

MEETING:	Central Area Council
DATE:	Wednesday 19 July 2023
TIME:	2.00 pm
VENUE:	Reception Room - Barnsley Town Hall

MINUTES

Present Councillors K. Dyson (Chair), Bowser, Christmas, Clarke, Fielding, O'Donoghue, Mitchell, Moyes, Murray, Ramchandani and P. Wright

9 Declaration of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

Councillor Moyes declared a non-pecuniary interest in any item on the agenda insofar as it related to her employment by GMB.

10 Minutes of the Previous Meeting of Central Area Council held on 24 May 2023 (Cen.19.07.2023/2)

The meeting received the minutes from the previous meeting of Central Area Council held on 24 May 2023.

It was noted that the previous meeting had noted the potential overlap of the Worsbrough Ward Alliance and its Environmental Working Group. A meeting to discuss this was still outstanding. The Area Council Manager agreed that this would be arranged as soon as possible.

With regards to the Area Council Manager post, it was noted that Central Area Council still received six days of officer time per week provided, with Sarah Blunkett working for five days and Lisa Phelan for one. It was noted that the current arrangements were only temporary, but that any further recruitment had been paused due to the ongoing transformation process.

Members noted that Sarah Blunkett had unfortunately been off work ill, and Members wished to place on record their best wishes. It was noted that a card and flowers would be sent.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Central Area Council held on 24 May 2023 be approved as a true and correct record.

11 Cost of Living Crisis - Community Support - Chris Crookes (Cen.19.07.2023/3)

Chris Crookes, Project Officer – Wellbeing, was welcomed to the meeting. An overview of the current financial crisis was provided, which highlighted key statistics from the Director of Public Health Annual Report 2022.

Members were made aware that Barnsley received £4.7m of Household Support Grant (HSG) from April 23 to March 24, and Community Funding represented £800,000 of this. A breakdown of the Community Funding was provided, which

included £420,000 of funding allocated to 36 community organisations across the borough, and £180,000 for a fuel support service due to launch in September 23. This would provide fuel vouchers to support those on pre-payment meters and it was noted that Berneslai Homes had a package of support for their tenants in a similar position. It was noted that £200,000 had been allocated for a second round of funding for community providers, aimed at winter support.

Members were made of the schemes funded in the Central Area, such as Worsbrough Community Pantry, Stairfoot Food Bank, Mind, Body and Spirit and schemes delivered through Oakhill and Oakwell Rise Primary Schools. Noted were the Boroughwide Funded Schemes such as Age UK and DIAL Warm Homes Advisors and support through Citizen's Advice Bureau and Community First Credit Union.

Questions were raised about whether Ward Alliances could apply for finance to fund schemes, and it was agreed that it be confirmed whether this was possible. It was recognised that the finance available had already served to fund some projects in the area, which may have otherwise applied to the Ward Alliance.

Members noted the recently approved Barnsley Food Plan 2022-2025 and the associated priorities, they were also made aware of a number of schemes involved in delivering against these. Noted was the Healthy Holidays Programme running in the Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays and Members noted that this was strictly for those in receipt of Free School Meals. However, also noted was the support schools sometimes provided such as food parcels. Discussion took place around how to support families outside of those holidays and how to provide support to those who required it but were not in receipt of free school meals.

Members heard of the Community Shop on the Go, with a successful pilot undertaken in Thurnscoe and of plans to expand this. Also noted was the work in train to support the establishment of community pantries. Those present discussed the best placement of Community Pantries, and it was suggested that it was important to have low rents, easy access and a solid volunteer base.

Members were made aware differences in Food Banks, Food Pantries, and Community Fridges, with the ability to support people up the food ladder from crisis to being able to take control of their situation. Members also discussed the wraparound support available, with signposting from food sources to such as Citizen's Advice Bureau.

It was noted that Household Support Grant could not be relied upon indefinitely, so work was ongoing to support any group to become more sustainable in the longer term, for example through small membership fees. It was noted that a toolkit was available to support groups to establish such support mechanisms and that need not necessarily have charitable status.

Questions were asked about how healthy the surplus food provided was, and it was acknowledged that whilst healthy food would be preferred, the supply was related to which food was surplus.

Members discussed different sources of surplus food through such as fairshare, and through contacts with local food outlets such as Greggs, Coop, Tesco and Asda. It

was noted that the use of apps such as Too Good To Go, and Olio was also promoted via the More Money in Your Pocket Website.

Those present then discussed support with hygiene and it was noted that although there were few bespoke schemes, this issues was considered by Health Watch, Youth Clubs, Warm Spaces and Community Panties as part of their work.

RESOLVED:-

- i) That thanks be given for the presentation and update in relation to Community Support;
- ii) That a Tenants First Officer from Berneslai Homes be invited to a future meeting of the Area Council to discuss their support to tenants in relation to the Cost of Living Crisis.

12 Procurement and Financial Update (Cen.19.07.2023/4)

The Area Council Manager introduced the item, drawing attention to the overview of activities funded by the Area Council. Also noted was the current financial situation, and that forecast.

Members then noted the intention of the recommendations, which was to align all Area Council commitments to conclude in March 2025. This would allow a more fundamental review of priorities and use of finance throughout 2024, considering relevant data, the outcome of trial projects, and appropriate monitoring and evaluation.

It was noted that the projects currently funded by the Social Isolation Challenge Fund were due to conclude in Spring 2024, and there was no opportunity to extend these. It was therefore suggested to launch a further round of the Fund with a total value of £130,000 to procure similar services for one year until 31 March 2025.

Similarly, it was noted that the outreach youth work provided across the area was due to end in June 2024. Therefore, it was suggested to launch a further Youth Work Fund to procure outreach youth work for 9 months from 1 July 2024 to 31 March 2025.

It was acknowledged that the recommendations considered had emanated from recently held workshops. Members were encouraged to engage in future workshops where this was possible.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that Members noted the overview of Central Area Council's current priorities, and overview of all current contracts, contract extensions, Service Level Agreements and Wellbeing Fund projects, with associated timescales;
- (ii) that Members noted the actual financial position to date for 2023-2024 and the projected expenditure, including future proposals, to 2023-2025 as outlined in Appendices 1 & 2 of the report;

- (iii) that Members noted there was a Supporting Vulnerable People and Social Isolation workshop for Members to explore recent project reviews and research, which resulted in a number of options and recommendations;
- (iv) That Members agree to progress the commissioning of services via a 'Social Isolation Challenge Fund' with a financial envelope of £130,000 for 1 year from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, and that this is progressed by the Area Council Manager, in conjunction with a panel made up of Central Area Council Elected Members, with responsibility delegated to the Executive Director Public Health and Communities for the approval of grants and procurement of services;
- (v) That Members agree to open a Youth Work Fund to fund outreach youth work for the period of 9 months from 1 July 2024 to 31 March 2025 with a financial envelope of £50,000, and that this is progressed by the Area Council Manager, in conjunction with a panel made up of Central Area Council Elected Members, with responsibility delegated to the Executive Director Public Health and Communities for the approval of grants and procurement of services.

13 Notes of the Ward Alliances (Cen.19.07.2023/5)

The meeting received the notes of the following meetings of the Ward Alliances in the area:-

Central Ward Alliance held on 26 April and 24 May 2023;
 Dodworth Ward Alliance held on 18 April and 30 May 2023;
 Kingstone Ward Alliance held on 17 May and 28 June 2023;
 Stairfoot Ward Alliance held on 15 May and 12 June 2023;
 Worsbrough Ward Alliance held on 13 April, 24 May (Environmental Working Group) and 25 May 2023.

The attention of Members was drawn to the investment made by Worsbrough Ward Alliance to the Community Pantry, which is working extremely well.

Members discussed the event being planned to celebrate 10 years of the area governance arrangements. Most of the Ward Alliances had made a contribution to the costs, or were set to consider this very shortly.

RESOLVED that the notes from the Ward Alliances be received.

14 Report on the Use of Ward Alliance Funds (Cen.19.07.2023/6)

Members received the report which detailed the use of Ward Alliance Funds in each of the Wards in the area.

RESOLVED that the report on the use of Ward Alliance Funds be received.

 Chair