

MEETING:	Dearne Area Council
DATE:	Monday, 21 January 2019
TIME:	10.00 am
VENUE:	Meeting Room, Goldthorpe Library

MINUTES

Present Councillors Noble (Chair), Gollick, C. Johnson and Phillips

29 Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

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

30 Minutes of the Previous Meeting of Dearne Area Council held on 26th November, 2018 (Dac.21.01.2019/2)

The meeting received the minutes from the previous meeting of Dearne Area Council.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Dearne Area Council meeting held on the 26th November, 2018 be approved as a true and correct record.

31 Performance Report Q3 (Dac.21.01.2019/3)

The Area Council Manager introduced this item, by stating that all commissioned services had performed well during quarter 3 with no significant concerns about targets being met.

With regard to Environmental Enforcement it was noted that the contract had performed well throughout the quarter with 69 Fixed Penalty Notices being issued for littering (62) and Dog Fouling (7) and 6 Penalty Charge Notices issued for Parking. Prosecutions were continuing for Littering and Dog Fouling with a 99% success rate in court. A growing concern was the inability to pursue all offenders who failed to pay. To date revenue raised from Fixed Penalty Notices this quarter was £2,000. It was again noted that the Kingdom contract would come to an end after the next quarter.

The Housing and Migration Officer was continuing to work proactively and in quarter 3 had dealt with 153 initial contacts, 32 of which had been identified as vulnerable households and 52 signposted to other services. There had been 10 property inspections and 5 campaigns and there had been the largest letter drop ever. In response to questioning, it was agreed that Members be kept informed of the areas targeted.

As a result of previous meetings, discussions and walk-a-bouts in the Beaver Street area throughout 2018 the officer had also undertaken a Street Survey of the surrounding streets. The issues identified were being addressed with landlords and residents.

Twiggs had not met their social action objective of working with established groups this quarter possibly because of the Christmas/Winter quarter but plans were in place

to address this within quarter 4. The number of impact sessions delivered to groups and schools was lower than would have been liked and this was also to be addressed in quarter 4. It was also understood that the Dearne Advanced Learning Centre was keen to undertake social action events in association with Twiggs.

The Chair reported that a meeting was to be held with the Godthorpe Development Group tomorrow which it was hoped would also facilitate the involvement of Dearne ALC. Other members asked to be informed of feedback on interaction with residents and the Area Manager commented that feedback reports were always provided and could be made available.

The Area Manager also gave details of a Work Experience Placement which had resulted in a candidate securing employment. She went on to outline the types of targeted work undertaken by the team together with the work with established groups which had resulted in residents informally adopting planted areas. Arising out of this discussion, the Link Officer referred to the importance of logging the adoption of such areas with Neighbourhood Services in view of the need for that Service to reduce maintenance responsibilities in the future as a consequence of future spending restrictions.

The B-Friend project was receiving low numbers in terms of referrals into the service but the team were liaising with partners and other potential referrers in order to elevate this. Whilst the Service had only been up and running since October 2018, it was noted that there were 38 volunteers registered and further referrals were awaited. In the next week, consideration was to be given to impact assessment tools/arrangements for the service.

The Area Council Manager then referred to the performance of projects funded through the Dearne Development Fund.

It was noted that the defibrillator placed at the Bolton on Dearne Ex Service Men's Club had only been installed for a very short period of time but had been used on at least two occasions. This demonstrated the importance of such a facility.

Dial had delivered 11 sessions at Godthorpe Library to 68 residents. Most issues raised related to debt, benefits and housing issues. This was a much needed service and additional sessions had been arranged in view of the demand.

The Goldthorpe Development Group was really working well with between 70-90 residents attending each session. Many volunteers were willing to assist and funding for the project was available until December.

The Dearne Electronic Community Village within the last quarter had assisting 27 individuals on the ICT and Employability Support Sessions and 5 had obtained employment with many more obtaining interviews. Arising out of this, reference was made to, and there was a discussion of, the need to ensure future resilience of this initiative given the limited staffing resource available. Reference was also made to the possible future commissioning of future initiatives and the possible development of apprenticeships.

RESOLVED that the report be noted

32 Dearne Area Council Procurement and Financial Update (Dac.21.01.2019/4)

The Area Council Manager introduced the item, reminding Members of the starting balance at the beginning of the financial year, which stood at just over £208,000. The Area Council had agreed to continue with the environmental enforcement, private sector housing and environmental, education and volunteering service and had allocated £65,000 to the Dearne Development Fund in order to meet area priorities. In addition, matched funding had been approved with Nesta for the social isolation project bringing total spend during 2018/19 of £210, 579.76, a slight overspend of 32,111.80. It was anticipated that the finance accrued from Fixed Penalty Notices would more than cover this deficit.

To date for 2019/20 the Area Council had agreed to commission and fund the education, environment and volunteer service, housing and Migration officer and community newsletter for which just over £119,500 had been allocated. A detailed financial breakdown was appended to the report

With regard to the Dearne Development Fund from a starting budget of around £46,800, Members noted that £9,572.10 remained.

It was noted that an evaluation Panel had met on the 4th December, 2018 to evaluate and receive presentations from two providers for the Education, Environmental and Volunteering Service and the current provider, Twiggs, had been successful in winning the tender the contract for which would start on the 1st April, 2019. A meeting had been arranged for the 28th January, 2018 to start the scheduling of work and Elected Members, the core neighbourhood's team and groups delivering environmental activities in the Dearne had also been invited to attend. In addition, Twiggs were to give a presentation to the May Area Council meeting.

The Area Council Manager then reported on the success and importance of the Employability initiatives within the area and outlined various alternatives for provision. The recommended option was to formalise the arrangements through the commissioning of an Employability Service and should members wish to pursue this option, a draft specification was appended to the report. The estimated cost involved was approximately £33,000 which was around the same cost as the previous arrangements

There was a detailed discussion of the options and it was suggested that in future, financial arrangements should include payment by performance. The Area Council Manager commented, however, that the contract would be performance managed and it was anticipated that, given past experience, all targets would be exceeded.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the updates and financial position be noted;
- (ii) That the procurement and specification (as detailed within the appendix to the report) for the Employability Service be approved at a total cost of £33,000 per annum;

- (iii) That the Service be tendered initially for one year with the option to extend the contract for two further periods of one year subject to satisfactory performance; and
- (iv) That the current financial position and the impact of future budgets for 2019/20 onwards be noted.

33 Dearne Development Fund (Dac.21.01.2019/5)

The Area Council Manager introduced the report, reminding Members of the allocations to the Dearne Development Fund made in previous years, and the successful outcomes due to the investment. It was felt that the scheme held to meet Area Council Priorities and provided value for money.

A suggestion was made that a further £60,000 be allocated to the Dearne Development Fund for the 2019/20 financial year.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) That £60,000 be allocated to the Dearne Development Fund for the 2019/20 financial year to be allocated in grants of £1,000-15,000; and
- (ii) That Dearne Development Fund be allocated using mechanisms previously agreed by the Area Council, with the Service Director, Stronger, Safer and Healthier Communities authorised to approved grants of between £1,000 and £15,000 in consultation with the Dearne Development Fund Panel.

34 Social Prescribing (Dac.21.01.2019/6)

Ms A Goddard gave a presentation outlining her work since commencing in the Dearne in 2017 in relation to signposting and navigating individuals and families to service providers, external organisations, DIAL, DWP and other appropriate bodies.

She made particular reference to two case studies, outlined the work she had undertaken in respect of each individual case and gave details of the outcome of her involvement for each family/individual.

The presentation engendered a full and frank discussion during which matters of a general and detailed nature were raised and answers were given to Members' questions where appropriate. Particular reference was made to instances where individuals/families struggled to obtain support they needed as they failed to meet the requisite criteria for the various support mechanisms/streams and to the ways in which this could possibly be addressed in the future. It was noted that meetings had been arranged with various Local Authority Departments and Organisations to try to ensure that a solution focussed approach could be developed.

Reference was also made of the increasing number of multiple deprivation cases coming to light. It was suggested that four or five cases should be analysed to facilitate an examination of how issues could be escalated, solutions found and, if not, what service developments needed to be examined.

RESOLVED that the presentation be received and Ms Goddard be thanked for all her hard work, for attending the meeting and for answering Members questions.

35 Housing in the Dearne (Dac.21.01.2019/7)

Ms A Forster, the Empty Homes Officer was welcomed to the meeting to speak about the work to support the return of empty homes back into use.

To the end of quarter 2 there had been a net reduction of 130 properties (1615 to 1485) throughout the Borough identified as requiring a variety of support. Whilst the figures for quarter 3 were still awaited, in quarter 2, 171 properties had been brought back into use with 79 more within the pipeline.

Within the Dearne, financial assistance and enforcement action was being taken and other initiatives such as the Berneslai Purchase and Repair Scheme, Humankind Housing and 3rd Sector were ensuring that properties were brought back into use where possible. In total, 17 had been brought back into use and a further 17 were in progress.

Information was also provided in relation to individual properties that had been the subject of enforced sale or where action was being considered/taken.

Reference was made to the ways in which vacant/void properties (and particularly those with absentee landlords) were identified and appropriate action taken.

Officers were working closely with all Council Departments in order to take appropriate action with empty property owners.

It was noted that consideration was being given to a revamp and relaunch of the accreditations scheme so that landlords and tenants were more aware of what the Council was able to offer. Arising out of this discussion reference was also made to the action being taken to avoid properties in some areas being targeted by Anti-Social Behaviour.

A free event was being planned for the 12th February, 2019 at the Barnsley Metrodome to which landlords and agents would be invited. This was being organised in association with the National Landlord Association and presentations would be made by, amongst others, DWP on Universal Credit, the National Energy Action Team on energy efficiency. Humankind, BMBC Waste Management and Berneslai Homes would also be in attendance. Members of the Council were also welcome to attend this event.

RESOLVED that the Empty Homes Officer be thanked for her work in the area, for attending the meeting and answering Members questions.

36 Report on the Use of Ward Alliance Funds (Dac.21.01.2019/8)

The meeting noted the current financial position for Dearne North and Dearne South.

At the time of publication Dearne North had £3,764.07 from an opening balance of £9,506.69 and Dearne South had £6,116.64 from an opening balance of £11,021.36.

It was noted that a number of applications had been submitted since the publication of the agenda.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Chair