

# SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

## North Local Area Committee

### Meeting held 10 September 2024

**PRESENT:** Councillors Alan Hooper (Chair), Ann Whitaker (Deputy Chair), Craig Gamble Pugh, Julie Grocutt, Mike Levery, Robert Reiss, Janet Ridler, Mark Whittaker, Richard Williams and Alan Woodcock

#### **4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

4.1 There were no apologies for absence.

#### **5. EXCLUSIONS OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

5.1 No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the public and press.

#### **6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

6.1 Councillor Julie Grocutt declared a personal interest in Item 7 of the agenda (Item 9 of these minutes) by virtue of being a Board Member of Food Matters.

#### **7. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

7.1 The minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 5 March and 15 May 2024 were approved as correct records.

#### **8. LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE PUBLIC MEETING DISCUSSION**

8.1 Carl Mullooly, Head of Local Area Committees, provided a background on the origination of Local Area Committees (LACs), and explained that the meetings had been formally constituted in 2021. They were held four times per year, and their purpose was to engage, empower and enable local communities, and to bring local decision-making into communities. LACs had evolved based on feedback from participants, and agendas had become more flexible and themed, based on local needs and issues. Meetings had become more interactive, including holding workshops to discuss themes, and inviting Council services to attend to share information.

8.2 Carl Mullooly noted that following observations had been made by participants, communities and the LAC teams:-

- Challenges were faced when selecting venues, as the 'geography' of the north of Sheffield made it more difficult to engage wider groups of people;
- The formal element of the meeting was not always a welcome part of community meetings;
- LACs felt like they were mainly for 'reporting back' rather than actual decision-making;

- Variation in attendance levels had led to discussions about the best value for money;
  - Webcast viewing figures were low; the timing of meetings was important so as not to be a barrier to attendance/viewing; and
  - The 'Future Sheffield' programme had been set up to improve the ambition and service of Sheffield City Council over the next four years, and community engagement was a key part of this process.
- 8.3 Carl Mullooly invited views from those in attendance on what had worked well, what could be improved, and how best to approach the aim of 'engage, empower and enable'.
- 8.4 Councillor Robert Reiss noted that the formal LAC meetings worked alongside the work of policy committees and LAC teams, and localised efforts to build connections and help communities.
- 8.5 Rachel Dawson, Neighbourhood Manager, explained that she found public LAC meetings to be a useful way of meeting members of the community that she might not get to see in other areas of her work, such as 'walkabouts'.
- 8.6 Councillor Julie Grocutt added that it would be useful to understand more from residents about their expectations of Local Area Committees and Ward Members.
- 8.7 Councillor Richard Williams reiterated that the large geographical area of the North LAC did not lend itself well to attendance at formal meetings.
- 8.8 A member of the public, who had a social enterprise shop on the main street in Stocksbridge, asked for an update on the Stocksbridge Towns Fund; specifically relating to options for new shop frontages.
- 8.9 Councillor Julie Grocutt noted her frustrations that the Stocksbridge Town Deal Board had not met since the general election in July 2024 and that few project updates had been shared. She advised that the next meeting was due to take place on 20 September, 2024, and hoped that community engagement would start again after this.
- 8.10 Ann Ashworth explained that she was in attendance at the meeting to support Item 7 of the meeting, and queried whether there was some way of the public 'owning' public LAC meetings.
- 8.11 Councillor Alan Hooper, Chair of the Committee, noted that different types of publicity were needed in order to reach as much of the community as possible.
- 8.12 Carl Mullooly confirmed that some people would attend for a specific item, for example the Food Matters presentation, and that all options for answering specific queries from the public should be considered.
- 8.13 Councillor Janet Ridler reiterated the importance of communication of LAC meetings, and particularly the topics/themes that would be included, in a way to encourage and make people feel welcome. She also noted the challenge of

effective public engagement during a formal meeting.

- 8.14 Councillor Mike Levery added that LACs were a local opportunity to raise any issue of concern and seek action.
- 8.15 Councillor Ann Whitaker noted that the public LAC meetings were a small part of the work that LAC teams carried out, and she welcomed a change in format to encourage informal community engagement.
- 8.16 Martin Price, Food Matters Co-Ordinator, queried how the LAC engaged with young people.
- 8.17 Councillor Williams noted the difficulties in, and the importance of, engaging with young people, and believed there was a gap between empowered young people and those who were struggling to find a place in the community. He confirmed that there was currently scheme in Ecclesfield, where members of local youth clubs came along to discuss their hopes and aspirations.
- 8.18 The Chair confirmed that some LAC funding had been allocated to support young people and youth work, and added that the Parish and Town Councils situated in the north of the city had also been able to support this.
- 8.19 Councillor Grocutt felt it would be of benefit for LACs to have a presence at community events, and speak to members of the public in their community settings.
- 8.20 The Chair thanked those who contributed to the discussion, and noted that comments would be fed into the consultation process.

## **9. NORTH STAR AWARD**

- 9.1 Councillor Alan Hooper, Chair of the Committee, explained that the North Star Award was to recognise community organisations and the great work they do. He announced that the award would be presented to Food Matters, a community outlet open to everyone, that provided food at below cost that would otherwise be wasted, and he invited Food Matters representatives to collect their award.
- 9.2 Martin Price (Co-Ordinator and Founding Director, Food Matters), Helen Bridges (Development Worker, Food Matters) and Sue Birch (Founding Director, Food Matters) were in attendance to accept the award.
- 9.3 Martin Price explained he had taken on Food Matters after the retirement of the couple who had been running the project successfully for ten years. He noted that they worked in conjunction with FareShare to receive food, and that the referral process had been removed so was open to all, providing food for anyone who turned up. A community shop was opened in 2023 to receive short-dated and overproduced food from supermarkets and agriculture. The project had grown in success, and was now feeding around 44 people per week.

9.4 Helen Bridges explained that her role involved raising the profile of the food bank and community outlet, and encouraging young people to actively engage in this community project. She added that a Facebook page had been set up that was providing further reach, and combined efforts meant that over 15 tonnes of food had been shared with the local community, instead of ending up as landfill.

9.5 Mr Price added that funding had been applied for to extend the premises and provide a shop area, and include space for Citizens Advice Sheffield, who attended once a week.

## **10. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS**

10.1 No public questions or petitions were received.

10.2 Councillor Alan Hooper, Chair of the Committee, provided an update on the following question that had been raised at the North Local Area Committee meeting of 5 March, 2024:-

### *Phil Harris, resident of Grenoside*

When the new school was built in Grenoside, the old school was left to rack and ruin. The building has been forgotten and has now fallen down due to lack of maintenance and repair. It seems that the Council has not taken an interest in this. What powers does the Council have to develop/enforce the site?

The Chair noted that a planning application had been submitted earlier in the year and had been refused. He understood that a developer was liaising with planning officers and hoped to submit a revised application.

10.3 The Chair advised the Committee that he had been contacted by two residents who were concerned about the reliability of the 1a bus to Ecclesfield School from High Green. The residents had also stated that drivers did not always stop at all bus stops, and were concerned about the cost of bus journeys for school children.

10.4 Councillor Mike Levery advised that he had been in contact with the bus operator, who had confirmed there were issues at the bus depot, and he would continue to liaise with them.

## **11. STOCKSBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL UPDATE**

11.1 Councillor Julie Grocutt updated the Committee on the following Stocksbridge Town Council activities:-

- A Participatory Budgeting event was being held on 16 October 2024, inviting local community groups to apply for funding for projects meeting the specified criteria. £36k was available for distribution, and anyone aged 8 or over was welcome to attend and vote.
- A Remembrance Parade was due to take place in Stocksbridge on Sunday

10 November 2024, which would be the centenary of the first ever parade.

- A Senior Citizens Christmas lunch was due to be held on Wednesday 4 December 2024, 12 noon, at the Venue Stocksbridge. Tickets would be available between 10am and 12 noon between 19 and 21 November 2024.
- There was a vacancy for a Town Councillor in the West Ward of Stocksbridge, and the deadline for nominations was today (10 September 2024).
- Stocksbridge Town Council had recently supported Penistone FM boost communication to local communities by the provision of a new aerial.
- The Stocksbridge and Upper Don Tenants and Residents Association carried out lots of community work in partnership with local groups, and welcomed anyone wishing to volunteer for a few hours.

## **12. NORTH LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE BUDGET 2024-25**

12.1 The Committee considered a report of the Community Services Manager on the funding allocated to the North Local Area Committee and the proposals for its allocation and expenditure for 2024-25 in line with the priorities of the North Local Area Committee, namely:

- Improving local transport through practical Highways improvements and promoting better public transport;
- Improving community safety; and
- Improving community life.

12.2 The following areas of expenditure were proposed, totalling £80,000:

- a) £50,000 Great North budget, for voluntary sector groups to apply for up to £5000 for projects to meet local needs;
- b) £25,000 NextGen North Fund (using £15,000 of North Local Area Committee funds and £10,000 from Youth Services) for voluntary sector groups to apply for up to £5,000 for projects working with local children and young people;
- c) £10,000 fund to support local food poverty initiatives; and
- d) A £5,000 operations budget.

12.3 Councillor Craig Gamble Pugh suggested the allocation of £10k of the Local Area Committee budget towards food poverty, and to ensure that projects tackling food poverty were prioritised and that spending was distributed across the four wards on a priority basis.

- 12.4 David Luck, Community Services Manager, advised that work was being carried out to further develop a fair balance of funding across the four wards within the North Local Area Committee.
- 12.5 Councillor Richard Williams noted a high proportion of elderly people in north Sheffield, and hoped that those not qualifying for winter fuel payments could be supported.
- 12.6 Councillor Robert Reiss made a suggestion to link advice around Pension Credit eligibility to existing community settings, such as Food Matters. He also noted that Chapeltown Veterans carried out valuable and wide-reaching support, and believed they would benefit from short-term funding.
- 12.7 Mark Hible, Community Development Worker, confirmed that there were regular drop-in sessions at Ecclesfield Library that provided assistance with applications for Pension Credit, and signposting to help raise awareness of financial support options.
- 12.8 Carl Mullooly added that the Cost of Living support team were carrying out work to help identify eligibility for Pension Credit.
- 12.9 In response to a question regarding the remaining 'fly-tipping' budget, David Luck confirmed that the Local Area Committee held a budget for tackling 'hot spots'.
- 12.10 Councillor Alan Hooper, Chair of the Committee, summarised by confirming that a budget of £10k was ring-fenced for cost of living support. He also noted the ageing population of north Sheffield, and the clusters of deprivation, and his concerns for supporting these communities during the winter months.
- 12.11 **RESOLVED:** That the North Local Area Committee:
- a) Agrees the recommendations set out for use of the 2024-25 budget;
  - b) Notes the expenditure against the £100,000 budget to address local priorities in the North Local Area Committee as detailed in the report; and

Authorises the Community Services Manager, in consultation with the Local Area Committee Chair, to finalise the eligibility criteria and make decisions, following engagement with the relevant Ward Members, on the award of the grant funds proposed of up to £5,000.

12.12 **Reasons for Decision**

The North Local Area Committee is asked to note the use of funding under delegated authority and agree the further expenditure outlined in the report to address the identified local priorities within the North Local Area Committee Community Plan.

12.13 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

The North Local Area Committee could choose not to allocate budgets at this stage, but this would delay local projects and facilities for local communities.

Decisions on grant awards could be reserved to the North Local Area Committee, but this would inevitably delay delivery of priority actions to address specific issues identified in the Community Plan.

All decisions on expenditure to support Community Plan priorities could be delegated to officers. However, this would restrict and undermine the Local Area Committee's ability to monitor its delegated budget and delivery of the Community Plan.

- 12.14 The Chair noted that this was David Luck's last meeting as Community Services Manager for the North Local Area Committee. He stated that David had been an excellent manager, who he had enjoyed working with, and extended his thanks to David on behalf of the Committee.
- 12.15 The Chair also noted that he was aware of the football match scheduled to take place between Sheffield United and Sheffield Wednesday on Sunday 10 December 2024, that would clash with Remembrance Sunday commemorations. He expressed his disappointment around the scheduling of this game, and advised that representations to this effect would be made to the appropriate parties.