

**4 Together Partnership
Minutes of the Board Meeting
Wednesday 4 March 2020
6:00pm at Dean Bank & Ferryhill Literary Institute**



PRESENT: **Partner Representatives**
Mark Booth – Clinical Commissioning Group
Nigel Jones – Voluntary Sector Representative
A/Insp Mike Sammut – Police
David Stothard – Business Representative (**Chair**)

Public Representatives
Carole Atkinson
Chris Cairns
Nicola Dexter
Rita Jacobs
Len Potts
Dennis Ramsey (**Vice Chair**)

Elected Members
Cllr Peter Atkinson – DCC
Cllr Brian Avery – DCC (**Vice Chair**)
Cllr Julie Cairns – Chilton Town Council
Cllr Pauline Crathorne – DCC
Cllr Christine Potts – DCC

OFFICER

ATTENDANCE: Lee Copeland – Principal AAP Coordinator
Callum Aitchison – Principal Community Development Project Officer
Paula Nixon – AAP Community Development Project Officer
Paula Stockport – AAP Support Officer
Claire Hawkes (Buckinghamshire County Council)
Gordon Elliott – DCC Head of Partnerships & Comm Engagement

APOLOGIES: Paul Darby, Tony Cutmore, Cllr Allan Hodgson, Justin Parry

OBSERVERS: Ms J Weston, Ms L Gaffing, Mr C Rich

Standard Board Meeting

A1. Introductions & Apologies

DS opened the meeting. New members were welcomed; A/Insp Mike Sammut, replacing Insp Warren Edwards, and Callum Aitchison, replacing Jason Turnough in the Principal Community Development Project Officer role with the 4 Together Partnership staff team, and a brief round of introductions was given.

DS welcomed Claire Hawkes (Buckinghamshire County Council) to the meeting; Bucks CC are looking at potentially setting up AAPs in their area, and Claire has been visiting DCC to learn more about how the AAPs work in Co Durham.

Apologies for absence were noted, as above.

A2. Agreement of Minutes from Previous Meeting (8.1.20) - Matters Arising

LC reviewed the previous minutes for matters arising, actions and accuracy. The following points were noted:

- LC highlighted that a presentation from DCC Housing Solutions had not been arranged for tonight's meeting given the tight agenda. LC added that information is currently available in relation to DCC's Selective Licensing consultation, which covers a lot of the areas of concern Board members had on this subject; LC will circulate the consultation details to Board members for information (**Action 1: LC**).
- LC highlighted that Mike Cherrington from Red Supported Living had forwarded some information recently, but not really in an appropriate format for circulation to Board members; LC will go back to Mike and request a more formal report (**Action 2: LC**).

There were no further matters arising, and the minutes were **AGREED** as a true record and a copy signed by DS before the Board.

A3. Countywide Partner Issues

A3.1 Fire Service Update

Item deferred.

A3.2 Ferryhill LADDER Centre Update (Nigel Jones)

Board members received an update presentation in relation to the work taking place at Ferryhill LADDER Centre, specifically the AAP-funded Benefits Support Service, which assists people with telephone benefit claims, online claims for Universal Credit, completion of appeal paperwork etc. There are wider benefits to the project than simply assisting with benefit claims, both in terms of engaging people who are socially isolated and also helping to support vulnerable clients who may be suffering with mental health issues. The project has exceeded all targets since it began approximately three years ago, assisting in excess of 600 people, and supporting local residents to obtain over £2m in benefit awards. Feedback from both service users and partner agencies has been consistently good.

NJ highlighted that there is increasing demand, and concerns around sustainable funding going forward. The LADDER Centre continue to seek external sources of funding for the service, however there is a real fear this could be lost in future, resulting in vulnerable people having nowhere to go for the support they need.

NJ thanked the AAP for their previous support and funding; the value for money in terms of the initial £10k/year allocation speaks volumes, as demonstrated by the figures achieved to date.

A brief Q&A took place, and the following points were noted:

- Cllr PC commended the service, and expressed concern at the potential for problems going forward if the service is no longer available.
- LC highlighted that the issues around welfare support and also the wider mental health impacts is high on the agenda for the DCC Poverty Action Steering Group, and this is also a huge topic of concern county wide for AAPs. The DCC Welfare Rights team speak very highly of the service provided by the LADDER Centre.

- NJ commented that support from GPs in relation to assistance with appeal paperwork isn't there now; this is a relatively simple process in terms of completing a prepared template, which would carry a lot of weight and could have a huge impact for clients. MB asked if NJ could pull together some examples, and MB will take this forward with the Director of Primary Care for further discussion (**Action 3: NJ/MB**).
- GE highlighted that DCC have allocated additional Welfare Reform funding for 2020-21, and specifically for additional welfare support. GE suggested that there could be potential to upskill volunteers to assist with lower level enquiries.

DR thanked NJ for his update.

A4. Local Neighbourhood Issues

A4.1 Neighbourhood Policing Update

A/Insp MS updated Board members in relation to current crime trends and emerging issues for the 4 Together area. There have been several allotment break-ins recently, as well as some ongoing issues with antisocial behaviour in various areas. The re-vamped police website (www.police.uk) hosts all crime statistics now for local neighbourhoods, which Board members may find useful.

Cllr CP highlighted that she has received several complaints recently in relation to youths banging on doors and windows in Chilton, particularly where the residents are elderly and/or vulnerable. The issues have been reported to the local beat officer. A/Insp MS said he would pass this information onto Sgt Newman, there could be measures taken if the problems persist.

Cllr PA commented that he recently attended a residents meeting in Dean Bank, where a suggestion had been made to try to improve communication with members of the public around crime figures, perhaps through publishing general information on the number of crimes taking place across the area in The Chapter newspaper. A/Insp MS advised that the police often use social media to communicate information, which provides a bigger platform, but appreciates that not everyone has access to online information and will take this suggestion back to the team for consideration.

Cllr PC commented that she's pleased to see the ongoing work in the area in relation to licensing and asked whether the police are carrying out any test purchases locally. A/Insp MS confirmed that these have definitely been carried out in the Spennymoor area, but will check for Ferryhill.

DR highlighted a recent spate of vehicle thefts that had taken place across the 4 Together area in the space of 24 hours (2 x in West Cornforth, and 1 each in Ferryhill, Chilton and Bishop Middleham), which was concerning.

Meeting observer Ms J Weston raised ongoing issues with people selling drugs from various properties in the Dean Bank area. A/Insp MS acknowledged that there are issues with this. The police are currently looking into securing funding to reinstate an outreach service in Ferryhill, to support people with drug problems.

Meeting observer Mr Rich raised an issue in relation to increasing numbers of electric bikes and scooters in the area, which are often travelling at high speed. These are clearly unlicensed and without insurance. A/Insp MS commented that

he's not aware of any specific issues, and encouraged people to continue to report incidents going forward so that the police are aware.

[A/Insp MS and LP left the meeting]

A5. Priorities & Action Plans

A5.1 Area Budget Update

LC briefly updated that all decisions in preparation for the 2020-21 project callout were previously agreed by Board members.

PN added that the Task & Finish Groups will be starting soon, to look at the criteria for the 2020-21 Area Budget callout; any Board member who'd like to get involved, please contact PN to confirm.

A5.2 Neighbourhood Budget Update

PN circulated updated information on current NB balances for all Elected Members. PN added that some great projects have been funded by Cllrs this year, and there are several more in the pipeline ready for the new financial year.

Cllr PC thanked PN for all her hard work and support, especially in relation to Neighbourhood Budget, both in supporting Cllrs as well as project applicants; this is invaluable and greatly appreciated. All DCC Cllrs seconded this.

A5.3 Quarter 3 Project Monitoring

CAi confirmed that the collated update reports for ongoing projects were circulated in advance with the meeting papers, for information. CAi highlighted that several projects are currently exceeding planned targets, and he will be arranging some project visits over the next few weeks. Two of the projects that did not submit their quarterly return have been offered support meetings.

PN asked if Board members would be interested in receiving a specific project update at the next meeting; DR suggested that Endeavour Woodcrafts could be a good organisation to invite. PN will arrange (**Action 4: PN**).

A5.4 2020-21 Chair/Vice Chairs

LC confirmed that she will be emailing all three sectors of the Board in advance of the AGM in May, to ascertain interest for the Chair/Vice Chair roles for 2020-21 (**Action 5: LC**).

A5.5 2020-21 Board Meeting Dates

LC confirmed that the proposed meeting dates for 2020-21 had been circulated in advance with the meeting papers, for information; these were **AGREED** by Board members.

A6. Date & Time of Next Meeting (AGM): Wed 6 May 2020, 6:00pm at Dean Bank & Ferryhill Literary Institute

DS thanked everyone for their attendance, and the meeting was closed.