

MEETING:	North Area Council
DATE:	Monday, 27 January 2020
TIME:	10.00 am
VENUE:	Meeting Room 1 - Barnsley Town Hall

MINUTES

Present Councillors Leech (Chair), T. Cave, Hunt, Lofts, Pickering, Platts and Tattersall

39 Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

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

40 Minutes of the North Area Council meeting held on 18th November 2019

The Area Council received the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 18th November, 2019.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the North Area Council meeting held on the 18th November, 2019 be approved as a true and correct record.

41 Violence Reduction Unit - Mark Miller

Mr Mark Miller (Community Safety Team Leader) attended the meeting and gave a presentation on the establishment and operation of the Violence Reduction Unit.

He explained that in October, 2019 he had been seconded to the Unit which had been established by the Police and Crime Commissioner as a partnership between the Local Authority and the South Yorkshire Police. The Unit had been borne out of previous government initiatives aimed at reducing serious violence and knife crime. South Yorkshire Police and other key stakeholders had been allocated £1.6m from the Government to establish the Unit which had been based on a model originally piloted in Glasgow. It was hoped that early investment and intervention using a multi-agency approach could assist in tackling the root causes of violence and thereby prevent problems escalating.

A profile was being developed for each area which would set out the current position with regard to violent incidents as well as the key issues for that area. A draft had been prepared and would be launched shortly. From the profile, a strategy for violence reduction would be developed which would outline the actions to be taken by multiple agencies who were all to be asked to 'buy in' to the approach. Agencies to be involved included the Local Authority, Police, Fire as well as other providers/services including the Youth Offending Team, schools, the Crime Commissioning Team as well as the Health Service.

Members of the Area Council welcomed this approach and in response to questioning Mark Miller gave a brief outline of the type of work to be undertaken and particular mention was made to:-

- work with schools and early intervention proposals
- gun and knife crime, domestic violence, assault and drug related offences

- the ways in which Elected Members could refer issues identified within their community
- issues related to the night time economy and work being undertaken with bars, clubs and other venues

Mark Miller commented that the development of the strategy was an extensive piece of work which would include the views and concerns of local residents following a consultation exercise.

The Chair and Members of the Area Council thanked Mark Miller for his most informative presentation.

42 Environmental Education Contract (Clean and Green Service) - John and Wendy Twigg

John and Wendy Twigg gave a presentation on the background to and current position with regard to the Environmental Education Contract (Clean and Green Service). The presentation included, amongst other things:

- The work undertaken since the commencement of the contract and the issues of which they were most proud. It was pleasing to note the amount of encouragement and support they now received as well as the direct links forged with schools and with businesses
- The shift of culture/attitude to self-sufficiency and a move away from reliance on council services to a partnership approach
- Information was circulated showing 'before' and 'after' photographs together with statistics relating to work undertaken
- The return on investment in terms of volunteer hours and the number of work placements offered.
- Information was also provided on the work undertaken with school pupils with varying abilities and particular reference was made to the work undertaken with Greenacre school and with Barnsley College students
- Work with businesses to reduce waste particularly plastic and glass and work with pharmacies to encourage safe disposal of sharps
- Liaison that was undertaken with organisations including the Woodland Trust, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and the Recovery College

Members of the Area Council welcomed the progress made and in response to questioning information was provided on:

- The specific work undertaken over the last couple of months
- The challenges encountered during the transition from reliance on the authority to a partnership and volunteering approach
- The improvements in liaison and partnership approach with external bodies and organisations
- the improvement in the environment for wildlife

The Chair and Members thanked both John and Wendy Twigg for their most encouraging presentation.

43 Excess Winter Deaths - Julie Tolhurst, Anna Stobbs and Sharon Brown (DIAL)

The Area Council received three presentations under the banner of tackling Excessive Winter Deaths.

The first presentation by Julie Tolhurst (Public Health Principal) gave a general overview of the current position with regard to the number of winter deaths within the borough (with statistical comparisons to national data) and the steps being taken to tackle issues identified. Particular reference was made to the following:

- The trends (national and local) from 2001 – 2017 which indicated that the number of winter deaths was higher in Barnsley. Information was also provided for the Area Council
- The reasons for the increase in the number of deaths together with the underlying causes. Within this context reference was made to the number of people living with underlying health conditions, access to services to manage conditions, social isolation and fuel poverty
- The actions of DIAL in promoting the warmer homes project
- The development of an action plan in association with partners to start to address issues
- The work of partners and volunteers
- The importance of disseminating key messages to vulnerable residents about ways of avoiding excessive cold and about remaining healthy

In the ensuing discussion the following matters were raised:

- It was important to undertake a further in-depth analysis of the data in order to identify the root causes for the increase in deaths and the ways in which such matters could be tackled. Once this analysis had been undertaken it would be shared with members of the Area Council. It was noted that the Business Intelligence Team was currently undertaking an analysis for the previous quarter and a further report could be provided in the spring
- Reference was made to the work of the Task and Finish Group on poverty. Arising out of this, reference was made to the housing commission stock survey which was to be undertaken and to the issue in some wards in relation to housing conditions and energy efficiency

The second presentation by Sharon Brown of DIAL, supported by Margaret Richardson (Caseworker – Warm Homes) focused on the Warm Homes, Warm Connections initiative. The initiative provided emotional and practical support and advice to isolated and energy vulnerable residents.

Sharon Brown briefly outlined how the initiative operated and made particular reference to the following:

- The social return on the investment and how this was calculated. It was noted that since last January 304 home visits had been made to residents who were socially isolated or who were living in cold homes or both
- The ways in which stakeholders and residents were identified
- The way in which the added value of the initiative was calculated and determined

- The intended changes introduced, what the performance measures were and how this was measured
- The number of volunteers participating in the initiative and the financial value this equated to. It was noted that for every £1 spent the social return value had been calculated to be £11.86
- Other external factors that had impacted or affected the changes that had occurred

In the ensuing discussion particular reference was made to the following:

- Detailed statistical information on the operation of the scheme would be provided on a ward by ward basis at a future date. It was noted, however, that there would be a lag between the implementation of the initiative and the impact that the service had on the number of winter deaths in the locality
- Margaret Homes explained the action taken to refer residents for first time central heating or boiler replacements. Work was also undertaken to assist residents to undertake price comparisons and to change their energy suppliers to reduce costs. This was not always easy as some residents were reluctant to change suppliers for a number of reasons but there were, in many cases, significant savings to be made
- It was noted that in some instances grants for certain energy efficiency improvements were available. Assistance was also available from various energy suppliers. Information on the number of residents assisted in this respect would be made available for the Area Council Manager for distribution

The third presentation by Anna Stobbs (Public Health) focussed on Social Isolation. She explained the initiatives and commissioned services that had been introduced to tackle this issue and made reference to other activities within the North Area Council area which, whilst not 'labelled' social isolation, nevertheless contributed to addressing that issue.

At a national level, a strategy had been agreed to tackle social isolation and loneliness and a number of commitments had been identified, however, there was currently little clarity nor a single solution identified. Such a strategy would bring together local government, public services, the voluntary and community sectors, businesses together with public health which it was hoped would address the root causes of social isolation. She then made reference to the various strands under consideration which included social prescribing, employee pledges, improving public spaces as well as other innovative solutions to loneliness. The Government now wanted to receive reports on the progress of schemes to tackle loneliness. There would be a combination of solutions and in order to ensure a successful outcome it was particularly important to ensure that they were all fully evaluated.

Anna Stobbs then gave a brief overview of current actions. A Task and Finish Group was currently examining a borough wide approach and an all Member Information Briefing was to be held on the 11th February, 2020.

She then went on to refer to specific Foundation, Direct and Gateway Services and the ways in which these impacted on and contributed to reducing social isolation.

A meeting was to be held with all Area Managers to look at a collective review and the outcome of these discussions would be fed into the wider review which would determine an appropriate approach.

In the ensuing discussion, particular reference was made to the following:

- The reasons for social isolation, the types of groups available, the reluctance of some (men in particular) to join such groups and the ways in which these issues could be overcome
- The ways in which Area Councils could assist in reducing social isolation by highlighting gaps in provision
- The role of Public Health and the NHS in identifying and addressing issues
- The role of 'social prescribers' in signposting individuals to various groups as well as the links with the Stronger Communities Partnership
- It was anticipated that the outcome of the review would be available towards the end of the year

The Chair and Members of the Area Council thanked Julie Tolhurst, Sharon Brown, Margaret Richardson and Anna Stobbs for their most informative presentations and for answering Members questions.

44 Young People's Health and Wellbeing Project Specification - procurement update

The Area Council Manager introduced the item and asked Members to reflect on the discussions that had taken place recently at the workshop which had explored the opportunity for a North Area Council funded young people's project.

Members were reminded of the background and intended focus for the project and were given an overview outlining the current position with the development of the project.

The project was currently out to tender, however, the advertisement had been delayed which meant that it would not be possible for the service to commence until May 2020 at the earliest. It was noted that a provider presentation was scheduled for the 12th March, 2020.

RESOLVED that the procurement update be noted.

45 Commissioning, Project Development and Finance - to include update from budget profiling workshop

The Area Council Manager provided introduced this item and provided Members of the Area Council with a financial position and forecast for expenditure based on the projects that had been proposed.

It was reported that the specification for the Environmental Education contract was to be reviewed at a workshop planned for 3rd March, 2020. The Grants Panel was to meet on the 28th February, 2020 for the Evaluation Panel and it was particularly important that the Area Council Manager was alerted to any proposed commissioning profile variations so that feasibility considerations could be made at the earliest opportunity. It was also noted that decisions on the continuance of various projects

would have to be taken at the March meeting so that there was sufficient time to advertise tender opportunities.

The Area Council Manager reported that whilst the Housing Migration Officer post was currently vacant a successful recruitment exercise had been undertaken and following interviews on the 17th January, 2020 the post had been filled (subject to the usual background checks). Details of the commencement date would be provided once this was known.

It was also reported that the closing date for applications for the Stronger Communities Grant was 12.00 noon on the 31st January, 2020.

The forecast for 2019/20 showed that whilst there was a significant underspend (including underspend from previous years,) this would be reduced to £156,433 and the reasons for this were outlined. In addition, there were some sizeable projects upon which decisions were required in March 2020 which meant that there was unlikely to be any further underspends going forward.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the existing budget position and funding commitments be noted;
- (ii) That the current position regarding the recruitment to the Housing Migration Officer post be noted; and
- (iii) That a Workshop be arranged to review the Environmental Specification prior to a decision on whether or not to re-commission the project.

46 Report on the use of Ward Alliance Funds

The Area Council Manager updated the North Area Council regarding the financial position of the Ward Alliance budget for each ward for the 2019/20 period.

It was particularly noted that in September 2019 an additional £10,000 of devolved ward budget had been allocated to each Ward Alliance. This finance would roll over into the following financial year.

RESOLVED that each Ward in the North Area Council area prioritises the efficient expenditure of the Ward Alliance Funds 2019/20, in line with the guidance on spend.

47 Notes from the area's Ward Alliances

The meeting received the notes from the Darton East Ward Alliance held on the 12th November and 10th December, 2019; Darton West Ward Alliance held on the 6th November, 2019; Old Town Ward Alliance held on the 12th November, 2019; and St Helen's Ward Alliance held on the 14th November, 2019.

Further information was provided as follows:

Within the Darton East Ward, the Christmas Lights switch on had been well supported at Woolley Colliery, however, the Darton Christmas Tree had been vandalised for the second year in succession so consideration was to be given to

whether or not provision should be made next year. It was also reported that the Christmas Disco had been a success and there had been good attendance for the Father Christmas event.

In the Darton West Ward work was progressing on the first phase of the Park development, footpath works and bulb planting etc. In addition, the Christmas lights switch on, Remembrance Day and poppy events had been successful.

The Old Town Ward has supported the St Paul's Christmas Community Celebration which had been a success. The Christmas events had been well attended. A number of issues had been raised in relation to Traffic Regulation Orders and investigations were progressing into the feasibility of undertaking a summer project for children.

In the St Helen's Ward investigations were being undertaken in relation to the possible provision of a defibrillator. The Ward Alliance had provided support for the Caterpillar Club and the Junior Tykes and the Christmas events had been successful. Thanks were extended to all who had rallied round to address vandalism issues. The Memorial service at Laithes Chapel had been successful and schools were thanked for participating in events. Moving forward, the Alliance was looking at developing the Ward Plan and specific reference was made to the development of happy healthy eating events. Information was also referred to in relation to forthcoming projects/bids and specific reference was made to, amongst other things, the provision of a bench in memory of soldiers from the Yorkshire Regiment. Reference was also made to the provision of funding for smart water marking.

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

Chair