

DERWENT VALLEY PARTNERSHIP (DVP) BOARD MEETING

Held via Microsoft Teams on 29 September 2021 at 6pm



PRESENT:

Councillors

Declan Mulholland, Michelle Walton and Alex Watson

Partner Organisations

Mark Clelland - Derwentside Trust, Craig Farrage - Co Durham & Darlington Fire & Rescue Service, Rachel Rooney - County Durham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Joanne Waller - Durham County Council (DCC)

Public Representatives

Marlene Boyles, Helen Marley and Susan Mellor

DVP:

Corinne Walton - AAP Co-ordinator, Kath Clements and Laura Sloan - Community Development Project Officers and Lynn Dougal – Support Officer

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 5

PRESENTERS:

Joy Allen - Durham Police and Crime Commissioner, Jackie Donnelly - Towns & Villages, DCC and Craig Farrage – Co Durham & Darlington Fire and Rescue Service

APOLOGIES:

Elected Reps: Cllrs Kevin Earley, Stephen Robinson, Kathryn Rooney and Alan Shields

Partner Reps: Paul Moralee (Karbon Homes) and Alison Lazazzera (DCC)

Public Reps: Mike Clark and Jeanette Harold

1. Meeting opened by the Co-ordinator

Corinne Walton welcomed everyone to the meeting, went through the Teams functions and meeting etiquette and reminded everyone of the Code of Conduct.

Board members introduced themselves, apologies were noted as above and there were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes of Previous Board Meeting (14 July 2021)

Page 2, regarding the Eden Miners Centre and funding support requested from the PGT Discretionary Fund. The Eden Miners Centre was contacted for information and associated costs about the project and unfortunately, we have not received anything from them. The DVP team will follow this up.

Page 4, regarding Rosemary Morris attending face to face DCC meetings, Craig Farrage asked Rosemary how well this worked and wondered if there was any preparation needed by the DVP in readiness for face-to-face meetings.

Rosemary Morris (Forum) said she has attended meetings in the Council Chambers where social distancing and face coverings were adhered to and attendees were requested to do an LFD test prior to attending the meeting. There were no members of the public at the meeting but it was broadcasted on You Tube.

Cllr Watson said that the public have attended meetings he has been in and they have observed social distancing and wearing face coverings when walking around.

Mark Clelland said he heard in the news that there are plans to scrap free PCR and LFD tests at the end of October. Anyone taking these tests would have to pay for them.

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

3. DVP Task Group Update and HAWB Project Recommendations

Corinne gave an update on the work of the four task groups.

Employment, Enterprise and Training (EET) Task Group – Chair Mike Clark and DVP Lead Officer Laura Sloan

The task group launched their call out for project proposals on 8 September with a deadline of Friday 8 October 2021.

The next task group meeting will be held via Teams on Friday 15 October. The group will look at the project proposals and any comments/questions raised will be sent to the applicants for a response in readiness for the next task group meeting at the end of October. Applicants will be invited to attend an online meeting to briefly discuss their project and answer any additional questions. The task group will then score the projects, against set criteria, and recommended project proposals will be presented at the November Board meeting for the Board to make a decision to support or reject.

Environment (Enviro) Task Group – Chair Ann English, Vice Chair Rosemary Morris and DVP Lead Officer Corinne Walton

The task group launched their call out for project proposals on 28 July with a deadline of Tuesday 31 August 2021.

There were 8 expression of interest forms received, totalling £107,912 and were oversubscribed from the funding available (£78,634). The task group have reviewed the project proposals, questions were sent to the applicants and responses have been received. The group will be meeting via Teams on 14 October and 21 October to hear a brief overview from the applicants about their projects and to ask any additional questions. The task group will then score the projects, against set criteria, and recommended project proposals will be presented at the November Board meeting for the Board to make a decision to support or reject.

Towns and Villages (T&V) Task Group – currently officer led by Corinne Walton but as the group progresses a new chair could be nominated

The first meeting was held via Teams on 19 August and the group:

- looked at the background to the towns and villages funding
- discussed the role, remit and membership of the task group
- received information about the role of the T&V Countywide Team and dedicated officer to the DVP (Joanne Ashworth)
- received an update on Consett Middle Street improvement programme and
- agreed to a one-off meeting to review and update the Consett Destination Development action plan

The next meeting will be held via Teams on 7 October and is open to everyone. The focus of the meeting will be around the criteria for the T&V funding and to look at holding future community consultation events.

Health and Wellbeing (HAWB) Task Group – Chair John O’Connor and DVP Lead Officer Kath Clements

The task group launched their call out for project proposals on 28 July with a deadline of Tuesday 31 August 2021.

They received 9 expression of interest forms totalling £83,851.24 and were oversubscribed from the funding available of £78,634. Task group members received copies of the expression of interest forms to review and questions were sent to the applicants. The responses were received prior to the applicants being invited to one of the task group meetings (14 or 21 September), via Teams, to present their projects and answer any additional questions.

Individual task group members scored each project proposal, against set criteria, based on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Each project proposal was given a total average score, ranked in order (from highest to lowest) and funds were allocated until the Area Budget (£78,634) was exhausted.

Based on the Task Group’s review and scoring, the following outcome was recommended to the Board:

<p>IT Skills for Over 50’s project, Hamsterley Mill Residents Association. Funding Request: £5,000</p> <p>To provide IT Skills training for over 50’s from Hamsterley, Medomsley and Burnopfield areas at Derwentside College.</p>
<p>Housing Support project, Moving On Durham. Funding Request: £5,765.88</p> <p>Two support workers and 0.5 Care Leaver worker to provide support for young people aged 16-24 years who are homeless. (1 year funding contribution requested from DVP for 1 support worker, divided proportionally amongst the 4 north cluster AAPs.)</p>
<p>Grief, Loss and Bereavement Workshops, Willow Burn Hospice. Funding Request: £5,178.51</p> <p>Delivering workshops to understand grief and loss, and to learn how to support bereaved people in your life, personally and at work.</p>
<p>Head, Heart, Health project, Sport Works. Funding Request: £19,020</p> <p>Supporting the wellbeing of local residents living in the DVP area through training and provision linked to capacity building, physical activity, emotional wellbeing, nutrition, and socialisation.</p>
<p>Safe with Sound project, Watling Space CIC. Funding Request: £11,080.85</p> <p>Creating a high-quality acoustic environment for those with hearing loss, learning</p>

disabilities, auditory processing disorders, speech or language delays and attention issues.
Consett Park Bowling Club project, Consett Park Bowling Club. Funding Request: £7,710 Funding is requested for coaching equipment including bowls, mats, gatherers and disability aids, disability ramps/steps to clubhouse and green, a kitchen upgrade and coaching courses.
Moorside Play Space Relocation and Extension, DCC. Funding Request: £11,000 This project is to relocate Moorside play space from its current location at Derby Crescent to an alternative site, to help improve anti-social behaviour and improve quality of life.
Rose and Robin Tour the Derwent Valley project, Mad Alice Theatre Company. Funding Request: £8,785 Touring theatre show, in the Derwent Valley area, covers themes of love and loss bringing grandparents, grandchildren and families together. Includes a post-show tea dance and natter and drama and dance workshops delivered to community groups attending the performance.
Digital Inclusion Derwent Valley project, MHA Communities Gateshead West. Partial funding of £5,093.76 This project aims to improve outcomes for older people who are socially isolated by using digital technology.

Corinne said as there was insufficient funding to support the last project – Digital Inclusion – in full, should the Board agree to fund the project the applicant will be contacted to enquire if they could deliver the project with less funding.

Given the short timescales involved in getting the recommendations back from the task group and them being presented to the Board this evening, Corinne advised that the expression of interest forms are available, should any Board members wish to see them.

A question was asked about a countywide AAP funding pot of approximately £300k. This fund is open to organisations across County Durham, but it must be a project that can be delivered in multiple AAP areas. This fund is separate to the allocation of the Area Budget each AAP receives. As the Chair of the DVP Board (Cllr Watson) is part of the Countywide Funding panel, he will be part of the decision-making process linked to countywide proposals.

Corinne advised that for those projects that have high amounts of unsecured match funding, their offer letter would be conditional that they achieve/secure the match funding before the DVP funding is released.

It was acknowledged that the task group had done a fantastic job and that the proposals had gone through a rigorous process, especially within the tight timescales and the task group were thanked for their input and time.

There were no further comments, and the Board APPROVED the project proposals as per the task group’s recommendations above.

Corinne advised that the applicants will now be asked to complete the full online funding application and a technical appraisal by the funding team would follow.

4. Partner Updates

Presentation by Joy Allen, Durham Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)

Prior to Joy setting her manifesto commitments, members of the public were asked, at the back end of 2020, what their main priorities were for the police to tackle. The top priorities were ASB, drug use and drug dealing, fly tipping, speeding and vandalism. These priorities will help feed into the Police and Crime Plan and her vision for County Durham and Darlington is to make communities safer, stronger and more resilient to crime and ASB.

Joy gave an overview on the Draft Police and Crime Plan 2021-24 which included 6 key themes:

- Safer Communities – addressing ASB issues and appointing an ASB Champion
- Safer Businesses – strengthening engagement with local businesses to help prevent crime
- Safer Online – working in partnership to tackle threats and support vulnerable people and to appoint cyber prevention officers
- Safer People – identifying and supporting victims of domestic abuse, sexual violence, hate crime, gambling related harm, etc
- Safer Roads – tackling speeding, drink and drug driving and mobile phone use whilst driving
- Safer Countryside – supporting rural communities

Joy mentioned that a partnership approach to tackling some of the issues identified by members of the public could be supported through funding provided by the PCC Office via the AAPs.

The Plan is currently with the Police and Crime Panel for further comments and once the final version is agreed, a copy will be made available and can be circulated to all 14 AAPs.

If anyone wishes to contact Joy or would like her to visit their area, she is happy to do so and can be contacted via www.facebook.com/PCC.Durham.

Following the presentation, Joy responded to comments/questions:

- Do schools have a responsibility to monitor young people's behaviour, especially when they emerge in crowds at the end of the school day?

Joy's response was that in some areas schools will get involved and in others they will not. However, if we are made aware of any local issues, we can work with the school to address them.

She said she is very supportive of the neighbourhood policing aspect but over 400 police officers have been lost between 2010 and 2020 and although numbers are increasing, we will not get what we had. She also said that if we want to get those police officers in school areas and out in the community more, we need to lobby the Government for fair funding.

- Any local initiatives that the police are involved in, the Fire Service would be happy to link in with and they can be disseminated through the district teams as a fire rep sits on each of the AAP Boards
- A question was asked in the chat facility about the future of PACT meetings and that they could do with financial support.

Joy said in the Plan she has highlighted about area based problem solving groups and how each of the 14 PACT areas across County Durham have different issues that are specific for that locality. To help tackle some of these issues at a local level, match funding would be available to the AAPs. To identify what the issues are at a local level, members of the community need to be involved as well as local councillors and partners.

- A question was asked in the chat facility if anything is planned to help communities increase their own security, eg burglar alarms, house security cameras, and are there any initiatives from the local police?

Joy said she would like to see an improvement in the 101 service as people are getting frustrated with the system which may stop them from reporting issues. She would like to promote the use of security devices, eg camera doorbells, dashcams, perhaps through a Christmas initiative, that would advise on where to get them/costs involved. She is also hoping to set up a system where people with footage of dangerous manoeuvres on the roads can share that information which will allow the police to follow up on and in the long term deter people from this behaviour.

- A lengthy discussion took place on speeding issues across the area, particularly in the villages and the following comments were noted:
 - In other AAP areas, community speed watch cameras were purchased by local councillors. As there were 20 purchased across the county, the cost per camera was approximately £1800.
 - Community Speed Watch (CSW) to do regular patrols and caution those who are speeding.
 - Fixed speed cameras are not ruled out but they are working with other officers to see what works.
 - The ability to self-report incidents on particular roads that would highlight repeat problems.
 - Speed cameras only slow people down at that point, but it was noted that that is the purpose of fixed speed cameras to slow traffic down.
 - Mobile speed cameras in hotspot areas are very effective in slowing traffic, however, drivers often warn oncoming drivers to them.
 - Promote and encourage more people to become CSW volunteers.
 - Encourage people to sign up to 'Keep in the Know' - a messaging service to keep people informed about local issues. This would be particularly useful when there is a callout for CSW volunteers.
 - From the survey carried out in 2020, 73% supported enforcement action linked to traffic/driving offences.
 - The Chair of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners is challenging the legislation around those people who have 20+ penalty points. Those who continue to speed and get caught, could end up losing their licence.

Cllr Watson thanked Joy for her presentation and input at the meeting.

Towns and Villages Presentation by Jackie Donnelly, Regeneration, Economy and Growth, DCC

Jackie gave an overview on the Towns and Villages (T&V) Strategy that aims to address the issues and challenges that towns and villages are facing and how they are impacting on local communities (a copy of the presentation is available upon request).

In the DVP area projects include:

- Digital High Street. DCC have a rolling programme of town centre Wi-Fi and it will be coming to Consett shortly. Further work is needed to be done around testing on lamp posts.
- Target Business Improvements. Currently working with 3 business in Consett.
- Middle Street, Consett Streetscape Improvements. Work is due to commence early 2022 and will include new paving and street furniture. Work on John Street car park has been completed as well as parking spaces created on Medomsley Road.
- Vacant Buildings:
 - Neurodisability Centre is on DCC's Problem Commercial Properties Log (PCPL). Discussions have taken place with the owners about potential demolition of the building.
 - Old Steelworks Brewery is not on the PCPL. She is not sure what the issues are but if anyone requires information about this, please go through the DVP Team and it will be passed on to her to follow up.
 - Taylor Street. DCC did some emergency repairs on the building but there are still ongoing issues, and it is a long term empty property. A report has been completed and it will be going onto the PCPL and allocated an officer.

Jackie advised that there is a facility on DCC's website to report problem properties.

The Community Economic Development Team has a Retail Business Support page on DCC's website and retail businesses can register with the team and request specific support. They will be allocated an officer who can give one to one support that could cover funding, business start-up, targeted business improvement, training, digital advice, licensing and more.

Regarding the Blackfyne School site, Cllr Watson said it is earmarked for housing.

Marlene Boyles said she owns property next to the derelict building in Taylor Street and this causes problems for her tenants with vermin. She asked if the owner is known to DCC and wonders if DCC could make a compulsory purchase on the building. Jackie said as it is on the PCPL and has been assigned an officer, they will be taking steps to ensure there is an end use for the property or it becomes a development site. They will contact the owner to try and get the issue resolved. If there is no progress, they will look at any legal powers that DCC have and any enforcement actions they can take.

Concerns were raised about the safety of the Taylor Street building and Jackie advised that she could ask DCC officers to visit the property.

Marlene says she welcomes the car parking restrictions and said there is a much bigger flow of people in the town centre and car parking should continue to be free of charge to encourage people to visit Consett. She also thinks that Trafalgar Street car park should not be an all day free car park and should be time limited.

Jackie advised that a report on the Black Diamond pub in Delves has recently been completed and it will go to the PCPL Board.

Cllr Walton said she has spoken to the owner of the Black Diamond property, who informed her that there are no plans for the building until the old people's home, which they own, is completed, also in the Delves Lane area.

Jackie introduced Joanne Ashworth who is part of the T&V Team. Joanne said she is the dedicated link officer to the T&V Fund for the DVP area. She will work closely with the DVP's T&V Task Group where they will be discussing how to progress with the funding allocation of £210k. She will also be working with the local councillors to support them with project ideas linked to the £10k allocated to their ward.

Cllr Watson thanked Jackie and Joanne for their input at the meeting.

County Durham & Darlington Fire and Rescue Service locality update by Craig Farrage

Due to the meeting running late, it was agreed that the presentation slides would be circulated to Board and Forum members.

5. Meeting Close and Date of Next Meeting

Alex thanked everyone for their attendance and confirmed that the next Board meeting will be on Wednesday 24 November 2021 at 6pm via Microsoft Teams.

Signed as a correct record:

Date: