

**3 Towns Partnership Board Meeting
6pm on Thursday 9 March 2023 via Microsoft Teams**

PRESENT:

Partner Organisations

Gordon Elliott
Jonathan Holmes
Liz Bradley
Insp. Ed Turner
Jill Matthewson

Public Representatives

Jay Conlon
Allan Coleman
Mary Hall
Fiona Nicol
David Dixon
Chris Ebdon

Elected Members

Councillor Richard Manchester, Durham County Council
Councillor Patricia Jopling, Durham County Council
Councillor Anne Reed, Durham County Council
Councillor Mike Currah, Durham County Council
Councillor Fraser Tinsley, Durham County Council
Councillor Olwyn Gunn, Durham County Council

Officer Attendance:

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| Sandy Denney | AAP Coordinator |
| Nicola Woodgate | Community Development Project Officer |
| Joanne Ashworth | Towns and Villages Community Development Project Officer |
| Kelly Hughes | AAP Support Officer |

Public Attendance:

0 members of the public were in attendance

Apologies:

Helen Ward, Cllr Margaret Elgie, Graham Tomaszko, Cllr Paul Stokes

A1. Welcome and Introductions

The chair opened the meeting and thanked the Board for attending.

A2. Agreement of minutes from the previous meeting 9 February 2023 – Matters Arising

The minutes from the last meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.

A3. Local Neighbourhood Issues

Neighbourhood Budget Applications and Neighbourhood Budget Report

NW gave an update on Neighbourhood Budget and directed the Board to the report in their packs and said no applications had been circulated to the Board electronically since the last meeting. The Board were updated that so far, this financial year there have been 36 main grants and 30 small grants allocated from Neighbourhood budgets.

NW said there were 2 applications to go through at the Meeting, one of which requiring approval due to declarations of interest.

Jay Conlon declared an interest for both projects as a director of Jack Drum Arts

1. Kings Coronation Party - Billy Row Residents Association

Councillor Richard Manchester

NB £3,000; Match £594; Total £2,379.28

The Board were informed that Cllr Manchester has a declaration of interest on the project and as such it is for comment and approval.

Comments were made that this is a good project and a benefit to the Billy Row area.

The Board approved the project.

2. Crook Winter Light Parade Workshops – Jack Drum Arts

Councillor Mike Currah

NB £2,404.28; Match £0; Total £2,404.28

The Board were informed that the project is for comment only.

No comments were received.

A4. Priorities and Action Plans

Action Plan and Project Updates

SD updated the Board on AAP business.

Towns and Villages

In the previous Board meeting, the Road Safety and Traffic Solutions project was agreed with funding from Towns and Villages up to £167,300. Since this Board meeting, the Police and Crime Commissioner has approved a £20,000 contribution, therefore, the Towns and Villages allocation has been reduced to £147,300. The Towns and Villages fund now has £62,700 remaining.

The AAP have obtained an outline of what is covered in the levelling up bid and have explored what elements are possible for the remaining funding, however, there are lots of elements which are beyond the reach of the funding. Therefore, the AAP are looking into the potential of improvements to green spaces/play areas in the 3 Towns. Once this information is available, it will be brought to the Board.

ACTION – AAP to look into the potential of improvements to green spaces/play areas in the 3 Towns.

Area Budget

At the previous Board meeting, the Board were presented with 3 options for allocation of the remaining £20,424 area budget which needs to be allocated by the end of March. Plan A was to use the funding towards elements of the levelling up bid, however as this is no longer viable in the time

available it is proposed the Board agree to move to plan B, to use the funding to create a 3 Towns Community Events fund.

It is proposed to allocate the remaining £20,424 to set up a 3 Towns Community Fund, which will be managed by the 3 Towns Team and decisions taken by a subgroup of the Board. Events were highlighted in the priority survey. There will be 2 levels of funding available, £10,000 for small grants with a £1,000 minimum allocation and £10,424 available with a £5,000 minimum. If the Board agree to this proposal the team will work to develop the fund/criteria and timescales.

Discussions were had surrounding the events fund. The Board were informed the fund would follow current funding processes for callouts and applications and a panel would be needed to scrutinise applications and allocation of funding. The funding process will follow current guidelines and will take approximately 8 weeks from application being submitted to the funding team to being available to advertise, to groups. Although the funding team are currently turning applications round quicker than this.

Concerns were raised regarding the minimum small grants fund being £1,000 and how this may impact on smaller neighbourhood events. It was suggested that these smaller neighbourhoods could apply for 2 or 3 events at one time, such as Summer and Christmas events, to reach the £1,000 minimum threshold. The Board were informed that the AAP have explored the option of a lower minimum allocation however, the funding team have confirmed this is not possible.

The Board agreed to allocate the remaining Area Budget to the 3 Towns Community Events Fund.

ACTION – AAP to develop criteria, and timescales for the events fund and complete Area Budget application for the project and submit to the Funding Team

The Board were informed that the AAP will be fully allocated at £335,158 for this year with match fundings of £410,486

The chair thanked the AAP team on behalf of the Board

Healthy Relationships Funding update

The Board were updated on the Healthy Relationships funding. This is a one-off funding of £10,000 from public health for projects aimed at children 11 years plus to improve support to children and young people around sensitive topics such as domestic abuse and to ensure there is a greater focus on prevention and early intervention. The AAP currently have one application which is for £2,800 which was reviewed and agreed at the Fun and Food panel and is now under appraisal.

The previous Board meeting discussed amending the criteria for the fund to attract more applicants, after discussions with the funders it was agreed the AAP could look at potentially younger age groups. As a result of this another callout has been created with a deadline of Wednesday, as of yet there are no other applications. As the fund needs allocating by the end of March, a request was made for the Board to agree to a subgroup to look at any applications that may be submitted and make decisions on behalf of the partnership.

Discussion was had regarding the funding and the strict criteria. Suggestions were made to approach local organisations to create projects, however, the Board were informed as an AAP this is not possible as this is commissioning, however, Board members are welcome to approach organisations

and discuss this. A comment was made regarding the criteria and a suggestion to change it, however, the Board were informed this has been explored and is not an option.

The Board were informed that other AAP's have also struggled with applications for this funding due to the strict criteria. The AAP are limited to what resources are available in the 3 Towns communities. A suggestion was made to approach a Countywide organisation that could also provide a project within the 3 Towns from other areas, but the Board were informed that other areas have also struggled and that it is local community groups that have come together to create their projects rather than a Countywide organisation, in most cases therefore, this would not be possible.

A suggestion was made to contact Changing Relations as they have previously delivered a similar project in the 3 Towns area. The Board were informed that Changing Relations requested an application pack in round one of the Healthy Relationships call out, however, they never submitted an application.

ACTION – AAP to circulate Healthy Relationships fund via Advice in County Durham and social media before the Wednesday deadline and to form a board panel to look at any applications received and make decisions on behalf of the board.

Youth Panel and Children and Young People small grants update

The Board were informed that Youth Panel met for a second time in February and had 3 applications to review and make decisions on. The Youth Panel agreed the funding for 3 organisations subject to satisfactory responses to appraisal queries. Two of those organisations, Natural High and Jack Drum Arts have responded to their queries and have had offer letters. One organisation we are still awaiting appraisal responses from. The next Youth Panel meeting is next Thursday, the current callout for applications closes on Monday. Suggestion for Board members to encourage organisations to apply

The Youth Panel currently has 4 members aged 11-14 years; however, they are keen to recruit more members. The Board were informed there is a press release to be advertised shortly and a suggestion was made to share as appropriate.

Fun and Food update

The Board were updated that since the last meeting the AAP held a panel for the 3 Towns Easter Fun and Food applications. There were 3 applications received totally £4,537.60, with £2,897.50 match funding, which were all approved. There was also a multi-AAP bid covering 3 Towns, BASH and Weardale AAPs which was approved; however, this will come from the central Fun and Food Budget but will be managed by the 3 Towns AAP.

There is currently £42,234.40 available for Summer and Christmas holidays and £18,557 for May, October, and February Half terms. There will be a holiday timetable created for Easter and May Half Term Fun and Food will be launching on 20th March 2023 with a deadline of Wednesday 10th April 2023.

A discussion was had about schools applying for fun and food. A suggestion was made to the Board to encourage schools to apply for the funding, however, issues were raised that the application process is long, and organisations/people do not have time to apply. Other issue includes monitoring and anxiety over whether the organisations can deliver the projects also. The Board understood that the AAP are bound by external funders criteria for these funds. A comment was made regarding the 3 Towns staff and how they are always helpful with the processes and that it is appreciated.

A concern was raised regarding the same organisations providing in the area. If one of these organisations were to stop providing it would leave a hole for provision in the 3 Towns. Suggestion to analyse data on providers over the last 3 years and to encourage new organisations to apply. The Board were informed that the analysis of this data from February's Board meeting could be circulated.

ACTION – AAP to circulate the analysis data from the previous Board.

Public Representatives

The Board were informed that the deadline for public representative applications were yesterday, 8 March 2023. There was a good response and interviews will be held on 30th March 2023. The AAP thanked RR and AC for their roles as public representatives over the last 4 years to the Board.

Chairs and Vice Chairs 2023/2024

The Board were informed that a new chair and vice chairs will be needed starting in the new financial year. The chair next year will be from the elected members. Board members were to consider if they would like to take on those roles. If more than 1 member from each sector is nominated, they will be asked to write a paragraph on why they want the role and what skills/experience they bring, this will then be voted on by members of that sector.

ERS Community Engagement Review

The Board were informed everyone should have now received a copy of the ERS Community Engagement Review, sent on 14th February 2023. This was opened up for discussion to the Board. Comments were made that the report is flawed and did not understand how AAPs work. If the 3 Towns were to lose AAPs, there would be no regular meetings or monitoring and this would be a problem for communities. It was suggested the Board should be raising these issues and reporting back through the consultation process.

The Board were informed that it is an independent consultant report with recommendations. Some, all, or none of these recommendations could be implemented by DCC. Consultations will start on Monday 13th March 2023 until 23rd April 2023. A teams meeting was suggested to bring Boards together and for notes to be taken and reported back to the consultation. A questionnaire will be produced and a dedicated online email to send responses to. These will all be advertised on social media to spread the word. The report will appear differently online due to accessibility issues, however, it is the same report that has been circulated.

Concerns were raised regarding the online County Durham Boundary consultation and how it is hard to discuss the review with this uncertainty also, however, it would be beneficial to input a collective response from the Board regarding the review. The Board were informed that the outcome of the review will be a cabinet decision. It will go to cabinet in June and if any recommendations are to be implemented the report suggests these should take place from May 2025. There is the potential to implement some of these recommendations before this date.

Comments were made that the report included recognition of great work that staff do and the importance of community development work. It was also highlighted that recommendations suggest it would be beneficial to move to a 4-year funding cycle to free up admin time.

The Board were informed that there will be opportunities to discuss the report and input a response collectively. These sessions will take place on 22nd, 28th, 29th March 2023, with possibility of a meeting in April.

Concerns were raised regarding older people and communities who do not have access to devices to complete the online consultation. **GE** responded that the consultation will be available online and in hard copies for those who need them. They will be advertised via the local AAPs.

The Board were asked if they would like to arrange a special board meeting to discuss any concerns and feedback collectively before the end of the consultation

BOARD AGREED

ACTION – AAP to organise a special meeting on the review and to circulate date to the Board

Kings Coronation

In the previous meeting the Board were informed that each elected member had been given an additional £300 each to allocate for the King's Coronation. Elected members have started to allocate this funding already.

The Board were informed that Jack Drum Arts have secured funding for a 10-month project called Year of the King which will commence with a Kings Coronation Parade & Gala Event on Monday 8th May 2023 12pm. Jack Drum Arts are looking for groups within the 3 towns area who are interested in taking part in the creative engagement in the lead up to the 8th May 2023. Ideally these should be intergenerational groups. The funding for this project has been secured by Spirit of 2012. Jack Drum Arts are one of only 4 groups in the UK to have been awarded the funding and are the only group focussing on the King's Coronation.

Future Board Development

A proposal was made to the Board on whether they would like an opportunity to discuss the priorities for the locality in more depth. A suggestion was made to look at the data and potentially inviting local people, schools, and health providers in to look at this data and discuss what the AAP priorities should be moving forward.

The Board were informed that the AAP have contacted John Mitchell Research & Consultation Officer Research and Public Health & Intelligence Team who would be willing to come and provide a special session on Durham Insight. Equally given the levels of child poverty in the county and for the 3 Towns area, discussion have been had with a social inclusion operations manager. They are happy to do a session on child poverty and show what DCC are doing and what the statistics are in the 3 Towns area. This will be to add subcategories to the priorities, not to change them.

A suggestion was made to the Board to arrange an additional session before the AGM in May, if possible, to discuss this.

BOARD AGREED

ACTION – AAP to arrange addition sessions before the AGM.

The Board were informed that young people from Jack Drum have won the Volunteer Group of the Year in the DCC Environment Awards.

A5. Countywide Partners

JH gave a presentation from the County Durham and Darlington Fire Service

ACTION – AAP to circulate the presentation to the Board and to publicise the consultation on social media and to the forum.

Local Policing Update

ET gave a policing update for the 3 Towns. The Board were informed that in regard to the arson attack that took place just after the previous Board meeting, a suspect was arrested and has now been charged with ten counts of arson and endangering life.

There have been several drug related incidents across the 3 Towns, however, there have been several arrests, and these have been released under investigation.

PACT meetings are still taking place in the 3 Towns, Thursday 9th March was Crook, Wednesday 15th March will be Howden-Le-Wear and Thursday 16th March will be Willington.

ASB is under control at the moment.

A comment was made thanking the police for their quick response regarding the arson attacks and also thanking Durham County Council Clean and Green and Highways teams for their help. It was also stated that there was a lot of information recorded, however, some residents were afraid to do so due to safety concerns.

A query was raised regarding a break in at Crook Cricket Club as this is the third break in.

Concerns were expressed about the breaking of bus shelters in the local area over the last few months. ET confirmed they were aware, and they are repeated offences, the police are currently working with the bus companies to try and resolve this.

A6. Date and time of next meeting

6pm on Thursday 18 May 2023 at Crook Civic Centre