

DERWENT VALLEY PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING

Held via Microsoft Teams on 24 March 2021 at 1pm



PRESENT:

Councillors

Derek Hicks, Ivan Jewell, Alan Shield, Watts Stelling (Vice Chair), Owen Temple and Alex Watson

Partner Organisations

Mark Clelland - Derwentside Trust, Craig Farrage - Co Durham & Darlington Fire & Rescue Service, Alison Lazazzera – Durham County Council (DCC), Rachel Rooney - County Durham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Gary Scott (Vice Chair) - Do Business Network (DBN)

Public Representatives

Marlene Boyles, Mike Clark, Jeanette Harold (Chair), Helen Marley and Susan Mellor

DVP:

Corinne Walton - AAP Co-ordinator, Pete Garrod and Kath Clements - Community Development / Project Officers and Lynn Dougal – Support Officer

PRESENTERS:

Shotley Bridge Community Hospital update, Durham & Darlington Fire and Rescue Service Arson Reduction Team - Craig Farrage and Derwentside Trust presentation - Mark Clelland

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 7

APOLOGIES:

Partner Reps: Paul Moralee - Karbon Homes and Joanne Waller – DCC. Public Rep: Shelley O'Brien

1. Meeting opened by the Co-ordinator

Corinne Walton welcomed everyone to the meeting and briefly went through the Teams functions such as the mute button, raising the hand icon and turning camera on/off. Board members were asked to write RTS (request to speak) in the chat facility.

Board members introduced themselves, apologies were noted as above and there was one declaration of interest from Mike Clark regarding the Shotley Bridge Community Hospital update.

Corinne shared the agenda which covered the items to be discussed at the meeting.

Jeanette Harold reminded everyone of the Code of Conduct, which is on the reverse of the agenda.

2. Minutes of Previous Board Meeting (27 January 2021)

Matters arising:

Page 5, Footprint Climate Change Conference. The DVP Team contacted Durham University to enquire if the conference could be held virtually and were informed that it would take place online on 11 and 12 June 2021. Should there be no financial cost required from us, the £1k will go back into the Area Budget and used towards an alternative environmental project.

Page 5, Greening Derwent Valley competition. The Board agreed that this would not go ahead but would be relaunched as a photograph challenge in conjunction with Visit Consett. The details of the challenge are available on www.visitconsett.co.uk and will be promoted on our Derwent Valley Life website www.derwentvalleylife.org.uk and in the May edition of our Derwent Valley NEWS newsletter. There are no costs required from the DVP and the £1k can be used towards an alternative environmental project.

There were no further comments/matters arising and the minutes were AGREED.

3. DVP Task Group Update

Corinne gave an update on the three Task Groups and shared a copy of the presentation slides which she briefly went through.

Following the Board's agreement in January to reconvene the 3 task groups and to keep the Covid-19 Recovery Task Group, the 3 task groups met to refocus and refresh their actions plans with Covid-19 recovery as a cross cutting theme within their work.

Employment, Enterprise and Training (EET) Task Group – Chair Gary Scott

The task group met on 28 February and will be focusing their action plan on (with links to Covid-19 recovery):

- Support for those furthest from the labour market into employment.
- Support the business sector in its recovery from the impact of Covid-19.
- Link to Health & Wellbeing Task Group to promote Better Mental Health for EET related activities.
- Promotion and increased awareness of EET related activities.
- Support sectors with the demands of re-opening with a focus on hospitality and the visitor economy.
- Provision of a variety of training and skills development to support varying levels.

Gary Scott said that the group's key points to focus on are job creation and to acknowledge the mental health issues prevalent with many small business owners.

The DBN will be surveying their members to address the skills gaps and challenges for businesses. When things start to open again there is likely to be a huge demand for hospitality and leisure facilities and they are tailoring activities around getting them ready to meet those demands.

The task group also discussed the skills needs for the next 5 years with businesses as well as looking at how large organisations (i.e. health, public procurement) can place their business locally with small business suppliers to help support and stimulate the local economy.

Mike Clark said that prior to the first lockdown, we tried to establish a business forum/business support session. As businesses will be gearing up to open from 12 April, he suggested organising something now rather than further down the line.

Gary said he is keen to get that group together. He said that Business Durham (BD) organised an event, with providers, last year and they identified significant duplication in support and programmes. Gary said he wants to avoid duplication and would like to tap into those organisations that can help businesses in any way possible.

Pete Garrod suggested that the task group contact BD (as he is temporarily leaving the DVP) to see what could be done to get the business forum up and running as they were involved initially. He said he will share the list of providers from the initial set up with Gary.

With regards to the budgets available to the DVP, Cllr Shield suggested doing some background work as soon as possible so we can identify the route to go down and know where the funding can come from to support those initiatives.

Environment (Enviro) Task Group – Chair Ann English

The task group met on 25 February and 4 March and although there is more work to do on finalising the action plan, the group will be focusing on (with links to Covid-19 recovery):

- Climate change initiatives linked to resource efficiency, reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality.
- Employment and training in the green energy sector.

Ann English said the group want to catch up with all the things they thought of in the past which they could not do. While Covid-19 is and has been terrible, we will recover but it will take the environment a lot longer.

Regarding reducing carbon emissions, Cllr Watson asked if this involves supporting initiatives that reduce carbon emissions and if it is based on research. Corinne said the task group would need to commission work to get data on local air quality and emission levels. The group is keen to support initiatives that aim to reduce the impact of emissions such as planting schemes that can absorb/trap harmful emissions from within the air.

Rosemary Morris (Forum) said there are a lot of ideas on how to tackle environmental issues and targets to be achieved but there does not appear to be any delivery plans and suggested local industry and the Council work together to set plans in action.

Mike said we need to have some research/empirical data available to ascertain what the priorities are that we should be tackling locally and have some idea about what CO₂ reduction and recovery means. He also said there are opportunities around the Derwent

Valley and Consett areas for woodland and hedge planting, biodiversity initiatives, etc that could help with mitigation strategies.

Cllr Jewell suggested inviting John Clare to an Enviro Task Group meeting to give an insight into what is going on around County Durham. He also feels that we are looking at this in a parochial way and sees the problem as much wider and that we need to know the wider picture and how we can we fit into and may be influence it.

Alison Lazazzera said she is happy to find out what DCC is doing and what the proposals are around environmental issues and will liaise with the relevant officer outside of the meeting. Corinne commented in the chat facility that the Environment Task Group would benefit from this input and that she has been in touch with Vicky Bell, Strategic Waste team for further information.

Rosemary (Forum) said there is an update on DCC's Emergency Response Plan which gives an insight into what they are doing. She also referred to DCC, and other local authorities, proposing to burn waste in a Teesside incinerator and would like to know why DCC agreed to this and what they propose to do about the emissions.

Health and Wellbeing (HAWB) Task Group – Chair John O'Connor

The task group met on 17 February and 16 March and their action plan remains relevant in tackling the issues they identified pre Covid as well as post Covid. The group will be looking at (with links to Covid-19 Recovery):

- Mental health – specifically looking at initiatives around suicide prevention and social isolation.
- Physical activity and bereavement – this is a new addition in the action plan.

John O'Connor said the impact from Covid-19 is likely to go on for years and the subsequent mental health issues are likely to take some time to deal with. Rather than keep debating what we have discussed in the task group, we need to get on with what we have identified and put that into action.

Jeanette said she is aware of mental health issues amongst health workers and the possible gaps in health-related employment as they succumb to the pressures of working in that environment. She said it was important to have good mental health in the workplace.

Cllr Watson said mental health issues are a growing problem in young people and wondered if there was any research done on this. Jeanette asked John if the task group would consider doing some research into youth mental health.

John advised that they have received statistics from the Suicide Prevention Alliance as well as for County Durham and the local area. At the current time, the rate for suicides in our area has declined. He said they have empirical data, which has been noted in the minutes of the task group and are available should anyone wish to see them.

Cllr Watson said he feels schools in particular are failing young students as they do not know how to address students' problems.

Rachel Rooney advised about being cautious on using rate as a measurement especially when looking at such few numbers, as it can look like a decrease when the difference is between 1 and 2 people. She said the demand for mental health services is huge and we need to think differently as local communities how we manage these issues. The CCG is looking to fund Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) projects, that are non-medical, to help tackle issues that have arisen since the outbreak of Covid. She also said the CCG is expecting their Planning Guidance from the NHS shortly and envisage it will be around recovery with key points focusing on health, wellbeing and inequalities.

Jeanette mentioned an organisation called Engage Britain, where people across the county can join in conversations online, e.g. on health matters, and make their views known. Search Engage Britain to access the website.

Rosemary (Forum) said schools, particularly secondary, give feedback on a child's educational progress and personal development in terms of what they can achieve and where they might like to go. However, that part of the system is not well joined up and schools need qualified staff to provide the appropriate support and guidance on careers and personal development feedback.

Corinne said there may be a review of the local priorities at the end of the year for the 2022/23 financial year. However, the current actions plans will run for one year but within the work of the task groups they will be looking at short, medium and long term delivery timescales.

4. Partner Updates

Shotley Bridge Community Hospital (SBCH)

Corinne shared a copy of the County Durham CCG Public Engagement – Phase 2 document, which Board members had received prior to the meeting.

The document gave an overview on the second phase of the engagement process which included seeking the public's views on how future services could be delivered and potential locations for clinical services. The public could share their views online, via paper copy or attend virtual sessions during March.

Rachel said the CCG have closed their engagement period from 24 March, due to the Pre-Election Publicity Period (PEPP) which is the time leading up to the local elections in May. She hopes that people have been able to have their say and listened to what the CCG have had to say. They have gone through a lot of detail on the clinical model and discussed two options around potential building solutions – one to refurbish the existing site and the other to build a new facility on the Derwent View site in Consett. They have had an overwhelming response to building a new facility. All the information they have received will be used to take forward to the next stage.

Rachel gave a brief update on timescales:

For a new build facility – we have to put forward an outline business case and then a full business case, to demonstrate we are using public funds effectively. It is hoped that the

business case will be completed by the end of this year/start of next year and construction will start summer 2022 with completion early 2024.

For a refurbishment of SBCH – it is likely that there would be implications/disruption around service continuity as SBCH is an old building and refurbishment would take place on the tower block. This will be highlighted in the business case.

John (Forum) said the format of the sessions was very good and well explained. As there has been a lot of engagement with the public, he asked how the CCG will continue to keep them engaged. Rachel said it is crucial to keep the public engaged especially as we are nearing the end. It is a positive thing for the area, and it needs to have a North West Durham feel about it and if anyone has any ideas, she is happy to hear about them.

Cllr Shield said there was a lot of repetition in the engagement sessions and thought it would be beneficial if the second group were given a review of what had been asked in the first group and vice versa. He thought, the most contentious issue was about the number of inpatient beds and feels that this needs to be addressed.

He also asked about power capacity in the Consett area and if the CCG has contacted officers at County Hall to enquire if there are any/likely to be issues around capacity should a facility be built on the Derwent site. He said he cannot find any information on this and if there is any, he would like a copy of the report.

Rachel said NHS Property Services work on their behalf and the CCG also have links with the Planning Department in DCC. She is not aware of any formal issues raised regarding power capacity, but the development is part of the Health Infrastructure Plan, for example, complying with modern methods of construction, modular design and being carbon neutral. To deliver a carbon neutral solution there are additional costs, and these are being factored in. Regarding Cllr Shield's enquiry, Rachel said she will contact the relevant team and get back to him.

Cllr Temple thought the sessions were very useful and well managed. He wondered if a straw poll, on a new build facility versus refurbishment of SBCH, could be conducted with Board and Forum members at this meeting. He also mentioned that people who attended the engagement sessions could leave a contact name if they wished to be kept informed about the design phase and he asked if the same could apply to those at this meeting.

Rachel said they will be speaking to the architects about the best way to engage people in the design and if anyone would like to be involved please let her have your details.

Rachel also said she would be happy to do a quick poll at the meeting and Board and Forum members were asked to either put 'refurb' or 'new build' in the chat facility. The results were: new build = 14 and refurb = 0.

Rachel advised they will be pulling together an engagement report which will be available on their website and she will share this information in due course.

Corinne thanked Rachel for her contribution at the meeting.

County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS) – Deliberate Primary and Secondary Fires presentation delivered by Craig Farrage (copy available upon request)

Craig said the picture across the country in all of the fire and rescue services is not good as far as arson and deliberate fire crime is concerned. Durham Constabulary made 44 arrests for arson last month and we still have an increasing arson problem in the county.

Primary fires refer to something with a value e.g. cars, but there are very few deliberate primary fires involving business premises. On a national scale, County Durham is ranked as the fourth most dangerous place to live in England (based mainly on fire crimes). If we continue to see increases, we could become the most dangerous county to live in based on the impact arson has on their risk rating.

The main problem area is around the east coast side of County Durham where a lot of deliberate fires are linked to organised crime.

Secondary fires refer to something of little value e.g. rubbish, garden waste and these are found across the county. On a national scale CDDFRS is in the top 3 worst areas in England.

CCTV has been placed in high fire crime areas across the county, however there are not many around the Derwent Valley area as deliberate fires are not a big problem. There has been a slight increase in secondary fires in the area, due to waste dumped during lockdown, but again not a huge problem.

The fire service work in partnership with DCC and Neighbourhood Policing Teams and also do intervention work with young people and have worked with schools to raise awareness about the detrimental effects of fire crimes and the impact on the community.

If anyone has any concerns or ideas on how they can contribute to reducing fire trends in the area, visit www.firestoppersreport.co.uk.

Jeanette thanked Craig for his presentation and if anyone has any questions, please contact Craig.

Derwentside Trust Video Presentation

Mark Clelland said the video is to give everyone an idea of what has been happening with Glenroyd House since the first lockdown in March 2020. A short video was shown.

Jeanette thanked Mark for an uplifting video.

5. DVP 2021/22 Budget

Corinne briefly went through the report, which Board members received prior to the meeting, that gave an update on the financial position of the DVP at the end of 2020/21 and outlined the budget allocations for 2021/22.

The Covid-19 Recovery 2020/21 budget (approx £143k) was fully allocated to support 13 local projects. However, further to an appraisal by the Funding Team, the St Ebba's Church project (for IT equipment within the church, £5,260.80) was not successful due to it being deemed as a 'religious project' which does not meet our Area Budget criteria. Therefore £5,260.80 will be carried forward into the budget allocations in 2021/22.

All 14 AAPs will be awarded a further £1.4m from the Local Council Tax Support Grant in 2021/22 to invest in local anti-poverty and coronavirus response initiatives, this equates to £100k per AAP.

For the 2021/22 financial year, the funding allocations for the DVP are:

£100,000 Area Budget (AB)

£100,000 Local anti-poverty and coronavirus response fund

£5,260.80 (carried forward from 2020/21)

£300,000 Towns and Villages funding (available over 3 years)

£35,754 Holiday Activities with Healthy Food (HAHF) (Grant provided by the Department for Education (DfE))

£25,000 Older Persons Social Isolation Fund (OPSIF)

£9,902 Youth Fund

£10,000 Welfare Reform Fund

Total budget of £585,916.80 from 1 April 2021.

In addition to the above, Project Genesis Trust (PGT) has kindly offered the DVP up to £10k to be used as match funding for local projects receiving DVP funds, where the applicant has a shortfall. This money is awarded at the discretion of the Board and if the pilot is successful it could be rolled out across Mid Durham and Stanley AAP areas.

John (Forum and Chair of PGT) commented in the chat facility '*PGT attempting to fill the gap under the DVP £5k threshold. Plus, PGT have small grants fund up to £500, total fund £15,000. Launch in early May 2021*'.

Corinne advised that three projects have been allocated funding from the Easter 2021 HAHF, totaling £9,185: Groundwork North East and Cumbria, Derwentside Trust and the Grove Primary School.

Although there are more pots of money to administer, the DVP team remains at the same capacity. However, there will be additional staff to help administer the Towns and Villages money. Corinne suggested that at the May Board meeting, the agenda mainly addresses the new funding pots and the Board discuss the various processes and who would be involved.

Delivery of the spring edition of the Derwent Valley NEWS (DVN) has been postponed until after the local elections (6 May). The newsletter is very well received and offers an alternative to online content. As there is no money available for future editions, Corinne asked the Board if they wished to fund 2 further editions, e.g. Winter 2021 and Summer 2022 from the 2021/22 AB at a cost of approx £9k. The Board AGREED to fund 2 editions of the newsletter.

Gary agreed that the next Board meeting should focus mainly on the budget element and who will be involved in the allocation and decision-making process. Jeanette concurred with Gary.

Cllr Shield said he was disappointed to hear St Ebba's project had been declined. He said as there was a shortfall of approx. £13.5k in The Roxy project, due to insufficient funding left in the Covid-19 Recovery budget, he asked if the £5260.80 from the St Ebba's project could be used to reduce the shortfall. There were no objections from the Board, and it was AGREED £5260.80 would be allocated to The Roxy project.

Towns and Villages Funding Report

Corinne outlined the report, which Board members had received a copy of prior to the meeting, that gave an update on the money available to all AAPs to support local schemes that help to enhance towns and villages across the county based on local priorities. Each AAP will receive a share of £4.2m, which equates to £300k per AAP, across a 3-year period 2021/22 - 2023/24 and can be allocated to projects over 1 to 3 years.

The report highlighted guidelines and principles around the funding, examples included:

- bids for funding will be made through the established AAP funding process
- funding can be used for both capital and revenue expenditure
- AAPs will have flexibility to be innovative but within the criteria framework
- feasibility studies to be capped at £30k
- minimum amount of funding that can be applied for is £10k
- must achieve a match funding rate of at least 30%

Corinne said there needs to be some joined up working as this is a DCC led strategy and funding application proposals need to align with what is going on centrally. She said there will be a group set up to look at this, which will have DVP Board representation, or certainly AAP representation to keep AAPs informed.

As this is an initial report, more information will be forthcoming on the content and criteria for the Towns and Villages Fund.

Corinne mentioned that the Board were keen to reconvene the funding subgroup and advised that further information on joining the subgroup will be sent to Board members after the local elections.

John (Forum) said that the 30% match funding may be difficult to achieve for some organisations in the current climate and asked if in kind/volunteer time can be used. Jeanette said it would be useful to have some clarity around this. Corinne stated that further information would be available in due course which would hopefully address any arising issues/queries.

6. DfE HAHF Fund Subgroup

Corinne said that the HAHF has been run by the AAP teams for their area due to the limited amount of funding involved. The DfE money however is a much larger pot and we

are looking for volunteers from the Board to sit on a subgroup. The subgroup would be responsible for reviewing the funding applications submitted to the DVP for future DfE programmes administered by the team. An email will be sent to Board members asking for volunteers to sit on the subgroup in due course.

7. Pre-Election Publicity Period (PEPP)

Corinne said the PEPP (formerly known as Purdah) applies from 25 March until after the local elections on 6 May 2021. There will be no Board or Task Group meetings during this time and we also need to be mindful of what is posted on social media.

8. Any Other Business

Regarding an email Kath Clements sent to Board members for approval on 22 March relating to a Neighbourhood Budget application from Crookhall Foundation for basketball court and field improvements. As the application needs a quorate response (3 from each Board category) and needs to be with the funding team by the end of today for processing, Kath said she requires at least 2 more responses from the Public Reps and 1 more from the Elected Reps.

In the chat facility 2 Public Reps, 1 Councillor and 1 Partner Rep gave their support to the application, therefore the application was APPROVED.

Corinne said there may be another funding application sent out today for Board members to comment on, if they wish, as we have had a last-minute funding request to process prior to the start of PEPP.

9. Meeting Close and Date of Next Meeting

Corinne advised that the next Board meeting is the AGM and we will be seeking nominations for a new Chair and Vice Chairs for the coming year. More information will be sent out after the elections and prior to the Board meeting in May.

Jeanette thanked everyone for their attendance and confirmed that the next Board meeting (AGM) will be on Wednesday 26 May 2021 at 1pm via Microsoft Teams.

Signed as a correct record:

Date: