

MEETING:	Central Area Council
DATE:	Wednesday 24 May 2023
TIME:	2.00 pm
VENUE:	Council Chamber, Barnsley Town Hall

MINUTES

Present Councillors K. Dyson (Chair), Bowser, Christmas, Clarke, Fielding, Lodge, O'Donoghue, Mitchell, Moyes, Murray, C. Wray and P. Wright

1 Welcome and Appreciation

The Chair welcomed all new Councillors to their first Area Council meeting and placed on record her thanks to former Councillor Kevin Williams for his hard work and dedication as Chair of the Area Council.

2 Declaration of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

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

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting of Central Area Council held on 22 March 2023 (Cen.24.05.2023/2)

The meeting received the minutes from the previous meeting of Central Area Council held on 22 March 2023.

An update was provided in relation to the Central Area Council Manager position, it was noted that whilst Lisa Phelan was undertaking part of the North East Area Council Manager role, Sarah Blunkett had increased hours temporarily to ensure that the hours provided to the Central Area remained the same. It was noted that efforts had been made to recruit to the part-time vacancy, and an advert with associated promotional material would shortly be live.

Members were also updated with relation to hanging baskets. It was noted that a survey of lampposts had been completed and the majority were safe to use, and no issues were foreseen. With regards to their procurement, it was noted that the combined value of all hanging baskets meant that this was above financial thresholds and would therefore necessitate a change to how these were procured. It was noted that a specification for this, which also included procuring Christmas trees, had been developed and it was hoped that this may result in some economies of scale.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Central Area Council held on 22 March 2023 be approved as a true and correct record.

4 Update from Sarah Davey, Community Development Officer (Cen.24.05.2023/3)

Sarah Davey, Community Development Officer, was welcomed to the meeting. She made Members aware that she worked throughout the Central Area, and focused on supporting marginalised and vulnerable groups, including asylum seekers and those with mental health issues.

The Community Listening Exercise highlighted that many residents were feeling anxious and struggling with isolation following the restrictions of the pandemic. Efforts were made to engage residents in a way they felt safe. The Stepping Stones micro-volunteering project worked alongside groups and offered an opportunity for individuals to take part. People could be referred, or could self-refer, with any barriers to taking part reduced. Volunteering would also involve a social element, with coffee and cake.

Sarah went on to speak of 'Coffee, Cake and Confidence' where people not ready to volunteer could meet as part of building their confidence.

A further project 'Coffee, Cake and Community' started in Worsbrough Library on Thursday afternoons as some volunteers wanted to start a project. A wide range of activities had been undertaken as part of this.

Members were provided examples where volunteers had been involved including at the Harborough Hills Allotment Project, Lavender Court, Worsbrough Mill, and Locke Park. It was noted that 22 volunteers had been engaged, with over 775 hours of volunteering at a value of £10,617

The programme was rolling so new people could engage at any time, and a discussion would be held beforehand about what opportunities would be most suitable. It was noted that support was provided alongside the Employability Team, to ensure interested parties were aware of all available opportunities.

Members heard that that opportunities were purposely arranged midweek, and at times to avoid pressure points such as taking children to school, to further reduce any barriers to participation.

It was acknowledged that opportunities were highly flexible and were designed to provide a safe space to build relationships and trust. Support was provided to progress further if people wanted. Many who had engaged had built friendships that continued outside of any volunteering.

Members also heard of the work Sarah had undertaken with groups in the area, assisting them to consider their long-term sustainability and supporting them to put together bids for external finance.

Questions were raised about how the work impacted on those most marginalised, and how they were engaged. Members heard that relationships with agencies such as MIND and Social Prescribing ensured referrals for those who may benefit, but individuals also self-referred after seeing leaflets and newsletters. For some individuals, the impact had been significant, helping them to improve confidence, overcome isolation, and enjoy their life again.

Many Members provided thanks to Sarah for the work undertaken and the impact within their ward.

RESOLVED that thanks be given for the presentation and the hard work within the Central Area.

5 Performance Report Q4 (Cen.24.05.2023/4)

The Area Council Manager introduced the report, making Members aware that feedback from all the contract meetings was extremely positive. The report provided a summary, and Members were encouraged to contact the Area Team if they wished to be provided with more in depth information.

Thanks were provided to Mandie Olofinlua, Stronger Communities Project Officer, who compiled the report with relevant statistics and case studies.

It was noted that the report covered quarter 4 of 2022/23, and some projects would now have ended, but Social Isolation Projects delivered by Rotherham and Barnsley Mind, Age UK Barnsley, and Reds In The Community had been extended for a further year. In addition, new contracts had been granted to YMCA Barnsley for Building Emotional Resilience and Wellbeing in Children and Young People, and to DIAL for their advice drop-in.

Members discussed the annual budget, which had remained at £500,000 since the inception of the Area Council. Noted were the pressures on contractors, with increased costs from such as vehicles, energy, and salaries. Historically the Area Council had underspend, which had rolled over from delayed contract starts, but this had now been utilised. It was acknowledged that Members may have to make difficult decisions in prioritising the use of their finance resources in the near future.

RESOLVED:- that the report be noted.

6 Procurement and Finance Update (Cen.24.05.2023/5)

The Area Council Manager introduced the report, which provided an up-to-date overview of services delivering against priorities.

The attention of Members was drawn to the use of finance to support delivery against the Vulnerable People priority. The first tranche of funding had been allocated, but a suggestion had been made not to allocated tranche two. It was noted that the Area Council Manager was in the process of arranging a workshop to discuss this in more detail. Information related to services provided by Rotherham and Barnsley Mind, Age UK Barnsley and Reds In The Community would be provided to those attending the workshop, alongside other relevant data and information. It was noted that this would take place in June, with an invitation to members being circulated imminently.

Members also noted that a workshop had taken place in March to consider the Clean and Green priority, with a further workshop to be held with Twiggs Grounds Maintenance to discuss priorities in relation to this service.

An additional workshop had been requested to consider the services related to Housing and Flytipping and it was noted that this would be arranged when the new Housing Officer was in post.

RESOLVED:-

- i) That the overview of Central Area Council's current priorities, and overview of current contracts, contract extensions, Service Level Agreements and Well-being Fund projects, with associated timescales be noted;

- ii) That the actual 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;
- iii) That there will be a Supporting Vulnerable People and Social Isolation workshop for Members to explore recent project reviews and research, which will result in options and recommendations to be presented at a future Area Council meeting be noted;
- iv) That a Clean and Green Workshop took place on 16 March and that a further workshop to cover flytipping and housing enforcement will take place in the summer when the new Housing Officer is in place be noted, with a further workshop also taking place with Twiggs Grounds Maintenance in autumn to assess progress.

7 Notes of the Ward Alliances (Cen.24.05.2023/6)

The meeting received the notes of the meetings of the Ward Alliances within the Central Area held on the following dates:-

Central Ward Alliance held on 22 March 2023;
Dodworth Ward Alliance held on 28 February 2023;
Kingstone Ward Alliance held on 19 April 2023;
Stairfoot Ward Alliance held on 13 March and 17 April 2023; and
Worsbrough Ward Alliance held on 22 February 2023 (Environmental Working Group) and 2 March 2023.

Questions were raised around the relationship between the Worsbrough Ward Alliance and its Environmental Working Group, with the latter having delegated authority relating to certain environmental matters and engaging a wider group of volunteers interested in that area.

However, concern was expressed that there may be some duplication of the issues considered. It was suggested that this matter be discussed by the Ward Members and Area Council Manager.

RESOLVED that the notes from the Ward Alliances be received.

8 Report on the Use of Ward Alliance Funds (Cen.24.05.2023/7)

The report on the use of Ward Alliance Funds was received for information.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Chair