

BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEARNE AREA COUNCIL

22ND JULY 2013

9. **Present:** Councillors Noble (Chair), Brook, Gardiner, Sixsmith, Worton

10. **Declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interest**

There were no declarations of pecuniary or non pecuniary interest.

11. **Minutes of the previous meeting of Dearne Area Council, held on 29th May 2013**

The minutes of the previous meeting of Dearne Area Council were accepted as a true and correct record. Regarding minute 7, members noted that the Area Council had decided not to hold a separate workshop but to discuss emerging Area Plan priorities as part of the day's formal meeting.

12. **Dearne South Ward Alliance notes**

No member wished to highlight any issues arising from the notes of the Dearne South Ward Alliance meetings held on 15th May and 10th July 2013.

RESOLVED: that the notes of the Dearne South Ward Alliance be noted.

13. **Appointment of community representatives to the Dearne South Ward Alliance**

The Chair explained that all seven community representatives who had been nominated to the Dearne South Ward Alliance could make an important contribution to its successful development.

Members agreed that the seven nominees represented a broad cross section of the local community and had an good understanding of the ward and the challenges it was facing.

RESOLVED: that the individuals proposed be approved as community representatives on the Dearne South Ward Alliance, for the remainder of the municipal year.

14. **Nomination of a representative to the Local Plans Working Group**

The Chair reminded members that the Cabinet Spokesperson for Development, Environment, and Culture had asked that at least one member from each Area Council join a working group that would be discussing the implications of new local development plans. Members agreed that it would also be helpful to identify a reserve member who could attend meetings on occasions when the Area Council's main representative was unable to do so.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that Councillor Sixsmith represent the Dearne Area Council on the Local Plans Working Group, and update the Area Council on developments as appropriate;
- (ii) that Councillor Brook act as a substitute representative of the Dearne Area Council on the Local Plans Working Group, as required.

15. **Key long term developments affecting the area**

The Chair drew members' attention to important long-term developments in the Dearne, the implications of which would have to be taken into account when the Area Council agreed its Area Plan priorities for the coming year.

Work to improve local housing stock and develop employment opportunities along the A635 corridor was felt to be particularly significant. Members acknowledged that many of the development sites currently available across the borough were relatively small, and that larger plots would be needed to attract major new employers to the area.

Members agreed that more detail was needed about existing medium and long term improvement projects planned for the Dearne, which provided important context for the Area Council's own future work.

RESOLVED: that the Area Manager arrange a briefing for members of the Dearne Area Council with the Assistant Director (Development) and the Housing Market Renewal Programme Manager, to discuss existing plans for the area's future development.

16. **Area-specific headline data and performance information**

- (i) **Dearne North and South area profiles**

The Area Council received a presentation from Liz Pitt, Principal Research and Intelligence Officer, which highlighted some of the key challenges facing the area. The presentation was largely based on

recently released data from the 2011 Census, supplemented where appropriate from other official sources.

Members noted that a relatively large number of Dearne residents were aged 0 to 16 but that almost 30% of children in Dearne South, and almost 40% of children in Dearne North, were living in poverty. Teenage conception rates in the Dearne were also the highest in the borough. The data further indicated that almost 10% of households contained single parents, over 2% more than the borough and national averages, and that in almost 8% of households there were no adults who were in work.

Members expressed concern that almost one third of Dearne residents did not have access to a car or van and were therefore reliant on public transport, which was compounded by recent changes that had seen several local bus services either re-routed or removed completely. Connectivity between local residents and education and employment sites was felt to be a key issue, which members agreed to raise with the Council's representative to the South Yorkshire Integrated Transport Authority.

The presentation also indicated that over 7% of adults living in the Dearne had long term health problems, and that more than 11% provided some level of unpaid care each week. Unemployment had reached 6%, one and a half times the national average, and over 16% of 16 to 24 year olds were claiming Job Seekers Allowance. The meeting heard that almost 40% of local people had no educational qualifications at all, nearly 7% more than the borough average.

Members also discussed the links between socio-economic conditions in the area and lifestyle issues such as smoking, alcohol, and obesity. Members noted that the Government's Index of Multiple Deprivation rated parts of the Dearne as being amongst the most deprived communities in the country, which it was felt only added to the challenges facing local people.

(ii) Dearne Approach summary report

The Area Manager presented a draft report that summarised research conducted by the social enterprise Turning Point, which was working with the Council under the auspices of the 'Dearne Approach' project. The report highlighted the following seven priorities for action, identified through face to face surveys with more than 600 local people:

1. Access to GPs (though this problem was concentrated in Thurnscoe)
2. Housing issues
3. Debt and benefit problems
4. Unemployment and training
5. Teenage anti-social behaviour and gangs
6. Dog mess and causing nuisance

7. Drug dealing and usage

In relation to priority three, the Chair informed members that the six Area Council Chairs from across the borough had discussed the possibility of jointly commissioning specialist debt advice for local people. Access was felt to be a key issue, with members agreeing that advisors would have to rotate between local communities as many people could not afford to travel into central Barnsley.

Members noted that the Council and Turning Point were contractually committed to the Dearne Approach for the next four years, but felt that more discussion was needed on the project's relationship to the Area Council. Members agreed that the relationship needed to be complementary and avoid duplication, and that the Area Council should take the lead in setting the local agenda for change.

The Area Council Manager noted that members had received a summary of the Dearne Approach's findings, and that they would be briefed on the full report before it was submitted to the Dearne Approach Steering Group for approval on 14th August.

17. **Emerging draft priorities for Dearne Area Council**

Members agreed that the Area Council needed to turn the intelligence they had received from the above presentation and report into action, through the Area Plan. It was noted that Ward Alliance priorities and devolved ward budget spending plans would also be taken into account, but that a focus on strategic priorities would ensure that the whole area benefited from Area Council initiatives.

However, members noted that some priorities for action, such as job creation, may not be achievable by the Area Council on its own. In such instances, members agreed that the Area Council had a key role to play in 'lobbying' relevant Council departments and partner organisations to take appropriate action.

Members also acknowledged that the Area Council's priorities would develop over time, particularly through a process of ongoing community consultation.

18. **Planning and format for the next meeting of Dearne Area Council**

Members noted that the next meeting of the Dearne Area Council would further develop and refine priorities for action, in order to ensure the Area Plan was ready for public consultation in the autumn.

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Chair