

North East Local Area Committee

Meeting held 2 March 2023

PRESENT: Councillors Fran Belbin (Chair), Talib Hussain (Deputy Chair), Mike Chaplin, Dawn Dale, Jayne Dunn, Mark Jones, Abdul Khayum, Abtisam Mohamed, Peter Price and Safiya Saeed

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tony Damms 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 There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 The minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 17 January, 2023, were approved as a correct record.

5. NORTH EAST LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE BUDGET REPORT

5.1 The Committee considered a report of the Community Services Manager (Lindsey Hill) that advised each Local Area Committee had a £100,000 budget to address local priorities, identified within their respective Community Plans. The report set out details of the spend in respect of the £100,000 that had been authorised by the Community Services Manager, in consultation with the Local Area Committee Chair and in accordance with the delegation granted in September 2021.

5.2 Ms Hill reported on the spend for the year so far, the creation of a further priority of “cost of living”, and indicated that some grant money would continue to roll-out over the next year.

5.3 **RESOLVED:** That the North East Local Area Committee notes the expenditure against the £100,000 budget to address local priorities in the North East Local Area Committee in 2022/3, as detailed in the report.

6. LOOK BACK OVER THE LAST YEAR OF THE NORTH EAST LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

- 6.1 The Chair noted her thanks to the North East Local Area Committee team for the work they had achieved over the last year.
- 6.2 Katie Townend, Community Services Officer, provided an overview of the work of the North East Local Area Committee over the last year. She explained that the Local Area Committees had been introduced as a way for people to make a difference in their area and communities, and they provided an opportunity for people to express their views on what matters to them in their community.
- 6.3 Ms Townend advised that consultation with local residents, services and community groups had taken place to help understand what residents liked and disliked about their area. She explained that this had informed the development of the Community Plan, which consisted of nine priorities. Since the commencement of Local Area Committees, five public meetings had been held across the north east of Sheffield, aiming to give residents the opportunity to ask questions and share views. She advised that a number of community and family events had been held, and more were planned due to the positive feedback that had been received. Several funding streams had been promoted through the Local Area Committee, and further details could be provided to residents via a mailing list.
- 6.4 Ms Townend advised that the North East Local Area Committee team had interviewed a few community groups so that they could share their stories on how the Local Area Committee had helped them over the past year, and a video of the interviews was shown to the Committee. She thanked those who had contributed to the making of the video.
- 6.5 The Chair noted that the video aimed to highlight the benefits of bringing together different groups and services. She added that it was useful to hear from residents on what could be improved, and their thoughts on what services should be involved.
- 6.6 The Chair advised that, at the Budget Council meeting of 1 March, 2023, funding of £100,000 per Local Area Committee had been approved for 2023-2024, and that further funding had also been approved for those areas with a low ranking on the Index of Multiple Deprivation. A bid had also been made for funding via the Shared Prosperity Fund, which was hoped to provide funding for recruitment of development workers.
- 6.7 The Local Area Committee notes the information now reported.

7. DISCUSSION WORKSHOPS ON THE COMMUNITY PLAN PRIORITIES

- 7.1 The Chair invited members of the public to take part in workshops with North East Local Area Committee Members and officers, to discuss Community Plan priorities.
- 7.2 Councillor Mike Chaplin reported the following feedback from his group:
- Community engagement had been good, but varied depending on which

ward, due to the rotation of public meetings between the wards.

- It was discussed how best to sustain community groups discussion groups.
- Some people were suffering with mental health issues which could lead to disengagement.
- It was noted that having Local Area Committees and community officers had helped groups to keep going.

7.3 Councillor Dawn Dale reported the following feedback from her group:

- Local Area Committees had provided networking benefits, connected services and Tenants and Residents Associations, which had resulted in residents feeling more supported.
- A sense of community spirit had been built, for example, during street parties for the Queen's Jubilee.
- Promotion and advertising of Local Area Committees could be improved by letting residents know in advance who would be speaking at public meetings. Some had heard about the meetings via a third party, eg South Yorkshire Police.
- A funding directory would be useful so that organisations were aware of options for seeking smaller amounts of funding, and support from officers in making groups aware of funding opportunities.

7.4 Councillor Talib Hussain reported the following feedback from his group:

- The partnership of officers and Councillors had worked well this year.
- Tackling and improving litter across all wards in north east Sheffield was important.
- Making contact with schools, or allocating them funding to improve children's lives was discussed, and making children 'champions' of schools to teach younger siblings.
- Flytipping around business centres was noted, and how best to support businesses to keep their shop fronts clean.
- Open spaces were important, and community allotments were suggested.

7.5 Councillor Abdul Khayum reported the following feedback from his group:

- It was felt better to have Local Area Committees than not have them.
- Some issues were being passed to other services, so it was important for Local Area Committees to facilitate until they were resolved.
- The benches in Firth Park would be better if they had backs.
- It was important to continue to develop initiatives that had been started, for example car parking and flytipping schemes.
- It was suggested that Amey and Veolia representatives attend Local Area Committee meetings so that they can hear directly what the issues are.
- Involvement of local groups was important to ensure better co-ordination, and to keep up the momentum.
- Communication was key, and making sure that all community groups were kept up-to-date.

- 7.6 The Chair thanked all those who had taken part, and advised that all ideas would be noted and considered when developing priorities for the next year.

8. ROADSHOW INTERACTIVE SESSION

- 8.1 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 East Local Area Committee Community Plan.

9. FORMAL REFERRALS TO POLICY COMMITTEES

- 9.1 The Chair provided an update on an issue raised at the North East Local Area Committee meeting on 17 January, 2023, and which had been referred to the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee. The issue related to concerns about the potential impact of the Clean Air Zone on the poorest districts of Sheffield.

- 9.2 The Chair advised that a full response had been provided and that ongoing discussions were taking place with the questioner.

- 9.3 The following public question had been raised at the North East LAC meeting on 26 July, 2022:

It was mentioned that the North East Community Plan had little mention of how private landlords had a devastating effect on the community. It was added that Selective Licensing was also a total failure. Therefore, what strategic actions does the Local Area Committee intend to take.

- 9.4 The Chair advised that this question had been referred to the Housing Policy Committee, where it was considered, and officers have advised that a paper on selective licensing would be brought to the March meeting of the Housing Policy Committee.

10. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

- 10.1 The Committee received the following questions from members of the public who had attended the meeting to raise them:-

(a) Chris Fox

What plans, if any, exist to continue the work done to develop the Green Flag award winning park status in our area, given the austere times and cuts. Gardening teams are concerned that the work they have started will start to fall apart. We have well used parks that are really important, Is there still some commitment within budgets for this?

In response, the Chair noted that Mr Fox had played a big part in supporting Local Area Committee events and thanked him for the work he carried out within his local area.

Darren Whittaker (Parks and Countryside Service, Sheffield City Council) confirmed that there was no additional allocation of funding for the north east of Sheffield. The next park to be considered for a Green Flag award would be Hillsborough Park. He confirmed that Firth Park would continue to have Green Flag status, after passing the 'mystery shopper' spot check in 2022 and that other parks, including Meersbrook Park, would be considered in due course.

Mr Fox stated that he hoped funding could allow gardeners in Firth Park to continue their work in achieving the Green Flag status.

Mr Whittaker noted that he was unable to advise on budgets, but confirmed that it was a source of pride to those involved that so many Green Flag awards had been achieved, and that work would continue as long as budgets allowed.

Councillor Mike Chaplin confirmed that resources had been going into parks across the north east of Sheffield, for example, a pavilion had been built in Parson Cross Park a few years ago. He added that work had been carried out in Foxhill Park, including a new footpath and climbing frames, and he noted that there were currently difficulties around keeping naming signs up around the Park.

Councillor Peter Price explained that there may have been staffing changes within parks, but that the budget had been maintained with no reductions. He added that this was a success story due to parks being maintained and improved despite budget issues.

Councillor Jayne Dunn believed that it was important to ensure an equal ability across Sheffield to access open space, and to retain Green Flag status to ensure fairness for the north east of Sheffield. She stated that other parks across the city had received investment, and requested that the Committee seek answers from the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee Chair to ensure equal investment across the city.

Councillor Price added that Firth Park had managed to utilise funding that had been available for local shopping areas, and had obtained seats and tables for the park and improvements to the flower beds. He explained that it was important to be creative and be aware of different funding streams, and referred to the success of local voluntary groups in raising money for Firth Park. He hoped that Concord Park and other parks could follow in the same way.

The Chair advised that there was still some Local Area Committee funding available for environmental and park improvements which could assist in maintaining Green Flag status. She stated that it was important to use funding wisely, and suggested that these questions were put to the Communities, Parks and Leisure Committee.

Mick Daniels requested that residents be consulted to ensure that plans for parks meet the needs of the people using them.

The Chair advised that the investment referred to for Firth Park had been via business recovery funding, so had been driven by businesses. She noted that different funding would feed into improvements in different ways, and agreed that it was important to hear what residents wanted in their areas and to collectively agree options. She added that there was currently a live survey seeking views on how the North East Local Area Committee could better communicate across the area, and the link to this survey would be shared.

Councillor Mark Jones believed it was important to enable communities to have an input. He noted the good work of 'Friends of' groups, which were volunteer led. Although Parkwood Springs had a dedicated ranger, it appeared to Councillor Jones as though parks in other parts of the city had more ranger presence than the north east. He felt that that the north east of Sheffield was underserved, and requested that this be put as a question to the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee. He hoped that parks in the north east of Sheffield would not be overlooked and under-resourced, and be given the same prestige and privilege as others across the city.

RESOLVED: That the Committee meet informally to discuss questions which would then be put directly to the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee.

(c) Chris Fox

Defibrillators had been installed at key locations within the area. Could some of the yet unallocated Local Area Committee funding could be used to fund the installation of defibrillators at further suitable locations.

In response, the Chair stated that the North East Local Committee had provided funding to assist with installation of the defibrillators that Mr Fox had mentioned, which were reasonably widespread across the area. She explained that there were other funding streams available for the provision of defibrillators, and that it was important to identify where they could be installed and if there were any potential barriers to fitting them, to ensure a more efficient process.

Mick Daniels stated that most firms (such as doctors and dentists) had defibrillators, but didn't share this widely, and that it was important to consult when choosing locations for installation to ensure safety and to avoid vandalism. He welcomed more defibrillators in the area, but noted that funding was important.

The Chair noted that funding was available and that locations of defibrillators could be found via a Google search for 'defibrillator finder'. She added that when looking at suggested locations, there was work involved in checking, for example, land ownership and power supply.

(b) Mick Daniels

I am concerned about the state of Council housing and have recently attended a Housing and Neighbourhoods Advisory Panel meeting and found out that none of the figures were on target. The number of houses being built has been cut back and 1,300 properties currently stand empty. I am not able to attend Full Council meetings to ask questions, but am concerned that rent has increased, but it's still taking two to three years for repairs to be carried out.

In response, the Chair advised that part of the purpose of the Local Area Committee was to hear questions directly, and residents didn't have to attend Full Council to get their questions answered. She confirmed that a housing budget had now been agreed, and accepted that there was a need for more advisory panels involving tenants of council housing, housing association housing and private sector housing. She hoped to see housing advisory panels attached to Local Area Committee areas to encourage local discussions about the state of housing. She advised that the Housing Performance Report (Quarter 3) 2022/3, due to be submitted to the Housing Policy Committee on 10 March, 2023 had shown that the number of empty houses had reduced. She stated that more repairs were reported during winter time, and that the Housing Policy Committee had requested to see performance data more regularly so that progress on repairs could be monitored. She believed that it was important to ensure that residents in Sheffield had warm and safe homes, and confirmed that policies around the Decent Homes Standard, and the rights of people who are renting, were being developed. She considered that close working with the Government and the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority was needed, and believed that the work currently being carried out by the Council would start to develop better housing.

Mr Daniels stated that there used to be Investment Repairs Partnership Group meetings where updates were provided, and that were well attended. He pressed the Committee to get these meetings back up and running in order to help address some of the current housing issues.

The Chair agreed that this was a good idea, and advised Mr Daniels that she would contact him directly about this.

The Chair thanked those present for attending the meeting.

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