community Car Share Scheme, new ways to attract drivers was to be explored. Men in Sheds continued to go well with 21 regular attendees. Members heard that they were in the process of moving to a new venue near Scout Dyke.

Members were provided with a comprehensive update of all the projects and initiatives that Age UK had been and continued to be involved in around the Penistone Area. It was suggested that Age UK be invited to the Area Council Meeting to be held in April 2023 to provide members with a more detailed update of their contract.

DIAL had submitted their last report for the previous contract as they had commenced their new contract in January 2023. There had been continued face to face advice in Penistone Town Hall by appointment only, and whilst not as many clients could be seen, it was deemed as the most effective way to help people, particularly when helping to fill forms in. In comparison to quarter 1, the amount of people accessing the service had significantly reduced from 170 to 37, this was a consequence of returning to face to face appointments. However, there was a lot of

added value to the contract in that centralised funds from the Council supported the phone service which included 89 contacts from the Penistone Area for Quarter 3. DIAL were also providing additional support through energy advisers and More Money in Your Pocket events planned for the area.

The Supporting Young People Grant Fund had 4 projects being delivered. Ad Astra continued working in Penistone Grammar School delivering weekly groups and one to one sessions to support young people with emotional wellbeing, concerns from Year 7 children around transition from primary to secondary school and friendship groups amongst other things. 12 Sessions had been delivered since the project started and there were discussions with the school to look at young people from the group sessions accessing the schools peer mentoring qualification in the future.

Penistone Grammar School are going to be supporting 50 students with a level 2 qualification in peer mentoring, of which 25 students had received a one day training session with a third year medical student and workbooks had been submitted for marking with a view to gaining their qualification later in the year. A number of inspirational speakers had been invited into the School to speak about a number of issues to enhance their knowledge of the wider world.

Angel Voices had 5 pupils gain their ABRSM qualification and 6 more had been approached to audition for TV talent shows such as Britain's Got Talent and The Voice Kids. Money raised by the concerts has helped a number of charities and Cawthorne Village Hall.

Girlguiding West had commenced their Girls Going Away Badge which would enable girls to learn and prepare for being away in preparation for the proposed events at Kingswood to be held later in the year.

Members were provided with a brief overview of the work undertaken by the Area Team during Quarter 3.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

#### **34 Use of Ward Alliance Funds (Pac.09.02.2023/6)**

Members received the report, noting its contents. The Area Council Manager drew particular attention to £9,515.23 which remained in the budget. Members were informed that there were a number of applications that had been received for approval at a future meeting of the Ward Alliance which, if approved, would leave an estimated £3,900.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

#### **35 Procurement and Financial Update (Pac.09.02.2023/7)**

The item was introduced by the Area Council Manager who drew attention to the Age UK contract and that it was due to end it's first year of a 2 year contract in June 2023. It was recommended to members that Age UK be invited to the Penistone Area Council Meeting to be held 6 April 2023 to present an overview of outcomes for the first year of the contract.

Members attention was drawn to the Working Together Grant Fund which was low at £10,986. It was recommended that £80,000 be allocated from the Penistone Area Council budget in order to enable the Area Council to consider new innovative approaches to addressing local need emerging from the rising cost of living.

Members were informed that the Practical Support Grant monies which had been left over from covid had £13,485 remaining. Some of this money had been used to support DIAL and the remaining money would be used for the CAB contract.

It was recommended to members to hold a workshop meeting to hold further discussions to agree the outcomes for the Clean, Green and Tidy Contracts six month waiver contract, being mindful not to move too far from the contract already agreed. Members were informed that £50,000 would be allocated for this contract going forward into the 2023/2024 Penistone Area Council budget.

Members were provided with an overview of the 2022/23 budget. It was noted that, if the proposed budget allocations set out as above were approved, the remaining allocation to be carried forward into the 2023/24 financial year would be £8,059.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (i) that the update of the contract funded by the Supporting Isolated and Older People Grant Fund be noted;
- (ii) that the update on the current financial position of the Penistone Working Together Fund be received and noted and that the allocation of additional funds of £80,000 to the grant pot from the 2022/23 budget in order to meet agreed PAC priorities for the next financial year be agreed;
- (iii) that the update on the Supporting Young People ringfenced funds within the existing Working Together Grant Fund be received;
- (iv) that the updates on the Clean and Tidy contract, which commenced in April 2020, be noted and that further discussions to consider and agree outcomes needed for the 6 month extension to the contract be agreed;
- (v) that the update on the Ward Alliance budget be noted; and
- (vi) that the record of allocated spend from the current financial budget for 2022/23 and the projected end of year financial statement for Penistone Area Council be noted

-----  
Chair