

MEETING:	Central Area Council
DATE:	Wednesday 27 September 2023
TIME:	2.00 pm
VENUE:	Reception Room - Barnsley Town Hall

MINUTES

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

15 Declaration of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

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

16 Minutes of the Previous Meeting of Central Area Council held on 19 July 2023 (Cen.27.09.2023/2)

The meeting received the minutes from the previous meeting of Central Area Council held on 19 July 2023.

Members heard that the job share post of Area Council Manager had been offered, subject to references. Members would be updated when a start date had been confirmed.

With regards to outstanding actions, it was noted that a Tenant First Officer from Berneslai Homes, together with the Housing Cohesion Officer for the area, had been invited to the next meeting of the Area Council.

Questions were raised as to whether any response had been received in relation to whether the Ward Alliances were eligible to apply for funding from the community element of Household Support Grant. It was confirmed that they could apply for funding similarly to other community groups and would be assessed on the same basis. It was suggested that it may be better for the Ward Alliance to support bids from community groups in their area.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Central Area Council held on 19 July 2023 be approved as a true and correct record.

17 Cultural Strategy (Cen.27.09.2023/3)

Lianne Holdsworth and Karen Buttery were welcomed to the meeting. Members were made aware that consulting via Area Councils was a key part of the process of developing a Cultural Strategy for Barnsley.

It was noted that Barnsley did not have a current Cultural Strategy and had been designated as a priority place by the Arts Council. This was due to the relatively low levels of cultural engagement, but it was noted that this also provided opportunities for investment in Barnsley.

Members heard that Barnsley's cultural offer was relatively strong, with five museums, a vibrant town centre and a number of theatres, but it was acknowledged that this could be improved. Members noted the recent increase in the number of National Portfolio Organisations in the area, and the associated investment.

The limited understanding of grassroots organisation was acknowledged, and Members heard of the mapping exercise underway with the University of Sheffield to help appreciate the variety within Barnsley.

The barriers to accessing culture were discussed, including relatively high levels of deprivation and increasing costs. However, also noted was the ability for culture to reduce barriers within society and support wellbeing.

The crucial role of culture in delivering against Barnsley's priorities was acknowledged, and that there should be the ability for everyone to engage in cultural activities throughout the borough.

Members noted that engaging Area Councils was part of wider consultation to celebrate the current cultural offer, find out the interests of Barnsley people, and create ideas for the future.

It was noted that engagement was taking place and in October the findings would be reviewed. Further consultation would then take place before a more finalised strategy was produced in February/March 24.

Members questioned what the strategy would encompass, and it was noted that this could include everything, from that done at home such as gaming, to considering venues for music and arts in the borough. It would include amateur and professional, and opportunities not only to be consumers, but creators.

Members noted the opportunities for a wide range of groups and organisations, and individuals of all ages to input in the development of the strategy.

Members heard of the Cultural Development Fund, which was being delivered using Principal Towns as a starting point, with the view to this being extended further.

Those present noted that the strategy would be used to help support applications for Arts Council funds, with direct applications from groups preferred. It was noted that bids were often coordinated through the culture team to avoid duplication.

RESOLVED that thanks be given for the presentation and that the work to develop the Cultural Strategy for Barnsley be supported.

18 Performance Management Report Q1 (Gen.27.09.2023/4)

The Area Council Manager spoke to the performance report for quarter 1, noting that that this was a summary and that quarters 2 and 4 would provide more detail. However, assurances were provided that a contract management meeting had been held with each provider, and further information was available if Members so wished.

Members heard that targets had been met or exceeded for all services. A summary had been provided for all services within the report, with case studies also included for some.

RESOLVED that the report be received.

19 Procurement and Financial Update (Cen.27.09.2023/5)

The Area Council Manager introduced the item, acknowledging that the report provided an overview of the contracting arrangements for all Central Area Council services.

With regards to the priority related to supporting isolated and vulnerable people, Members noted proposals emanating from the recent workshop to launch a Social Isolation Challenge Grant Fund with a budget of £130,000 for a year. Members heard how this would be launched imminently with organisations able to apply for grants of £5-40,000. A panel would then meet in November to assess the applications and make recommendations. It was agreed that Councillor Mitchell take part in the panel. Successful organisations would be granted finance for delivery from 1st April 2024 for one year.

An update was provided with regards to the extension of Youth Work Fund projects until end March 2025, which would then mean the contracts would end in line with other services.

With regards to the Clean and Green priority, a Member workshop was held in July, 2023 to discuss the priority and current commissions delivering against this. Here Members had the opportunity to meet the new Housing and Cohesion Officer. It was noted that they would also be attending the Area Council meeting in December 2023.

It was noted that all contracts were expected to conclude in March 2025, which allowed time over 2024 to consider the priorities of the Area Council and commission services accordingly. Services would then commence from April 2024. Much of the discussion and preparation for this would be undertaken through facilitated workshops, with recommendations feeding into Area Council meetings.

It was noted that though finance was expected to be carried forward from 2023/24 to 2024/25, that remaining unallocated was around £32,000. It was suggested that this remained as a contingency at the current time.

RESOLVED:-

- i)** That Members noted the overview of Central Area Council's current priorities, and overview of all current contracts, contract extensions, Services Level Agreements and Wellbeing Fund projects, with associated timescales;
- ii)** That Members noted the actual financial position to date for 2023-2024 and the projected expenditure, including future proposals, to 2023-2-25 as outline in Appendices 1&2 of this report; and
- iii)** That Members note that there was a Supporting Vulnerable People and Social Isolation workshop for Members to explore recent project reviews and research and that the update in relation to the Social Isolation Challenge Grant Fund be noted; and

- iv) That updates on the outcome of the Social Isolation Challenge Grant Fund call for projects be provided at the Area Council meeting in December.

20 Notes of the Ward Alliances (Cen.27.09.2023/6)

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

Central Ward Alliance held on 28 June, 12 July and 26 July 2023;

Dodworth Ward Alliance held on 11 July 2023;

Stairfoot Ward Alliance held on 10 July 2023; and

Worsbrough Ward Alliance held on 5 July 2023 (Environmental Working Group) and 6 July 2023.

Members discussed the issue of hanging baskets, noting that the cumulative financial amount for hanging baskets purchased by the Council had reached procurement thresholds and therefore this would be going out to tender.

Noted were the potential economies of scale in securing one provider, and ability for the supplier to plan appropriately. Further information would be provided on this in due course.

Members took the opportunity to praise the celebration event which marked 10 years of Central Area Council. This was well attended with a good time had by all. It was suggested that this could become an annual event to reward volunteers.

With regards to the summer sports roadshows, Members noted that attendance had been variable. It was suggested that this may have been due to the weather, but that the feedback from these would be taken into account in future planning.

The attention of Members was drawn to the High Street Fair in Dodworth which was scheduled for 3rd December, and all were welcome.

RESOLVED that the notes and feedback from the Ward Alliances be received.

21 Report on the Use of Ward Alliance Funds (Cen.27.09.2023/7)

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

Members noted that all Ward Alliances had significant funds remaining and were asked to encourage eligible applications for use of the funds.

RESOLVED that the report be received.

Chair