

East Durham Rural Corridor Area Action Partnership Minutes of the Board Meeting

Tuesday 28 September 2021

(Virtual Meeting - held via Microsoft Teams)

Present: Cllr Chris Varty, Cllr Chris Lines, Cllr David Brown, Maureen Dixon-Berne, Angela Stobbart, Peter Maddison, Neighbourhood Insp Sarah Honeyman, Malcolm Gray, Christine Carter, George Storey, Mel Carr, Stuart Dunn, Allan Blakemore, Tony Cutmore, Cllr Gary Hutchinson (joined late)

Officer Attendance: Jane Bellis – AAP Co-ordinator
Claire Craft – Community Development Project Officer
Marie Ainscough – AAP Support Officer

Presenters: Julie Anson, Community Economic Development Manager – Durham County Council (DCC)
Emma McLoughlin, Community Development Project Officer – Towns and Villages Team (DCC)
David Tinmouth, Principal Economic Development Officer (DCC)

Forum Members: 7 forum members attended the meeting

Apologies: Kester Noble, Cllr Jan Blakey and three forum members had submitted their apologies

1 Introductions and Apologies

Allan Blakemore, AAP Chair welcomed everyone to the Board Meeting of the East Durham Rural Corridor Area Action Partnership.

A warm welcome was offered to Julie Anson, Economic Development Manager – DCC, Emma McLoughlin, Community Development Project Officer (Towns and Villages Team) – DCC and David Tinmouth, Principal Economic Development Officer – DCC who were in attendance to deliver presentations.

A special welcome was also offered to the three new public representatives on the Board. Stuart Dunn and George Storey who were in attendance, and Kester Noble who had submitted his apologies.

Apologies (see above). A round of introductions followed. The Chair highlighted that although the names of Board and Forum members are not included in the body of the minutes; advice given in relation to the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), is that the board minutes are

made public, therefore should anyone wish to remain anonymous they were to state this.

Anyone present who had a conflict of interest in any item on the agenda was asked to declare an interest at the start of the agenda item to ensure this was formally recorded in the meeting minutes.

2 Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 July 2021 & Matters Arising

The Chair reviewed the previous minutes for matters arising, actions and accuracy. There were no matters arising.

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2021 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

3 Countywide Partner Issues:

3.1 Towns and Villages Presentation

Julie Anson, Community Economic Development Manager – Durham County Council delivered a presentation on the Towns and Villages Programme.

Various consultation stages on the Vision, Housing Strategy and County Durham Plan had raised concern from communities. The Towns and Villages Programme will support the acceleration of these together with the alignment of other current council and partner activity.

The Towns and Villages Strategy will focus on partnership working, aligning activities and budgets and will have an equitable approach on disadvantaged communities.

The strategy will also focus on five themes -

1. Strategic Investments – support for town and neighbourhood centres.
2. Housing and Community - to support the accelerated delivery of the Housing Strategy, creating resilient communities.
3. Environment and Health - to create local opportunities through high quality environment.
4. Built Environment - to support regeneration activities within our towns and villages; find innovative solutions to underused / derelict land and buildings; support independent retailers and businesses; and to provide clean and attractive built environments that communities are proud of
5. Transport and Connectivity - to ensure connected communities through excellent connectivity for businesses and the workforce.

Emma McLoughlin, Community Development Project Officer (Towns and Villages Team) delivered a presentation on the AAP and Councillor Funding element of the Towns and Villages Programme.

AAP Funding

- Each AAP has received £210,000 – can carry out joint working across AAP areas.
- County Councillors have £10,000 in addition to the £19,400 neighbourhood budget allocation.
- Unless there are exceptional circumstances, projects supported should have a minimum contribution from this fund of £10,000 and seek to achieve an external match funding rate of at least 30%.
- AAPs should cap any spend on feasibility studies to a maximum of £30,000.
- Only not for profit constituted organisations are eligible.

The Chair thanked Julie and Emma for their presentations; which will be shared with the Board.

Julie highlighted that as well as providing some strategic context to the localised Towns and Villages work, the Regeneration Team will also identify opportunities locally from their perspective that the AAP could add value to, to ensure work is not being duplicated. The AAP Towns and Villages work will fit with the current and future plans of the AAP area.

Julie will be attending the first meeting of the AAP's Towns and Villages Task and Finish Group meeting once it's arranged; and an agenda item will be aligned to the Towns and Villages Programme.

Julie explained that they do something called 'Investment Mapping' which is updated after every quarter. This shows all of the projects that are being considered /delivered and gets populated on the mapping document. She said she could go through the list and advise the AAP on the work happening within the East Durham Rural Corridor AAP area.

Questions/ queries/ comments raised in relation to the presentation were –

- Clarity was sought on the allocation of the County Councillors one-off contribution of £10,000 towards Towns and Villages projects as well as match funding against the main fund.
- Does this money have to be spent or committed by the end of the financial year? It was highlighted that it doesn't all have to be spent but we need to make good progress.
- We need to start with connectivity. There are lots of problems across the AAP area – bus services, poor shopping areas, cost of people going shopping in the area, issues with speeding traffic, no pedestrian crossing. The local Trindon and Thornley ward County Councillors are looking at combining their money towards anti-social behaviour for the whole area.
- Where will we be able to access the map showing the projects being considered? The Coxhoe street scene needs some attention. As above, information from this will be available at the first Task Group from Julie Anson.

4 Priority Updates (from Task Group and Projects)
4.1 COVID-19 Recovery Project Summaries – agreement of Task Group recommendations

At the Covid-19 Recovery Task Group meeting held on 21 September, task group members recommended that all 3 eligible applications be taken to the Board for agreement; 2 of which were subject to satisfactory responses to queries.

The following Area Budget projects were approved by the Board –

[Lynne Watson declared an interest in the Fishburn Youth and Community Centre project]

- ❖ Fishburn Youth and Community Centre – Staff salaries
 - ❖ Cleaner (for a 12-month period)
 - ❖ The Community Centre Manager (for a 12-month period)

Both members of staff to which this application applies are currently funded by the National Lottery Community Fund to the end of March 2022.

Amount of funding applied for: £25,447.00

Total project cost: £27,659.00

[George Storey declared an interest in the Cassop Community Centre project]

- ❖ Cassop Community Centre – Toilet Refurbishment and Update

The funding will be used to refurbish, update and extend the ladies toilets on the site of the current ladies and gents toilets. A new gents toilet will be built at the back of the centre using part of a storage cupboard and a new entrance to the storage area will also be built. This will require new drainage.

Amount of funding applied for: £13,500.00

Total project cost: £14,500.00

[Derek Bradley declared an interest in the Deaf Hill Ward Partnership project]

- ❖ Deaf Hill Ward Partnership – Community Support

The partnership's trustee realise that the future is going to be difficult in terms of trying to support their current activities and bring in new business since the pandemic and would therefore like to employ a part time worker for 12-hours per week who would support their volunteers.

Amount of funding applied for: £9,004.00

Total project cost: £12,504.00

For information: Rose Cottage Community Hub CIC were ineligible as they did not have a bank account with two unrelated signatories. The team have since had notification that they're in the process of opening another account; they will be eligible to apply to future rounds once this is sorted.

4.2 October Half Term Holiday Activities with Healthy Food – agreement of Task Group recommendations

At the Covid-19 Recovery Task Group meeting held on 21 September, task group members recommended that all 6 applications be taken to the Board for agreement; 2 of which were subject to satisfactory responses to queries and suggestions.

The Board agreed to the recommendations from the task group meeting held on 21 September, and the following 6 Holiday Activities with Healthy Food projects for October Half Term were approved.

[Lynne Watson, Louis Hurst, Derek Bradley and Stuart Dunn declared an interest in the following items of business]

- i. Fishburn Youth & Community Centre – Youth Club October Half Term Project
- ii. DJ Evans Youth Club – October Half-Term 2021
- iii. Spennymoor Youth & Community Centre – October Half-term Fun & Food
- iv. ATOMS Education CIC – Halloween Fun
- v. Investing in Children – Family Food Day with Creative Kitchen
- vi. Deaf Hill Ward Regeneration Partnership – Autumn Fun

4.3 Financial Ability Programme

David Timmouth delivered a presentation on the Financial Ability Programme.

Further information can be found on the Durham County Council website <https://www.durham.gov.uk/financialability>

The presentation will be shared with the board.

An event 'Routes out of Poverty' will take place on 30 September. Sam Scotchbrook can provide further information.

There were no questions raised in relation to the presentation.

Future Task Group Meetings

- ❖ Thursday 18 November 2021 @10am
- ❖ Tuesday 18 January 2022 @10am
- ❖ Thursday 17 March 2022 @10am

5 Co-ordinators Report including Quarterly Performance Management

Members of the public are being invited to apply to become a public representative on the Board of the East Durham Rural Corridor Area Action Partnership. For an application pack or for more information, please contact the AAP team via email eastdurhamruralaap@durham.gov.uk or call 03000 261128. Board members were encouraged to get the message out into the local community.

Jane had attended her first face to face meeting in over 18 months in the Council Chamber on the 1st September to deliver a report to the Health and Wellbeing Board on the work of all 14 AAPs. The purpose of the report was to provide an overview of the work the AAPs have led on, to support the community in responding to, and recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic and it was very well received.

The Chair thanked Jane for a detailed report, and she passed on her thanks to the Board and Task Group Members, as well as Claire, Lyndsey and Marie for all of the hard work and commitment, to ensure our communities had received the support they needed through what hadn't been an easy time for anyone. If any Board Members would like to look at the report; it is available on the DCC website as the Health and Wellbeing Board is a Committee of the Council.

Allan Blakemore had recently attended the Countywide Funding chairs group on behalf of the East Durham Rural Corridor AAP and notified the meeting that there had been debate and discussion into the process for allocating the £300,000 countywide funding. The group had picked 3 themes to work up project activity against and these were –

- Mental Health – with a specific focus on young people's mental health linked to the impact of the COVID pandemic
- Employability
- ASB with a focus on youth related ASB (including diversionary activities)

He added that he had put forward the issue of arson reduction, a project necessary in our area following a meeting held with Jane and the Chair/Vice Chairs. Allan notified Jane that Andrew Megginson said he was going to get in touch with her about this.

The second round of the Area Budget Project Call Out is to be relaunched on 29 September 2021. Any support in getting the message out to interested groups and organisation who may be interested in applying was appreciated. Within the funding the AAP need to allocate this financial year, the meeting was reminded that we have £25,000 to help tackle older people's social isolation so applications in relation to that would also be appreciated. The deadline for applications is 12 noon on the 3rd November, and as well as constituted community groups, partner organisations around the table can also apply.

AAP questions to Full Council that the AAPs did on a rota basis pre COVID have now been paused until further notice.

The 2020/21 Annual Report is now complete and has been uploaded onto the webpage. Jane thanked the team for their joint effort alongside herself to get this finalised.

The East Durham Rural Corridor AAP is required to monitor projects it has funded on a quarterly basis. Jane provided a comprehensive verbal update on the progression of some of the projects during Quarter 1 (April – June 2021).

As part of the Youth and Cyber Crime quarterly project progress report, Louis Hurst had stated that –

It would be nice to have a discussion about the future of the project with the Area Action Partnership. The key issue is engagement and it would be good to hear some suggestions from the AAP about what I can do in order to increase engagement and try and get the project back on track.

Louis advised that since the report had been submitted the bulk of the animation had been done and the audio sent out and the project was now running smoothly.

Further details on any of the projects the AAP had funded can be emailed out upon request. Alternatively, project leads can be invited to come along to a future meeting to showcase their work.

Prior to moving onto the next agenda item, Jane explained that the AAP had received a local neighbourhood issue in relation to Go North East suspending bus service 239 which runs between Peterlee and Sedgefield, and the negative impact it was having on members of the community who use it for work etc.

Allan Blakemore highlighted that this had been raised at the Countywide Funding meeting.

Jane went on to say that the underlying issue was anti-social behaviour, and the relevant officers within the council are prioritising their work to get the service reinstated, although they don't have a timescale at present. Any further updates will be shared with the Board.

If anyone has any particular issues regarding the transport services, please direct them to the AAP team who will then feed them onto John Hewitt.

6 Local Neighbourhood Issues (LNI)

6.1 Locality Policing Issues

Neighbourhood Insp Sarah Honeyman provided an update on local policing issues.

Sarah said the bus service withdrawal of the 239 came to her attention last Monday. A meeting had taken place with Go North East to discuss the issues. There had been 6 criminal damages since the 1 August all of which have been

in Trimdon Colliery; the issue started in Sedgefield during the summer. Initially as part of the meeting, the bus company mentioned that they wouldn't be putting the bus service back on until there was a police presence; however this was not feasible for police officers to be on that bus service and Go North East had accepted this. The police have agreed to look at the CCTV but unfortunately with some of the issues they can't make out who is who. The CCTV is to be reviewed and further updates will be fed back to the AAP.

Sedgefield Area

- Trend on reported incidents re. anti-social behaviour is going down.
- Problem with burglaries on Fishburn Industrial Estate and Salters Lane Industrial Estate.

Durham Area

- Keep up community engagement during COVID. Not much take up on Facebook in Bowburn and Coxhoe. Struggling with people signing up to 'Keeping in the Know'. AAP to promote when Sarah sends information through.

Peterlee/Trimdon Station/Deaf Hill Areas

- Trimdon Colliery and Deaf Hill – 4 incidents of anti-social behaviour reported between 1 August – 20 September
- 6 incidents of criminal damage to buses.
- 1 vehicle arson.

Comments made in relation to the police update included –

Cllr Chris Varty commented on the monthly meeting held with the Peterlee Policing Team, where she asked if it would be possible to contact Sarah or Insp Boyd to have a representative to come along to the meetings every other month as Trimdon Village seemed to get missed out. Sarah agreed to speak to Gary and Charlotte.

George Storey commented on the recent spate of burglaries in Cassop. He also mentioned the presence of drones, and asked Sarah what the position was in relation to low level drug dealing.

Sarah reminded everyone of the winter nights campaign now that the nights are drawing in.

7 Neighbourhood Budget Projects

[Allan Blakemore declared an interest in the following item of business]

The following neighbourhood budget project was shared with the Board -

Name of Scheme: Sedgefield Xmas Lights

Councillor(s): Brown / Lines

Interest Declared: No

Amount: £5,000.00

The Board was happy to approve the project.

The AAP team will be going back into the office soon on a hybrid model, the new way of working. Staff will work flexibly around meetings etc to ensure the needs of the AAP are covered. The team agreements are still to be finalised.

8 [Date and time of next board meeting](#)

Thursday 21 October 2021

Subsequent Board Meeting Dates

- Thursday 25 November 2021
- Tuesday 1 February 2022
- Wednesday 30 March 2022

Meetings will take place via Teams until further notice and will move back to the traditional 5.00 pm – 7.00 pm meeting time as soon as possible.

Everyone was thanked for their attendance and the meeting closed.