

MEETING:	Dearne Area Council
DATE:	Monday, 16 November 2020
TIME:	10.00 am
VENUE:	Held Virtually

MINUTES

Present Councillors Noble (Chair), Danforth, Gardiner, C. Johnson and Phillips.

1 Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

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

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting of Dearne Area Council held on 14th September, 2020 (Dac.16.11.2020/2)

The meeting received the minutes from the previous meeting of Dearne Area Council.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Dearne Area Council meeting held on 14th September, 2020 be approved as a true and correct record.

3 Goldthorpe Investment Plan - Paul Clifford (Dac.16.11.2020/3)

Paul Clifford, Head of Economic Development, was welcomed to the meeting.

A brief overview of the government programme was given. Interventions of up to £25m were to be supported, with 90% of funds for capital expenditure. It was envisaged that the investment would be for up to five years, and that this would help encourage further investment from either the private sector or other areas of government.

Members noted the intention of creating sustainable growth through urban regeneration, skills and enterprise infrastructure, and through connectivity.

Those present were made aware of the Town Board which oversees the investment plan. Noted was the wide representation on the board, including from the community, from local businesses, and from other stakeholders such as the MP, and agencies such as the Coalfields Regeneration Trust.

Members noted the vision for Goldthorpe, for it to act as a growth catalyst for the Dearne Valley, and that around £500k had been made available for accelerated projects to be completed by 31st March, 2021. Proposals put forward as part of this included a strategic acquisition on Goldthorpe High Street, the creation of a green active travel route, enhancement on the Embankment site, the relocation of the Market site and the creation of a community orchard/growing space.

Members heard of the themes within current plans, which included creating a new heart for Goldthorpe, addressing housing challenges, improving connectivity and enhancing the community/cultural offer.

It was noted that the plan would be submitted 11th December, 2020, and that detailed business cases for projects would then be developed. Feedback from the first cohort submitting their plans was encouraging, with their plans uniquely developed to recognise the local situation.

Whilst Members were generally supportive of proposals, questions were raised around the proposed siting of a new playground. Members were concerned that this may lead to a rise in anti-social behaviour, and that there may be issues with regards to ongoing maintenance. Reassurances were made that Members concerns would be taken into account during more detailed planning work.

Suggestions were made as to whether there was an opportunity to duplicate support to that provided by DECV in Thurnscoe, and it was agreed that this could be considered.

RESOLVED that thanks be given for the presentation.

4 Performance Report Q2 (Dac.16.11.2020/4)

Claire Dawson, Dearne Area Council Manager spoke to the item.

With regards to the Employability Service provided by DECV, provision had moved to be provided virtually due to restrictions, but as these were lifted more face to face session had been conducted in a covid secure way. It was acknowledged that this would not now be the case.

Despite restrictions 20 learners had been recruited in quarter 2, with 20 receiving a qualification and 4 securing employment. 23 learners had also progressed on to further training. Members noted the case studies provided, and the changes to assessment to enable qualifications to be granted by OCR.

The impact of Covid-19 on the operation of the Housing and Migration Officer was acknowledged. However, despite this, 103 contacts had been made. Two vulnerable households had been identified and referred for additional support.

The officer had made 14 requests to landlords and 32 improvements to premises had been seen. The officer had been effective in dealing with waste on premises, with a number of Community Protection Notices issued. Members noted that the officer had detected 44 flytipping incidents and these had been reported.

The Environmental Education Service provided by Twiggs Grounds Maintenance had been flexed due to Covid-19 and continued to work alongside Neighbourhood Services to report fly-tipping and clear areas.

As the team were restricted in working with schools and volunteers, they had increased their independent work, addressing issues in areas identified as hotspots.

Members heard how B:Friend had received a significant number of requests from people wishing to volunteer within quarter 2. 'Bundles of Joy' had been distributed and contact with those isolated had been maintained through phone or other virtual means. Quizzes had been conducted with groups on social media.

With regards to the Dearne Development Fund, it was noted that a number of funded projects had to cease due to Covid-19. Members were reassured that these would be monitored and recommenced when safe to do so.

Members heard how TADS continued to work with students at Astrea Academy Dearne, with 10 receiving assistance over six weeks, with a further cohort of 10 planned. The main issue young people highlighted was anxiety, with this heightened due to Covid-19.

DIAL had moved to providing support via the telephone and remained extremely busy. 144 enquired had been dealt with during the quarter. A similar situation was seen with the service provided by CAB, and Members noted the case studies provided.

RESOLVED that the report be received.

5 Dearne Area Council Commissioning and Financial Update (Dac.16.11.2020/5)

Claire Dawson, Dearne Area Council Manager spoke to the report previously circulated.

An overview of the financial position was provided. The Area Council had an opening budget of £204,720.67, which was supplemented by an additional £10,000 from the hardship fund. Members had approved the Education, Environment and Volunteer Service, Housing and Migration Officer, Employability Service and Social Connectivity Service, together with an allocation of £28,000 to the Dearne Development Fund. It was noted that £163.67 remained. However, £9,500 from NESTA to support the Social Connectivity Service had been received, leaving a total of £9,663.67 unallocated.

Following the allocation of £28,000 to the Dearne Development Fund, together with £10,000 from the hardship fund, and finance carried forward from 2019/20, £41,650.68 was available to distribute. Members noted that awards had been given to DIAL and CAB, and that £23,427.68 remained in the fund.

The attention of Members was drawn to the duration of the current contracts held by B:Friend, with this in the first of two years of the contract, and the service level agreement for the Housing and Migration Officer which was in its final year.

Members noted that the contract with DECV had been granted on a 1+1+1-year basis and was at the end of the first year. A recommendation was made to approve its continuation until 31st March, 2022.

Similarly, the contract with Twiggs Grounds Maintenance had been granted on at 2+1+1 year basis, and a recommendation was made to extend this into its third year until 31st March, 2022

RESOLVED:-

- (i) That the current financial position and the impact on future budgets be noted;
- (ii) That the latest position with regards to commissioned services be noted;
- (iii) That approval be given for the Education, Environment and Employability Service to continue in to the third year of the contract from 1st April, 2021 to 31st March, 2022 at a cost of £85,000;
- (iv) That approval be given for the Employability contract to continue into the second year of the contract from 1st April, 2021 to 31st March, 2022 at a cost of £33,000.

6 Notes from the Dearne Ward Alliances (Dac.16.11.2020/6)

Members received the notes of Dearne South Ward Alliance held on 17th September, and 15th October, 2020. The Ward Alliance had discussed projects just as Healthy Holidays and the distribution of hundreds of fruit and vegetable boxes. Noted was the success of virtual events such as soup making and pumpkin carving.

Members heard of the planned distribution of Winter Warmth packs in conjunction with the Public Health team and Active Dearne.

It was noted that the provision of Christmas Trees on Goldthorpe High Street had also been discussed.

The meeting received the notes from the Dearne North Ward Alliance held on 16th September, and 15th October, 2020. The meeting had also considered a number of joint Ward Alliance applications as well as those from Big Local and Station House. Similarly to the Dearne South Ward Alliance, plans were being made to erect Christmas trees, and for the distribution of Winter Warmth Packs.

Thanks were given to Marie Sinclair, Community Development Officer, for her continued hard work in this area.

RESOLVED that notes from the respective Ward Alliances be received.

7 Report on the Use of Ward Alliance Funds (Dac.16.11.2020/7)

Claire Dawson, Dearne Area Council Manager, provided an update in relation to the Ward Alliance Funds for Dearne North and Dearne South wards.

Members noted that Dearne North had a balance of £12,247.12 at the start of the financial year, which included Covid support funds and finance carried forward from 2019/20. Eight projects had been funded leaving balance of £932.92.

Dearne South Ward Alliance had a balance for 2020/21 of £16,605.12, which included Covid support funds and any remaining finance from the previous year. Following the funding of seven projects £4,453.72 remained for allocation.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

8 Community Safety - Fiona Tennyson (Dac.16.11.2020/8)

Fiona Tennyson, Community Safety Team Leader, was welcomed to the meeting to discuss issues in the area.

Issues in Bolton on Dearne were discussed and it was noted that additional patrols had been requested. In addition, issues with parking around The Green were considered. Inconsiderate parking had led to issues with access for emergency services. It was noted that this may have subsided, but this may be due to lockdown closing the Prospect Road Centre. This would be followed up in due course once the centre reopened.

Members questioned whether there had been Covid related patrols in the area. It was noted that they had commenced, with a dedicated officer responding to intelligence.

A question was raised as to whether issues had changed due to Covid-19 and it was noted that crime patterns had changed, and officers were increasingly dealing with breaches of Covid-19 restriction. However, congregating young people often dispersed on seeing officers.

RESOLVED that the feedback be noted.

Chair