

East Durham Area Action Partnership Board Meeting
6pm on Wednesday 13th September 2023, 6pm, Horden Social Welfare Centre

PRESENT:

Elected Members

Cllr Angela Surtees (AS) (Chair)

Cllr Kevin Shaw (KS)

Cllr Ivan Cochrane (IC)

Cllr Isabel Roberts (IR)

Partner Organisations

Graham Easterlow (GE)

Ian Hankin (IH)

Sgt Lucy Oxley (LO)

Jim Murray (JMurray)

Public Representatives

David Blackwell (DB)

Rona Hardy (RH)

Andy Cammiss (AC)

Alison Paterson (AP)

Annabelle Lumsden (AL)

Co-opted Members

Amanda Moon (AM)

Edna Connor (EC)

Officer Attendance:

John Murphy (JMurphy) – AAP Coordinator

Laura Towers (LT) – AAP Support Officer

Ian Moran (IM) – Community Development/Project Officer

Kaye Stephenson (KS) – Community Development/Project Officer

Presenters:

Jim Murray – Head of Education & Skills, Durham County Council

Emily Ross – Stronger Shores

Public Attendance:

4 members of the public were in attendance

Apologies: Cllr Miller, Cllr Griffiths, Ian Porter, Insp Joanne Eales, Insp Phil Carter, Susan Robinson, Gill Rodgers, Joanne Angus

1. Introductions & Apologies

GE welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were undertaken.

Apologies were noted, as above.

2. Previous Minutes & Matters Arising

The minutes of the previous Board Meeting on 12th July 2023 were approved by the Board as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

No matters arising.

3. Police & Fire Reports

Peterlee – Sgt Lucy Oxley

Operation Trident is targeting priorities. Investigations are currently ongoing following two warrants today. Drugs were found at both addresses. The addresses were in Horden and Peterlee. This remains as part of the Clear Hold Build tactics in Horden.

A stolen van in Peterlee was located with stolen tools. Two arrests were made. A stolen Ford Kuga in Peterlee was also located less than 24 hours later.

There was a good turnout for the Emergency Services Day at Shotton Hall, Peterlee.

Two warrants were carried out in Wheatley Hill which located two cannabis grows. Three males were arrested. One was charged and remanded in prison. Two were released under investigation.

A male was remanded after shoplifting spree. He has been recalled to prison and will be there until mid-2024.

Earlier in the month, an operation with the DVLA was carried out. Nine warning letters were issued for non-compliance (registration plates) of record keeping. All nine suppliers received emails with their warning letter and an information pack. Two suppliers were removed, as they had given false information. However, they were willing to come off the register. Nine vehicles have been reported whilst patrolling the roads for vehicle defects/registration issues.

Operation Trailblazer was carried out at the start of the month which all the teams across the force conducted.

There has been a Pop-Up PACT At Asda, Peterlee. The officers were able to engage with the community whilst showing a presence in the community.

The week has been a great success with the following results;

Five Community Protection Warning Notices issued. Five persons Issued with Traffic Warning Notices for driving anti-socially. Five Anti-Social Behaviour Contracts issued to youths in the area. One off-road bike seized. Five people reported for driving offences. One prolific shoplifter arrested whilst on patrols and remanded in prison. One person arrested for driving whilst under the influence. Over 15 visits carried out in partnership with local housing groups to target anti-social behaviour by tenants. One youth reported for public order. 14 Anti-Social Behaviour Warnings given out to youths.

Thanks was offered by the Board for the good work carried out on Operation Coastal and the information which was sent out to community centres.

AP also offered thanks for the Emergency Services Day at Blackhall.

Seaham & Easington – Sgt Lucy Oxley

Operation Trident continues to run throughout the year. A warrant was carried out in Seaham today. There was an arrest for drug offences. Cash and digital devices were also seized. Information and intelligence has led to other warrants being executed.

It was good to speak to communities at the Emergency Services Day to set priorities. The charity golf day was a success. £2,000 was raised towards defibrillators. Seaham and Murton community engagement days saw around 1,000 people attend over three days.

Operation Trailblazer has seen a slight rise in ASB over the summer. There have been some issues around St John's Square. Acceptable Behaviour Contracts, Community Protection Warnings and Notices have been issued. The education side of things is continuing in schools.

The CrimeStoppers initiative as part of Operation Endurance for information on off-road bikes has been launched.

A male who was released on 8th August has now been recalled until August 2024.

A large amount of cannabis was found and taken off the streets. Four people were arrested at the end of August and received 16 months each.

Fire Report – Ian Hankin

Community Safety is being restructured across the county to the delivery side of things. There are now five officers who move around the county as well as a Youth Education Coordinator since November. A campaign is scheduled for the next 12 months to go into schools. Crews will go into Key Stages 2, 3 and 5. The next campaign will be bonfires and then road safety.

Home fire safety visits are offered to members of the public. 80% of premises will be targeted on a risk-based approach. A partnership approach is taken to get into premises.

Approximately £20,000 has been requested from the PCC for resilience projects for younger people who may be close to offending or who have been referred. Two pilot projects have taken place and they will be followed up.

IH provided the following data for July and August 2023:

Wheatley Hill

July 2023 – 29 safety visits, 6 secondary fires, 2 primary fires and 1 vehicle fire

August 2023 – 40 safety visits, 4 secondary fires, 2 primary fires and 2 vehicles fire

Seaham

July 2023 – 90 safety visits, 10 secondary fires, 3 primary fires, 0 vehicle fires

August 2023 – 92 safety visits, 9 secondary fires, 6 primary fires and 2 vehicle fires

Peterlee

July 2023 – 186 safety visits, 31 secondary fires, 13 primary fires and 7 vehicle fires

August 2023 – 186 visits, 38 secondary fires, 13 primary fires and 8 vehicle fires

A question was raised regarding the consequences when fires are deliberate.

IH advised that this would involve engagement with people when they are aware of who they are. This could be enforced with the Police later if necessary. If it was a younger child, a community safety officer would be sent out to make them aware of the consequences of their actions.

4. Budget Consultation Presentation, Jim Murray, Durham County Council

JMurray gave an overview of the slides and highlighted that the presentation is part of the general consultation on the budget position. This is the proposed approach for 2024/25 which will go to Cabinet.

The keys messages of the consultation are:

- A range of unavoidable budget pressures, largely driven by national/external factors need to be accommodated next year.
- Position is both volatile and uncertain. It is uncertain what, if any, additional support will be forthcoming from Government and there is a risk we could face further funding cuts.
- The Council is in a stronger position than some other local authorities.
- It is unlikely that the Government will provide additional funding beyond what is already forecast.
- There is a £12.1m shortfall in funding for 2024/25 with savings already agreed and being consulted on of £5.9m, leaving a shortfall of £6.2m. The Council needs to identify additional savings or consider using reserves.
- Since 2010, the Council has had to make £260m of savings. Emphasis has been on protecting front-line services through finding saving to back office workforce. The workforce has reduced by 3,000 during this time. It is becoming more difficult to make savings in this way.
- The Council continues to suffer low tax base and limitations on tax-raising capacity.

Questions and comments were made throughout the presentation. These are summarised below:

Where does County Hall fit into this? Is it incorporated?

JMurray – The building has been sold, but alternative staff accommodation needs to be funded although less accommodation is needed post-Covid.

Is the figure of £25m increase in government funding based on last year's settlement?

JMurray - This is a safe figure for the Local Authorities to work on, but this won't be known until January.

Do we know what pressures there will be due to RAAC? Could this affect other public buildings too?

JMurray - None found in our council-maintained schools, but it could mean other work may potentially be put back. The checklist changed last week.

There are already pressures on CYPF services. If vacancies aren't filled, this is likely to create more pressure.

JMurray – There is pressure on services. Any reduction will have an impact.

Did the Council lose money on selling County Hall?

JMurray – No, but decisions will be made on alternative accommodation going forward. There is likely to be a financial saving.

Where is the funding for the selective licensing fee going?

It is used to run the scheme. It is a circular fund. It can't be levered out.

Have asset transferred buildings been surveyed for RAAC? Will buildings be aware and/or liable? How many are there?

JMurray to confirm with Susan Robinson.

A 4.99% rise in council tax would be devastating during the cost-of-living crisis although it is understandable that the Council is investigating this option.

It was noted that this consultation is highlighting the question rather than providing a solution.

5. Neighbourhood Issues

EC asked regarding a traffic diversion at Sixth Street, Horden.

IR advised that this is due to issues with underground piping which is being reviewed.

6. Priority Group & Area Budget (AB) Updates

Maintaining the Social Fabric of our Communities (MSFOOC) – Cllr Angela Surtees (Chair)

The last MSFOOC meeting took place on 11th September.

Discussion took place around individual resilience of people and ensuring people have access to support.

The group will look at pulling together a network for partners in relation to support and referrals.

The next meeting is scheduled for 19th October.

Neighbourhoods & Place (N&P) – Graham Easterlow (Chair)

Discussion took place at the last meeting on 12th September on preparing for winter and thinking of community resilience. It is important to support centres and ensure something can be activated so that people aren't in isolation. There should be checks for people who are working in the community.

There was also discussion on a capital grant allocation of £25,000 and the parameters for this.

Children, Young People & Families (CYPF) – Rona Hardy (Chair)

The next meeting will take place on 21st September.

There will be Fun and Food updates.

The closing date for Fun and Food – October Half Term is noon on 20th September.

Area Budget & Quarterly Monitoring Update – IM

The Area Budget and Quarterly Monitoring Updates were circulated to the Board prior to the meeting for information and taken as read.

The Fun and Food Summer Holiday monitoring deadline is 20th September.

For information, the following funding is available:

October Half Term 2023 - £22,715
Christmas Holidays 2023 - £16,136
February Half Term 2024 - £22,715

£120,663.19 was allocated for the Summer Holidays 2023.

£210,000 of AAP Towns & Villages funding has been allocated. The South Hetton and Haswell projects are now complete.

There is a notification of extensions to the Artful Age and Connecting the Coast projects in the update for information.

The next Connecting the Coast subgroup meeting will take place tomorrow – 14th September.

GE added that the project came from SeaScapes and Durham Heritage Coast. This is a good piece of work and with oversight, it is looking at the original focus of inland villages.

7. Neighbourhood Budget (NB) applications for notification or endorsement of a declared interest

The NB spreadsheet was circulated to the Board prior to the meeting, as per the spreadsheet above.

IM highlighted the following NB project with conflicts of interest. The Board approved this project.

Project Name: Seaham Youth Project

Councillors: Charlton-Lainé & Purvis

Project Cost: £13,139.80

NB Amount: £6,992.50

Description: Groundwork North East is applying for funding to continue delivering youth work sessions in Seaham Youth Centre.

Conflicts of interest declared by Cllrs Charlton-Lainé & Purvis. Cllrs Charlton-Lainé & Purvis are both committee members at Seaham Youth and Community Centre. This is the third and final iteration of this project. The Board approved this project.

The Board made no comment to the other NB projects which were presented.

8. Any Other Business

East Durham AAP Annual Report 2022/23 – for information

This has now been finalised. Hard copies were available at the meeting and it can also be accessed via the East Durham AAP webpage. This has also been circulated in the e-bulletin.

9. Date and time of next meeting

Wednesday 8th November 2023, 6pm
The Hazelwell Centre, Haswell