

MEETING:	North Area Council
DATE:	Monday, 15 March 2021
TIME:	2.00 pm
VENUE:	

MINUTES

Present Councillors Leech (Chair), Howard, Hunt, Lofts, Pickering, Platts and Tattersall

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

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

19 **Minutes of the North Area Council meeting held on 1st February 2021**

The Area Council received the minutes of the previous meeting held on 1st February 2021.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the North Area Council meeting held on 1st February 2021 be approved as a true and correct record.

20 **Welfare Advice Outreach Service Update - David Andy and Sharon Brown**

David Andy and Sharon Brown were welcomed to the meeting and gave a very detailed update on the Welfare Advice Outreach Service, jointly delivered by Citizens Advice and DIAL. Before the lockdown 1000 clients were assisted with benefit issues, with 285 clients gaining an additional £1,669,894 of benefits. During lockdown 1519 clients have been assisted with benefit issues with 173 clients assisted to gain £1,175,861 of benefits. Since the project began in 2015, there have been 8088 client contacts, with £10.4m of additional benefits gained and in excess of £1.65m of debt managed, representing a return on investment for the Area Council of £26 per £1 spent. Three case studies were provided for information.

RESOLVED that David and Andy be congratulated on this very strong performance and that thanks be passed on to staff who had continued to deliver the service with positivity even though going through a very challenging time themselves.

21 **Super Fast South Yorkshire - Julie Tattershall & Natalie Ward**

Julie Tattershall, Superfast South Yorkshire Project and Contracts Manager and Natalie Ward, City Fibre Manager, were welcomed to the meeting.

A presentation was delivered to explain the role of City Fibre. There are currently 67 projects underway to provide a full fibre gigabit capable network. £32m of investment has been made and the current build will last just over 2 years. It is a case of short term pain for longer term gain. City Fibre uses existing infrastructure so there is no need to dig and they also use duct and pole sharing. The network is gigabit capable, dependent on need, and residents will be able to get 1gb per second, which is

phenomenal. An interactive map for the whole of the UK is available and will be shared. More information will be shared with members as the project progresses.

Members heard how SFSY was a partnership between the four South Yorkshire local authorities, Building Digital UK, Openreach and the Local Enterprise Partnership. So far SFSY had increased availability of superfast broadband from 80% to over 98% bringing nearly 120,000 new connections. In addition, support had been provided to SMEs on how to gain the benefits of connectivity and advice relating to infrastructure had also been provided to developers and to planning departments.

Members noted the current activity being undertaken, including working with Openreach to provide fibre to the premises for 8,000 homes, inputting into digital strategies in Barnsley and the City Region and also being consulted on digital connectivity as part of the planning process.

RESOLVED that thanks be given for the presentation, and that its content be noted.

22 Public Health Covid-19 update (North Area) - Cath Bedford / Lucy Butcher / Leyla Brooke

Lucy Butcher and Leyla Brooke were welcomed to the meeting and updated Members with regard to the current Covid-19 situation. It was reported that case rates are slowly declining but it is important that guidelines continue to be followed. Case rates in 65+ are continuing to reduce. A pattern is emerging within areas of deprivation which have higher case rates. This includes lots of household mixing in parks and open spaces and lots of travel with associated busy roads. There has been violence in town centres and a lack of use of face coverings. Consultation data is currently being analysed. Most people follow guidelines but some are confused by the advice, with the largest gap in understanding relating to self-isolation requirements. The intended uptake of the vaccine is high and is above the national average. Vulnerable and vaccine hesitant groups are being targeted to encourage vaccination, despite the anti vaccine campaigners. Asymptomatic testing at the Metrodome continues. Members were asked to feed in any concerns through the usual channels. It was also reported that all 27 licensed premises in the North Area have been contacted for advice and support, which has also been given to community centres etc.

RESOLVED that officers be thanked for their attendance and contribution and the update be noted.

23 Stronger Communities Grant - Panel Update

The Area Council Manager introduced this item, updating Members about the North Area Council Stronger Communities Grant application and allocation process and the outcome of the grant panel meeting and the projects approved for funding. The performance management and monitoring arrangements for successful projects were also outlined. It was reported that a total of 6 applications were received before the deadline totalling £55,772.06. 5 applications were agreed for funding: North West Church – Re-Connect: Building Resilience and new confidence with older people; Ad Astra – 5 Star Well Being: Gender Based; Reds in the Community – Transition with the Reds; Age UK Barnsley – Covid Recovery North Area, Butterflies Dementia Support and Activities Group - Barugh Green Social Club Weekly Tea Dance.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) Members note the NAC Stronger Communities Grant update and the projects that have been approved for funding,
- (ii) Members agree the performance and monitoring arrangements, and
- (iii) Panel members be thanked for their work on the panel

24 Commissioning, Project Development and Finance

The Area Council Manager provided the Area Council with a financial position and forecast for expenditure based on the projects that have been proposed, outlining the projects which have been commissioned, including the Anti-Poverty Community Outreach Project, Clean and Green contract and the work of the Housing Cohesion Officer.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) The North Area Council should note the existing budget position and funding commitments;
- (ii) Members agree to offer a further contract for welfare advice through the Anti-Poverty Community Outreach Project on a 12 month basis
- (iii) A workshop be arranged for late April with regard to the social inclusion and cold homes project to avoid duplication with other projects.

25 Report of the Ward Alliance Fund

The Area Council Manager updated the North Area Council on the financial position of the Ward Alliance budget for each ward for the 2020/21 period. It was highlighted that there has been a flurry of applications received since the start of the New Year as thoughts turn to recovery after Covid.

RESOLVED that

- (i) Ward Alliances pay particular attention to the Ward Alliance Covid-19 Recovery Plan document when developing project during the remainder of 2020/21, and
- (ii) Each Ward in the North Area Council area prioritises the efficient expenditure of the Ward Alliance Funds 2020/21, in line with the guidance on spend.

26 Notes from the Area's Ward Alliances

The meeting received the notes from the Darton East, Darton West, Old Town and St Helen's Ward Alliances. Further updates were received as follows:

Darton East - Hanging baskets have been approved, with sponsorship agreed. Healthy Holidays delivered 74 food parcels to struggling families during February half term with lots of positive feedback received.

Darton West - More applications than ever before are being received from groups who are struggling financially in the current climate and consideration is being given

to how to deal with this in the longer term. The Active Travel Hub is being closely looked at and should be a fantastic addition to the area once it is up and running.

Old Town - Wilthorpe Park funding has been approved along with funding for Pogmoor Football Club Ladies and Walking Football for older people.

St Helen's - Spring bulbs are starting to flower and it is hoped that a gala may be possible later in the year. February food packs have been distributed.

The Chair thanked all Ward Alliance Members for their hard work over this difficult time.

RESOLVED that the notes of the respective Ward Alliances be noted.

Chair