



## **4 Together Partnership Minutes of the AGM & Board Meeting Wednesday 7 July 2021 (Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams)**

### **PRESENT:**

Mark Booth – Clinical Commissioning Group, Justin Parry – Fire Service, Mary Readman – DCC, Insp Mike Sammut – Police, David Stothard – Business Representative (**Chair**), Carole Atkinson, Chris Cairns, Tony Cutmore, Dennis Ramsey (**Vice Chair**), Cllr Peter Atkinson – DCC, Cllr Brian Avery – DCC (**Vice Chair**), Cllr Julie Cairns – DCC, Cllr Elaine Peeke – DCC, Lee Copeland – Principal AAP Coordinator, Callum Aitchison – Principal Community Development Project Officer, Paula Stockport – AAP Support Officer

### **APOLOGIES:**

Paul Darby, Angela Smurthwaite, Paula Nixon

### **Annual General Meeting**

#### **a. Introduction from Current Chair**

DS opened the meeting and handed over to LC to Chair this section.

#### **b. Election of Chair & Vice Chairs**

LC confirmed that this agenda item will need to be postponed. LC explained we are still awaiting confirmation of our 2 x Town & Parish Council representatives to the Board. As the Chair for 2021-22 will rotate to the Elected Member third, it would be unfair to proceed with nomination of a Cllr Vice Chair rep until these two positions have been filled.

LC added that our Public Representative recruitment exercise has been paused until the Cllr reps have been confirmed. We currently have three Public Rep vacancies, and have received three applications, one of whom has also expressed an interest in one of the T&PC positions on the Board. We also have two current reps due to stand down having reached their full term, but who have both reapplied to stay on the Board, and so with the Board's permission LC suggested these two reps could remain in position until we have carried out our interviews to ensure we retain quorum for decision making.

LC asked the Board's permission to coordinate the Chair/Vice Chair roles for all three sectors by email once the T&PC reps have been confirmed, and for the current Chair & Vice Chairs (DS, Cllr BA and DR) to remain in place until this has been completed; Board members **AGREED** with this proposal.

LC will keep Board members updated on the Chair/Vice Chair arrangements and Public Rep positions as soon as possible (**Action 1: LC**).

**c(i). 2020-21 Area Budget Summary**

LC confirmed that a copy of the summary had been circulated in advance with the meeting papers, for information. LC gave a brief outline of the projects funded through last year's COVID Response and COVID Recovery budgets. LC noted that 4 Together Partnership was one of the only AAPs to (almost) fully allocate the total £100k COVID Response funding, and this was largely due to the fantastic organisations still running in our area, providing much needed support to our communities at such a crucial time.

**c(ii). 2020-21 Neighbourhood Budget Summary**

LC confirmed that a copy of the summary had been circulated in advance with the meeting papers, for information. LC commented that some fantastic projects were funded last year and commended Elected Members. CAi highlighted a small error in relation to the balance shown for former Cllr Joe Makepeace; the final balance of funding had in fact been allocated to a project run by Ferryhill History Society to deliver outreach work with local schools.

**Standard Board Meeting**

**A1. Introductions & Apologies**

DS welcomed everyone to the meeting of the 4 Together Partnership Board. A round of introductions were given, and apologies for absence were noted, as above.

LC asked the Board to note the recent passing of former Board member, Dominic Brown from Co Durham & Darlington Fire & Rescue Service. Dominic was a fantastic and highly valued Board member during his time as our Fire Service rep, and LC asked JP to pass on the Board's acknowledgement.

**A2. Agreement of Minutes from Previous Meeting (3.3.21) - Matters Arising**

LC reviewed the previous minutes for matters arising, actions and accuracy. The following points were noted:

- LC has contacted Red Supported Living to request an update report to bring to the Board, and will forward this upon receipt.
- LC clarified that CAi will follow up with Nigel Jones in relation to the previous outstanding action for Nigel to provide examples of prepared templates for GPs in relation to benefit appeal claims for Mark Booth to take forward.
- MR updated Board members in relation to the previously highlighted issue of safe disposal of used needles on private land. MR has discussed this further with Oliver Sherratt (DCC Head of Environment). It has been agreed that the script for Customer Services staff will be updated following feedback from the Board, to investigate potential access issues when incidents are reported.
- DR raised an issue that had been discussed at the last meeting in relation to off-road bikes in West Cornforth. Former Cllr Crathorne had said she was having discussions with the PCSO in the area regarding the issue. DR added for information that the bikes are being used in the same location in West Cornforth every Sunday afternoon. Insp MS commented he is aware of the issues and a lot of work is taking place locally, for example with landowners to try and reduce access for the bikes. The Operation Endurance bike section will also be carrying work out in the area over the coming weeks, but this is a persistent issue across the County and is often difficult to address. LC suggested that Insp MS could keep Board members updated on any progress with this issue at a future meeting.

There were no further matters arising, and the minutes were **AGREED** as a true record.

### **A3. Countywide Partner Issues**

LC invited partner reps to give any relevant service-related updates.

MB highlighted that Cllr JC had recently been provided with a response to queries raised in relation to Ferryhill & Chilton GP's surgery, and asked if any further input was needed. Cllr JC expressed concern over the ongoing significant issues with this surgery, with patients unable to get through by telephone, lack of face-to-face appointments, and in particular issues around poor communication with members of the community. Cllr JC would welcome a meeting with relevant representatives from the Practice and/or the CCG/Primary Care Trust as appropriate to explore these issues in more detail.

CAt expressed the view that there is too much reliance on use of technology, with patients being asked to send photographs through to the surgery as a form of triage; this isn't always possible for those who don't have a smartphone or internet access. MB acknowledged this and suggested that whilst there should be a place for newer methods of engaging with patients, i.e. online/apps etc, this shouldn't be the exclusive way to communicate with patients or for them to access services.

TC commented that he has had feedback from users at Cornforth House in relation to difficulties contacting the surgery, lack of appointments, and issues with the prescriptions app. DR commented that he is a member of the Patient Participation Group for West Cornforth and will discuss these issues further with TC outside of the Board meeting.

LC suggested that Cllr JC liaise with MB to take this issue forward, and copy LC into any correspondence (**Action 2: Cllr JC/MB**).

### **A4. Local Neighbourhood Issues**

LC confirmed that no local neighbourhood issues had been submitted to the AAP team to bring to the Board.

Cllr PA highlighted an issue with antisocial behaviour in the areas of King George V playing field and Dean Bank Park recreation ground. These issues are proving difficult to deal with, with large numbers of youths gathering in these areas, particularly at weekends. Ferryhill Town Council and the local neighbourhood policing team are aware, but Cllr PA thought it was worth highlighting to Board members for information. Local Cllrs are trying to help where they can, but the issues will require a combined effort from a range of partners. Cllr BA suggested the possibility of having the KGV playing field locked at night should be looked into by Ferryhill Town Council. Cllr PA added that offers of financial support from his Neighbourhood Budget have been made to improve fencing/security in the area.

TC added to this point that reductions to government grants for youth services provision will inevitably impact on ASB levels when the young people don't have a suitable outlet or access to diversionary activities. TC also commented that in terms of ASB in Ferryhill this is the same across the area where there are secondary schools with multiple feeder schools, e.g. Sedgfield, Newton Aycliffe

etc, who are all reporting ASB, and there are also issues with an increase in cannabis amongst young people.

Cllr JC asked whether it's possible to be kept updated by the neighbourhood policing teams in relation to ASB/crime incidents and stats in her Ward area. Insp MS clarified that the team operate a transparent 'open door' policy and should be able to update Cllrs with relevant local info, within the parameters of Data Protection/GDPR guidelines, and would be happy to discuss further with Cllr JC if needed.

#### A4.1 Neighbourhood Policing Update

Insp MS briefly updated Board members in relation to local crime figures; youth ASB is increasing but is no worse than in previous years. There are some problem areas where the number of incidents is more concentrated, and through working together with partner agencies, members of the community, Councillors etc this plays a big part in the effort to help tackle specific problem areas. In relation to the issues previously highlighted at King George V playing field, Insp MS confirmed the neighbourhood policing team will be happy to get involved in relevant discussions with partners etc to look at potential suggestions to deal with the issues in the longer-term.

### A5. **Priorities & Action Plans**

#### A5.1 2021/22 Funding & Operating Arrangements

LC confirmed that a report had been circulated in advance with the meeting papers, for Board members to note. LC took Board members through the recommendations:

- a) Board members were asked to note the content of the report and the accompanying DCC Cabinet Report (16 June 2021), "Area Action Partnerships and Member Neighbourhood Budgets – Proposed Operating Arrangements 2021/21" to recognise the increase of investment into AAPs for 2021-22 and the amalgamation of the five budget headings into a single Area Budget Fund (£244,902); **AGREED.**
- b) Board members were asked to note the direction of travel for return to offices and hybrid meetings which will be in line with DCC corporate policy; **AGREED.**
- c) Board members should note that each Elected Member's Neighbourhood Budget will be enhanced with a one-off allocation of £10,000 to support the revitalisation of towns and villages, and this will accompany the main AAP Towns & Villages grant of £210,000; **AGREED.**
- d) Board members were asked to agree the AAP's 2021-22 priorities of:
  - Community Recovery and Emerging Local Issues
  - Towns and Villages Revitalisation
  - Holiday Activities with Healthy Foodthis was **AGREED.**
- e) Board members were asked to note the amalgamated core Area Budget of £244,902 with an acknowledgement that a minimum of £125,000 must be spent before the end of the 2021/22 financial year; **AGREED.**
- f) Board members were asked to agree that the Board approach for project development (previously agreed in March 2021) be brought back to the Board for further discussion in light of the additional financial resources and number of new board members; **AGREED.**
- g) Board members were asked to note the proposals for future hybrid working and return to locality offices in line with corporate policy; **AGREED.**

- h) Board members were asked to note the intention to carry out consultation around AAP Priorities in autumn 2021/22; **AGREED.**

Board members further discussed point (f) above and the consensus view was that a separate meeting should be held to discuss the process in more detail for allocation of this year's Area Budget, as well as the Towns & Villages funding. Cllr JC expressed the view that a more targeted approach would allow us to focus funding resources to areas where they are needed most; the whole premise of the AAPs is to focus on specific issues and Cllr JC feels that a project-based approach to allocation of funding would be more beneficial than an open callout. TC added that by adopting a consortium approach with a range of partners this could have potential to attract additional funding to the area, as well as being more issue focused.

LC highlighted that Paula Nixon has already started consultation work with local service providers to gather information around local needs and issues. LC will make arrangements for a separate funding processes meeting to take place in August to discuss this year's AB and T&Vs funding further (**Action 3: LC**).

#### A5.2 2019-20 AB/NB Clawback Issue for Decision

*[DS, CA and Cllr PA declared an interest and left the meeting during the following discussion]*

LC advised Board members that a previously funded project (Dean Bank Heritage Centre, Ferryhill Town Council) which had been allocated both Area (£15k) and Neighbourhood Budget (£10k) funding from 2019-20 budgets can now no longer progress, as the building is not fit for purpose. Our Funding Team have arranged a clawback of funding which they have advised will be lost unless another similar heritage-themed capital scheme in our area can be identified.

LC explained that Paula Nixon has been in discussion with representatives from Mainsforth Community Centre who are looking at a large scale project which broadly fits the requirements around parity to the original scheme specified by our Funding Team, to which the now unallocated AAP funding could potentially be used as match.

LC asked the Board's permission to invite the group to submit a formal proposal for consideration so that this funding is not lost. Cllr BA commented that Mainsforth is a fantastic centre and this option provides a great opportunity to help them, adding that it would be a real shame to lose the funding altogether from our area. Cllr JC seconded Cllr BA's views.

TC asked whether the building is sufficiently stable and financially sound to warrant AAP investment. LC clarified that the centre has a new management committee who are really proactive and investing a great deal of time into the centre. Paula Nixon has also been liaising closely with centre representatives in relation to this potential project. LC added assurances that any such issues around financial viability of organisations receiving AAP funding would be picked up by our Funding Team during technical appraisal.

Board members were happy to receive a project proposal as outlined above, and LC will make arrangements for this to be brought to the Board for consideration (**Action 4: LC**).

*[DS, Cat and Cllr PA re-joined the meeting]*

**A5.3 Neighbourhood Budget Update**

CAi briefly updated Board members. The AAP team recently met with newly elected DCC Cllrs for an informal welcome and introduction to the AAP, and specifically around Neighbourhood Budgets. CAi highlighted that we'll be using a new online funding application form this year, for all Area/Neighbourhood Budget and Towns & Villages projects, and CAi will be happy to assist groups with the new process should they need support. A number of NB projects are currently in the pipeline, and work is well underway with NB Small Grants as well.

**A5.4 Holiday Activities with Healthy Food Funding Update**

CAi briefly updated Board members in relation to the DfE funded 'Fun & Food' holiday scheme. 4 Together Partnership was given an initial allocation of £22,560 to deliver Holiday Activities with Healthy Food provision over the Easter, Summer and Christmas holiday periods for 2021. During Easter, £14,549 was allocated across 5 projects, with a wide range of provision including activity packs, food hampers and face-to-face delivery.

There was another great response to the call for projects for Summer 2021, with a total funding request of £32,821. We originally only had a funding balance of approx. £8k, however we were able to secure an additional £25k from the DfE grant to allow all 5 x projects to be supported. The Summer provision will again see a wide range of activities and food provision across the whole 4 Together area.

CAi highlighted that the Fun & Food team are currently collating monitoring information from the Easter projects, and this will be shared with Board members in due course.

**A6. Date & Time of Next Meeting:**

**Wed 1 September 2021, 6:00pm (venue/Teams tbc)**

LC confirmed that an additional funding meeting will also be arranged for August, as discussed at Item 5.1 above.

DS thanked everyone for their attendance, and the meeting was closed.