

MEETING:	Dearne Area Council
DATE:	Monday 5 December 2022
TIME:	2.00 pm
VENUE:	Meeting Room, Goldthorpe Library

MINUTES

Present Councillors Coates (Chair), Bellamy, Bowler and Danforth

10 Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

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

11 Minutes of the Previous Meeting of Dearne Area Council held on 11th July, 2022 (Dac.05.12.2022/2)

The Area Council received the minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 July 2022.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Dearne Area Council meeting held on the 11 July 2022 be approved as a true and correct record.

12 B:Friend Update

Jenny Pitman (Project Leader – B:Friend) delivered an update, accompanied by Colette Bunker (CEO – B:Friend).

It was celebrated that the group had received The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, presented in December 2022 in Thurnscoe.

Members noted that the local clubs in Thurnscoe and Bolton upon Dearne were thriving and that one Thurnscoe club had begun to attract a cohort of male participants, notable as typical participants were female. During Member discussion it was suggested that engagement with long-established male friendship groups could prove a useful mechanism to establishing a more representative gender split in the groups.

The Project Leader advised that a notable number of one-to-one befriending pairings had been established for a period of over one year.

It was noted that volunteer recruitment was a challenge and that volunteer social events were planned to combat this.

The Cost-of-Living Crisis was discussed at length and whether this was evident in the organisation's work. It was advised that there had been no impact on group footfall and that the suggested donation of £2 was continuing to be received. During Member discussion, it was suggested this financial contribution could be a barrier to attendance and that subsidisation could be explored as an option if required. Participants were being monitored to see if they were utilising the venues for warmth

and were being offered left over refreshments at the conclusion of sessions. It was scheduled for the Council Warm Homes Team to visit groups in January 2023.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

13 Young People Update

Jade Beever (Early Intervention and Prevention Worker) delivered an update.

It was advised that the Junior, Senior and Additional Needs groups were all well-attended. The service was working on several projects, as follows:

- A project partnered with the University of Sheffield, which captured stories from young people in the Dearne area, focused on culture, likes and dislikes and looked to the future.
- A project centred around The Heart of the Wood by Martin Riley, a story that focused on children and pit communities. This project was planned to run for a full year and would incorporate the creative arts, namely, acting, choir singing, set design and film production. The final performance was scheduled to take place in late 2023 at The Dearne Playhouse and options were being explored to subsidise tickets and book sales.
- A project partnered with Project 14 that would deliver artwork for the exterior of Dearne Youth Centre and a mural inside.

During Member discussion, a question was raised as to whether the service offered intervention for Anti-Social Behaviour. It was advised that high-level ASB was dealt with through a multi-agency approach headed by the Police and that a low-level ASB provision could be delivered by the team, although part-time contracts were stated as difficult to be recruited to at that time, hence capacity was low.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

14 Quarter 1 Performance Report (Dac.05.12.2022/5)

Members received the report, noting its content.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

15 Quarter 2 Performance Report (Dac.05.12.2022/6)

Members received the report, noting its content.

During Member discussion, it was highlighted in particular that the service provided by DIAL was value for money and that the support provided to benefits claimants was substantial. A concern was raised that any significant overlap between the support provided by DIAL and CAB should be addressed.

For both quarter 1 and quarter 2 it was acknowledged that despite the offer of face-to-face support being minimal, both DIAL and CAB had significantly higher figures that previously recorded. It was speculated this was achieved through telephone consultations and acknowledgment there was even further potential for growth as face-to-face appointments had at that time returned. The importance of this in-person

support was agreed by Members, particularly for those residents who would struggle to complete paperwork unassisted.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

16 Welfare Reform Review (Dac.05.12.2022/7)

Members received the report, noting its content.

The Area Council Manager advised that the Healthier Communities Service funded a Barnsley town-centre based core welfare provision, offering information, advice, and guidance. Members were signposted to section 3.4 of the report which requested a review of Area Council arrangements for the commissioning and procurement of welfare services to determine whether there was any efficiency which could be derived from a more coordinated approach.

As part of Member discussion, it was considered that management costs could be reduced, and joint tenders may be more encouraged if partnership commissioning took place between Area Councils. Concerns over duplication of statistics being reported from central data and localised area data were also raised. It was however also acknowledged that there had been a significant take up of welfare services in the Dearne area in 2020-21 and 2021-22.

It was suggested that the Area Council commissioned a year-long service from CAB from January 2023 onwards, in line with the contract with DIAL that was forecast to run until the end of 2023. CAB had confirmed they could report statistics for the current period where a service wasn't being commissioned, as a means of comparative data.

RESOLVED:-

- i) That the report be noted; and
- ii) That members agreed to continue to commission a welfare provision service for the Dearne Area on an independent cycle, based on local need through the Dearne Development Fund.

17 Dearne Area Council Update on Commissions (Dac.05.12.2022/8)

Members received the report, noting its content.

As part of in-depth discussion, Members focused on section 3.5 of the report, the environmental service being delivered by Twiggs Ground Maintenance. A variation in contract was discussed and cost implications of this considered. It was theorised that a slight reduction in service or a variation with respect to the individual delivering certain services from the contract may eradicate any additional costs. It was proposed that a meeting be scheduled for January 2023 between Members and the contract provider with the aim of starting the schedule of works in February 2023.

A 7-year partnership between Dearne Area Council and Twiggs Ground Maintenance was acknowledged with Members endorsing that this partnership was to continue.

RESOLVED:-

- i) That the report be noted; and
- ii) That members agreed to a contract extension for one year to the end of March 2024 at a cost of £90,000 with the current provider Twiggs Grounds Maintenance rather than undertaking a full procurement exercise at this time.

18 Financial Update (Dac.05.12.2022/9)

Members received the report, noting its content.

It was reiterated to Members that the annual Dearne Area Council budget was £200,000. With this information in mind, Members discussed the need to balance underspend so the funds could be utilised at end of current contracts, some of which were forecast to end in 2024.

The Chair of the Area Council suggested to ringfence funds for working with young people, as previously discussed. It was suggested these monies could be accounted for through the Dearne Development Fund.

RESOLVED that Members noted the current financial position and the impact on future budgets.

19 Notes from the Dearne Ward Alliances (Dac.05.12.2022/10)

The Area Council received the notes from the Dearne South Ward Alliance meetings held on 02 August 2022 and 04 October 2022.

The Area Council received the notes from the Dearne North Ward Alliance meetings held on 09 August 2022 and 11 October 2022.

RESOLVED that the notes from the Dearne South and Dearne North Ward Alliances be received.

20 Report on the Use of Ward Alliance Funds (Dac.05.12.2022/11)

RESOLVED that Members noted the Dearne North and Dearne South Ward Alliance Fund Report, inclusive of spend to date for the Dearne North and Dearne South Wards.

Chair