



**GREAT AYCLIFFE & MIDDRIDGE PARTNERSHIP (GAMP)
MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING
TUESDAY 25 JANUARY 2022, 6:00PM (VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS)**

PRESENT:

Cllr Eddy Adam – DCC, Cllr James Atkinson – DCC (Vice Chair), Cllr Neville Jones – DCC, Cllr Alan Jordan – Midsridge Parish, Cllr Ken Robson – DCC, Cllr Tony Stubbs – DCC, Cllr David Sutton-Lloyd – DCC, Sue Cooke (Vice Chair), Julie Dudley, Simon Hocking, Chris Hutchinson, Carl Robinson, Peter Shovlin, Daniel Blagdon – Health Representative, Andy Coulthard – Living Housing Representative, Peter Gallone – Business Representative, Insp Sarah Honeyman – Police Representative (Chair), Oliver Sherratt – DCC Head of Service Representative, Malcolm Woodward – Fire Service Representative, Brian Riley – GAMP Coordinator, Victoria Grieves – GAMP Community Development Project Officer, Paula Stockport – GAMP Support Officer, Angela Blanchard – GAMP Towns & Villages Link Officer

APOLOGIES:

Carol Gaskarth

OBSERVERS:

Mr R Adamson, Mr V Crosby, Mr R Forster

Standard Board Meeting

1. Introductions & Apologies

Insp SH opened the meeting, reminding observers they would be welcome to comment under Items 3 and 4 on the agenda. Insp SH also reminded Board members of the standard Declaration of Interest item on the agenda. BR confirmed that apologies for absence had been received, as noted above.

BR informed Board members that Carl Robinson has now completed his 4-year term as Public Rep, and this will be his last meeting. BR added that he is pleased to confirm we will be welcoming a familiar face back to the Board at our next meeting; Kate Hopper was interviewed during the last round of Public Rep recruitment and appointed as a reserve; Kate has accepted the position. BR thanked Carl on behalf of the Board for his time with us.

2. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 23.11.21 – Matters Arising

The draft minutes from the Board meeting held on 23.11.21 had been circulated in advance with the meeting papers. There were no outstanding actions or matters arising, and the minutes of the last meeting were **AGREED** by the Board as a true and accurate record.

3. Countywide Partner Issues

3.1 DCC Budget Update (Oliver Sherratt)

Board members received a presentation in relation to the Council's budget and Council Tax position, with the following key messages:

- the Council is in a strong financial position, but things can quickly turn – there is a need to continue to plan and prepare for the worst;
- a range of unavoidable additional budget pressures need to be accommodated next year;
- significant uncertainty exists over impact of possible redistribution of government funding and Social Care Levy / Social Care changes in the medium term;
- the Council continues to suffer from low tax base and limitations on tax raising capacity;
- additional flexibility on council tax increases and expectation from Govt that this is taken – if not taken in any one year cannot be recovered, is lost forever from base.

The AAP was asked to consider their view on balancing the 2022/23 forecast budget shortfall from council tax increases vs reductions in services or one-off use of reserves which would increase the savings required in 2023/24.

Questions and/or comments were invited from Board members and the following points were noted:

- Cllr KR made an observation in relation to any potential impacts arising from new housing, i.e. generating more Council Tax. Oliver explained that with additional income will also come additional costs, and future projections in relation to housing growth would always be taken into account when budget setting.
- Cllr EA commented that it's important to note the Council will continue to face significant financial pressures in years 2, 3 and 4, suggesting that it may therefore be prudent to increase Council Tax by the maximum permitted at this stage thus generating additional income that could help in future years.
- Cllr JA took the view that the 'unknowns' going forward have the potential to be astronomical and therefore increasing Council Tax now by the maximum permitted and potentially ending up in the situation where the additional income exceeds this year's budget shortfall wouldn't necessarily be a bad thing as the Council will very likely continue to face increasing pressures.
- SC commented that it would be difficult for some Council Tax payers if it were to be increased by the maximum, and asked whether there would be any scope to achieve savings through a combination of reduction in services together with a slightly lower Council Tax percentage increase. OS advised that the Council have made significant service reductions since 2009, but commented that this would probably be very difficult at the current time without some consequence as most services are already operating at a minimum.

OS explained the next steps will be a Budget report presented to Cabinet on 9 February 2022, and a Cabinet report then presented to Full Council on 23 February 2022 where budget approval and council tax for 2022/23 will be sought.

BR confirmed that a copy of Oliver's presentation slides will be circulated with the minutes. BR also advised that all feedback from this evening's meeting will be

passed to the County Durham Partnership Team as part of the consultation process (**Action 1: BR**).

- 3.2 Fire Service Community Risk Management Plan (Malcolm Woodward)
MW briefly updated Board members in relation to the Fire & Rescue Service's Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) consultation, which is seeking views on how resources are used to prevent and respond to emergencies in the future. Information has previously been circulated to Board members in relation to the consultation, and full details are available via the website: www.ddfire.gov.uk. The closing date for responses is 14 February.

BR confirmed, for the minutes, that the following information had been circulated to Board members by email since the last meeting:

- Masterplan consultation (29.11.21);
- Info on DCC's non-voting co-optees for Overview & Scrutiny Committees (16.12.21);
- Info on DCC's School Admission Appeals Panel (6.1.22);
- DCC Library Consultation info (10.1.22).

There were no additional partner updates. BR reminded partners to get in touch if they need space on a future meeting agenda.

4. Local Neighbourhood Issues

- 4.1 Neighbourhood Policing Update
Insp SH updated Board members in relation to ongoing antisocial behaviour issues, local PACT priorities and meeting dates, crime data, as well as current and emerging issues.

Questions were invited from Board members and the following points were noted:

- Cllr KR asked whether it would be possible to break down the criminal behaviour stats into 'types'. Insp SH advised that due to the way incidents are reported and recorded this would be difficult.
- Cllr KR advised that he is receiving an increased number of reports of youths harassing people, particularly in the Town Centre. Insp SH acknowledged this issue and shares peoples' frustrations, commenting that higher priority incidents must be responded to first, and this is more difficult whilst the team are short staffed.
- JD asked what support is available for parents when dealing with youth ASB, as well as any input from schools. Insp SH advised that lots of partnership working takes place with services such as DCC, and parents are involved when processes escalate, however this can often be difficult. Schools can have input where incidents are taking place during school time. Insp SH would be happy to chat further with JD outside the meeting around the processes involved.
- Cllr EA commented that the issues relating to repeated ASB aren't solely the responsibility of the Police, and that partner agencies such as DCC, housing landlords etc all have a part to play, e.g. action can be taken to move problem families.
- Cllr DSL asked for feedback on the multiagency meetings which are now taking place. Insp SH feels these meetings are really helpful for information sharing and supporting strong working relationships between all parties.

- SC commented that the Newton Aycliffe Neighbourhood Policing team do a fantastic job in supporting our local communities and this should be commended and supported by the Board.

BR confirmed a copy of Insp SH's update report will be circulated with the minutes.

5. GAMP Coordinator's Update

5.1 2021-22 Area Budget Project Callout Update

BR briefly updated Board members in relation to this year's 'Community Recovery' Area Budget project callout. 20 x projects were supported in total, seeing our starting budget of £244,902 fully allocated. There are 2 x projects still with our Funding Team for technical appraisal, with offer letters expected shortly. This year has seen a great range of projects and groups supported. BR noted thanks to the DCC Funding Team for their work to process all the funding applications across the County. BR also thanked VG and PSt for their work on this year's callout, and also thanked Panel members for their input.

5.2 Towns & Villages Funding Update

BR updated Board members in relation to this year's additional £210k funding allocation to support Towns & Villages schemes. We have a subgroup of Board members who are meeting regularly to review potential project proposals and also looking at project development in conjunction with GAMP's Towns & Villages Link Officer, Angela Blanchard.

BR advised that 2 x T&Vs projects have now received their grant offer letters, there is another project still with the Funding Team for technical appraisal, as well as several other schemes in the development/discussion stages.

BR reminded Board Members that Elected Members also have an additional £10k to enhance their Neighbourhood Budget this year, for T&Vs schemes – and are being supported by Angela on this.

5.3 Quarter 3 Project Monitoring Updates

BR confirmed that the collated Q3 monitoring reports had been circulated in advance with the meeting papers, for information. Board members were asked to get in touch with the GAMP team if there are any queries relating to any of the projects.

Cllr EA asked why a couple of projects were showing a 'nil return' – whether this was due to no activity taking place during the reporting period or because the project lead had not supplied the requested information. BR confirmed it was the latter, but added that all updates have now been received after chasing. BR advised that it can often be difficult to obtain timely and thorough updates for some projects, and the GAMP team work to support applicants as far as possible with this element of the grant process. BR added that any concerns in relation to a group's compliance with monitoring will always be fed back to funding panels who determine applications during future project callouts.

BR added that the GAMP team will be issuing a couple of press releases in the next week to publicise some of the projects supported.

Items not on the Agenda

- BR advised Board members that the GAMP team are still working from home, in line with current guidance, and this is due to be reviewed by DCC some time in February.
- BR confirmed that a county-wide 'priorities' survey will be launching later this week, where Co Durham residents will have an opportunity to comment on what they believe the key priorities are for each AAP area going forward. BR will circulate relevant information to Board members for onward promotion as soon as this is available. Cllr EA asked whether the survey will be available in any other formats for those without electronic access; BR will double check (**Action 2: BR**).

6. Date/Time of Next Meeting

Tuesday 29 March 2022, 6:00pm (venue/Teams tbc)

BR highlighted that the following items are confirmed for the next agenda:

- DCC 'Libraries for You' consultation update;
- an update in relation to the adult mental health support service Qwell.

Insp SH/BR thanked all attendees, and the meeting was closed.