

MEETING:	Dearne Area Council
DATE:	Monday 20 November 2023
TIME:	2.00 pm
VENUE:	Meeting Room, Goldthorpe Library

MINUTES

Present Councillors Coates (Chair), Bowler, Cain, Moore and Morrell

26 Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

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

27 Minutes of the Previous Meeting of Dearne Area Council held on 4 September 2023 (Dac.20.11.2023/2)

The meeting received the minutes from the previous meeting of Dearne Area Council.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Dearne Area Council meeting held on 4 September, 2023 be approved as a true and correct record.

28 Quarter 2 Performance Report (Dac.20.11.2023/3)

The Area Council Manager submitted her performance report for Quarter 2 and Members noted its contents.

Arising out of the discussion, particular reference was made to the following:

- The Area Council Priorities, the commissions including Twiggs, the B:Friend service, the Dearne Electronic Community Village and the work of the Private Sector Housing and Cohesion Officer.
- Since the last quarter, Twiggs had worked with 144 volunteers and 23 new volunteers which had included 384 volunteer hours at Twiggs' events, a total of 272 rubbish bags had been filled, 35 areas had been targeted in proactive and reactive work and 4 fly tipping cases had been reported.
- During the quarter, the B:Friend service had supported 190 isolating older neighbours, provided 248 hours of 1:1 befriender interactions, 65 hours of staff visits/calls, had a total of 96 volunteers which included 8 new volunteers and had provided 52 hours of group social activities.

Arising out of the above, reference was made to the changes in DBS processing which, in the past, had delayed individuals being able to take on volunteer work. In addition, it was noted that the social groups were going from strength to strength. It was also noted that the Thurnscoe Groups was now full to capacity.

- The Dearne Electronic Community Village had provided learning to 52 individuals during the quarter, 22 learners had been recruited with 16 learners

achieving qualifications, 4 learners had moved into employment and 16 learners had progressed into further training.

Members were reminded of the issues that had been encountered in relation to the lease of the premises by the DECV which it was hoped was to be finally resolved with the group only paying for the space that they used.

- In relation to Housing Enforcement, a total of 179 reports had been made during the quarter, 22 properties had been improved, 36 contacts had been made with household waste on premises, 130 fly tipping incidents had been reported, 39 households had been supported to responsibly recycle or dispose waste and 6 vulnerable homes had been identified.

It was noted that a meeting had been held with Berneslai Homes, Waste Management and other parties in relation to the Lansdowne Estate, Thurnscoe and a targeted clean up was to take place on Friday.

- During the quarter, DIAL Barnsley had received a total of 69 enquiries, 93 individuals had reported reduced anxiety as a result of using the service and £64,524 benefit claims had been supported. It was noted that just under three quarters of all issues dealt with were with regard to benefits and the social return on investment was amazing.
- A total of 211 individuals had attended the Older Generation Get Together within the Goldthorpe Development Group during the quarter, and 39 volunteers had provided assistance across 3 events.

Arising out of the above, it was noted that attendance had been reduced due to a clash with another group meeting at the same time but it was hoped that dates could be changed to avoid this going forwards.

Laura Hammerton the Area Council's Senior Management Link Officer informed Members of changes proposed to be introduced nationally in relation to childcare and wrap around care which it was hoped would assist parents getting back into work. She gave a brief resume of the changes in entitlement and the enhancements in provision particularly in relation to the increase from 15 to 30 hours provision. She gave details of the minimum standards of provision required, the staffing requirements, the likely pay scales as well as the key dates for implementation. It was noted that these changes had been announced as part of the Governments Spring Budget 2023. The Council was currently looking at ways in which it could assist and support both providers and staff, including new staff, in implementing and introducing these changes and in developing their service provision further. The Council was also looking at how these changes could be properly advertised and communicated so that parents were aware of their entitlements.

Members were disappointed that Nursery Nurse expertise appeared to have been lost and they expressed an element of concern at the proposed pay scales and qualification requirements of some staff to be employed in this sector as it was thought that this should be higher so as to truly reflect the importance of such provision.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

29 Dearne Area Council Financial Update (Dac.20.11.2023/4)

The Area Council Manager submitted a report which provided an update regarding the Area Council's financial position.

The report outlined the carry forward from 2022/23, the committed spend for 2023/24 and 2024/25 together with information on the Dearne Development Fund. A detailed financial breakdown was included within an Appendix to the report.

It was noted that in total the Area Council had £57,429.91 to carry over into this financial year.

The Area Council Manager reported that the financial information was correct at the time of the writing of the report but further expenditure since that time, and the decision on the future arrangements for the Environmental Service, meant that there would be a variance from the reported figures. An update would be provided at the next meeting.

RESOLVED that the financial update and the impact on future budgets be noted.

30 Future Environmental Service (Dac.20.11.2023/5)

Further to Minute 23 of the meeting held on the 4th September, 2023, the Area Council Manager submitted a report providing an update regarding the Environmental Commission, funding and contract timescales. It provided information regarding recent Member briefings to discuss possible future direction for the commission and detailed several options for the Area Council to consider.

Members were reminded that the environment was a priority for the Area Council and the report provided the background to the operation of the various environmental service contracts that had first started in 2013. It was clear that there was a definite need from within the community for professional support to deliver on environmental projects. Although volunteers needed to be central to the delivery of this priority, Members had also stated the need to have a service that could also be reactive and target hotspot areas.

The Area Council was then asked to consider five options previously discussed at a Members Briefing held on the 24th July, 2023 and these were outlined in detail within the report. The report also outlined the costs involved and the operational remit of the various options together with Area Council Manager's observations and comments on each option.

It was noted that the Area Council had allocated £90,000 in the 2023/24 financial year and because of other commitments and commissions, this amount was the maximum that could be aligned to the environmental priority.

It was noted that the current contract came to an end on the 31st March, 2024 and, therefore, if this service was to continue a decision would be required at this meeting in order to progress with the procurement. In addition, depending on the preferred

option a decision would also need to be made on how long the Area Council agreed funding for.

If a full procurement exercise was undertaken, in order to appeal to more providers, it was suggested that this could be done on a 1+1+1 basis (a three-year agreement in principal but with contract reviews at the end of each year). All other options could initially be confirmed for 12 months and reviewed prior to the end of the first year with a maximum commitment of 3 years.

Members of the Area Council then discussed each individual option in detail and, based on the option chosen, the potential implications for staffing together with any TUPE transfer arrangements. Arising out of the discussion, the Area Council Manager gave details of the way in which environmental projects operated in other Area Council areas and she gave information of the service providers in those areas.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Environmental Services contract be awarded to Neighbourhood Services;
- (ii) That the contract be awarded in principle for three years (on a 1+1+1 basis) and in accordance with the following budget projections (Y1 - £84,139, Y2 - £86,222, Y3 - £94,175 – Y3 to be funded by an element of carry forward funding) but subject to quarterly contract meetings and review every 6 and 12 months;
- (iii) That there be a 50/50 split between working with volunteers and reactive work and an understanding that, as a minimum, there will be a Team Leader working 5 days per week and a Driver/Worker working 3 days per week; and
- (iv) That it be noted that the contract will include a 20% contingency to cater for unexpected occurrences and that Performance Monitoring be undertaken using the Council's Power Bi system.

31 Notes from the Dearne Ward Alliances (Dac.20.11.2023/6)

The meeting received the notes from Dearne North Ward Alliance held on 26th September, 2023 and the Dearne South Ward Alliance held on 10th October 2023.

Members received a brief update from the Area Council Manager of the main items discussed and the activities promoted at the meetings:

(a) Dearne North

- Three applications for funding had been submitted – one had been part funded on the proviso that further information was provided, one had been paid by their working funds partial payment and one application was declined.
- Group updates had been provided on the excellent work undertaken through the Autumn and winter months.

- The Community Development Officer supported Alliance Members in running through several ideas for winter projects. Reference was made to the lack of volunteers which meant that some proposals were not feasible. Ideas around hampers was taken away for further costings and work for the officer supporting the Alliance.
- Many projects related to activities around Christmas and the Alliance took a decision not to duplicate these.
- A membership recruitment exercise would be undertaken in January 2024 and there would be some marketing of the Alliance with examples of what it had previously undertaken and funded.

(b) Dearne South

- A guest speaker, Mr R Snaith from Humankind, had attended who outlined the work he undertook in relation to mental health and young people in the Dearne South Community. He indicated that he ran a weekly session from The Factory in Goldthorpe.
- No funding applications had been submitted.
- The Treasurer gave an update on the working funds balances and projects against committed spend.
- Projects were discussed around the Christmas on The Square and winter warmth provision. It had been agreed to fund a Christmas Event on St Andrew's Square due to the folding of a local community group last year. This was to ensure that the community had some community cohesion and could celebrate Christmas. Discussions took place around initiatives that could be provided and run by the Ward Alliance
- Group updates were given by each of the Ward Alliance members representing their work in the Dearne South Ward.

RESOLVED that notes from the respective Ward Alliances be received.

32 Report on the Use of Ward Alliance Funds (Dac.20.11.2023/7)

The Area Council Manager submitted a report on the spend to date from the Ward Alliance Funds within the Dearne North and South Area.

It was noted that within the Dearne North Ward Alliance there was a starting balance for 2023/24 of £12,270.17 which included the underspend of £2,270.17 from 2022/23. Eleven projects had been funded at a cost of £8,088.49, leaving a balance of £4,181.68. Within the Dearne South Ward Alliance there had been a starting balance for 2023/24 of £16,031.04 which included an underspend of £6,031.04 from 2022/23. A total of nine projects had been funded at a cost of £9,468.57, leaving a balance of £6,562.47.

It was noted that since the publication of the report, further expenditure had taken place on certain projects/initiatives details of which would be reported to the next meeting.

RESOLVED that the Dearne North and South Ward Alliance Fund Report be received and the spend to date be noted.

Chair