

MEETING:	South Area Council
DATE:	Friday, 23 April 2021
TIME:	10.00 am
VENUE:	Held Virtually

MINUTES

Present

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

21 Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

Councillors Franklin, Lamb and Shepherd each declared a non-pecuniary interest in minute number 28 and 29 due to their positions as directors of Forge Community Partnership.

22 Minutes of the Meeting of South Area Council held on 12th February, 2021 (Sac.23.04.2021/2)

The meeting considered the minutes of South Area Council held on 12th February, 2021.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the South Area Council held on 12th February, 2021 be approved as a true and correct record.

23 Notes of the Ward Alliances (Sac.23.04.2021/3)

The meeting received the notes from the following Ward Alliances:- Hoyland Milton and Rockingham held on 3rd March, 2021; Darfield held on 18th March, 2021; and Wombwell held on 1st March, 2021.

The Chair made Members aware of serious issues in her Ward, with illegal off-road biking extremely prevalent. It was suggested that the culprits were aware of Councillors aims to prevent this, which had resulted in Councillors being targeted. The Chair, Councillor Markham, had been assaulted by a biker, being knocked to the floor, and there were reports of Councillor Smith's house being vandalised.

Issues had also been seen in other Wards within the South Area, including in Jump Valley. Members were encouraged to supply intelligence to Fiona Tennyson, Tasking Officer, and were urged to call 999 in an emergency.

It was noted that a proposal to help combat the issue was due to be considered later in the meeting.

RESOLVED that the notes from the Ward Alliances be received.

24 City Fibre - Natalie Ward (Sac.23.04.2021/4)

Natalie Ward, City Manager, was welcomed to the meeting. Members heard that a programme of £32m of investment in Barnsley had commenced in January, 2021.

The programme would provide a model of full fibre infrastructure to allow improved internet connections that would be suitable for decades to come. The build involved both under and over ground work which would take around three years to complete for the first phase.

Members were made aware of the details of the build and how the infrastructure would look. It was acknowledged that City Fibre owned infrastructure, but that the service would be provided by Internet Service Providers.

Members heard that work had commenced in January, and that City Fibre was working closely with the Council, engaging all stakeholders where possible, and raising awareness of the work being undertaken.

Noted was the workflow and additional communications to ensure residents were aware of the work in the area. It was acknowledged that this had been impinged somewhat by the pandemic. However, it was hoped that face to face discussions could be had in the coming months as restrictions were reduced. A suggestion was made for Members to highlight any avenue of potential stakeholder engagement, through briefings, events or publications.

Members questioned the reinstatement of pavements and roadways following work, and it was noted that this would be undertaken on a like for like basis. Should issues arise, Members were made aware of the complaints process and that a team was dedicated to Barnsley was on hand to consider defects.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

25 Public Health Update - Diane Lee (Sac.23.04.2021/5)

Diane Lee, Head of Public Health, provided an update in relation to the recently undertaken 'A day in the life of...' exercise. Members of the public had been asked to complete a diary, giving details of their feelings on 3rd November, which enabled a greater understanding of the impact of Covid-19 on everyday life.

320 diaries had been completed with 191 A4 pages of narrative. Comments had been arranged under key themes.

There was a clear mix of feelings, with many reporting impacts on mental health, increased anxiety: feeling worried about themselves and their children. However, many recognised that this would be temporary, and it was ok to feel this way.

There were also positives in that the pandemic allowed many to undertake things they may not normally have time for. Many had explored the natural environment on their doorstep and had been able to support local businesses

With some working from home, the need to have a separation of home and work was acknowledged. The increased social isolation, both at work and home was noted, and the realisation that many people were isolated and lonely prior to the pandemic. However, for some there had been an increase in community spirit and the ability to build local relationships.

The pandemic had meant an impact on health, with more unhealthy food consumed, less exercise and an impact on the quality of sleep. The hidden harm from cancelled appointments and operations was also acknowledged. Members noted that report did contain signposting for support to relevant agencies.

A suggestion was made to address isolation, build community spirit, and improve health by introducing more walking groups in the area. It was agreed that colleagues in Communities and Public Health explore this further.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

26 Covid-19 Update - Kay Tinkler (Sac.23.04.2021/6)

Kay Tinkler, Neighbourhood Engagement Officer, spoke to the report circulated. It was noted that case rates remained high when compared to the national average, with a 7-day average of 66 per 100,000. However, this continued to fall. Cases were largely linked to household transmission, which was often also linked to school or work places. There were no specific issues for the South Area.

Contact had been made with licensed premises regarding reopening safely, with the majority being visited to provide advice and guidance. If there were any concerns regarding non-compliance, Members were encouraged to report these to Regulatory Services. It was noted that publicans and provided positive comments to Members about the support they have received.

Neighbourhood Engagement Officers had worked with libraries and museums to support reopening and had developed a toolkit to support community groups to reopen venues. Advice and support were also available. Members were asked to encourage community groups to access support if they had plans to hold any events.

Issues of non-compliance were discussed in relation to young people gathering in large numbers, drinking alcohol. It was noted that this would be reported to Covid Marshals to follow up.

RESOLVED that thanks be given for the report and support in the area, and that the report be noted.

27 Report on the Use of Ward Alliance Funds (Sac.23.04.2021/7)

Members noted the finance remaining at the end of the financial year. Also noted was the amounts of returned finance, which was often as a result of securing finance from other sources.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

28 Performance Report (Sac.23.04.2021/8)

The Area Council Manager introduced the item, noting that this was an annual report of performance. The attention of Members was drawn to the priorities of the Area Council, including the recent addition of 'Health and Wellbeing for All'. It was noted that each commissioned service contributed to a number of priorities.

Over the past year all contracts were required to flex and adapt to meet the needs of the community in light of the pandemic.

The Tidy Team had been delivered by Anvil CiC, a trading arm of Forge Community Partnership until the end of March, 2021. The service had continued to be provided throughout the pandemic, and had been supporting Neighbourhood Services, including targeting areas which had seen an increase in litter. It was noted that the service had engaged with 175 new volunteers, supported 277 events/projects and had assisted 75 community groups.

Members discussed the large numbers of purple waste bags around the area where volunteers had collected waste for disposal, but which had yet to be collected. It was noted that the revised Tidy Team service would continue to support groups and residents with this whether that be arranging for Neighbourhood services to pick up bags if it's an independent group or litter picker or support from the Tidy Team where they are involved in supporting the group and delivering the work or project.

Discussions had taken place with the current service provider and Neighbourhood Services about this. It was noted that there had been issues with the volume of waste being collected and the capacity to collect this. It was hoped that this would be resolved imminently.

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Questions were raised in relation to the 'Tidy Team' name, and the merits of changing this to differentiate between the outgoing and incoming providers. On balance it was felt important to retain the 'Tidy Team' name which was well known throughout the South Area. Members also requested for contact details of the provider to be circulated.

Those present went on to discuss the Better Together Service delivered by Age UK Barnsley. The service had employed two social inclusion workers who had provided one to one support to 168 residents. 448 people had accessed groups or activities, 36 community car journeys had been undertaken for essential purposes and 43 Good Neighbour relationships developed, which were hoped would carry on after the pandemic.

The service provided by District Enforcement had been impacted by the pandemic but officers were able to support efforts by patrolling in parks, open spaces and high streets to ensure adherence to restrictions. More recently the service had returned to normal duties, concentrating on parking enforcement to help traffic flowing and patrolling areas identified as hotspots of littering and dog fouling. 458 Parking Charge Notices had been issued, together with 17 Fixed Penalty Notices for dog fouling and 32 for littering.

Members' attention was drawn to the performance of the Private Sector Housing Officer, who had provided support for both landlords and tenants. The officer had been supported with enforcement from the Community Safety Service, and formal notices had been issued where required. The service had been proactive, developed relationships and ensured that those in need were aware of support.

The service providing local information and advice, delivered by CAB, had previously done so via face to face sessions at three venues in the area. However, this had moved to be provided via telephone and digital means as a result of the pandemic. 1,234 individuals had been supported with 715 being new to the service. The service had helped 10 individuals to avoid homelessness and helped residents to manage around £345,000 of debt. It was noted that the majority of assistance provided was related to benefits, but enquiries relating to employment and furlough had significantly increased.

£10,000 of finance had been utilised by the Ward Alliances to deliver the Healthy Holidays Programme. The programme had delivered 918 healthy lunches, 37 healthy holiday sessions and had engaged 53 volunteers. Thanks were given to all those involved in the effort.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) That the report be noted;
- (ii) That contact details for the new 'Tidy Team' be circulated to Members.

29 Procurement and Financial Update (Sac.23.04.2021/9)

The Area Council Manager introduced the item by referring to the financial situation. Within the current financial year, the Area Council had £24,800 unallocated with an additional £60,000 ringfenced to address social isolation.

Members noted the service, Better Together, currently delivered by Age UK Barnsley, which aimed to address social isolation. It was noted that the service was due to end on 31st August, 2021. A workshop had been held to consider performance and ongoing demand. Over the previous 12 months the service had, amongst other things, supported 168 people with one to one support; supported 295 people to access other support; assisted 42 people dealing with fuel poverty; and encouraged 135 people to get involved in physical activity. The workshop had highlighted that challenges with social isolation existed prior to the pandemic and had been exacerbated by restrictions.

A number of options were considered, with the preferred option to recommission a service to reduce social isolation and loneliness. It was acknowledged that the service would need to be flexible as would need to respond to the lifting of restrictions, and the changing needs of service users.

Following consideration of recommendations relating to addressing social isolation and loneliness the meeting became inquorate. It was therefore suggested to call an additional meeting to consider proposals to address anti-social behaviour throughout the area due to off-road biking and to extend post office opening hours in Wombwell.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) That the social isolation and loneliness service is retendered, and the opportunity is advertised on YOR Tender as an open, transparent and competitive tender with a contract value of £60,000 per year for a three year (1+1+1) contract;
- (ii) That Councillor Lamb and Stowe take part in the tender process for the Social Isolation and Loneliness Service, scoring and sitting on the tender interview panel;
- (iii) That the South Area Council Manager develops a specification for the Social Isolation and Loneliness Service for consideration by Members taking into account feedback from the workshop held;
- (iv) That the Executive Director Communities be authorised to agree the final specification and tender information for all commissioning work detailed in the report, following consultation with Members of South Area Council.

30 Appreciation

Members expressed thanks to retiring Councillors for their hard work and dedication. Best wishes were provided for the future.

In addition, thanks were also given for the work of the Tidy Team delivered via Forge Community Partnership, and it was agreed that a letter of appreciation be sent praising the work of all team members, past and present.

RESOLVED that the Area Council Manager sends a letter of thanks to the Tidy Team delivered by Forge Community Partnership on behalf of the Area Council.

Chair