

MEETING:	North Area Council
DATE:	Monday 14 November 2022
TIME:	2.00 pm
VENUE:	Meeting Room 11, Barnsley Town Hall

MINUTES

Present Councillors Leech (Chair), T. Cave, Crisp, Denton, Hunt, Lofts, Newing, Platts and Tattersall

23 Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

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

24 Minutes of the North Area Council meeting held on 12 September 2022 (Nac.14.11.2022/2)

The Area Council received the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 September 2022.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the North Area Council meeting held on the 12 September be approved as a true and correct record.

25 Housing and Cohesion - Bradley Beatson (Nac.14.11.2022/3)

Bradley Beatson, Housing and Cohesion Officer; announced he had been selected as the successful candidate for the role of Housing and Environment Officer, departing the Housing and Cohesion position in December 2022. Assurance was given that open cases would be completed or carried over into the new role. An overlap (subject to successful recruitment) was forecast which would provide an opportunity for handover.

Members gave thanks for the support Bradley had provided to the Area Council with the Chair expressing thanks on behalf of the entire North Area membership.

26 Future Commissioning - Cost of Living Workshop Feedback (Nac.14.11.2022/4)

The Area Manager provided an update on the two workshops which were held at Barnsley Town Hall, particularly on the positive situation to have the room full of partners on a scale echoing that pre the Covid-19 pandemic. It was acknowledged that it was however disappointing that this conversation was on the Cost-of-Living crisis. Key discussion points at the workshops included, but weren't limited to:

- One-to-one casework
- Working with children and families
- Celebrating existing assets
- Partnership working, including DIAL, Romero, and CAB
- Social welfare support
- Voluntary sector
- Healthy Holidays

- Health & wellbeing work

At the workshops there was an ask to look at gaps in provision and how to address these. It was stated it was clear that opportunities to bring people together for group working was highly prized and that there was a desire for partnership working with schools and local libraries. Suggestions at the workshops included:

- Money saving hacks.
- An exercise to get people into a problem-solving frame of mind.
- Community champions and partnership working.
- Maximising existing services and buildings, with low cost/no cost suggestions.
- Community connector role, being a peer-led role on 18-month contracts delivering in the communities in which they live.
- An empowering and signposting role looking at helping people with food and fuel poverty.
- Working with young people with provision such a Healthy Holidays, Sunday breakfast clubs, free school meals, hygiene poverty and period poverty.
- Reinstatement of the Mi Card.
- A community bus, with acknowledgment ASDA were collaborating with Yorkshire Rose buses to get shoppers to their store.

The Area Manager looked to Members for their experience on how the cost-of-living workstream should progress.

Members praised the effectiveness of the workshops and their usefulness for information sharing and identifying problems and gaps. Presentations given from various groups were noted as powerful with a desire to take the energy from the room and conversation and turning it into something meaningful. The number of providers and partners in attendance was noted as striking. Opinion was stated that engagement work with those hard-to-reach that have an obvious need was essential. It was additionally acknowledged that it was clear that the Council was doing a lot already to help people with the cost-of-living crisis.

A consensus was reached that a further meeting should be held with members to progress the ideas presented at the workshops further. The Area Manager would strive to deliver solutions that made best use of existing resources with consideration for budget constraints. The focus would be on giving residents a hand up rather than a handout.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the detail extracted from stakeholder discussions at the two workshops held on the 6th and 13th October 2022 be noted;
- (ii) that Members agreed to hold a further workshop to develop the North Area response.

27 Environmental Workshop - Future Direction (Nac.14.11.2022/5)

The Area Manager advised that a 1.5-hour workshop had taken place on 8 November 2022 to look at the environment priority and explore the frustrations around the existing service delivering against the priority. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges had been discussed and it was acknowledged that the

process was currently viewed as quite clunky and overly bureaucratic. The outcome of this workshop was a recommendation to move away from the existing offer to a schedule of works defined by each ward. One of the recommendations to Members delivered in the report was to explore the aims and objectives of the service the North Area Council wished to deliver and a direction of travel to be agreed. The 2-year contract signed with the current provider was coming to an end with the opportunity to extend for a third year or the deadline to give notice being late 2022.

During Member discussion it was communicated that there was a clear consensus on the way forward, moving away from a volunteer-dependent approach to a schedule of works. It was suggested this could be an extension to the work of Neighbourhood Services or a new model with an external provider, focussing on: public spaces and parks, clearing pathways, fly tipping and problem litter areas. It was suggested a list of jobs be drawn up to ensure even distribution of level of delivery between wards, given funding was limited. It was stated any future contract should be weighted towards this schedule of works, rather than being too reactive to day-to-day asks from the public or volunteers. The option to request a variation in contract with the current provider was also made as a suggestion to Members.

Members commented on the importance of continuing to support volunteers, with a distinction made that work would be directed by the Ward Alliances rather than being requested by individual residents. The model will enable residents to participate where there is a desire to do so. Enabling and engaging communities was deemed a priority to enable residents to love where they live. Consideration was given to the potential loss of educational opportunities with an opinion stated that the current provider worked very well with schools, however a counterargument was made that this work had been inconsistent. It was acknowledged that educational opportunities would be a challenge to incorporate in the contract of any future provider.

The Area Manager was advised in advance of a scheduled meeting that the current provider was also dissatisfied with the current process for managing service requests. It was communicated that the Steering Group was hindering some of the community work associated with the current contract and additionally that current delivery left them running at a deficit. Concerns were raised by members that there had been a breach of confidentiality. Clarity was given that discussions at Steering Group are required to be presented to North Area Council for a decision, and that the agenda and reports were published ahead of the meeting at which point the information entered the public domain. Members of the public were also entitled to attend North Area Council.

In informing a steer on how to implement discussions from the workshop, Members suggested a scheduled-led specification be developed in order to be put to tender, with an ask that volunteers could work with the provider and encouraged to do so. A proposed split was 80% schedule-based to 20% community participation. It was agreed to draw up a tender of works by the end of November 2022. In the meantime the tasks allocated to the current provider will be determined at the Steering Group.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the current position, section 4 be noted;
- (ii) that the opportunity to reflect on the discussion that took place at the workshop 8th November 2022 be acknowledged;

- (iii) that contract with Twiggs Grounds Maintenance be ended at the end of term, 31st March 2023. Reference Section 6.
- (iv) that a task-based schedule of works service and offer the opportunity for tender. Section 5.3 be pursued;
- (v) that Members work towards a “wish list” for this schedule of works in cooperation with the Area Manager by the end of November 2022.

28 Performance Report Q2 2022/23 (Nac.14.11.2022/6)

The report gave an overview of commissioned services and grant providers with particularly good feedback having been received. There had been a significant amount of additional benefit gain from the work under anti-poverty and work was being undertaken on how to maximise delivery from CAB and DIAL colleagues. The Reds in the Community project had started slowly, and this was due to delays with a DBS check for a member of staff, with a relaunch being looked at to deliver until April 2024.

Members commented on the gap in provision for Economic Regeneration. Previous experience was reflected upon that small businesses had not taken up the offer of support due to them tapping into existing provision. A previous focus on developing small businesses hadn't been fruitful, with many being content to remain a small business. It was suggested that work in Economic Regeneration had been vast in the past and was taken out of the hands of ward alliances and the area council as it could not be delivered effectively at this level.

The Area Manager fed back that it had been quite some time since the priorities for North area were reviewed. Economic Regeneration was an area of work that the work of North Area Council struggled to have an impact given core Council services were already delivering this provision. Work was however ongoing despite a lack of any funding allocation, maximising resources, and working with partners. Pop-up sessions facilitated opportunities for training and development whilst residents were waiting for other provision.

Members commented that the first annual report of area councils and ward alliances had been to cabinet. An ask was for the report to be disseminated to area councils and ward alliances as it gave very good examples of work being undertaken around the borough. The Area Manager agreed to determine how far the report had been shared.

RESOLVED that members noted the contents of the Performance Management Report.

29 Commissioning, Project Development and Finance (Nac.14.11.2022/7)

The report was received by Members.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the existing budget position and existing funding commitments be noted;

- (ii) that update regarding the Clean and Green Steering Group and the process for requesting work be noted with the next Steering Group to take place on 15 November 2022;
- (iii) that recruitment be undertaken for the Housing and Cohesion Officer post that was to become vacant;
- (iv) that the updated projected spend at appendix 1 be noted.

30 Report on the use of Ward Alliance Funds (Nac.14.11.2022/8)

The report on Ward Alliance Funds was received. Ward Alliances were encouraged to work with Community Development Officers and volunteers to make plans for the use of remaining funds.

RESOLVED that each Ward in the North Area Council prioritises the efficient expenditure of the Ward Alliance Funds 2022/23, in line with the guidance on spend.

31 Notes from the Ward Alliances (Nac.14.11.2022/9)

The meeting received the notes from the Darton East Ward Alliance held on 13 September and 11 October 2022; Darton West Ward Alliance held on 20 September and 18 October 2022; Old Town Ward Alliance held on 13 September and 11 October 2022; and St Helen's Ward Alliance held on 8 September 2022.

Councillor Hunt provided an update regarding the work in Darton East. Mapplewell Park was subjected to ASB during the month of October, with wheelie bins set on fire. A recommendation was received from Safer Neighbourhoods to install CCTV and a £900 budget was identified to cover this. It was hoped the CCTV installation would help deter ASB and also identify suspects. A Health Event had taken place and was very successful. The first ever Darton East Making a Difference Awards took place, recognising volunteering and community groups, with thanks given to the Mayor for her attendance.

Councillor T. Cave provided an update regarding the work in Darton West. The Ward Alliance had managed to spend its budget well on appropriate projects. Remembrance decorations in Darton Village were particularly impressive thanks to the hard work of volunteers. Initiatives were taking place in the ward around community development. Work was being undertaken to get a Christmas tree for Kexbrough working with the Community Centre and also at Wood View, Gawber working with local schools. A third tree was to be located at Wilthorpe & Redbrook Community Centre. Councillor Cave commented that the community spirit lost for some time during the Covid-19 pandemic was slowly being built back.

Councillor Newing provided an update regarding the work in Old Town. There was an issue with hanging baskets with the firm procured unable to complete the works. Works were rescheduled to 2023, which Councillor Newing acknowledged could have been disappointing for those who had paid for plaques. The Ward Alliance budget was being spent on projects such as a Halloween event, bulbs for planting and six Christmas trees. Events were being planned to celebrate the festive period around the trees.

Councillor Platts provided an update regarding the work in St Helen's. The Ward Alliance budget was being spent well. Three Christmas trees were purchased – it was noted that one memorial tree at the chapel, being a blue spruce that cannot be relocated, therefore a tree for St Helen's Church was being considered for Christmas 2023. On Sunday 4th December 2022 a Santa Sleigh was to travel around the ward with a New Lodge event to coincide. A Cost-of-Living Event was to take place on 22nd November 2022 at Laithes Primary School. A memorial bench had been fitted in the ward, with the unveiling event and confirmation of armed forces participation to be determined.

RESOLVED that the notes and feedback from the respective Ward Alliances be noted.

Chair