

MEETING:	South Area Council
DATE:	Friday, 18 December 2020
TIME:	10.00 am
VENUE:	Held Virtually

MINUTES

Present Councillors Markham (Chair), Andrews BEM, Eastwood, Franklin, Frost, Lamb, Saunders, Shepherd, Smith, Stowe and Sumner

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

Councillor Shepherd declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 11 due to his position as director of Forge Community Partnership.

Councillors Frost and Markham each declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 11 due to their positions on the board of Age UK Barnsley.

7 **Minutes of the Meeting of South Area Council held on 23rd October, 2020 (Sac.18.12.2020/2)**

The meeting considered the minutes of South Area Council held on 23 October, 2020.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the South Area Council held on 23rd October, 2020 be approved as a true and correct record.

8 **Notes and Feedback from the Ward Alliances (Sac.18.12.2020/3)**

The meeting received the notes from the following Ward Alliances:- Wombwell held on 16th November, 2020; and Darfield held on 19th November, 2020.

Councillor Sumner provided feedback from the Hoyland Milton and Rockingham Ward Alliance, noting that many community members had issues attending Ward Alliance meetings. Digital Champions were working with members to address issues. The Ward Alliance had found alternative means to approve funding for such as Healthy Holidays. In addition, the Ward Alliance had been planning a sizeable project to reduce anti-social behaviour associated with quad bike use. The Alliance was also looking at ways to support local businesses affected by the pandemic.

Councillor Frost spoke about the work of the Wombwell Ward Alliance, and the work to support Healthy Holiday provision. This included delivering food boxes to vulnerable families which had been supplied by local businesses. Members also heard about the distribution of activity packs and festive craft packs. Notes were the Christmas dinners cooked by the Luncheon club and delivered by volunteers. These had been very well received.

Councillor Smith gave an update on the work of Darfield Ward Alliance, including the allocation of Ward Alliance Funds to the Basket Ball Club, Cricket Club and to support Healthy Holidays provision.

Though it had not been possible to organise Christmas decorations, it was hoped a new group would be established in January, 2021 to consider Summer decorations such as hanging baskets as well as festive lighting in future years.

The Darfield Ward Alliance had discussed CCTV provision, and it was hoped that this would be funded through the Principal Towns Programme.

All Members thanked the hard work of the Area Team in their continued support of the Ward Alliances and work throughout the area.

RESOLVED that the notes from the Ward Alliances be received.

9 Report on the Use of Ward Alliance Funds (Sac.18.12.2020/4)

The report was received for information. It was noted that each Ward Alliance Fund had finance remaining for allocation.

RESOLVED that the report be received.

10 Presentation from Barnsley Citizen's Advice Bureau (Sac.18.12.2020/5)

David Andy from Barnsley Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) was welcomed to the meeting.

It was noted that since lockdown the service had been delivered via telephone and digital means, rather than face to face. This had worked very well, and residents could access the service every day. Should local telephone lines be busy clients would be redirected to other CAB offices. Plans had been made for clients to be able to video call in the new year.

It was noted that the County Courts had been suspended in lockdown, and only recently reconvened to consider the most pressing cases. This had impacted on the types of issues being dealt with by the service with clients tending to have fewer housing and debt issues. However, there had been an increase in demand of employment advice. Numbers of contacts were slightly down on the previous year and the number of clients was significantly down, however those seeking advice had more complex issues which required a greater level of support.

Numbers of vulnerable clients seen had reduced, which was thought to be attributable to certain processes at the Department of Work and Pensions being paused. It was thought that numbers would increase once the pandemic eased.

During the year 1,219 issues had been dealt with and clients were seen on average three times. Members heard that clients accessed from all wards, in a pattern similar to previous years.

The service had assisted clients to manage £117,000 of debt this year and gain £770,000 of additional benefit. It was acknowledged that both were lower than the previous year, but this was attributed to pauses in court hearings and in DWP processes.

Members asked if plans in place for when courts were more widely opened, and it was noted that arrangements were in place to support clients when required.

Those present discussed the impact of the pandemic and anticipated job losses, and a suggestion was made to consider what additional support could be provided to those looking for work or to reskill.

Discussed was the lack of access to appropriate IT, and it was noted that support was available in the form of tablet computers accessible through Neighbourhood Engagement Officers.

RESOLVED that thanks be given for the presentation.

11 Procurement and Financial Update (Sac.18.12.2020/6)

The Area Council Manager introduced the report previously circulated, and a brief presentation was given to highlight the pertinent points.

Members were reminded of the current contract with District Enforcement which was envisaged would help encourage behavioural change; keeping traffic flowing in centre and reducing dog fouling across the area. The contract was due to finish at the end of March, 2021. A number of options were considered, with a recommendation that the contract be extended for a further 12-month period, and that Darfield patrols formally recognised in contract documentation.

Those present were then reminded of the work of the One Stop Shop, delivering impartial and confidential advice. The contract was due to cease on 30th June, 2021 and there was no option available to extend.

Members were reminded of previous discussion on the subject, including at a Members' briefing on 12th November, 2020. A number of options were considered. The national and local economic issues and consequent need anticipated in the area was acknowledged.

RESOLVED:-

- (i)** That the contract with District Enforcement be extended for a period of one year from 1st April 2021 to 31st March, 2022 at a cost of £18,220, with Darfield 'Hotspot' areas formally included in the contract;
- (ii)** That the One Stop Shop Advice Service be retendered at a value of £83,000 per annum for a period of three years (one year with two further periods of one year, subject to an annual review of performance, continued evidence of need and availability of funding);
- (iii)** That the Area Council manager drafts a specification of requirements and all other necessary tender documentation and that the Executive Director Communities be authorised to approve all necessary paperwork in order to procure a One Stop Shop Advice Service following consultation with Members of South Area Council;
- (iv)** That the timescales proposed for the procurement of a One Stop Shop Advice Service be approved;
- (v)** That Councillors Markham and Stowe take part in the tender process including scoring tender submissions and being part of the interview panel.

Chair