

MEETING:	South Area Council
DATE:	Friday 7 June 2024
TIME:	10.00 am
VENUE:	Meeting Room 1 - Barnsley Town Hall

MINUTES

Present Councillors Eastwood, Franklin, Frost, Higginbottom, Holling, Osborne, Shepherd, Stowe (Chair) and A. Wray

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

Councillor Frost declared a non-pecuniary interest in any item on the agenda insofar as it related to his role as a trustee at Age UK Barnsley.

Councillor Osborne declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute 4 insofar as it related to his previous employment with the DWP.

2 **Minutes of the Meeting of South Area Council held on 12 April 2024 (Sac.12.04.2024/2)**

The meeting considered the minutes of South Area Council held on 12 April 2024.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the South Area Council held on 12 April 2024 be approved as a true and correct record.

3 **Notes of the Ward Alliances (Sac.12.04.2024/3)**

The meeting received the notes from the following Ward Alliances; Darfield held on 14 March 2024, Hoyland Milton and Rockingham held on 20 March 2024, and Wombwell held on 18 March 2024.

During member discussion thanks were given to Wombwell Ward Alliance for their support in funding the Wombwell Community Memorial Stone, the ongoing work to preserve the ward's heritage and the plans for the civic unveiling in July 2024.

RESOLVED that the notes from the Ward Alliances be received.

4 **Barnsley CAB – New Advice drop in service presentation – David Andy (Sac.12.04.2024/4)**

Members received a presentation from David Andy, Barnsley Citizens Advice Bureau on the community outreach project for the South area. The service delivered generalist and specialist benefit advice to residents and workers of Rockingham, Hoyland Milton, Darfield and Wombwell Wards. Members were given a breakdown of client numbers, financial outcomes and enquiry issues over the duration of the contract, with case studies exemplifying how residents of the South area had been assisted.

Members questioned whether a breakdown was available for the percentage of support provided to Berneslai Homes tenants, and how the service complimented the private sector housing officer. A full data set was not available, although investigations into potential trends would be explored.

During further member discussion, the working relationships between CAB and the DWP were explored, with both having a shared role in working out benefits entitlement for clients. The use of “better off calculators” to determine how an individual’s change of circumstances could impact their benefits entitlement was discussed, with both CAB and the DWP using external systems to calculate this, as opposed to an internal software the DWP had previously used to administer.

Reflecting on lower engagement numbers for CAB’s service in Darfield when compared to Hoyland and Wombwell, venues available were discussed. Members suggested sessions in Middlecliffe and Darfield Family Centre, with an understanding that the facilities at Darfield Library would be developed in future to offer a private breakout room that would lend itself well to service delivery.

RESOLVED that the presentation be noted.

5 Performance Report (Sac.12.04.2024/5)

In introducing the performance report for the final quarter of 23/24, the Area Council Manager broke down the data available for various commissioned services. The information on the private sector housing and environmental caretaker services was complete and verified. The key performance indicator data for the Age UK contract had not been received on time and would be subject to scrutiny and verification at a future meeting of the Area Council Manager and representatives from the contract provider. With regards to the District Enforcement contract, the staffing hours documented did not evidence the specific 5 hours contracted for the school pickup and drop-off patrol windows. The provider had suffered with staffing shortages, although advice had been received that recruitment process had been finalised and normal service was due to resume. With this information in mind the Area Council Manager would scrutinise the amount of service delivery during Q4 and negotiate lesser payment terms, if appropriate.

During member discussion, disappointment was expressed at Age UK not delivering providing timely performance data, with an awareness that the organisation was facing ongoing challenges. This did not diminish the need for elected members to have sufficient time to scrutinise information ahead of meetings of the Area Council. Members were assured that Age UK employees were still delivering the contracted service.

Members requested that the potential to supply information on value for money for contracted services was explored. The Social Value Engine tool was no longer being utilised by the Council, however the possibility of revisiting this would be raised. For volunteering and several contracts, value for money information could still be produced through other means.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

6 Procurement and Financial Update (Sac.12.04.2024/6)

Members were guided through the recommendations in the report by the Area Council Manager.

RESOLVED that:-

1. Members note the update within the report regarding a welfare and debt advice service; and
2. Members agree to continue the South environmental caretaker service level agreement for a further two years at a cost of £121,000 per year; and
3. Members agree to allocate £1000 of the South environmental caretaker service contingency underspend to an environmental working budget and offset that against the previously agreed Ward Alliance allocations; and
4. Members agree to allocate the £18,000 contingency underspend to running a South area community environmental grant scheme with additional funding from the South commissioning budget of £12,000 to give a total grant pot of £30,000; and
5. Members delegate responsibility and authority to the Executive Director Public Health and Communities to develop an Environmental grant scheme in line with the report; and
6. Members nominate Councillor Holling to the social isolation and loneliness commission and grants panel, as a replacement for Councillor Sumner; and
7. Members agree to allocate a total of £80,000 towards two areas of support in the Children and Young Peoples grant scheme; diversionary activities for young people and support for young people with complex needs; and note that the South Area Council Manager will develop the grants paperwork and process in line with discussions and recommendations from the South Area Council; and
8. Members delegate responsibility and authority to the Executive Director Public Health and Communities to develop a children's and young people grant process.

Chair