

MEETING:	South Area Council
DATE:	Friday 17 February 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, Sumner and White

22 **Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**

Councillor Higginbottom declared a non-pecuniary interest in minute number 28 he is employed by Age UK and minute number 27 as the SLA mentioned in the report comes under his Cabinet Portfolio.

Councillor Frost declared a non pecuniary interest in minute number 28 as a Treasurer of Age UK.

Councillor Markham declared a non-pecuniary interest in minute number 28 due to holding a position on the Age UK Board.

Councillor Osborne declared a non-pecuniary interest in any item on the agenda insofar as discussion related to Berneslai Homes Board as he serves on the Board.

23 **Minutes of the Meeting of South Area Council held on 16 December 2022 (Sac.17.02.2023/2)**

The meeting considered the minutes of the South Area Council held on 16 December, 2022.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the South Area Council held on 16 December 2022 be approved as a true and correct record.

24 **Notes of the Ward Alliances (Sac.17.02.2023/3)**

The meeting received the noted from the following Ward Alliances:- Hoyland Milton and Rockingham held on 23 November 2023, Darfield held on 19 January, 2023 and Wombwell held on 16 January 2023.

RESOLVED that the noted from the Ward Alliances be received.

25 **Bernesali Homes - Cost of living and resident support - Tracey Powers, Tenant First Service Manager (Sac.17.02.2023/4)**

Tracey Powers, Tenant First Service Manager and Sharon Laister were welcomed to the meeting.

Members were provided with an overview of the work being undertaken by the Tenants First Service. A leaflet was handed to members, which was also being handed out to tenants, containing comprehensive details of the work covered by 5 specialist area teams which included:

- Family Intervention
- Financial Tenancy Support
- Housing Coaches
- Employment and Training Support
- Mental Health Housing Support

Members were informed that the Financial Tenancy Support Team had seen a significant increase in demand due to the cost of living crisis. Support for those experiencing severe financial hardship was provided through the Berneslai Homes Hardship Fund and Housing Support Grants. Letters of support had been sent out to around 1050 tenants who were already in rent arrears, to inform them of the help available in advance of the impending rent increase. Additional grant funding had been secured from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Poverty vs Neglect, which had aided in providing tenants with hygiene packs, white goods, Hoover and cleaning materials.

It was reported that there were 6 Tenant Support Officers that were champions in different areas in order to provide specialised support, including, Universal Credit, Energy, Yorkshire Water, Food and Clothing and Cost of Living Champions. A dedicated Citizen's Advice Bureau Adviser was also on hand to help with debt advice. The Champions were able to help with an array of issues including energy vouchers, grants to have arrears written off, lower bills for water and help to cover parts of the rent due to bedroom tax.

Members queried as to whether there was a Pension Credit Champion to encourage older people to claim as a number of tenants would be eligible and not aware they could claim it, which in turn would open up a number of other benefits. It was noted that there was not a specific Pensions Credit Champion as those roles were around information providing and not targeting specific tenants. However, members were informed that this was something that would be taken away and looked into.

Queries were raised around tenants who were using pre-payment metres and not cashing in vouchers which were expiring. In response members were informed that the Service were aware of this issue and work was being undertaken to provide some communication to support tenants around this issue.

Members were interested to hear the demographics for the South Area of the types of problems the Team encountered, what types of families or ages presented the most with specific issues and whether these were more prevalent in certain areas than others. Members were informed that there was no specific area data but that across the board single people with universal credit were the worst off as they did not have enough money to live off. It was also highlighted that single men who only saw their children on weekends were often in need as they had to deal with bedroom tax.

It was recognised that tenants of a pensionable age were the ones that would be least likely to come forward for help and assistance as opposed to those on benefits who would be the ones most likely to come forward.

Members raised concerns around the sending out of letters and leaflets and the possibility of these being ignored as opposed to going out and knocking on doors and speaking to people. In response members were informed that the leaflets had been distributed across the Borough through a number of agencies and events and also to the wider Berneslai Homes staff, in order to be proactive in handing out leaflets when visiting properties for repairs or for other business. Referrals were received from a variety of sources including Social Services, Housing Management Officers and the Benefits and Taxation Team.

Concerns were raised that the leaflets had not been seen at Community Groups within the South Area, feedback would be provided in order to rectify this issue.

RESOLVED that Tracey Powers and Sharon Laister from the Tenancy First Team be thanked for their presentation and continued hard work of all those involved in providing the service.

26 Smoking Cessation Service Update - Dayna Towns, South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (Sac.17.02.2023/5)

Dayna Towns, Community Stop Smoking Adviser (South), provided an update in relation to Yorkshire Smokefree Barnsley.

Members were informed that Dayna had been in post since August, 2021 whose main role was to promote and develop Yorkshire Smokefree Barnsley across the South Area. The role allowed for Dayna to work closely with community groups, and promote general health and wellbeing to members of the community and signpost them to relevant services.

Members noted the Key Performance Indicators and that the annual target may not be met for registrations into the service, although it was noted that some figures for the end of January were yet to be included within the forecast. However, the number of quits at 4 weeks and at 12 weeks had exceeded their targets. This information had highlighted the need for more support with referrals as once people were in the system it was a success.

Members heard of the variety of work being carried out in the South Area in order to promote the service including, face to face clinics, attending Winter Warmth and Cost of Living events. Sending promotional posters and leaflets to GP surgeries and pharmacies as well as online media posts. Training had been carried out with a number of community services in how to make referrals into the service and support was provided to Stop Smoking Advisers within GP practices in order to keep them up to date with changes in best practice.

Members were informed that targeted work to gain access to workplaces in order to set up health and wellbeing programmes remained a barrier. Members were asked if they could provide any links into these workplaces in order to help set these up.

New resources would be made available on social media platforms to promote clinics. Plans were also in place to create content around advisers by making them more personable by including pictures of who the adviser is in the clinic and what an appointment would entail. Alternative posters would be designed to be based in dental surgeries, children's centres and veterinary practices. Client stories would be shared on the South Area Council social media platform on a monthly basis.

Looking forward, future development that would be taking place would include attending more events and linking in with services such as Age UK. Training would be provided to Community Development Officers, Private Housing Officers and Family Centre Workers in how to make referrals into the system. Plus a variety of other events in the South Area.

Councillors queried as to whether it would be advantageous to promote the fact that 90% of the South Area do not smoke and whether to aim the campaign towards the younger generation. In response it was acknowledged that this would be taken on board and included in future promotional material.

It was recognised that there was a desire and a need to push for advisers to return to schools in order to aid pupils in stopping smoking. In response members were informed there were no immediate plans to liaise with schools but this would be looked into in the future.

Members raised concerns around people turning to vaping after smoking and the dangers therein. In response they were informed that guidelines stated that vaping was 95% safer than smoking but that it was clients choice whether to use one to aid stopping smoking tobacco and was not an option promoted as part of the Service.

It was reported that further work, separate to the Stopping Smoking Service, was being undertaken to tackle vaping, particularly in the younger generation. A funded incentive scheme had been set up in collaboration with Barnsley College to help stop vaping and there were plans to lobby and work with the Government and Regional Public Health Teams in order to achieve this.

Members were informed that 17% of the Barnsley population smoked and with the increased cost, it was a significant contribution to poverty. There was a fear that due to this people would turn to illicit tobacco that would be even more harmful to people's health. Smoking was the leading cause of preventable deaths which could be reduced if more people were referred into the programme.

Members enquired as to the range of reasons why people smoked and wished to quit. It was reported that reasons for quitting varied from affordability to health but, it was highlighted that smoking was an addiction and as difficult to give up as crack cocaine. There were plans to rename the service from the Stopping Smoking Service to the Tobacco Treatment Service to reflect the fact that it is an addiction that needs treating.

Routine and manual male workers were one of the highest demographic of smokers, as well as health workers. Work was being undertaken to tackle this with the health service and there were hopes of getting into more work places.

Members noted that the numbers of young people smoking had reduced significantly but there was no data to show whether they had moved onto vaping instead, as smoking was no longer socially acceptable.

Members suggested that following the success of the Smokefree zones in Hoyland Town Centre, Elsecar Park and Wombwell High Street that this be expanded to a Smokefree South Area. It was hoped word of mouth would give this plan momentum.

RESOLVED that the Chair and members thank Dayna for the presentation and continuous hard work being undertaken.

27 Procurement and Financial Update (Sac.17.02.2023/8)

The Area Council Manager introduced the item and referred members to the South Area Tidy Team Service which was due to end 31st March 2023. Members were informed that work was ongoing with various BMBC departments to facilitate the conclusion of the contract with Twiggs Grounds Maintenance.

Members attention was then brought to the District Enforcement Limited – Environment Enforcement contract, of which the South Area Council had bought in additional resources which would cease on the 31 March 2023.

A number of issues were highlighted following a Members briefing with District Enforcement held on 10 February 2023. A further workshop would be arranged by the South Area Council Manager to provide an update picture of current provision.

Members noted that there was an additional £7,000 revenue from tickets issued which could also be used to purchase more hours or, a suggestion made by a Councillor had been put forward, to purchase litter picking equipment.

The options set out in the report were reiterated to members and in the ensuing discussion the following points were raised:

- Need to look at how to maximise the number of patrol hours. Whether it would be an option to have the enforcement officers based in the LIFT Centre Hoyland in order to reduce travel time.
- A review of current patrol areas and hotspots to take place at a future workshop.
- Whether there was provision for enforcement patrols at school drop off and pick up times, Kirk Balk was highlighted as a particular hotspot.
- Consideration of additional hours for school patrols to be considered at the workshop alongside the £7,000 revenue allocation.
- The thoughts around allocating the £7,000 revenue on litter picking packs was to encourage future environmentalists and volunteers in the area.
- Members queried whether the contract was having the significant educational impact it had hoped to promote and whether it was changing behaviours of residents around parking.
- Members requested that 'drive offs' received follow up letters to their home addresses educating them on safe parking.

- Any enforcement around schools would be around being visible and educating parents as a mechanism to modify behaviours.
- A more in depth contract breakdown of performance in each area was requested in order to make a comparison of the services being delivered Borough wide.

After a full and frank discussion, members were minded to approve option B and it was proposed to continue the contract for 3 months subject to an ongoing review of the service and to address the issues raised. The decision around the £7,000 spend would also be reviewed during this time, but it was noted that there was a preference put forward to ring fence this money to provide capacity to support schools to reduce parking issues.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the update and current position on the South Area Tidy Team Service and new service in development be noted;
- (ii) that the proposal for the South Area Council Manager to hold a Members workshop to develop an agreed scheduled work plan from the 1 April 2023 and to discuss any unallocated Area Council funding with a view to developing future proposals be agreed;
- (iii) that the information provided on the District Enforcement Ltd additional hours, which ends on 31 March 2023 be noted;
- (iv) that Option B, to extend the purchase of additional hours with District Enforcement Ltd for a period of 3 months from 1 April 2023 to the end of June 2023, at a cost of £6,000 plus £438 for the Service Level Agreement with Barnsley MBC, be agreed;
- (v) that the District Enforcement estimated revenue of £7,000 be noted and that members review the spend allocation alongside the Additional Hours contract review.

28 Performance Report Q3 (Sac.17.02.2023/6)

The Area Council Manager presented members with the Q3 Performance report containing an update of each of the contracted services.

It was highlighted that 529 people had received access to local information and advice through Citizen's Advice Bureau, Age UK and the Housing Enforcement Officer during Quarter 3 which was positive as the contracts had been in place for a number of years and were still in demand.

The Tidy Team contract would end on 31 March 2023. The South Area Council Manager was working with a number of internal officers to facilitate the end of the Tidy Team Contract and launch of the new arrangements.

Members were clear that the new arrangements needed to have a clear and transparent performance review and targets in place. In response members were informed that the Area Council Manager had met with Officers to look at the SLA.

The Age UK service had seen a number of referrals from external agencies such as GP's, social prescribing and the South Area Council Private Sector Housing Officer. There had also been an increase to self and family referrals of relatives, some of which had turned into complex cases.

The engagement of men within the service had always proved difficult but there had been success in securing the Wombwell Scout Hut for the Men's Club. It was noted that there was a desire to do something similar in each ward whilst not duplicating already established clubs.

During the period 16 new clients had been seen along with 8 known clients with the vast majority of work being benefit related enquiries. Benefit gains within the quarter were £10,317.

Members raised concerns that promotional materials from Age UK did not include details that the service was funded from the South Area Council. It was requested that the Area Council Manager remind Age UK that this must be included in all promotional materials going forward in order to publicise what the Area Council is doing for the Area.

Members were provided with a brief overview of the work being carried out by the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Officer. It was highlighted that due to the large range of issues affecting private tenants, the Housing Enforcement Officer had completed a number of training courses in order to have a wider understanding of what is available to residents.

Members queried the difference in numbers of visits in each area and why Wombwell was considerably larger. In response it was acknowledged that Wombwell had a higher number of private landlord owned properties. Members requested whether it was possible to have a breakdown of the numbers of private rented houses in each ward in order to make better comparisons of the numbers of interventions made.

Following previous concerns of CAB having enough capacity and ability to support the number of clients due to the amount of demand coming through the service, it was noted that the Welfare Rights contract currently has 73% of clients self-serving or partial self-serving by going online to fill in paperwork and carry out research. Members noted that within the quarter the service had managed £67,064 of debt and £137,097 of benefits gains.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the Area Council Manager be requested to contact Age UK to remind them that it is a requirement to advertise on their promotional material that the Service is funded by the South Area Council;
- (ii) that the report be noted.

29 Report on the Use of Ward Alliance Funds (Sac.17.02.2023/7)

The Area Council Manager introduced the item, noting that this would be the last report before the financial year end. Members noted that 42 projects had been

supported or delivered through the Ward Alliances with a further 8 in development by the end of March 2023.

An update on finance remaining was provided. Following potential approval for future projects Hoyland Milton and Rockingham had around £1321 remaining and Darfield would have £414 remaining and Wombwell would have used all their budget if the money is used on the proposed defibrillators project and hanging baskets.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Chair