

MEETING:	North East Area Council
DATE:	Thursday 26 January 2023
TIME:	2.00 pm
VENUE:	Meeting Room 1 - Barnsley Town Hall

MINUTES

Present Councillors Hayward (Chair), Cherryholme, Ennis OBE, Green, Peace, Richardson and Webster

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

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

35 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting of North East Area Council held on 24th November, 2022 (Neac.26.1.2023/2)**

The meeting considered the minutes from the previous meeting of the North East Area Council held on 24 November 2022.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the North East Area Council held on 24 November 2022 be approved as a true and correct record.

36 **Private Sector Housing Officer Update - Gail Hancock**

Gail Hancock, Senior Private Sector Housing Management Officer was welcomed to the meeting to provide Members with an overview of how damp and mould issues were being addressed by the Council in private rented homes.

Members heard that issues of damp and mould in social and private rented housing had had been immensely publicised in the media throughout 2022.

Following this media coverage, the Council expected there to be an influx of complaints received. However, there had only been a small increase in the number of complaints received around damp and mould issues in private rented housing.

Members received assurances that all reports of damp and mould were fully investigated. The Team made appointments to visit a property to look at potential causes and also to check the fabric of a property, for example, damaged brickwork and mortar, poor fitting windows/doors, roof damage, poor ventilation or lack of central heating.

Members heard that government guidance states 'in order to abate damp and mould issues, it was important to adequately ventilate and heat a property'. Due to the current cost-of-living crisis, tenants were worrying about heating and ventilating their properties.

Where the tenant was deemed to be contributing towards the presence of damp or mould, then advice would be provided. Where the responsibility lies with the

Landlord, around the fabric of the property, the Council would issue a Housing Act Notice, and this prevented the landlord from issuing a (Section 8) or section 21 (accelerated) possession proceedings. Where a notice has been served on the landlord – failure to comply could lead to court action, if no action had been taken to address problems with the fabric of a property.

In the ensuing discussions it was noted that:

- Vulnerable people living in private rented housing may be scared to complain about their property due to possible reprisals. In response, it was noted that the Private Sector Housing Team and Area Council staff had reviewed all reports received from private rentals in the last 2 years where issues of damp and mould and the fabric of a property had been previously reported for reinspection.
- The Team were currently revisiting these properties and others where there was a likelihood that it may be an issue relating to damp and mould. The Team would issue a Section 239 Housing Act Notice to the Landlord giving them notice that a property would be inspected. An advisory letter would also be issued to the Landlord and contact made with the tenant to ascertain if work had been undertaken by the Landlord. Where appropriate enforcement action would also be undertaken either via civil penalties or Court action.
- Where there was evidence of a high risk and vulnerable tenant living in a cold, un-heated property. The council assess all properties using the HHSRS guidance (a risk-based assessment). When necessary, the Council will serve an emergency remedial action notice using the Housing Act or issue a Building Act Order where the boiler is not working to address the cold issues. The Building Act could be used for action to be taken in 9 days. Failing that the Council can / will intervene.
- Referrals are made to the Warm Homes Team for them to provide help and advice to tenants around keeping safe and warm in their homes.
- In relation to Housing Associations in the Barnsley area, it was noted that the Housing Associations set their budgets a year in advance where they look to see what improvements can be made to a property. Complaints were often received around electric heating installed in their properties. When necessary, the Council could serve a Notice on a Housing Association. All private rented properties including Housing Association properties are required to have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) prior to renting out a property.
- It was confirmed that 6 Area Council staff and a team of private enforcement staff were available to deal with complaints.
- Members expressed their thanks to Chris Platts, Private Sector Housing Management Officer for the valuable work he has done, and continues to do, in the community.

The Chair thanked Gail Hancock for attending today's meeting and for answering Members questions.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

37 Procurement and Financial Update (Neac.26.1.2023/4)

Lisa Phelan, Area Council Manager, submitted a report providing Members with an up-to-date overview of the Area Council's current priorities. It provided an overview of all current contracts, contract extensions, Service Level Agreements and Grant Funded Projects together with the associated timescales.

It outlined the financial position to date for 2022-23 and gave details of the projected expenditure, including future proposals to 2023-2024 as outlined in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report.

Members were informed that the Youth Development Fund Panel had agreed the guidance and commissioning documents for Youth Development Fund – Detached Youth Work. The fund was now open for applications and would close on 31 January 2023.

The Panel would then consider all applications and moderation would take place at a Funding Panel meeting scheduled for 14 February 2023. A further update would be presented at the Area Council meeting on 23 March 2023.

Members were informed that a small grants fund would become available for the financial year 2023/24. Documentation to support the grants fund had now been updated.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the current priorities and overview of all current contracts, contract extensions, Service Level Agreements and Grant fund projects, together with the associated timescales, be noted.
- ii) That the financial position to date for 2022-23 and the projected expenditure, including future proposals to 2023-24 as outlined in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report be noted.

38 Notes of the Following Ward Alliances with Feedback from each Ward Alliance Chair (Neac.26.1.2023/5)

The meeting received notes from the Monk Bretton and Royston Ward Alliances held throughout December 2022. The following updates were noted:-

Cudworth – Members were reminded that a storage container located in Pocket Park had been broken into last year causing significant damage to the gazebos stored in the container. With a full summer programme scheduled for 2023, Councillor Hayward stated that it would be important to purchase new gazebos.

It was suggested that other Ward Alliances may wish to contribute towards the purchase of new gazebos for future use at events in their Wards.

On behalf of the North East Ward Alliance, Councillor Peace stated that the Ward Alliance would be interested in making a contribution.

In relation to the summer events programme, Senior Officers were being asked to complete a schedule sheet which would allow the Ward Alliance to consider which events it would support.

Lisa Phelan, informed Members that all Area Teams are considering procurement options for the purchase of hanging baskets (collectively) to meet the requirement for procurement threshold rules from the financial year starting April 2024. A discussion took place around the sponsorship of hanging baskets, noting that the Council's Advertising and Sponsorship Policy guidelines must be adhered to.

Members were informed that Joanne Smith, the new Community Development Officer, would be commencing in post shortly. Joanne would be working part-time at Bow Street, Cudworth. It was suggested that Members could meet with Joanne on 9 February, if she was available.

Monk Bretton – The Christmas events held at St Paul's Church and at Carlton Church had been very well attended.

'More Money in Your Pocket' events had been held today (26 January 2023) at Burton Grange Community Centre and on 25 January 2023 at Monk Bretton WMC.

The Ward Alliance had agreed a programme of activity for the year.

North East – A meeting was scheduled to be held during week commencing 30 January 2023.

Royston – The Christmas tree lights switch on and Christmas Carol Service at St John the Baptist Church, Royston had been well attended.

The Ward Alliance had developed a summer 2023 activity list and were reviewing events which had taken place in 2022 to see where improvements could be made in 2023.

RESOLVED that the notes from the Ward Alliances be received.

39 Report on the Use of Ward Alliance Funds (Neac.26.1.2023/6)

Lisa Phelan, Area Council Manager, submitted a report which outlined the funding that remained for each of the Ward Alliances.

RESOLVED that the report on the use of Ward Alliance Funds be noted.

Chair