

MEETING:	South Area Council
DATE:	Friday 14 April 2023
TIME:	10.00 am
VENUE:	Meeting Room 1 - Barnsley Town Hall

MINUTES

Present Councillors Markham (Chair), Eastwood, Franklin, Frost, Higginbottom, Lamb, Osborne, Shepherd, Smith, Stowe and White

30 Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

No Member wished to declare an interest in any item on the agenda.

31 Minutes of the Meeting of South Area Council held on 17 February 2023 (Sac.14.04.2023/2)

The meeting considered the minutes of South Area Council held on 17 February 2023.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the South Area Council held on 17 February 2023 be approved as a true and correct record.

32 Notes of the Ward Alliances (Sac.14.04.2023/3)

The meeting received the notes from the following meetings:- Hoyland Milton and Rockingham Ward Alliance held on 1 February 2023; Wombwell Ward Alliance held on 27 March 2023 and Darfield Ward Alliance held on 16 March 2023.

RESOLVED that the notes from the Ward Alliances be received.

33 Public Health Update (Sac.14.04.2023/4)

Diane Lee, Head of Public Health, introduced the item, noting that both Workplace Wellbeing and Vaping had been brought up in the discussion at the previous meeting, with Members wishing to be provided with more detail.

Julia Sykes, Workplace Health Officer, gave a presentation about the Be Well@Work Programme. The programme was South Yorkshire wide and had been in place for around seven years. It aimed to work with employers to support workplace health and wellbeing and the associated benefits, such as improved morale, increased productivity, and lower sickness and absence rates. Members heard how the pandemic had impacted efforts, but that for many employers the health of their employees had been a higher priority since.

An overview of the support provided was given, which include the undertaking of a health and wellbeing survey within the business, the provision of resources to help deliver a tailored health and wellbeing programme, and recognition in the form of a Be Well@Work Award. Businesses taking part could be of any size and could take up as much of the offer as they felt appropriate.

Although the support was free, noted was the difficulty in engaging some businesses, however Members heard that the mailing list, which provided details of support available, such as through topical workshops, contained around 240 individuals.

Employers were encouraged to promote other public health messages such as 'How's Thi Ticker' and the Warmer Homes programme, as well as sign posting employees to services such as stop smoking or for support with drugs or alcohol. Employers were also encouraged to appoint workplace health champions to take forward and promote the offer, and to encourage take up amongst employees. A number of case studies were then provided of employers in the South Area and the impact of the programme.

It was noted that the role was based in Employment and Skills and was part of the approach to helping people get into work and then keep people in work by ensuring they are healthy. Members were encouraged to promote the programme and refer any interested businesses.

Questions and comments were then invited from Members.

Councillor Lamb noted that he had worked for an educational establishment that had engaged with the programme. Positive results had been seen amongst the workforce, and this had been viewed favourably by Ofsted. Members heard that the programme had been promoted to Academy Trusts, and St Mary's Academy Trust were engaged.

It was noted that there was an offer of training and support to volunteers through the Ward Alliance, and it was suggested that this could be potentially widened to further support business.

Questions were raised about why businesses did not engage when they were made aware of the offer, and there was thought no definitive reason why this was the case.

Further details of the survey were provided, including that this was anonymous, which would help promote honesty with regards to highlighting issues. However, it was noted that if significant concerns were raised, then the employer would be required to act on these, which may be a reason some employers decline to take part. Though it was noted that a number of sources of free support to employees were available.

Garreth Robinson, Senior Public Health Officer, and Lydia Clark, Public Health Officer, introduced the second part of the update, focused on Vaping. It was noted that the current position on vaping was ever changing, with the Government recently announcing that 1million smokers would be receiving support packs.

Members were reminded that advice, based on evidence, was that vaping had a role to play as an alternative to smoking, and was less harmful, but there was still harm attached. However, vapes should not be sold or used to those under 18 years old and adults should not start vaping if they have never smoked.

An overview of national and local key policy recommendations was provided, which included the taxing of disposable vapes, and more regulation of advertising and

packaging/labelling. Also proposed was better funding of enforcement, stricter age verification and prohibiting free distribution.

Members were made aware of action being taken locally. This included including questions around smoking and vaping in the 'Let's Hear Your Voice' Survey of school children, more effective enforcement, and extending Smoke Free Schools to secondary schools. Resources around reducing vaping had also been developed regionally, focused on young people, which could then be disseminated in a variety of settings.

An update on enforcement in Barnsley with regards to smoking and vaping was provided, which included the seizing of 676 illegal vapes with a street value of £6,760.

Members then heard of the next steps proposed with regards to Young People. This included analysing findings from the 'Let's Hear Your Voice' survey; updating the Healthier Future webpage to include information related to children and young people smoking and vaping; ensuring smoking and vaping resources were more children and young people focused; and considering how to tackle the environmental impact of disposable vapes.

Members were then apprised of the new Government proposals 'Stop to Swap' Scheme, with Local Authorities invited to take part later this year with proposals being developed to suit local need and prioritise populations most at risk.

Suggestions were then made about how reducing vaping could be taken forward tailored to the South Area, including piloting vaping cessation in schools in the area; taking forward Smokefree Secondary Schools, and piloting smokefree touchlines.

Questions were raised around the enforcement of supplying illegal vapes and to those under the age of 18. Concern was expressed about the marketing and promotion of the product, with flavours and designs aimed at young people. It was noted that many vaping brands were owned by tobacco companies.

A discussion took place around the harmful and addictive nature of vaping, and it was noted that although studies were ongoing, the true nature of the impact in the long term was not clearly known. Members then discussed packaging, which did not clearly mention the harms associated with vaping, which cigarettes did.

Members noted that enforcement was the responsibility of the Local Authority, and there was no requirement for a licence to sell the product. The finite resources available for enforcement were acknowledged and a suggestion was made to publicise this work through the press and social media to discourage selling illegally. With regards to Police involvement, it was noted that they were involved in test purchasing, and also took part in the steering group on this issue. It was suggested that the issue could be raised with neighbourhood officers, asking them to forward intelligence to enforcement teams.

Members noted the focus on supporting deprived areas, which generally had a higher prevalence of smoking and vaping, and suggestions were made to engage people through family centres and through food banks. Other voluntary and community organisations could also refer and help disseminate resources.

Questions were raised regarding the work done with schools, and whether the young people who vaped were aware of the health issues and costs. It was suggested that a school in the South Area could be approached to pilot an intervention to raise awareness of the issues to discourage vaping, and support those who did vape to stop. It was suggested that many may not admit that they vaped. It was acknowledged that schools did have a number of competing priorities, and although resources were available, the use of hard-hitting drama was suggested could be impactful.

Those present discussed nicotine patches and other nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) which were available over the counter and via prescription, as well as other therapies.

RESOLVED:-

- i) That thanks be given for the updates provided;
- ii) That the Area Council supports the work done by Public Health in this area; and
- iii) That South Area Councillors support the programmes highlighted and agree to disseminate information where relevant.

34 Report on the Use of Ward Alliance Funds (Sac.14.04.2023/5)

The Area Council Manager spoke on the item, referring to the report previously circulated. Members were made aware that since the report had been published there had been a number of grant approvals processed, which led to each Ward Alliance having no finance to carry forward into the 2023/24 financial year.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Chair