

MEETING:	Dearne Area Council
DATE:	Monday 3 June 2024
TIME:	2.00 pm
VENUE:	Meeting Room, Goldthorpe Library

MINUTES

Present Councillors Bellamy (Chair), Bowler, Cain, Moore, Morrell and Pearson

1 Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

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

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting of Dearne Area Council held on 18 March 2024 (Dac.3.6.2024/2)

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 the 18th March, 2024 be approved as a true and correct record.

3 Dearne Electronic Village Update

Rory Garforth, Dearne Electronic Community Village Ltd, was welcomed to the meeting.

For the benefit of the newly elected Member, he gave a brief overview of the work, aims and successes of the Community Village. He then updated Members on the ICT Employability Support Sessions held recently.

Since his last report to the Area Council, he stated that whilst the aim was to support 90 persons per year, there had been 93 new learners accessing the service and support. This was largely 3 hours per week for either 6 or 12 months, but the nature of the work and the time involved was dependent upon the individual's needs. Sometimes this just required support to prepare CVs to enable clients to apply for jobs. He also stated that 90% of enrolments were referred from the DWP work coaches. Twenty-four learners had obtained full time employment and the types of jobs obtained were outlined.

The service was provided 'face to face' but remote sessions were held for those who, for whatever reason, could not access the services directly. The main areas of work involved, digital skills as well as general support in relation to job search, online job application, Universal Credit applications, registering with job agencies, social media, job search, online banking, online shopping as well as accessing Council services. He was also working with 2 volunteers who were looking for work. Access to IT services was largely provided via the learning Centre where there were currently 12 up to date PC's and 2 Apple Mac's all equipped with the latest software.

The Dearne Electronic Community Village Ltd was now in its third year of funding and since April, 22 learners had been recruited and accessed the service largely to seek support in relation to IT and employability. Six learners had passed their digital skills qualification and discussions were now progressing to investigate the feasibility of maths being embedded into the digital skills training. Five individuals had also obtained employment since April.

It was also reported that additional funding had been obtained from a Charitable Truist foundation for the next four months which would assist in the provision of services. In addition, reference was made to the composition of Trustees. It was noted that further new Trustees were still being sought.

In the ensuing discussion, the following matters were raised:

- The Area Council Manager reported that discussions were being held to see if provision could be made for specific sessions to be held in the Dearne South Ward area. She also stated that it would be helpful if a breakdown could be provided of where those accessing services lived. Rory Garforth said that this could be provided, however, as a general overview, he stated that the majority of people lived within the Thurnscoe, Goldthorpe and Bolton upon Dearne areas with the youngest being 19 and the oldest in their 70's. There was largely an even spread of male and female clients, but he had seen an increase in those within their 70's who wanted to get back into employment due to the financial climate and the increasing cost of living which Members of the Area Council felt was really sad
- It was noted that the finance provided by the Area Council was to support people back into work as well as to upskill them for the workplace and, therefore, the services provided by the DECV was particularly welcome. Arising out of this Rory Garforth said that he had been approached by a 16-year-old who had requested support in completing her CV. He felt that this was disappointing if this support was not available via schools. However, support for this age group was not able to be included within his performance data

RESOLVED that thanks be given for the presentation and update and that Rory be thanked for all his hard work.

4 Housing and Cohesion Officer Update

Kev Frisby, Housing and Cohesion Officer was welcomed to the meeting.

For the benefit of the newly elected Member, he gave a brief overview of his role, work, aims as well as the successes achieved as the Housing and Cohesion Officer for the Dearne area and he explained how work was identified, planned and undertaken.

He then outlined the work in which he had been involved over the last quarter. There had been an increase in the number of disrepair jobs being reported and whilst no Improvement Notices had been issued to date, appropriate advice had been issued. The vast majority of the issues being identified were within the Goldthorpe area.

There had been 16 referrals received largely in relation to waste within gardens and with regard to empty properties. The 'drop ins' were continuing at the Salvation Army and work was ongoing to promote his work with 'drop ins' planned for Thurnscoe and the Bolton upon Dearne areas.

Arising out of the above, there was a discussion about how 'drop ins' could be promoted/facilitated further and various suggestions were made. Kev reminded Members that the 'walk abouts' had proved to be particularly successful in the past. The Area Council Manager suggested that the pop ups with the Police in various locations had also been successful and it might be worth considering their reinstatement. Kev stated that he was willing to assist in attending meetings/surgeries if he was available and had sufficient notice.

He then went on to report on the current position with regard to the demolition of housing within Goldthorpe, permission for which had been granted. He also commented on the work to be undertaken to clear the embankment at the side of the railway line and on clean ups in the Marlborough Lansdowne Close areas of Thurnscoe and particularly as this related to the 'bin' areas. Arising out of this, reference was also made to the current position with regard to the removal of contaminated waste, rubbish put in the wrong bins, and to the cost of purchasing replacement wheelie bins.

it was also noted that one of the doors to a vacant property on Hight Steet, Goldthorpe had been vandalised and Kev agreed to investigate this matter further.

RESOLVED that thanks be given for the presentation and update and that Kev be thanked for all his hard work.

5 Quarter 4 Performance Report (Dac.3.6.2024//5)

The Area Council Manager submitted her performance report for Quarter 4 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.
- It was noted that this quarter the Twiggs partnership had come to an end. Since the last meeting, Twiggs had worked with 138 volunteers and 12 new volunteers which had included 371 volunteer hours at Twiggs' events, a total of 350 rubbish bags had been filled, 81 areas had been targeted in proactive and reactive work and 2 fly tipping case had been reported.
- During the quarter, the B:Friend service had supported 153 isolating older neighbours, provided 1474 hours of 1:1 befriender interactions, 65 hours of staff visits/calls, a total of 103 volunteers which included 5 new volunteers and had provided 50 hours of group social activities. It was noted that the social groups were all doing well and events had been held at the Dearne Playhouse and the Parkway Cinema. In addition, Barnsley Museums had

paid for an event at Elsecar Heritage Centre. The service was also successful in obtaining external funding to support various activities

- The Dearne Electronic Community Village had provided learning to 93 individuals during the quarter, 22 learners had been recruited with 28 learners achieving qualifications, 5 learners had moved into employment and 18 learners had progressed into further training.
- In relation to Housing Enforcement, a total of 115 reports had been made during the quarter, 16 properties had been improved, 44 contacts had been made with household waste on premises, 88 fly tipping incidents had been reported, 16 households had been supported making improvements during service intervention and 8 vulnerable homes had been identified. Arising out of this, reference was made to the case studies/photographs provided in relation to waste on premises and particularly to the work involved in relation to a hoarding case. Kev Frisby also commented on the preventative work that was undertaken in this respect. He particularly commented on the increase in the incidence of hoarding, to the potential reasons for this, and for the need for preventative work to be undertaken to try to ensure that hoarding did not become a significant issue for individual residents. Reference was made to the complementary comments received about the work of the Private Sector Housing and Cohesion Officer and these were particularly welcomed
- During the quarter, DIAL Barnsley had received a total of 69 enquiries, 96% of individuals had reported reduced anxiety as a result of using the service and £56,868 benefit claims had been supported (which was a huge figure but consistent each quarter). It was noted that the social return on investment was currently £21.69 which was amazing. A case study was provided which outlined the benefits and success of the service and details of the outreach work for the previous quarter was outlined.
- A total of 254 individuals had attended the Older Generation Get Together within the Goldthorpe Development Group during the quarter, and 37 volunteers had provided assistance across 3 events. Particular mention was made, amongst other things, to the case study which referred to a successful January Get Together and to the filming by Look North as part of their Minders' Strike Commemoration
- The Deare Area Team Quarter 4 Case Study and particularly the collapse of a local community group in Bolton upon Dearne, the action taken in response to this to facilitate initiatives within the community, the lessons learned from this, and the positive feedback received.

Arising out of the above, it was suggested that the Area Council might want to have a stall at future events/markets when these were held. It was also suggested that it might be worthwhile purchasing a gazebo for such purposes.

Reference was also made to the current position in relation to the theft of the Area Council's storage container which had subsequently been found, returned and relocated in a more secure location.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

6 Dearne Area Council Financial Update (Dac.3.6.2024/6)

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

The report outlined that there was £34,270.50 left within the commissioning Budget from the last financial year. Committed spend in 2024/25 was £176,833 leaving £58,037.50 in the core budget to spend on local priorities. This included £600 that had been added to the budget from work the Team Leader was undertaking on environmental projects. A detailed financial breakdown was included within an Appendix to the report.

In the last financial year, the funds supported four projects that met the Area Council priorities, namely, Citizen Advice, DIAL, TADS and a contribution towards the Goldthorpe Development Group's Bounce into Summer event and the older persons get together. Members were reminded that in July 2022 it had been agreed that a further £30,000 be allocated into the fund and DIAL and Goldthorpe Development Group were successful in their applications to run for a further year. Members also contributed to the Bounce into Summer Event and to pay for Welfare Advice until December 2024 leaving £9,500.41 in the Dearne Development Fund.

The Area Council Manager reported that some lower costing projects had come out of this funding pot and were due to end in this financial year, therefore, she was recommending that the Area Council allocate a further £15,000 into the Dearne Development Fund. The carry forward and amount left in the Dearne Development Fund combined would then total £67,537.91.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the financial update and the impact on future budgets be noted; and
- (ii) that £15,000 be allocated into the Dearne Development Fund.

7 Dearne Area Council Commissioning Update (Dac.3.6.2024/7)

The Area Council Manager submitted a report providing an update with regard to the Area Council's Commissioned Services.

Information was provided about the performance of the following:

- The Social Connectivity Service – which would end in June 2025. This service cost the Area Council £28,000 per annum. There were no issues with this contract and the groups and the 1-1 befriending service were operating well. It was recommended, therefore, that Members approve the final year of the contract
- The Housing and Cohesion Officer - which would end in March 2025. It was noted, as previously reported, that the officer was now working a four-day week and the cost involved for the year was £30,694. This costing was still being examined as it may be slightly higher than previously stated
- The Assisting Employment and Skills Project (Dearne Electronic Community Village) – which would end in March 2025. The cost to the Area Council was £34,000 per annum and there were no issues with this contract. As discussed

previously, it was hoped that this service could be developed further to provide wider coverage over the Dearne area

- The Dearne Environmental Service – the service had come to an end in March 2024 and was now delivered by Neighbourhood Services who could provide more hours within the Area Council Financial envelope. The Team Leader had been appointed and this was the first quarter so no report on performance was available yet but would be submitted to the next meeting. There were currently no issues to report. It was noted that interviews were to be held for the apprentice post. It was also noted that a Workshop was to be arranged with Members to discuss future environmental projects/priorities to be undertaken during this and future years.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the progress on the Dearne Commissions and the update on the commissioned services be noted;
- (ii) that the final year of the Social Connectivity Service from July 2024 to the end of June 2025 at a cost of £28,000 be approved; and
- (iii) that the Area Council Manager arrange a Workshop with Elected Members to discuss environmental projects/priorities to be undertaken during 2024/25 and future years.

8 Notes from the Dearne Ward Alliances (Dac.3.6.2024/8)

The meeting received the notes from Dearne North Ward Alliance held on the 12th March, 2024 and the Dearne South Ward Alliance held on the 9th April, 2024.

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

- Two applications for financial assistance had been received and approved, one from the Autism Allotment for additional fencing and one from the Rainbow Centre towards the cost of LED lighting and for roof repairs/redecoration – this was to match funding received from another source.
- The Action Plan had been the main topic of discussion and projects had been discussed and it had been agreed for the support officer to devise a plan and associated costings for further discussion at the next meeting. There were to be no additional summer programme events due to over subscription and many initiatives already being provided
- Group updates had been provided from Thurnscoe Park, Big Local and St Helen's Church Hall. There was more discussion about the Plaza and Thurnscoe Park activities and it was hoped that some funding would be sought to aid some family provisions during the summer.

(b) Dearne South

- Two applications for funding had previously been submitted from Urban Impact Karate Group and the Dearne South Ward Alliance to purchase a shipping storage container for Bolton on Dearne – both applications had been agreed and fully supported.
- The Action Plan had been the main topic of discussion and it had been agreed that the support officer would devise a plan for consideration at the next meeting which would contain all suggestions together with costings, and suggested projects were the outdoor cinema, health event, breakfast clubs in the summer, winter warmth and Christmas event
- The Treasurer gave an update on the working funds and balances and projects against committed spend. It had been agreed to put monies towards the forthcoming projects on the Action Plan for 2024
- Group updates had been given by each of the Ward Alliance members representing their work in the Dearne South Ward

RESOLVED that the notes from the respective Ward Alliances be received.

9 Report on the Use of Ward Alliance Funds (Dac.3.6.2024/9)

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. To the end of the financial year, fifteen projects had been funded at a cost of £10,780.04, leaving a balance of £1,490.13. This, together with the allocation of £10,000 funding for 2024/25 meant there was currently a balance of £11,490.13 available for funding projects during the financial year 2024/25.

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 thirteen projects had been funded at a cost of £15,751.65, leaving a balance of £279.39. This, together with the allocation of £10,000 funding for 2024/25 meant there was a currently a balance of £10,279.39 available for funding projects during the financial year 2024/25.

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

Chair