



GREAT AYCLIFFE & MIDDRIDGE PARTNERSHIP (GAMP)

MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING TUESDAY 18 JULY 2023 (6:00PM) OAKLEAF SPORTS COMPLEX

PRESENT:

Cllr Eddy Adam – DCC, Cllr Jim Atkinson – DCC (Vice Chair), Cllr David Sutton-Lloyd – DCC, Cllr Tony Towers – Middridge Parish, Simon Hocking, Sue Hughes, Chris Hutchinson, Peter Shovlin, Daniel Blagdon – Health Representative, Andy Coulthard – Livin Housing Representative (Chair), Carol Gaskarth – Voluntary & Community Sector Representative, Insp Sarah Honeyman – Police, Oliver Sherratt – DCC Head of Service Representative, Malcolm Woodward – Fire Service Representative, Rosie Woodward – Business Representative, Brian Riley – GAMP Coordinator, Victoria Grieves – GAMP Community Development Project Officer, Paula Stockport – GAMP Support Officer, Angela Blanchard – GAMP Towns & Villages Community Development Project Officer, Marie Smith – DCC Housing Manager, Paul Sailes – DCC Strategy & Partnerships Coordinator

APOLOGIES:

Sue Cooke, Andy Kerr, Cllr Neville Jones, Natalie Whitworth

OBSERVERS:

Mr B Adamson, Ms S McCormick, Cllr T Armstrong

Standard Board Meeting

1. Introductions & Apologies

AC opened the meeting, reminding Board members of the standard Declaration of Interest item on the agenda. AC informed observers they would be welcome to comment under Items 3 and 4 on the agenda.

Apologies for absence had been received, as noted above, and a brief round of introductions was given.

2. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 23.5.23 – Matters Arising

BR confirmed that the draft minutes from the Board meeting held on 23.5.23 had been circulated in advance with the meeting papers; there were no outstanding actions.

There were no 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 Housing Strategy Consultation (Marie Smith / Paul Sailes)

Board members received an update presentation in relation to the Council's current Housing Strategy consultation. The Strategy will provide a framework to inform the actions and investment of the Council and its partners.

The Vision for the Strategy states:

'By 2035 County Durham will be a place that has good quality homes that meet the needs of existing and future residents that they can afford. The provision and quality of housing will support economic growth, contribute to improved health, and create and maintain sustainable, mixed and balanced communities. People will live long and independent lives within connected communities.'

MS gave a brief outline of the proposed principles and priorities for the Strategy.

The consultation poses 2 x questions:

- **What do you think are the housing issues in your area?**
- **What do you think the potential solutions are?**

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

- Cllr DSL commented that parking is already a big issue in Newton Aycliffe, particularly in relation to new housing developments, and should be given careful consideration. In addition, ensuring that the relevant service infrastructure is balanced should be looked at.
- Cllr EA commented that this is a complicated area, which covers a lot of different aspects in people's lives. One of the key areas for consideration must be infrastructure, when building more houses, this impacts upon school places, highways/parking, issues with lack of retail etc, all of which need to be built into any new Strategy. Cllr EA added that often the construction industry is predominantly about profit, but the Strategy should give more consideration to what housing's actually about, ensuring decent homes for people to live in, in the right places and in the right density.
- Cllr JA commented about the number of empty homes across the County. Works have been carried out in the past to visually improve rows of terraced houses which have deteriorated to a poor state of repair. Cllr JA also asked whether DCC are buying empty properties. MS confirmed that DCC are buying houses again, as part of their Council Homes Delivery Programme to help increase supply. MS acknowledged that empty homes are an ongoing issue, the Selective Licensing arrangement only covers certain areas. There is a dedicated empty homes team who work to bring properties back into occupation. Some of the cladding work previously carried out was part of a targeted delivery plan, which not only improved the aesthetic of the properties, but also supported with carbon reduction.
- Meeting observer Cllr TA asked whether government guidelines specify a minimum amount of green space/parking when looking at new housing developments. MS was unsure on this, it's more of a planning issue, but the point will be noted and fed into the consultation.
- SHo asked how housing would be defined as 'affordable'? MS clarified there are different categories, and it can be quite complicated. This will need to be defined as part of the Strategy.

- PSh commented that sometimes the only way to achieve robust parking standards that housing developers aren't able to appeal is for the Local Authority/social housing providers to build their own houses. MS advised that DCC has a Council Homes Delivery Programme, with a plan to build approximately 500 new homes over the next 5 years. Added to this are acquisition plans, meaning Council owned stock will increase over the next few years.
- AC added that Livin continue to have conversations with DCC, to look at potential for purchasing some homes that Livin (as well as other housing partners) are developing.

MS encouraged all Board members to complete the online survey as part of the consultation process. Further information is available via:

[The Housing Conversation](#)

The closing date for responses is 18 August 2023.

[MS & PS left the meeting]

3.2 County Durham Partnership (CDP) Forum Update (Andy Coulthard)

AC attended the CDP Forum meeting recently, on behalf of GAMP. A pilot project was highlighted, 'Horden Together', which is a multiagency group looking at regeneration/place-making, and includes reps from various agencies including the police, fire service, DCC, social care services etc, all based in one location to provide local support. The project lead updated that it's going well and there may be potential for the model to be replicated in other areas of the County.

AC highlighted that this year is the 10th anniversary of the Advice in Co Durham service, with various events happening.

AC also highlighted that there was discussion around antisocial behaviour, and an update on the new 'Operation Trailblazer' initiative which has been supported by the Police & Crime Commissioner. This will see £2m in funding available over the next two years for various hotspot areas, to look at specific targeting and also prevention. The West Ward of Newton Aycliffe is one of the hotspot areas. The funding should see more support on the ground, as well as multiagency interventions via the community and voluntary sector.

3.3 Community Engagement Review Update

BR gave Board members an update presentation in relation to progress with the Community Engagement Review. A report was recently approved by Cabinet, which included a number of recommendations around the future model for AAPs, as well as revised governance and funding arrangements. BR updated Board members in relation to the proposed timescales:

- July 2023 – agreement at Cabinet
- Phased implementation project plan:
 - Number of improvement processes delivered by April 2024
 - Transition year (including additional process improvements) April 2024 - May 2025
 - Launch - First year of a 4yr planning cycle from May 2025
- Communications plan to promote new model and phased improvement delivery (between now and May 2025)
- Regular training opportunities

- New model goes live in May 2025
- New robust Governance and Terms of Reference and documentation with a commitment to review on an annual basis

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

- Cllr EA asked about office accommodation going forward if the team are no longer based within the Pioneering Care Centre and whether there would be an expectation for the team to be based within a DCC building in the GAMP locality, i.e. the leisure centre. BR clarified his understanding is that the team will have no 'permanent' office base, but rather will be visible at various community venues, alongside the current hybrid/working from home model. Specific details are still to be confirmed, but BR's understanding is that this will take effect from April 2024.
- Meeting observer Cllr TA commented that he feels a lot of members of the public are still unaware of the work of GAMP/AAPs, and asked how it is intended to improve this going forward. BR clarified that one of the high-level milestones within the Review plan is to look at re-branding and a new communications plan with a view to improving engagement/reach. BR isn't aware of any local community groups who may be seeking support and/or funding who aren't currently engaging with the GAMP team, but often with the wider public it can be difficult to engage people unless they have a specific interest or issue.

BR confirmed, for the minutes, all information circulated by email from the GAMP team since the last meeting:

- information on DCC's new dog control measures (24.5.23);
- a survey request from Healthwatch County Durham about people waiting for NHS treatment or care (25.5.23);
- a link to the 2022-23 Annual Report (9.6.23);
- GAMP ebulletin (10.7.23).

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 local PACT priorities, PACT meeting dates and current/emerging issues.

Insp SH gave a brief update on staffing; the team will be down to two x PCs and two PCSOs with no scope to recruit until November.

Insp SH gave an update on the current position with the Police Station. The Fire Service have advised that the neighbourhood team can stay at the fire station for the foreseeable future, but the response team will need to be relocated. There has been a suggestion that this will be to Bishop Auckland, which means there will be no permanent staff based in Newton Aycliffe out of hours. Work is ongoing to look at alternative solutions but at the moment this is the current plan, which will be effective from December.

Cllr DSL asked whether there would be any flexibility around the Trailblazer funding to extend outside of the West Ward. Insp SH confirmed that the funding is specifically for that area.

Cllr DSL also expressed disappointment at the proposal to relocate the response team to Bishop Auckland.

Cllr EA expressed concern about the current staffing levels in Newton Aycliffe. The Trailblazer funding will be time-limited and therefore the additional resource being provided as a result of the funding is not sustainable. Cllr EA is hopeful that if the additional resource proves successful, the government may see this and consider further funding.

Meeting observer Cllr TA asked if Insp SH had any update in relation to people parking on traffic calming areas; previous advice was to contact DCC, but they have advised this is a Police matter. Insp SH clarified that not all offences are policed. Insp SH has looked into this specific incident and will discuss with Cllr TA outside of the Board meeting.

RW asked if it's possible to attend the BPACT meetings as a representative of both GAMP and the Business Park network. Insp SH will find out the relevant contact info and pass onto RW (**Action 1: Insp SH**).

Insp SH confirmed that a copy of her update report will be circulated with the minutes, for information.

5. GAMP Coordinator's Update

5.1 2023-24 Area Budget Update

BR confirmed that a panel meeting was held recently with a subgroup of Board members to review this year's Expressions of Interest (EOI) submitted to our Area Budget project callout.

There were 19 x EOIs submitted, with a total funding request just over £180k. At the panel meeting, 13 x projects were approved for funding. In terms of processes going forward, all successful applicants are now working to complete a full Area Budget application form, with support from Victoria. Once we have all the applications completed, these will be circulated to the full Board for final approval and ratification. After this, the applications will then be passed to our Funding Team for technical appraisal. Hopefully we should be looking at having offer letters completed no later than November 2023.

BR thanked the panel members who took part on the day, it was a really productive meeting, and hopefully Board members will see that we've supported a great range of projects when the final applications are circulated. BR also thanked VG and PSt for their input into this year's AB process.

5.2 Towns & Villages (T&V) Funding Update

BR advised that the T&V subgroup recently met to look at allocating the remaining balance of this funding (£39k). We had a project proposal which was agreed at the meeting, and the project lead is now working on completing a full application form, which will be circulated to the full Board in due course for final approval and ratification.

BR confirmed that this will see our total T&V budget of £210k fully allocated. BR thanked the subgroup members, and also our T&Vs link officer, Angela; it's been a long process to coordinate this funding due to the nature of the projects, and BR is appreciative of everyone's input.

5.3 Public Representative Recruitment

BR updated Board members; we have a current Public Rep vacancy on the Board, which was recently advertised. BR advised that we received four applications and interviews are taking place tomorrow (thanks to panel members AC and CH). BR will update Board members accordingly in due course.

6. **Date/Time of Next Meeting:**

Tue 26 September 2023, 6:00pm, Newton Aycliffe Youth & Community Centre

(Apologies noted from Carol Gaskarth)

AC suggested it could be good to ask if a representative from NAYCC would like to give a general update on the Centre to Board members at the next meeting. SHu will liaise with the Centre on this (**Action 2: SHu**).

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