

MEETING:	North Area Council
DATE:	Friday, 5 June 2020
TIME:	2.00 pm
VENUE:	THIS MEETING WILL BE HELD VIRTUALLY

MINUTES

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

57 Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

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

58 Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed participants, the Press and the public to the meeting, highlighting that this meeting was to be streamed live over the internet and that a recording would be available on the Barnsley MBC website shortly after the conclusion of the meeting.

59 Minutes of the North Area Council meeting held on 16th March, 2020

The Area Council received the minutes of the previous meeting held on 16th March 2020. It was highlighted that the waiver for the anti-poverty steering group has now been progressed and is awaiting sign-off.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the North Area Council meeting held on the 16th March 2020 be approved as a true and correct record.

60 Covid-19 Presentation

David Robinson, Service Director Customer Information and Digital Services, and Phil Hollingsworth, Service Director Stronger, Safer and Healthier Communities were welcomed to the meeting to deliver a presentation on BMBC's Covid-19 Recovery Plan.

An overview of the strategic approach was provided, acknowledging that Covid-19 was different to previous incidents due to its length and ongoing impact and the requirement for responses to be agile and adaptive.

The pandemic also offered opportunities to realign values and to create a new 'normal'. Members heard how the Government had drafted a recovery and renewal strategy, and a recovery plan was also in development at a South Yorkshire level, with Barnsley plans aligned and complementary to this. It was noted future plans needed to be interactive, agile and iterative in order to respond to the need for services to be turned on and off in relation to further peaks and that responses would

be different depending on the needs of particular groups of people, including those shielding.

Three horizons were considered – H1 immediate recovery steps (April-June 2020), H2 post-peak recovery steps (July-December 2020) and H3 realising the recovery objectives (2021 onwards). It was suggested that Barnsley was moving into H2, with lockdown being lifted, and that this was a period of innovation. As Barnsley moves forward the H3 horizon will be the future that we want with the outcomes Barnsley desires. Barnsley is Currently in the 'collision zone' where all 3 horizons meet.

A 5 point recovery and renewal strategy is proposed, encompassing: Humanitarian (Health and Wellbeing), Business Economy, Building Resilience, Education and Attainment and finally Infrastructure and the Environment. This will go to Cabinet over the next few weeks. An impact analysis will be conducted, what's stopping, starting and continuing will be identified, the key recovery actions and plan will be set out, a 100 day recovery plan will be implemented alongside ongoing monitoring, learning, testing and adapting. It was recognised that all of these need to be underpinned by the financial stability of the Council.

It was highlighted that we have already seen how commissioned services and community organisations have flexed to adapt their service models and continue support to local communities. However, there is a need to review funding assumptions made for all budgets in 2020/21. Funding allocations for area councils remain unchanged but there is a need to consider whether the planned priorities remain the same. There is likely to be an exacerbated impact on poverty and worklessness, education, mental health and emotional wellbeing, economic impact, coupled with a need to re-establish the fabric of society and the health and wellbeing impact from lack of service availability.

There is an opportunity to build on the digital agenda, inclusive economy, more agile working, changing support networks and examples of greater community spirit as exemplified by the Thursday night support for NHS and care workers.

Members were reminded of the guidance issued in relation to Ward Alliance Funds, and that the base budget of £10,000 per ward would remain but plans for an additional £10,000 had been paused due to the current financial situation. It was emphasised that Ward Alliance expenditure should support recovery efforts, with the only exception being where finance has already been approved and local businesses have committed resources.

Although there was an interest in re-establishing community events, it was acknowledged that this was not appropriate in the current climate, but that this position would be reviewed during the remainder of 2020/21.

Members noted the previous requirement for Ward Alliance Funds to match 50% of their budgets with external finance or volunteer time was to be relaxed until it is possible to hold public events.

An update was provided in relation to the provision of grass cutting, which had been impacted on from prioritising domestic waste collection. It was noted that that this would now recommence as staff return to substantive grass cutting duties from 8th June and the backlog being addressed in due course.

The North Area Council Manager outlined the North Area Team's Response to the crisis, which initially was community mobilisation with Area Team support. Over 5000 leaflets were delivered across the area, Nestle Easter eggs were distributed to those in need and Community Responders stepped up, answering 84 requests for support.

Area Council contracts and grants have been flexed, including the Warm Connections Project, DIAL, Twiggs, CAB and YMCA and detailed information was provided of what this 'flexing' looked like. The Dementia Café and Emmanuel Churches Older Person Inclusion projects have had their start dates deferred. They will reopen when it is safe to do so in accordance with national guidance. The Area Council manager highlighted that it is a delicate balance of practical support and nurture and that the current North Area Priorities and Commissioning Intentions have a strong synergy with the 5 point plan outlined earlier.

Members were provided with detailed information on the North Area Council Budget. Those projects rated as 'Green' are continuing, those rated 'Amber' are being revised and those rated as 'Red' are being discontinued.

RESOLVED that Members note the presentation.

61 Discussion: reflection on the presentation and how the Area Council can assist our communities in recovery

Following the Covid-19 presentation, a discussion took place regarding how the Area Council can assist our communities in recovery and specifically what they would like to continue to do. Members were of the view that they wanted to use community groups and Ward Alliances to assist with the recovery but were unsure how to do this going forward with the requirement for social distancing etc. Reassurances were given that government guidance would be issued when available and that it may be possible to hold 'virtual' Ward Alliance meetings until such time as face to face meetings can recommence.

Members thanked Council staff and volunteers for all their hard work in supporting the community together with NHS staff, care home workers and all Council key workers. The Area Council Manager highlighted that there is an increasing number of vulnerable individuals in the community who may not meet threshold for statutory support and the Area Council and volunteers have been instrumental in identifying and supporting them. It is now a case of 'surviving', not thriving, and there is a greater awareness of pressures in the community, particularly amongst older and vulnerable people who have needed support. This greater depth of contact into communities should definitely be seen as a positive.

Existing contracts will help with the recovery and are closely aligned to the Recovery Strategy. Throughout the crisis there has been a food parcel service, medication

delivery and community befriending. The South Yorkshire Resilience Forum is in place to manage those individuals who are shielding. An exit strategy will be put in place for those who are shielding so that appropriate plans and step-down arrangements can be put in place for those who have become reliant on the service. The Befriending service will look at what is appropriate to sustain, using existing organisations and volunteers and building on it. Recovery planning is still in the early stages and will take 12-18 months.

RESOLVED that

- (i) Contract waiver arrangements will be put in place for existing contracts which were due for retendering (Environmental Education until March 2021 and a 12 month waiver for Anti-Poverty Outreach).
- (ii) A new start date will be agreed with the Community Cohesion and Housing Officer and the Young People's project.

62 Environmental Education Contract Specification

The Area Council Manager introduced this item, summarising the project development activity that has taken place regarding the North's Environment Priority and associated Environmental Education Contract. Next steps regarding the future investment in this priority area were also presented to Members for consideration.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) The North Area Council should note key points identified at the priority workshop held on the 16th April 2020;
- (ii) The North Area Council agreed the content of the specification at Appendix1; and
- (iii) The North Area Council agreed to proceed with the procurement of the revised specification following a 6 month waiver of the existing contract

63 Close of the meeting

The Chair declared the meeting closed.

Chair