

MEETING:	Dearne Area Council
DATE:	Monday 22 May 2023
TIME:	2.00 pm
VENUE:	Meeting Room, Goldthorpe Library

MINUTES

Present Councillors Coates (Chair), Bellamy, Bowler, Cain, Moore and Morrell

1 Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

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

2 Notes of the Previous Meeting of Dearne Area Council held on 20th March 2023 (Dac.22.05.2023/2)

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the notes of the inquorate meeting on the 20th March, 2023 be received and the recommendations contained therein be approved; and
- (ii) that the minutes of meeting of the meeting held on the 5th December, 2022 be approve as a true and correct record.

3 Introduction of the Dearne Area Council Link Officer - Laura Hammerton

Laura Hammerton (Early Start and Families Strategy and Service Manager) and Link Officer for the Area Council attended the meeting.

She gave a brief overview of her role and responsibilities and responded to Members questions. Particular reference was made to the following:

- How her service could assist in addressing the key aims and objectives of the Area Council, its procured and commissioned services and how such an approach could help in obtaining wider support and thereby better meet the needs of the residents of the area
- the service developments that were taking place:
 - to improve service delivery and provide targeted support where it was most needed
 - current caseload which were extremely high and the arrangements in place to address this
 - The recruitment of new staff
 - The receipt of £3.1m financial support to 2025. This would ensure the development of a one stop shop approach for families to enable them to access the support they needed
- the main issues identified by the service which, amongst other things included children's emotional well-being and mental health and the drivers that related to that and particularly in relation to financial and housing issues and domestic abuse

- the ways in which referrals could be made to the service and the way in which services of the Council and with other agencies were developed in order to provide a seamless approach
- the Family Hubs Plan and a Delivery Plan that had been submitted to the DfE
- the wider consultation that was being undertaken which would inform future delivery proposals and particularly the development of the Family Hubs. A link to the survey would be provided for the Area Council Manager. A report on the findings could be submitted to a future meeting once complete
- the development of an appropriate service offer which was agile enough to move things forward and be responsive and reactive to the needs of families

Ms Hammerton was then thanked for her attendance and for answering Members questions.

4 B:Friend Update

Jenny Pitman (Project Leader – B:Friend) delivered an update and for newly elected Members she also gave a brief resume of the work of the B:Friend service.

There were currently two social clubs operated, one in Thurnscoe and one in Bolton together with a 1-1 befriending service as well as other social events. Volunteers were ordinary members of the public who gave their up their time free of charge to help others. Anyone over the age of 18 was welcome to volunteer and would be given an appropriate DBS check for which help was available if required.

Members noted that groups were struggling to attract male participants and work was being undertaken to try to encourage take-up.

The Chair reminded Members that in 2022 the Group had received The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

Information was also provided about various 1-1 befriending pairings held recently.

Various events had been held recently including, amongst other things, barge trips and coronation events.

Reference was also made to meetings/events held at the Little Theatre in Thurnscoe to which various speakers were invited. These events were held at three different times with the same speakers so that as wide a group of people as possible could attend. If anyone knew of an organisation or a person who would be willing to give a talk/presentation they should let Jenny know so that a wider programme of events could be provided going forward.

Arising out of this discussion, reference was made to the possibility of the Theatre seeking grant aid from the Park Springs Community Benefit Fund.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

5 Quarter 4 Performance Report (Dac.22.05.2023/5)

The Area Council Manager submitted her performance report for Quarter 4 and Members noted its contents.

Arising out of the discussion, particular reference was made to the following:

- the Area Council Priorities, the commissions including TWIGGS, the B:Friend service, the Dearne Electronic Community Village and the work of the Private Sector Housing and Cohesion Officer. Arising out of the discussion, the following matters were highlighted:
 - in response to questioning, the Area Council Manager stated that she would provide information in the future about the social return on investment.
 - The amount of work undertaken at the Dearne Electronic Community Village was noted, however, this was continuing to increase, in part due to the increased emphasis of the DWP to push people back into work.
- The Dearne Development Fund and the continuing amazing work undertaken by DIAL. It was noted that for every £1 spent, there was a social return of £23
- The work of the Goldthorpe Development Group which was coming to the end of its grant funding period. Reference was made to the cost of some events which, although small, could put some people off from attending. There were not many events for which a charge was levied. It was noted, however, that the cost of running the service over 12 months was not covered by the grant funding received which was a contributory factor to the need to charge for some events.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

6 Dearne Area Council Finance Update (Dac.22.05.2023/6)

The Area Council Manager submitted a report providing an update regarding the Area Council's financial position.

The report outlined the spend for 2022/23, the committed spend for 2023/24 and for 2024/25 together with information about the Dearne Development Fund and a detailed financial breakdown was included within an Appendix to the report.

It was noted that in total the Area Council had £62,929.91 to carry over into this financial year.

The Chair reported that at a recent Area Chairs meeting she had raised the issue of funding and was pushing for additional finance to be allocated in the future.

RESOLVED that the Financial update and the impact on future budgets be noted.

7 Dearne Area Council Update on Commissions (Dac.22.05.2023/7)

The Area Council Manager presented an update report with regard to the Dearne Area Council commissioned services and potential future projects.

Particular reference was made to the following:

- The Social Connectivity Service – it was recommended that the Area Council approve the continuation into the second year of the three year contract
- The work of the Housing and Cohesion Officer and to the continued proactivity in identifying problematic areas
- The Employment and Skills Service – it was recommended that the Area Council approve the continuation into the second year of the three year contract. It was noted that the issues associated with the lease on the building had now been resolved
- The Neighbourhood and Engagement Officer Role and the work undertaken. It was noted that the post holder had secured a permanent part time post in the Deane Area Team, however, as of 1st June, the postholder had also secured a permanent part time post in the North East. The actual cost to the Area Council in this financial year was, therefore, only £6,354. Arising out of this discussion, Members placed on record their thanks and appreciation of the services of the Officer and to the way in which this work might be undertaken going forward
- The Environmental Service contract delivered by TWIGGS. It was noted that, as reported at the last meeting, the contract extension had been agreed which would now end at the end of March 2024. The Team would be working 3 days in the area with a team Leader and an apprentice. They would be working in groups with volunteers and undertaken scheduled works which had already been developed by the Area Council and passed on to the provider.
- Potential future projects – now that newly elected members were in place, a workshop was to be convened to discuss environmental and young people's initiatives

The Chair briefly reported on a potential new funding initiative she had become aware of which amounted to approximately £1m for the Ings Lane and wider area towards Wath-upon-Deane in respect of which applications were sought. She would email the Area Council Manager with details so that this could be explored further.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that update report on Deane Area Council Commissions be noted;
- (ii) that the Social Connectivity Commissioned service be approved for the second year of a three year contract from July 2023 to the end of June 2024 at a cost of £28,000;
- (iii) That the Employment and Skills Commissioned service be approved for the second year of a three year contract from April 2023 to the end of March 2024 at a cost of £34,000; and
- (iii) that the Chair inform the Area Council Manager of details of the potential funding initiative for improvements to the Ings Lane and wider area and the Area Council Manager be requested to investigate this matter further.

The meeting received the notes from the Dearne South Ward Alliance held on 7th March, 2023.

It was noted that the Dearne North Ward Alliance meeting had been cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances.

It was suggested that in future, and in common with other Area Council meetings, Members provide a verbal update to the Area Council of the main issues discussed at Ward Alliance meetings they have attended.

RESOLVED that notes from the Dearne South Ward Alliance be received.

9 Report on the Use of Ward Alliance Funds (Dac.22.05.2023/9)

The Area Council Manager submitted a report on the spend to date from the Ward Alliance Funds within the Dearne North and South Area.

It was noted that with the Dearne North Ward there was a balance of £2,282.17 to carry forward over for 2023/24 and within Dearne South, £6,031.04 remaining to carry over to 2023/24 and a detailed breakdown of expenditure was provided as an appendix to the report. The Area Council Manager also reported that this meant the starting balances for the current financial year 2023/24 was £12,282.17 for Dearne North and £16,031.04 for Dearne South.

Laura Hammerton, the Area Council Link Officer, referred to the work of Family Hubs that would be helping to support and establish various groups and to the possibility that such groups might want to seek financial support from the Ward Alliances and other funding agencies. It was noted that such groups would have to be properly constituted. The Area Council Manager stated that support could be offered both in the form of signposting to funding streams and in developing applications for funding from Ward Alliances and also in terms of appropriate training opportunities.

RESOLVED that the Ward Alliance Fund Report, inclusive of spend to date for the Deane North and South Wards together with the funding available for the 2023/24 financial year be noted.

Chair