

BARNSELY METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

PENISTONE AREA COUNCIL

REVIEW OF THE PENISTONE EAST AND WEST WARD ALLIANCE

AUGUST 2015

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide members with a summary of the recent review of the Penistone East and West Ward Alliance in order that they can discuss and agree how they wish the Alliance to proceed going forward.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 **That members consider and discuss the information contained in the report.**
- 2.2 **That members suggest any proposed changes they wish to put forward to the Penistone East and West Ward Alliance.**

3.0 Background

Ward Alliances were set up in 2013 as part of BMBC's new area arrangements with the purpose of trying to ensure that decision making and planning for local areas is relevant and representative of the area it serves.

The main aim for ward alliances is to enable the ***'Council and Community to work together through an active partnership of Local Elected Members and representatives of the community who together can plan, take action and stimulate the involvement of the wider community to meet the needs of their area.'***

4.0 Penistone Ward Alliance

- 4.1 The Penistone East and West Wards are made up of small parishes and villages, several served by 13 Parish Councils including Penistone Town Council. In addition there exists a plethora of established community groups and voluntary organisations in Penistone Town and the surrounding area.
- 4.2 At an informal meeting between the Penistone Area Team and Penistone East and West elected members to discuss the new arrangements and planned creation of ward alliance/alliances held in 2013 members agreed that:

- **They would have one combined Ward Alliance which represented Penistone East and West.**
- **That the Ward Alliance budgets for each ward would also be combined for the use of projects across both Penistone East and West.**
- **Representatives from the network referred to in 4.1 above be invited onto the combined alliance to represent their particular parish council, village or hamlet.**
- **In addition to invite applications from representatives of the business, faith and school communities.**
- **That the Ward Alliance members be encouraged to work at addressing the priorities of the 'Penistone area' rather than concentrating purely on their own parish.**

4.3 Elected members and members of the Penistone Area Team attended all 13 of the Parish Council/Town Council Meetings to inform them of the new arrangements including the objective of establishing a combined Penistone East and West Ward Alliance. An invitation was extended to each Parish and Town Council to put forward representatives to the Penistone East and West Ward Alliance.

4.4 Elected members also approached representatives from the faith, business and school sectors, to extend invitations to become Ward Alliance members.

4.5 The upshot of the activity referred to above is the current Penistone East and West Ward Alliance which has been working as a combined group of 18 community representatives alongside elected members since late 2013.

5.0 Ward Alliance Activity During 2014/15

5.1 At its meeting held on 17 October 2013 the Penistone Ward Alliance agreed to adopt the same priorities for its action plan as the Area Council had in the production of the Area Plan with the agreement that this could change in the light of more 'local intelligence' coming forward from the community through the ward alliance representatives. The ward alliance priorities to date are therefore:

The Environment
 The Local Economy
 Activities and Support for Young People
 Roads and Transport – including Road Safety
 Access to Health Care

5.2 The group has consequently produced a Ward Action Plan and receives applications for funding from community led groups and organisations residing in the Penistone East and West area which address the above priorities.

- 5.3 During the financial year 2014/15 the Ward Alliance was successful in allocating 99% of the combined East and West Ward budgets. In recognition of this at its meeting held on 18 June 2015 the Penistone Area Council agreed to add £40,000 from the area commissioning budget to the £20,000 Ward Alliance allocation giving Penistone East and West Ward Alliance a total of £60,000 to allocate in the 2015/16 financial year.
- 5.4 In addition to the allocation of funds to local projects the Ward Alliance has elevated suggestions to Penistone Area Council ideas for projects which are beyond the financial scope of the alliance budget but meet the area's priorities.
- 5.5 Members of the Ward Alliance and wider parish council community held a workshop on 22 April 2015 to discuss and have input into a specification for the Area Council to commission a Clean and Tidy Service for Penistone Area. Ward alliance representatives from Penistone East and West also sat on the tender evaluation panel for this commission.

6.0 Ward Alliance Review

- 6.1 In order to produce a comprehensive Ward Alliance Development Plan to inform the future direction of Penistone Ward Alliance a review of activity was undertaken by Wendy Slater Neighbourhoods Funding and Development Officer (as an independent contributor), with input from the Penistone Area Team, Elected Members and Ward Alliance members.
- 6.2 The review method took the form of a workshop which took place on 13 August 2015. Prior to the workshop alliance members were asked to complete an anonymous self- assessment questionnaire. The results of the returned questionnaires were also considered at the workshop. The workshop covered the following areas:
- Recruitment
 - Demographics and Geographical Breakdown of Current Membership
 - Attendance
 - Funding Activity against Area Priorities
 - What is working well
 - What is working less well
 - Recommendations for future development of Ward Alliance
- 6.3 **Recruitment.** It was acknowledged at the workshop that the recruitment of ward alliance members had initially happened at a very fast pace and that not all members felt fully aware of the governance framework in relation to recruitment. **Action:** members were given another copy of the framework along with the community representative role description and the ward alliance assessment toolkit, to be discussed in detail at a future ward alliance meeting.
- 6.4 **Demographics and geographical breakdown of current Membership**
There was a discussion at the workshop about demographics and it was

agreed that although not all members of society are proportionally represented, current representatives are from a wide geographical spread. Also that the wider community is democratically represented in the fact that most of the representatives on the alliance are there as representatives of Parish Councils and therefore have input from and give feedback to a wider cohort of community members than if they just represented a small community group. Current membership of the Penistone East and West Ward Alliance is listed as **Appendix 1** to this report.

6.5 **Attendance.** It was agreed that some members had not attended for a number of meetings and that the Governance Framework had not been strictly adhered to i.e. that if alliance an member misses more than two meetings in a row without apology or explanation they cease to be on the Ward Alliance.

6.6 **Funding Activity Against Priorities.**

A discussion took place at the workshop with regard to spend in relation to priorities during 2014/15 as follows:

6.7 **The Environment** – This is the most popular priority with **58%** of the funding during the 2014/15 financial year being allocated to projects which address the improvement and maintenance of the local environment. It was agreed that there had been some good quality applications and that the priority was still very relevant to the Penistone East and West area.

6.8 **Activities/Support for Young People** – There was some surprise that this priority represented as much as **32%** of overall spend during 2014/15. Following discussion it was agreed that although there were not a large number of applications they had been for more significant amounts than the other priorities. It was agreed to keep this as a priority.

6.9 **Local Economy** – This priority attracted **5%** of the funding allocated in 2014/15 and whilst there had been fewer applications than the above two categories it was agreed it is still a high priority for the area.

6.10 **Roads and Transport/Road Safety** – No applications were received under this priority. Ward alliance members agreed that this is a difficult priority to deliver against a small budget but agreed to keep it as a priority.

6.11 **Access to Healthcare Services - (Area Council Priority taken from Penistone Town Council's 'Community Led Plan')** No applications were received under this priority in 2014/15. Following discussion it was questioned whether the ward alliance felt this is relevant, needed or deliverable. A suggestion was put forward that the Ward Alliance change the priority to "Health and Wellbeing" which would cover a wider range of issues regarding vulnerable older people and isolation. The Ward Alliance agreed to change this priority to "Health and Wellbeing" and to put forward a suggestion to the Area Council that it too considers changing the priority.

6.12 What is working well?

Ward Alliance Members were also asked this question at the workshop and suggested the following:

- Funding is being allocated
- The alliance fund has attracted some good quality applications
- Projects are using the funds to build Social Capital
- Elected members have elected to put additional funding into the Alliance pot in recognition of how they value the projects who are accessing it.

6.13 What is working less well?

In response to this question members put forward the following:

- They would like to receive more feedback from grant recipients

6.14 In addition to the above the following recommendations were put forward at the workshop.

- Ward Alliance members to promote the work of the Ward Alliance more actively within their own communities to encourage a wider range of applications to the enhanced funding pot.
- To use the Community Magazine to promote the work of the Ward Alliance and encourage funding applications.
- To work with individuals with a view to establishing new group activity in the area as many of the established groups are self-sufficient.
- The Ward Alliance revisit the idea of having its own 'logo'

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Date:
2 September 2015

Appendix 1

Penistone East & West Ward Alliance

Membership October 2015

Allen Pestell	(Dunford Parish Council)
Bruce Meek	(Penistone Scouts)
Robert Blythe	(Thurgoland Parish Council, Penistone & District Community Partnership)
Karen Richardson	(Local Business & Market Traders)
Steve Webber	(Penistone Town Council, Thurgoland & Millhouse Green)
Robert Green	(Millhouse Green Community Association)
Sarah Catterall	(Artisan Fayre)
Heather Harrison	(Penistone Young Farmers)
Adrian James	(Langsett Parish Council)
Keith Coulton	(Alliance Secretary)
David Hopkins	(St Johns Church)
David Edmondson	(Gunthwaite & Ingbirchworth Parish Council)
Richard Leech	(Silkstone Parish Council)
Emma Wright	(Stainbrough Parish Council)
John Kerr	(Hunshelf Parish Council)
Paul Reckless	(Tankersley Parish Council)
Jonathan Cutts	(Penistone Town Council, Penistone Ward)
Ann Rusby	(Penistone Town Council, Penistone Ward)