

North East Local Area Committee

Meeting held 25 October 2022

PRESENT: Councillors Fran Belbin (Chair), Talib Hussain (Deputy Chair), Mike Chaplin, Dawn Dale, Abdul Khayum, Abtisam Mohamed and Safiya Saeed

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tony Damms, Jayne Dunn, Mark Jones, Peter Price and Garry Weatherall.

2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

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

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 Councillor Talib Hussain declared a personal interest in item 9 on the agenda (item 8 of these minutes) the public question regarding Abbeyfield Park, as a member of the Friends of Abbeyfield Park.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 The minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 26 July, 2022, were approved as a correct record.

5. COST OF LIVING CRISIS

5.1 The Chair (Councillor Fran Belbin) shared a presentation on the cost of living crisis. She explained that although Government funding had been made available to support work around the Covid response, the cost of living crisis was being managed using existing resources. The Council's response to the cost of living crisis was based on the work done during the pandemic and the networks that were set up at that time.

5.2 She noted that 'NeighbourGood' postcards were available for front line workers to distribute, which pointed to a number of different types of support available from the Council, voluntary sector organisations, and national charities.

5.3 Councillor Belbin also noted that there were a number of websites offering support. The Council had a webpage "Help and advice on money issues" that provided links to a range of support and advice. There were a few sources of

financial help, which included the Household Support Fund, Discretionary Housing Payment and Council Tax Hardship Scheme, the Local Assistance Scheme, and the Priority Services Register. The Council's website also had some information relating to maximising income and minimising energy usage.

- 5.4 Councillor Belbin explained that it was hoped to bring people together in 'Welcome Places', which were public venues where people could keep warm, have tea/food, share ideas and receive advice. These spaces included local libraries, family centres, and volunteer, community and faith venues. The Voluntary Action Sheffield website included a map with voluntary sector 'Welcome Places'. This map was expected to keep developing. The North East Local Area Committee had allocated £25,000 to support 'Welcome Places' within the North East of Sheffield, which would help with energy costs, provision of food and drinks and staff and volunteer expenses.
- 5.5 A member of the public was of the opinion that Burngreave Vestry Hall could be a 'Welcome Space' but that access to the kitchen should be permitted in order to be able to make hot drinks. Councillor Belbin noted this suggestion.
- 5.6 Further to a question raised by a member of the public as to whether this information would be distributed and whether communication be improved, Councillor Belbin advised that communication would be included within the Local Area Committee budget report and that ideas were welcome.

6. NORTH EAST LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE PLAN UPDATE

- 6.1 Lindsey Hill, North East Local Area Committee Service Manager, provided an update on the Local Area Community Plan. She explained that there were information stalls set up around the venue and encouraged attendees to browse these during the interactive session of the meeting. The stalls were based on priorities from the Community Plan and had information relating to housing, libraries, and other themes.
- 6.2 Ms Hill noted that a spending plan had been agreed at the Local Area Committee meeting held on 26 July, 2022, and had been reprofiled to help address the cost of living crisis and to support vulnerable people. Local Area Committee funding had also been used to benefit festivals, events and activities held in the local area. This had included 'Dark Nights' and community safety, and information on this could be found at the stalls.
- 6.3 Ms Hill advised that £10,000 had been received from Youth Services. In response to the Holiday Activity Fund comments raised at a previous meeting, she stated that it was planned to split this money between the October 2022 and February 2023 school half-term holidays to support activities for children. She advised any youth groups wishing to bid for this grant money to contact a member of the North East Local Area Committee team for further details.
- 6.4 Further to a question raised by a member of the public as to where children's activities would be held during the autumn half-term school holiday as he felt that

his local community centre had few options for children, Ms Hill advised that support had been provided to those who had applied and that there was a fair distribution of activities across the area. Further options would be considered for the February 2023 half-term school holiday.

- 6.5 Councillor Belbin noted that there was a 'young people' section at one of the stalls where more information on activities could be found.

7. ROADSHOW INTERACTIVE SESSION

- 7.1 The Local Area Committee and members of the public were invited to browse the information stalls situated around the building which contained information relating to the different priorities of the North Local Area Committee Community Plan. This lasted for approximately 45 minutes.

8. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

- 8.1 The Committee received the following questions from members of the public who were in attendance at the meeting:-

Public Questioner number 1 - Lyn Brandon, Member of Friends of Abbeyfield Park

Abbeyfield Park and House are very important features in our local community. Whilst not a city 'designation park' it certainly serves as a destination park for the local area, An inclusive place, well used by all the local community for informal sport, recreation, socialising, cycling, walking, running, exercising, play etc.. Abbeyfield House provides space for local groups to meet, English Language classes, arts and crafts activities, educational and learning opportunities, a computer repairs service and soon to be a base for a local repair cafe. The house also provides office accommodation for Green City Action, Pedal Ready and Burngreave Messenger. An active volunteer gardeners' group is working closely with the Parks Department transforming the neglected flower beds; regular litter picks are ongoing, local community members all play a part in keeping an eye on the park and report problems or acts of vandalism.

We have a small but committed group of volunteers, the Friends of Abbeyfield Park, who meet monthly to plan and support activities. In July we held a very successful community festival, the Bowls Club has been reactivated. The local church made temporary use of the building when their building was subject to an arson attack. I could go on. We want to make the park and associated building the best they can be. We have support from local Councillors and met with various Council Officers over the past couple of years. Yet we don't seem to be making much progress. A couple of examples

Access to Abbeyfield House is very difficult for people with mobility problems, no accessible toilet facilities steps at the main entrance which resulted in Abbeyfield House not declared fit for purpose as a polling

station (voters had to use portacabins specially installed at what cost) whilst Hillsborough Library received about £245,000 for a new entrance.

We recently heard that £100,000 has been allocated to Concord Park.

Whilst we are not against investment in other parks and facilities, I would like to know how we raise the importance on Abbeyfield Park and House up the council agenda. We are shortly to become a register charity and will be able to apply for funding. We know that Council Officers are also in a position to apply for funding directly. How can we develop a partnership approach to improving facilities and investment in the park and the house to meet the needs of this community.

In response, Councillor Belbin stated that she recognised how much work was involved in the upkeep of the park and the house, and thanked those involved. She explained that some of the funding received by other parks was from external investment which had particular conditions/requirements. She noted that Council resource and capacity was limited, but that it was important to work with external partnerships and organisations to maximise spending and funding opportunities. Opportunities for further funding would be opened up once the organisation was registered as a charity, and the Chair agreed to work with Council services to assist with this.

Councillor Talib Hussain declared a personal interest in this item as a member of the Friends of Abbeyfield Park.

Public Questioner number 2 – Kanthi Fanthome

What specific information can the Council give on levelling-up funding in the North East of Sheffield and where it is spent? In terms of funding, this money was promised at the beginning of the year, so what is the plan and how will it be shared with attendees?

Councillor Belbin advised that a full response would be sent to the questioner and would also be reported to the next meeting of the North East Local Area Committee.

Public Questioner number 3

In a time of increasing food pricing inflation, I have noticed recent instances where supermarket items have scanned through at a significantly higher price than the shelf price. This appears to be happening more. Are Trading Standards aware of this as it is happening more, and what action can be taken?

In response, Councillor Dawn Dale advised the questioner to report full details to one of his Ward councillors.

Public Questioner number 4 – Mick Daniels

Is there an update on environmental issues such as 'bring out your rubbish day' and rat problems in some areas? We have been promised action but nothing has been done. Money should be focussed on issues like this.

Councillor Belbin advised that although 'Bring out your Rubbish Days' had taken place in the past she did not feel they were a good use of funding now as prices had increased significantly. She noted that this particular initiative helped in the short-term, but did not tackle the issue longer-term.

Councillor Belbin noted that a pest control project had been carried out in Firth Park, but it was a wider issue than just treatment. She felt that some work was needed around education and changing of the behaviours that might encourage infestation, for example, leaving food waste in gardens. She advised that funding had been made available to tackle flytipping 'hotspots' throughout the area via enforcement.

In response to concerns about rubbish piling up on streets, Councillor Belbin advised that this should be tackled in the most economical way and that the Council's Pest Control Service be utilised as needed.

Public Questioner number 5

What behaviour are you tackling, and what can be done about overcrowding by landlords and businesses that are not disposing of their waste properly?

Councillor Belbin considered that further advice could be given to residents on what they should do with their waste, for example, appropriate bagging of waste. She was aware that overcrowding and bin provision was an issue in some places, and that the Veolia contract dictated bin options. Options were currently being considered for extra bin provision in some areas of the North East of Sheffield.

Public Questioner number 6 – Malcom Camp, Green City Action

My question is around food supply in Sheffield. There is a suggestion that food will soon be too expensive to buy. What will the Council do about local growing food ideas in North East Sheffield and using housing services or parks and countryside land for this?

Councillor Belbin responded by stating that the Council worked with food networks that included foodbanks and food projects such as Food Works and Regather, which were involved in gathering surplus food and issues around food poverty. She noted that there were other demands on Council land, such as for house building.

Councillor Dawn Dale stated that conversations had commenced with Dr Megan Blake of the University of Sheffield regarding food poverty and growing of food. She stated that work was ongoing and an update would be provided when appropriate.

Public Questioner number 7

There is a really big field next to Woodside Lane/Pitsmoor Road that has a problem with flytipping. It has been reported to the Council but they need evidence to take action. It looks like waste from work carried out on houses. There is also a problem of drug exchange and prostitution on the field so it doesn't feel safe for children to go there. The green is a waste of space and should be used to build something.

My black bin got broken by binmen but they have advised me to buy a new one.

Councillor Belbin advised the questioner to contact her local Councillor who would follow up the issue with the black bin.

In response to the question about neighbourhood issues, the Chair stated that she understood how this felt and that it was important to work with local Councillors and South Yorkshire Police to bring residents, groups and services together to look at options. She stated that a combination of litter picking, police patrol and enforcement was needed.

Mick Daniels stated that the suggestion of getting people to work together was not new and was not working, and that it needed groups to come together and communicate better. He believed that this might assist when bidding for funding.

Councillor Belbin agreed and also considered that there had been examples of where people had worked together and achieved things. She noted that what worked for one area might not work for another and that it was important for officers to be in tune with their communities.

Public Questioner number 8 – Sarah Brighton, Southey Library

We are volunteer led and have been working with the Local Area Committee to further what we are doing to create our own hub. Local Area Committee support may end in January, can that be extended so that we can keep our projects and links going?

Councillor Belbin noted that some of the Local Area Committee posts were funded until January 2023. She stated that the Council was currently going through the budget process and that more would be known in early 2023 about available funding. She confirmed that Local Area Committees would continue and that library projects would continue to be supported.

Public Questioner number 9 – Malcolm Camp, Green City Action

On Saturday 29 October, 2022, on Carwood estate there will be a community skip and the Pitsmoor Pickers will be picking every last Saturday of the month for the foreseeable future. They hoped to go to the Burngreave TARA area next which needed attention.

Councillor Belbin appreciated this work and hoped it could continue, and welcomed the sharing of this information.

Public Questioner number 10

What are the chances of offering a further library in the Burngreave area?

Councillor Belbin advised that this was unlikely and that there was a reasonable spread of libraries across the area.

- 8.2 Councillor Belbin noted that as part of half-term activities there would be a 'fun day' on Wednesday 26 October at Longley 4G Centre from 1.00pm to 4.00pm, and information about services would be available.
- 8.3 Councillor Belbin thanked those present for their attendance at the meeting.

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