



STANLEY AREA ACTION PARTNERSHIP (AAP)

MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING

Held on Wednesday 8th December 2021 at 4.00pm via Teams

Councillors

Cllr Angela Hanson
Cllr Christine Bell
Cllr Joan Nicholson
Cllr Jeanette Stephenson (Stanley Town Council)
Cllr Gordon Binney

Partner Organisations

Alan Tubman (Stanley Town Council) Co-optee
Sgt Terry Archbold (Durham Constabulary)
Joanne Clennell, County Durham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
Max Wright (Business Representative),

Public Representatives

John Ullathorne
Helen McCaughey
Nerise Oldfield-Thompson, Vice Chair

Officer Attendance

Daniel O'Brien (AAP Coordinator)
Joanne Ashworth (Towns & Villages Community Development Project Officer)
Presenter: Stuart Carter (Durham County Council)
Apologies
Suzanne Jobson, (Karbon Homes), Michael Pearson (Fire Service), Cllr Carl Marshall,
Martyn Stenton (Durham County Council) Cllr Carole Hampson, Vicky Walton (Public
Representative), Linda Tyman (Public Representative), Andrea Boyd (AAP Community
Development Project Officer), Lesley Lines (AAP Support Officer)

Public Attendance

Three members of the Forum/Public attended the meeting.

Introductions and Apologies:

Nerise Oldfield-Thompson, Vice Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked Forum Members to introduce themselves. Apologies are noted above.

Declaration of Interest

Board Members were asked to declare any personal or pecuniary interest in relation to the agenda as per the AAP Terms of Reference: No personal or pecuniary interests were recorded.

Agreement of the minutes – 10th November 2021 and Matters Arising:

Nerise asked for agreement of the previous Board Minutes. The minutes were agreed as a true record.

Matters Arising – there were no matters arising.

Stanley Masterplan Consultation Presentation

Stuart Carter, Senior Policy Officer, Durham County Council gave the Stanley Masterplan Consultation presentation:

Stuart advised that the Masterplan is a Vision for Stanley from 2021 – 2035. The masterplan sets out the vision, recommendations and an implementation plan for Stanley Town Centre and the surrounding area. The aim of this is to guide development, facilitate investment, and transform Stanley into a thriving town for local people, businesses, and visitors.

The Consultant Team for the Masterplan consisted of Ryder Architecture, Lichfields, SAJ Transport Consultants, The Mackinnon Partnership, and Tourism UK.

The Stanley Masterplan Steering Group has been involved throughout the process, and engagement has also taken place with the local community, businesses, and schools.

The Masterplan focuses on the Town Centre, but also extends to the 7 parish wards – looking at opportunities and better connections within these areas.

Key Challenges

- High unemployment
- Health issues
- Weak housing offer
- The A693 road is a barrier between the town centre and surrounding communities
- The town centre is declining and there is a lack of people visiting it
- Poor connections and infrastructure
- Poor quality-built environment
- Limited food & drink, leisure and cultural offer
- Impacts of COVID

Key Strengths/Opportunities

- Local green spaces such as Oakies Park and surrounding countryside

- National and local cycle network, footpaths and a modern town centre bus station
- Community assets such as PACT House and The Venue
- Visitor attractions such as Beamish Museum and Tanfield Railway
- Existing leisure/cultural assets such as The Louisa Centre and Civic Hall
- Opportunity to repurpose and redevelop vacant buildings and sites
- Improve education, training, and employment opportunities
- Establish a focal point in the town centre, and improve the environment
- Improve walking and cycling routes and the gateways into the town
- Promote town centre living, which would increase footfall and support shops and businesses

Looking at the Stanley Town Centre itself... Key findings from the retail/town centre analysis:

- The traditional retail core along Front Street has seen a decrease in both its retail offer and levels of footfall in recent years, with this shifting towards Clifford Road Retail Park.
- Very limited commercial leisure offer in the centre - apart from McDonald's and a small number of pubs, there are no restaurants, or other facilities, which help to attract visitors on an evening. Some independent cafes – example of better-quality shop frontage.
- The general shopping environment is poor, and in addition to the vacant buildings, there a number of properties which are unattractive or in poor condition, and in need of an uplift.
- The length and width of Front Street, which adds to the perception of quietness, with pedestrian flows being particularly low at the northern end
- Limited operator demand, in the retail and leisure sectors
- Covid-19 has added to these issues

Town Centre: Vulnerable and Vacant Buildings:

- A number of prominent empty buildings create large stretches of dead frontage.
- The former Customer Access Point (CAP) building, the Old School Board building adjacent, the vacant Store 21 unit, and former Bertie's Bar, all on Front Street, as well as the former Elite buildings site at the junction of Front Street and Station Road.
- These create a poor first impression of Stanley.

- The refurbishment / redevelopment of these sites will improve the appearance, and economy of Stanley, as well as celebrating its heritage.

Summary of Challenges:

- Vacancies, and prominent sites
- Length and width of Front Street - low footfall
- Poor quality environment, including at arrival points into the town centre – service areas/unsightly backs of buildings etc.
- Poor quality routes and signage, for example between the car parks and Front St, and towards residential areas and green spaces)

Strengths:

- C2C, parks and countryside on the doorstep – views
- Recent investment – red hatched
- Community assets, leisure and services
- Positive buildings – purple
- Town centre parking close to shops and services

Opportunities:

- Re-focusing the town centre with a smaller retail core and bringing in different uses including housing, community uses, healthcare and education
- Improving the connections between the existing leisure uses at the southern end of Front Street and the retail core; and also improving routes to the C2C and Oakies Park
- Pedestrian routes should be improved, and key gateways to the town (pink squares)
- Should also look to improve the frontage along these routes (particularly poor on parts of Front Street and Clifford Road),
- Maximise views out and links to the surrounding countryside.

Local Engagement:

People wanted to see:

- Support and investment in start-ups and local businesses
- Improve the appearance of the town centre

In 5 years' time people would like to be able to describe Stanley as 'Vibrant / thriving'
Also, attractive, clean, welcoming etc.

From this engagement with local people and the Steering Group, the Vision for Stanley was created:

By 2035 Stanley will be... "a thriving, healthy town with a vibrant, welcoming, and distinctive town centre which local people are proud of, and which appeals to visitors."

The vision is supported by a set of Masterplan objectives – in no order / priority:

- A transformed Front Street which is enjoyable to visit and provides an attractive environment to spend time.
- Empty buildings to be redeveloped or brought back into use as high quality and sustainable developments which add to the vibrancy of the town centre
- Support local businesses and start-ups in Stanley
- Create opportunities to respond to any future demand for new anchor retail or leisure uses
- Strengthen our culture, leisure and heritage offer to draw visitors and residents into the town throughout the year including the coordination of events and markets
- Improved food & drink offer, including new bars and restaurants, which help to create an evening economy
- Improve key arrival points and wayfinding in the town, creating a good first impression and encouraging people to explore Stanley
- Encourage active and healthy lifestyles
- A renewed sense of pride in Stanley, based on its strength of heritage, new positive perceptions of the town, and a collective aspiration for the future

Masterplan Objectives:

- A wider variety of interesting and good quality shops and services, including independent and specialist operators, meeting the needs of local people, showcase local produce and attract visitors into the town
- Improve connectivity and accessibility, including public transport and walking and cycling routes, throughout the study area
- Improve housing mix and quality, and encourage town centre living
- Raise aspirations through continued improvement in education and training
- Digital solutions will support these objectives

Options - Based on the challenges and opportunities identified, we developed a series of initial options for the town centre:

- New anchor developments
- A different mix of uses in the town centre
- Various potential locations for new public space within the town centre
- One option looked at reintroducing vehicles to Front Street
- All of these options featured improvements to vacant sites, gateways into the town centre, signage and wayfinding, and walking and cycling routes.

These initial options were assessed with the Steering Group, and we prioritised elements to take forward into a preferred option. Following feedback from the Steering Group, this was refined further to produce the Draft Masterplan.

Town Centre Masterplan - this plan shows the key principles for the town centre:

- Strengthened civic and leisure quarter (orange zone) focused around these existing uses, but better connected into the rest of the town centre, and with the potential to improve and expand the offer of some of these facilities – e.g. the Civic Hall
- More compact retail core (pink), around Front Street and Clifford Road – ‘experience economy’ including food/drink/entertainment/social space, alongside shops and services
- In the north of the town centre (yellow), a mixed-use quarter, taking its cue from existing uses including residential, education, skills and community uses

Proposals:

- New public space, enabling events, markets, play and green space
- New anchor development (potentially retail / leisure) to attract footfall along Front Street
- Bring vacant buildings back into use and improved use of existing facilities
- Improve arrival points, connections, crossings, wayfinding and signage throughout the town
- Strengthen training and skills
- Establish food and drink offer, celebrate heritage, music, local growing and markets
- Potential for Parkrun, improved access to Oakies Park / C2C, and a Cycle Hub / café
- Improve housing quality and mix, and encourage town centre living

- Improve public realm, street furniture, service areas and car parks

Stuart then covered 6 different **Character Areas** on the Masterplan:

- **Area 1 - Front Street Public Space**
- **Area 2 - Scott Street and improve links to the C2C cycle path**
- **Area 3 - Bus Station to Clifford Road – Improving the arrival experience at the bus station and the route to Clifford Road**
- **Area 4 - Clifford Road**
- **Area 5 - Leisure and Civic Quarter**
- **Area 6 - Front Street North**

Stuart thanked the Board for their time and then Nerise opened the floor for Questions and Observations:

Q. Transport Links and Road Networks. What Stanley has is poor with Queues into Stanley. Stanley is struggling to attract new businesses due to this.

A. Stuart advised these issues need to be fed into the consultation. He would forward the link to Board Members.

O. Good to see the improvements in the design of the town centre, be good to help stop Anti-Social Behaviour. A693 Improvements – Road improvements would be welcomed too.

O. Levelling Up Bid might still include transport

O. Nothing is finalised regarding the Levelling Up, nothing is in and nothing is out.

O. We need better Bus networks and Public Transport to support local employment.

O. How do Stanley keep investment if Banks are closing (Barclays)?

O. Eden Terrace, Bus Lane is not needed.

O. Dual Carriageway would be welcomed at Eden Terrace.

The Chair thanked Stuart for the presentation.

Action: Daniel advised that he had previously circulated the Stanley Masterplan Consultation page link to Board and Forum Members to comment by the required deadline. He would resend the consultation page link to remind everyone of the deadline etc.

Neighbourhood Issues and Locality Policing Issues:

Sgt. Archbold informed the Board Meeting that a Police And Community Together (PACT) Meeting took place last Thursday in Stanley Indoor Bowls Centre to discuss the ongoing Anti-Social Behaviour that the Town has experienced. Terry informed the Board that ASB is

the hot topic that they are focusing on at present. Terry asked for the Cllrs responses to the above meeting. The Cllrs welcomed the opportunity to attend the meeting as it helps dealing with resident approaches about such local issues.

He advised that he had met with Durham County Council ASB Officer to discuss Parenting Courses.

He also highlighted the Christmas Drink & Drive Campaign.

Action: Terry to chase up the Shop Watch information for partners and local businesses.

AAP Coordinator Update:

Community Recovery 2nd Project Call Out

Daniel asked Board Members present for their consent to start a second call out. Board Members present gave their endorsement for a 2nd Call Out.

Budget Consultation

Daniel advised that the Board Meeting in January 2022 would feature a Durham County Council Budget Consultation Presentation that would be given by Martyn Stenton. The Board Meeting will start at the later time of 5:30pm to accommodate Martyn to give the presentation.

Storm Arwen Support

Daniel thanked PACT House, Annfield Plain Community Centre, and in particular Craghead Village Hall for stepping up to help and support residents in need following power outages in local communities following Storm Arwen.

Action: The Board asked Daniel to write thank you letters to the above organisations.

Partner Work Update / Stanley specific items of interest:

Love Beamish & Stanley:

- New Website to be launched in the New Year
- Health & Wellbeing Videos – filmed 16 new videos (AAP Funded)
- Face to Face Meetings to resume soon.
- Increased our Membership by 20%
- Financial Business – Clifford Road – huge investment in Stanley, created 5 jobs.
- Buy Local – Even a little stocking filler

Stanley Town Council

- New Clerk to start in January/February.
- Civic Hall's corridors have been painted
- Blooming Good Fun, In Bloom. Alan encouraged groups to get involved.
- Pantomime – Beauty & The Beast, bookings are picking up.
- Job Fare with Durham Works 27th January.
- County Durham Community Foundation will be giving support to Community Groups and helping with groups to apply for funding

Action: Alan to keep Board Members up to date regarding above events.

County Durham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

- Acceleration of the Booster Programme and Winter Flu Vaccine Programme.
- A new Super Hub has opened in Durham with face-to-face appointments.
- Increased access via telephone so residents can get through.
- Antibiotic Awareness Campaign
- Respect National Campaign.

Wellbeing For Life

- We are doing a focused plan around Stanley
- Men's Group starting in Stanley (Bowls Club) in the New Year
- Yoga for Beginners
- Dry January campaign – mocktails recipes
- Open call for Group/Class ideas – Any particular ideas welcome for classes or community venues, just get in touch with us direct to suggest any.

Neighbourhood Budget Summaries:

No report this month. Full report next month.

Next Meeting:

Wednesday 12th January 2022 at 5.30pm on Stanley AAP's dedicated 'Teams' page.

For further details please contact Stanley AAP office, Tel: 03000 265323