



Minutes of the Bishop Auckland and Shildon Area Action Partnership Board Meeting

Thursday 6 July 2023

Shildon, Civic Hall

Present

Partner Representative

Deborah Richardson (DR) - Community and Voluntary Sector Representative
Insp Andy Reeves (AR) - Durham Constabulary
Paul Cooper (PC) – Durham County Council
Rachel Edmunds (RE) – Believe Housing – Vice Chair

Public Representative

Peter Quinn (PQ)
Tony Bird (TB) – Vice Chair
Jayne Nicholson (JN)
Bernadette Crooks (BC)
Kirstie Hutchinson (KH)

Elected Members

Cllr George Smith (GS)
Cllr Shirley Quinn (SQ) – Chair
Cllr Cathy Hunt (CH)
Cllr Joanne Howey (JH)

Presenters

James Cook (JC) - Planning Team Leader, Durham County Council

Bethany Holly (BH) - Community Connector, County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust
Jules Howe (JH) – SW Facilitator, County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust

Officers

Andrew Walker (APW) – Senior AAP Co-ordinator
Sheilah Metcalfe (SM) - AAP Community Development Project Officer
William Lightburn (WB) - AAP Community Development Project Officer
Emma Walton (EW) - AAP Support Officer
Peter Henderson (PH) - AAP Towns and Villages Team Community Development Project Officer

Apologies

Tommy Taylor (TT)
Colin Davis (CD) - County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service
Nicola Craddock (NC) – Public Representative
Cllr David Bell (DB) – Town and Parish Council Representative
Cllr Samantha Townsend (ST) – Elected Member

Public / Other Attendees – 6

Board Meeting

A1. Introduction and apologies

Introductions and apologies were made.

Please see page 1 & 2 for attendees and apologies.

SQ welcomed Board and Forum members to the meeting and introduced and welcomed the following:

- James Cook (JC) - Planning Team Leader, Durham County Council
- Bethany Holly (BH) - Community Connector, County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust
- Jules Howe (JH) – SW Facilitator, County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust

A2. Agreement of minutes and matters arising from previous meeting held 11 May 2023

The Board agreed the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

A3. Declaring an Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

A4. Local Neighbourhood Issues

➤ The Housing Conservation – Housing Strategy Principles and Priority Paper

Board members received a presentation from James Cook (JC) - Planning Team Leader, Durham County Council on The Housing Conversation - Housing Strategy Principles and Priorities Paper. The Housing Strategy will provide a strategic framework to inform the actions and investment of the Council and its partners. JC provided an update on the delivery of the County Durham Housing Strategy 2019. An overview of the Housing Strategies principles, vision, priorities, and the next steps was provided.

The Board made the following comments:

SQ asked if existing housing stock will be considered within the strategy? JC stated the new housing strategy for 2024 will outline what the Council and its partners need to do to make sure County Durham will be a place of good quality affordable homes that meet the needs of both existing and future residents.

The Board highlighted several infrastructure issues that will need to be considered when building additional housing. These included transport links, parking, schools, the availability of doctors and dentists. JC stated when looking at new housing developments that robust consultation takes place. The strategy works alongside the County Durham Plan.

CH highlighted that there is a requirement for bigger houses for larger families. SQ stated that in addition housing is required for elderly people or those with disabilities that require internal adaptations. JN asked if the consultation is being carried out to see what types of housing is required. JC reported that a strategic housing market assessment was carried out in 2019 however this will need to be recommissioned.

PQ raised issues with selective housing and absent landlords in providing adequate housing provision. GR stated the buy to let scheme also adds to these issues. AR agreed that the issue of absent landlords can have an adverse effect on the area.

CH stated that there are several good tenants, including refugees, looking for housing however due to poor credit history they are being declined.

JN asked will local high streets be made more residential? JC stated that town centres aren't being used like they used too. There is an oversupply of former retail premises which can provide housing stock as well as footfall to the town centres.

APW invited JC to a future Board meeting to provide feedback on the consultation.

ACTION – JC to feedback the comments raised as part of the consultation process.

Board and Forum members were encouraged to respond to the consultation. Further details in relation to the consultation are available via the website: www.durham.gov.uk/thehousingconversation. The closing date for all comments is Friday 18 August 2023 at 5pm.

APW offered the support of BASH AAP in promoting the consultation.

SQ thanked JC for the presentation.

➤ **Wellbeing for Life**

Board members received a presentation from Bethany Holly (BH) - Community Connector and Jules Howe (JH) – SW Facilitator, County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust on Wellbeing for Life. BH gave an overview of the Wellbeing for Life service and the support available. Training and volunteering opportunities, physical activity groups and social groups were highlighted.

The Board made the following comments:

JH reported that a monthly group has been established at Henknowle and thanked BH for their support.

TB thanked Wellbeing for Life for their delivery at Dene Valley Community Partnership.

SQ commented positively on the training courses available.

APW offered the support of BASH AAP in promoting the sessions available.

SQ thanked BH for the presentation.

A copy of the presentations is available by contacting a member of the BASH AAP Team on bishopshildonaap@durham.gov.uk or 03000 268663.

A5. Priorities and Action Plans

➤ Area Budget - Community / COVID Recovery

APW stated that the Board had previously agreed a single priority of 'Community / COVID Recovery' for 2023/24. APW highlighted that a task group has been established. The task group agreed the key themes for the brief to allow a flexible approach to deal with local issues. The brief was circulated to the Board and agreed. As a result of the brief being agreed the call for projects is now live. Organisations will be invited to submit their applications based on the Community / COVID Recovery themes. The call will be live for 6 weeks with the closing date for applications being 12pm Friday 4 August 2023.

APW welcomed an initial conversation with a member of the BASH AAP team before submitting an application.

The AAP will have the following funding resources available to allocate in the financial year 2023/24:

- £100,000 Area Budget Funding
- £9,902 Youth Funding
- £10,000 Welfare Reform Funding

Each application received, with the support of the AAP team, will be assessed and considered by the funding panel. The panel will make recommendations on which projects to support, and these will then be presented at the September Board meeting. If the funding available is not fully allocated through this call for projects, then a second call will be launched.

APW thanked those Board members that volunteered to be part of the task group and asked if any other Board members would like to be involved to inform a member of the BASH team.

➤ **Holiday Activities with Healthy Food**

Durham County Council has secured additional funding from the Department for Education to continue to deliver holiday activities with healthy food during the school holidays. Individual allocations to AAPs were based on the number of free school meal eligible children and child poverty rates for 5 –15 year olds. BASH AAP has been allocated £90,273. The funding available is to be allocated in 2023 and is for the Easter, Summer and Christmas holiday periods.

In addition, funding has been secured from Durham County Council for holiday activities with healthy food during the school half terms. BASH AAP has been allocated £46,156. The funding available is to be allocated in 2023/24 and is for the February, May, October, and February 2024 half term periods. To date £19,655.25 has been allocated. This leaves a remaining balance of £26,500.75 for the October and February 2024 half term holiday periods.

SM stated that the last round of funding was for the Summer holidays. Following a call for projects each application was assessed and considered by the funding panel which agreed the following projects:

1. Woodhouse Church - £6,094.50
2. Shildon AFC - £1,880.00
3. Wear Rivers Trust - £7,220.00
4. Angel Trust Cookery School - £5,325.00
5. Stars Community Learning - £4,213.00
6. Dene Valley Community Partnership - £630.00
7. Daisy Arts - £7,356.00
8. West Auckland FC - £940.00
9. Shildon Alive - £2,845.45
10. AYCC - £9,608.00
11. OASES - £3,352.60
12. Little Chefs Big Chefs - £5,485.00
13. Influence Church - £1,030.00
14. Eldon Community Partnership - £1,340.00

SM reported that 14 applications have been supported to the project value of £57,319.55. This leaves a remaining balance of £16,017.50 for the Christmas holiday period.

The next round of funding is for the October half term. This will be launched on Monday 21 August 2023. The deadline for applications is 12 noon on Wednesday 20 September 2023.

SM reported that as part of the monitoring the HAHF team arrange visits to projects that are delivering in the school holidays. APW encouraged Board members to be involved in any future visits.

KH circulated a leaflet to the Board with regards to the HAHF summer delivery at Wear Rivers Trust.

APW thanked the BASH AAP team and the Funding Panel for the work involved in HAHF.

➤ **Town and Village Revitalisation**

PH reminded the Board that BASH AAP had an additional £210,000 funding to address the priority of Towns and Villages over 3 years. In addition, elected members also received an additional £10,000 each to address Town and Villages Revitalisation.

PH gave an overview and an update on the following projects:

AAP Towns and Villages Funding:

- **Move @ King James Academy** - £13,575 – The project is now complete and final monitoring has been issued.
- **Henknowle Community Improvements Scheme** - £75,000 – The project is now complete. Feedback has been positive. CH commented positively on the collaborative approach from DCC and Believe Housing in developing this project.
- **Bishop Auckland Recreation Area Improvements** - £27,000 – A number of issues have arisen however these are being dealt with.
- **Hackworth Park Wifi** - £37,715 – The appraisal queries have been addressed and we are currently awaiting service provider comments.

- **Oakley Cross Multi Use Games Area** - £14,000 - Following approval from the Board we are currently awaiting permission from DCC assets for the project to progress.
- **Escomb Car Park** – Following approval from the Board we are currently awaiting permission from DCC Environment Services.
- **ASB in Eldon and Dene Valley** – £26,855 – The offer letter has been issued. The CCTV has been purchased.

Cllr's Towns and Villages Funding:

- **Shildon Cemetery** - £7,000 each from Cllrs Quinn, Townsend, and Johnson – The project is complete and final monitoring has been issued.
- **Hackworth Park Footpaths, Shildon** – £3,000 each from Cllrs Quinn, Townsend, and Johnson - work is due to commence in the coming weeks.
- **Northumberland and Ravensworth Avenue** – £10,000 each from Cllrs Zair and Johnson – The project is now complete.
- **Watling Road** - £10,000 each from Cllrs Hunt and Howey – The project is now complete.
- **Leeholme Play Area** - £10,000 Cllr Kay – An offer letter has been issued; work is due to start in the next two weeks.
- **New Street (West Auckland Play Area)** – £7,840 each from Cllrs Yorke and Roberts - The project is expected to be complete in the coming weeks.

PH reported that the AAP Towns and Villages and the Councillor's Towns and Villages Budget has now been fully allocated.

JH thanked the BASH AAP team and PH for their work in allocating the Towns and Villages funding.

➤ **Neighbourhood Budget**

There were no neighbourhood budget applications to present at tonight's meeting.

APW highlighted that several neighbourhood budget applications have been circulated to the Board for their consideration via correspondence, however responses to these emails have been limited. APW stressed

that for those applications with a declaration of interest, need to be approved by at least three members from each sector of the Board to be quorate. If a 'quorate' decision isn't reached the application cannot be progressed through to appraisal.

ACTION – Board members to respond to all neighbourhood budget applications circulated via correspondence.

A6. Coordinators Update

➤ **Review of Community Engagement**

Board members received an update on the Community Engagement Review. APW provided the background to the review and gave an overview on the feedback received. APW explained the principles that will not be adopted and those that may be adopted. An overview of the new model, new governance, and terms of reference were highlighted. The timescales for adoption were underlined.

The proposed model will be presented to cabinet in July 2023. If agreed, the new model would go live in May 2025. Further details in relation to the cabinet report are available via the DCC website.

The Board made the following comments:

GS, CH, JH stressed their concerns with the community engagement review and the ERS report.

CH welcomed the funding process improvements and efficiencies. This was echoed by PQ.

RE commented positively on the flexibility of the new structure and welcomed the changes suggested. Changes will be minimal in comparison to those suggested in the ERS report.

CH commented positively on how well the BASH AAP Board works apolitically.

TB raised concerns regarding parish councillors not being permitted to be public reps on the Board. This was echoed by JN and PQ. GS highlighted the importance of parish councillors within their community. CH suggested submitting their concerns to Durham County Council.

ACTION - PC and APW to feedback the comments received to Gordon Elliot, Head of Partnerships and Community Engagement.

➤ **F & P Scotto Charitable Trust**

APW provided a brief overview of the work that has taken place with the F & P Charitable Scotto Trust. The last visit took place in June 2023. 17 applications were submitted to the Trust and we are currently awaiting the outcome. The Board will be updated in due course.

➤ **Woodhouse Close Church and Community Centre (WHCCC)**

APW reported that he attended the Woodhouse Close Church and Community Centre AGM at the beginning of the week.

WHCCC gave gratitude and thanks to the BASH AAP for their ongoing support e.g. funding for the Day Clubs, Greif and Bereavement, the planned extension and the new van. APW commented on the fantastic work taking place at the centre and encouraged Board members to visit the centre and see for themselves.

ACTION – APW to circulate WHCCC’s Annual Report to the Board.

➤ **Big BRASS BASH**

The Big BRASS BASH will take place on Tuesday 11 July, 6 – 9pm at Hackworth Park, Shildon. This event has been supported through the Neighbourhood Budgets of Cllr’s Quinn, Townsend and Johnson.

➤ **Public Rep Recruitment**

The recruitment for public representatives is now complete. APW stated that the final public rep vacancy has been filled by Bob Simm.

In addition, APW informed the Board that Mike Harker (Bishop Auckland Town Council) has been appointed as a deputy to Cllr David Bell (Shildon Town Council)

Insp AR stated that this meeting will be the last meeting as he will be leaving to take a up a new role in Spennymoor. APW thanked Andy for his time and dedication to the BASH Board, as a board, panel, and a task group member. This was echoed by the Board.

A7. Countywide Partner Issues

➤ Police / PACT Update

Insp Andy Reeves gave an update on the main priority issues for the BASH area.

- All crime has increased by 16%.
- The number of burglaries and thefts has decreased.
- Vehicle crime has decreased by 16%
- Anti-Social is down by 16%
- Environmental crime is up by 77% - this includes off road motorbikes. Seizures and escalations taken place and are ongoing.
- Funding has been received to tackle ASB. This includes community resolution initiatives through the probation service. i.e high visibility for offenders within the community.
- £125k has been received across the force to target forgotten communities. Staff will be directed to areas of the BASH AAP such as Coundon, Cockton Hill, Coundon Grange, South Church, Henknowle, Woodhouse Close Estate and Eldon.
- Drug related crimes continue. The reporting of local intelligence was encouraged.
- The home office crime reporting system is changing with the aim of freeing up officer time.
- Issues regarding the 101 service were highlighted. The possibility of additional call handlers is being explored freeing up officer time, along with a new telephone system. Callers will be signposted to the relevant services e.g ambulance, fire.
- Due to AR leaving his post Sgt Vikki Ord will be covering any future AAP meetings.

➤ AONB

KH raised residents' concerns with the level of pollution in the river Gaunless. An event will be held on 17 August 2023, 10am – 4pm at Bishop Auckland

Rugby Club. The Environment Agency, Northumbrian Water, Bishop Auckland Angling Club, Gaunless Gateway, Bishop Auckland College and Wear Rivers Trust. The event will allow residents to voice their concerns with the relevant agencies, ask questions, raise awareness as well as showcasing the work of the Wear Rivers Trust.

PQ stated that there will be a 50-year celebration event at the Civic Hall on Sunday 23 July 2023, 2pm. In addition, raised awareness of the Shildon FC 125 years celebration exhibition which is currently taking place at Shildon Workmen's Club.

A8. Date / Time / Venue for next Board Meeting

SQ thanked Board and Forum members for attending the meeting.

Board - Thursday 21 September 2023, 4pm, Bishop Auckland Football Club