

**BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**SOUTH AREA COUNCIL**

**28<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2013**

1. **Present:** Councillors Stowe (Chair), Andrews, Dures, Lamb, Saunders, Shepherd, R. Wraith

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

There were no declarations of pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest.

3. **Terms of reference, purpose of the Area Councils, and the role of elected members**

The Chair welcomed all those present to the first meeting of the South Area Council.

Members considered the Area Council's terms of reference and purpose, as well as the role of elected members. It was noted that Councillor Calls for Action of purely local significance would be considered by the Area Council as appropriate, whilst those of a more strategic nature or with borough-wide implications would be referred to the borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Chair drew the Area Council's attention to the role of local members under the new governance arrangements, highlighting in particular their important contribution to community leadership and performance monitoring. Members also discussed their role as advocates for the Council, tasked with disseminating information throughout the community about the Council's decisions and their implications.

The Area Council acknowledged that the borough Council's ongoing programme of budget cuts would have a significant impact on local people. It was felt important to be upfront in surgeries and through individual casework about the services the borough Council could and could not offer in the present financial climate. However, members also recognised that Area Councils had an opportunity to use their newly devolved budgets to help build and strengthen local communities, increasing resilience for the future.

The Area Manager noted that devolved budgets were being made available to both wards and Area Councils. Each ward had £20,000 to spend during 2013/14 to support community groups and local services, with local members deciding how to allocate funding. An additional £10,000 was available per Ward Alliance, which would support Alliance and Neighbourhood Network development. Members could transfer

some or all of their ward budget to the Ward Alliance fund if they wished, but could keep the two funds separate if this was more appropriate in their own individual wards. Members noted that Community First funding was also available in Darfield, Hoyland Milton, and Wombwell, but that this would be kept separate from the ward budgets.

The Area Council discussed ways to maximise the monies available by using ward budgets as match funding where suitable opportunities arose. It was noted however that this would be on a case by case basis and that match funding for some schemes, such as Community Challenge, was measured through volunteering hours available rather than purely financial resources.

Members recognised the importance of encouraging volunteering but also stressed the need to engage community based businesses. The meeting discussed examples from elsewhere in the country of private sector involvement in community projects, and agreed that similar opportunities should be explored in Barnsley.

The Area Manager noted that the Area Council would have its own devolved budget from 2014/15, which would be used for commissioning local services. Priorities for spending would have to be in line with the borough council's strategic needs but also take account of ward priorities.

There was a strong emphasis on commissioning local companies wherever possible, and the Council's Contract Standing Orders were being revised accordingly. Members noted that the Council's YORtender system was easy to use but that some community groups had little experience of tendering and would need support. A procurement 'handbook' would hopefully be ready for the Area Council's next meeting, although it was acknowledged this would have to be accompanied by commissioning training for both officers and members.

**Resolved:**

- (i) that the terms of reference and related paperwork be noted;
- (ii) that officers further explore opportunities to engage private sector businesses in the Area Council's work;
- (iii) that Voluntary Action Barnsley be invited to a future Area Council meeting to discuss their experience of working with local businesses to support community projects.

4. **Notes of Ward Alliance meetings**

Members discussed the notes of recent Ward Alliance meetings.

It was noted under point 7 of the Wombwell notes that ward members would be meeting with the Police Commissioner to raise concerns about security on Wombwell High Street, following a number of recent break-ins.

Under point 4 of the Hoyland Milton/Rockingham notes members noted that the Forge Community Partnership, Sure Start, local GP, and Jump Community had identified candidates to join the Ward Alliance. Hemingfield Action Group and Friends of Milton were also interested in taking part, and officers were liaising with Friends of Elsecar Park.

**Resolved:**

- (i) that the Area Council receive the notes of the following Ward Alliances:
  - Wombwell, held on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2013
  - Hoyland Milton/Rockingham, held on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2013
  - Darfield, held on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2013

5. **Work programme for 2013/14, including key milestones**

The Area Manager drew members' attention to the proposed Area Council work programme for the year, which would ensure important milestones were reached but recognised that individual areas would develop their own approach.

**Resolved:**

- (i) that the work programme be noted and form the basis of future meetings of the South Area Council.

6. **Standard agenda format for Area Councils**

The Chair drew members' attention to the draft standard agenda format circulated with the meeting's papers, which was intended to help the Area Council develop a consistent approach to business.

**Resolved:**

- (i) that the standard agenda format be used as a basis for future meetings of the South Area Council.

7. **Deadlines for Area Councils**

**Resolved:**

- (i) that the Area Council note the deadlines for report submission and publication, which reflected relevant statutory guidance.

8. **Planning and format for the next Area Council meeting**

Members discussed holding a workshop in advance of the next Area Council meeting to discuss local priorities. The meeting noted that this could include ward based discussions focused on emerging ward plans, which would give members an opportunity to learn from each other and consider relevant data in detail.

**Resolved:**

- (i) that the South Area Council hold an informal workshop on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> August at 9.30am in Ilsley Road community centre, Darfield, to discuss emerging area priorities.

9. **Venue for future meetings**

Members agreed that future Area Council meetings should take place in the local community, though a shortage of suitable venues in Wombwell was acknowledged. The Lead Locality Officer confirmed that modest room charges could be accommodated within existing service budgets.

**Resolved:**

- (i) that future meetings of the South Area Council rotate between the following venues:
  - Ilsley Road community centre, Darfield
  - Hoyland LIFT centre
  - Wombwell Centre, Barnsley Road

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Chair