

Chester-le-Street & District Area Action Partnership (AAP) Board Meeting Minutes of Meeting held Monday 18th March 2024.

Present:

Councillors: Alison Batey, Tracie Smith, and Emma Waldock.

Partner Organisations: Inspector Lee Morris (Police), Suzanne Jobson (Karbon Homes), Joanne Malki (Business Association) Colleen Baker (VCS Representative), Graeme Carr (Durham & Darlington Fire & Rescue) and Marion Ingleby (Durham County Council).

Public Representatives: Clare Todd, Jake Rollings, Howell Davies, Chris Hoy, Janet Ford Davidson and Khaled Malki.

Officer Attendance: Michael Wilkes (Principal AAP Co-ordinator), Laura Sloan, Allyson Rose (Community Development Project Officers), Helen Pinkney, (Principal Community Development Officer) and Lesley Lines (Support Officer).

Apologies: Colin Stephenson (NHS), Cllr. Bill Moist, Cllr. Julie Scurfield, Cllr. Phil Heaviside, Cllr Elsie Forrester (Parish Council Representative)

Public Attendance: Three members of the AAP Public Forum were present at the meeting.

Introductions, Apologies and Virtual Housekeeping Code of Conduct/Protocols

Cllr Alison Batey (Chair) opened the meeting. Housekeeping arrangements were noted. Apologies were also noted as above.

Michael introduced Helen Pinkney, Principal Community Development Officer, who had taken over from Pete Garrod. He highlighted that Helen had previously worked with Chester-le-Street & District AAP.

Declaration of Interest

Clare Todd and Joanne Malki declared an interest in items 6 and 7 in regard to the Christmas Event and Flood Resilience projects.

Cllr Alison Batey noted that she was a Fire Authority Board Member.

Agreement of minutes from the previous meeting held on Monday 5th February 2024 & Matters Arising

The Chair went through the minutes page by page.

The Board agreed the minutes of Monday 5th February 2024.

Matters Arising

Page 2 – Michael advised a letter would be sent to the Board for comment with regard to the car parking charges. This would be sent to the Leader (Durham County Council) this week.



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Joanne Malki, Business Association, advised she would also forward a letter highlighting the effect car parking changes has had on footfall in the town after 2pm.

Page 4 – Michael advised the Town & Village report had been sent to Board Members for a decision on the recommendations.

Page 5 – Michael advised that a meeting with Insp. Morris would be set up to take the Market Activity Week project forward.

Neighbourhood Issues

Michael advised that no neighbourhood issues had been raised prior to the meeting. The Chair asked Board Members if they would like to raise any. No issue were forthcoming.

Fire Service IRMP Presentation

Cllr Allison Batey, Chair of the AAP, highlighted that she was a Board Member of the Fire Service and RIMP and asked that this be recorded.

Graeme Carr, County Durham & Darlington Fire & Rescue Service (CDDFRS) gave a presentation.

The Chair opened the floor to questions.

Cllr Tracie Smith asked if the Fire Service were still going into communities with free smoke alarms. Graeme advised that this was part of the home visits the Fire Service offered.

Cllr Tracie Smith asked if tumble dryers were checked as part of the home visit. Graeme advised that officers would check, if it looked like a check was needed.

Cllr Smith advised she would like to arrange visits within South Pelaw area if possible.

Howell Davies asked, if the ongoing cost of living crisis was causing problems with the likes of portable heaters causing more of a fire risk.

Graeme advised that very recently a fire had been caused with a portable heater.

Chris Hoy asked how ready the service would be to tackle a major incident. Graeme advised the service are always doing tactical training, they take their learning from a national basis. The service put measures in place following HIMC guidance with specialist mapping from the Local Resilience Forum.

Cllr Danny Wood asked if the Government funding was enough when it used to be a 50/50 split. Graeme highlighted that they were proud to still have 15 Fire Stations with no closures as yet.

The Chair highlighted the need for members of communities to inform the service of any vulnerable people within their wards that would benefit from a welfare check from the service.

The Chair thanked Graeme on behalf of the Board for the presentation and encouraged members to go online to fill in the questionnaire.

Area Budget Report

Michael talked through the report.



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To date the Board have approved eight projects totalling £106,643. Six projects have now been approved with one awaiting formal appraisal and one awaiting final application.

£30,000 is currently pipelined for a project in development linked to the Community Support Task Group. The project once finalised, will be brought to a future Board Meeting for approval.

At the January 2024 Board Meeting, Board Members agreed to move towards a joint task group and utilise a 'call for projects' model to seek projects which meet the identified areas of concern locally.

Chester-le-Street and District AAP have traditionally looked at events in the local area with both Brass and Christmas Events being held. In line with this, the Board are asked if they would want to consider these outside the Call for Projects process.

Area Budget Proposal Changes to Projects

Following work on each of the Area Budget applications, the following project has requested changes to their projects. The changes are in keeping with the original projects and are presented here for information.

Pelton Community Centre – Pelton Care in Crisis

The group have requested that the funding be used to buy in meals from an existing local business rather than employing a chef. It has been noted that the outcomes of the project would remain unchanged, and this model would present better value for money. This model is currently being utilised using other funding and it working very well for the Centre.

Area Budget Request: £19,997

Match Funding Contribution: £2,880

Total Project Cost: £22,887

The Board Agreed

Potential Projects to Consider

Chester-le-Street and District AAP have previously held Brass and Christmas Events in the AAP area. Initial discussions/approaches have been made to consider these events. It is noted that timescales for the call for projects may mean that these projects would be precluded from applying for funding.

Owing to timescales, the below projects are being highlighted to Board Members to gauge whether there would be appetite to consider top slicing the 2024 /25 Area Budget subject to firm costings being obtained.

Whilst funding cannot be formally allocated outside of the financial year, an indication by Board Members that they would like to consider these outside of the call for projects process can inform whether the approaches would be brought to the May 2024 Board Meeting as formal project approaches with an in-principle reduction in the budget available for the call or projects process.

Durham BRASS Festival Community Programme 2024 – Durham County Council



Better for everyone

It has been confirmed that Durham County Council can offer a programme of BRASS Festival events in communities as part of the 2024 Durham BRASS Festival and are able to offer community events to AAPs within their communities.

The Big BRASS Bash Events feature top bands from the UK and Internationally to present an evening of high-energy and high-quality entertainment at locations in County Durham. The events are free to attend and aim to bring local communities together to be entertained by the best street bands.

In 2024, performances are available from Monday 8th - Friday 12th July (6pm – 9pm). Interested areas are being asked to indicate a first and second choice date for events.

The event requires a park or open space capable of holding an audience of 400+, which in the Chester-le-Street area would be the Riverside Park. Venues will require a visit from the Festivals Events and Community Engagement Team to ensure they are suitable for infrastructure needs. All food vendors, welfare, technical requirements and security will be organised as part of the project.

Amount requested: £6,500 (please note this is a contribution to the cost of holding an event within a community. The overall BRASS programme is subsidised by Durham County Council)

Please note, the BRASS 2024 Community Festival Programme does offer a Little BRASS Bash option, but this falls below the minimum threshold for Area Budget projects and as such would need to be considered through alternative funding options if there was interest.

The Little BRASS Bash would bring two/three street bands to a location of choice to deliver a 1 ½/2hour show. These events are intended for smaller areas such as town squares, car parks, village greens etc. A site visit is necessary to confirm the suitability of the proposed location.

These are available Monday 8th - Friday 12th July (6:30 – 8:30pm) **at a cost of £2,250.**

Chester-le-Street Christmas Event, Chester-le-Street and District Business Association

The Business Association have successfully run the Christmas Event in Chester-le-Street over the last few years and it is recognised that this project is likely to come to the AAP for funding in 2024. It is noted that the call for projects process and associated timescales for this, may hinder the Business Association in terms of planning and as such it is being highlighted to Board Members as an event that they may like to consider outside the call for projects process.

Formal approaches from the Business Association have not yet been made but should there be appetite from the Board to support a Christmas event in Chester-le-Street in 2024, the AAP team would be able to work with the Business Association to gauge their interest and develop a formal approach for the event to be considered in the new financial year outside of the call for projects process.

Amount requested: TBC, in 2023/24 £8,000 was awarded to the event.

The Chair went through the recommendations.

Agreed

- 5.1 The Board Agreed to note the contents of the report.
- 5.2 The Board Agreed to the change to project outlined in Item 3.

5.4 The Chair opened the floor to comments.

Brass Festival

Chris Hoy Chair of the Town & Village Task Group, highlighted that the AAP missed the chance to participate in the Brass Festival last year as there was only a limited amount of performances over five days and it was first come first served.

The Chair asked if Task Group Members had a preference between a small event or a larger event. Chris advised that this had not been discussed.

Suzanne Jobson highlighted a bigger event was preferable. A bigger event made a difference in bringing people into the town.

Cllr Emma Waldock agreed because by doing two smaller ones, the problem would then be, in which of the wards to hold them.

Khaled Malki highlighted the last event was held within the Market Place. Marion Ingleby highlighted that, holding the event on the Riverside Park, would not help businesses in the Front Street.

Howell Davies observed that previously the bands went around the schools. It was highlighted that the organisation who ran the event liaised with schools that were interested in being involved.

Helen Pinkney highlighted that both events would be held on an evening, so would not necessarily affect businesses.

Insp. Morris highlighted that having the bands on the street i.e., at the Queens Head site would cause traffic problems, moving it to the Riverside would a better venue. Joanne Malki also advised she thought the park would be a better venue.

Suzanne Jobson noted that there was a nighttime economy within the street. Mick Rodgers, Forum Member, highlighted that Burns Green would be nearer the street than the Riverside.

The Chair asked for Board agreement to move forward with the bigger brass event. The Chair highlighted the quicker the Brass Team were contacted, the more chance of securing a performance. The Chair advised the organisers would then do their own risk assessment to find the best venue. Board Members would be kept in the loop.

The Board Agreed to allocate £6,500 to the Brass Event

Christmas Event

Joanne Malki and Clare Todd declared an interest.

The Chair asked for agreement to move forward with organising this event.

A discussion took place. Board Members asked if the £8,000 would be enough to produce the event as everything had gone up since the last event.

It was suggested that the budget be increased up to £10,000, subject to a firmer cost breakdown being provided.

The Board agreed to allocate up to £10,000 to the Christmas Event.

Town & Villages Report

Helen talked through the report outlining the current position in respect of the AAP Towns & Villages Fund. Helen provided the background to the Towns & Villages Programme, advising each AAP was allocated £210,000 to support local projects that help to revitalise and enhance towns and villages. In addition to this, County Council elected members were provided with an additional £10,000, as part of their Neighbourhood budget. This investment, across the 14 AAP's, amounts to £4.2M. She highlighted that all expenditure needing to be planned and grants awarded by the end of March 2024.

Consequently, the Board agreed to support one priority project in each of the eight County Council Wards. It was acknowledged that funding may not be divided equally, but that applications should be assessed on their own merits, with financial support to be based on project need.

To date the Board has approved support for eight AAP Towns & Villages projects, with a combined grant value of £205,348.

North Lodge Ward - Camperdown Pocket Park Refurbishment (£10,400 grant)

This project is complete.

Chester North Ward - South Pelaw Road Safety/Environmental Enhancement (£25,093 grant)

This project is complete.

Sacriston Ward - Multi Site Play Space Refurbishment (£22,085 grant).

The supply/installation contract has been awarded and the DCC Outdoor Facilities Team is awaiting a start date for works.

Chester West Central Ward - Fines Bank Landscape Improvements (£12,200 grant)

This project is complete.

Chester South Ward - Waldrige Village Parking/Traffic Circulation (£26,700 grant)

This project is approved and works should start in due course.

Lumley Ward – Great Lumley Parish Council – Great Lumley Community Centre (£31,522)

This project is approved.

Chester East Ward – DCC Highways – Event Parking Management Project (£32,348)

This project is approved.

Pelton Ward – DCC Highways – Pelton Ward Infrastructure Scheme (£45,000)

This project is approved.

At the November 2023 Meeting, the Board was advised that following approval of the final three priority projects, an overall balance of £4,652 remained. Discussion took place on allocation of this balance with a view that it could potentially be utilised in support of work around flood resilience.

Chester-le-Street Flood Resilience – DCC £4,652

The aim of the project is to support flood resilience work taking place in the centre of Chester-le-Street and the riverside area. These areas are noted within the flood resilience plan as areas of high risk. This work is linked to the work of the overarching community emergency plans for the county.

This project will see the purchase of emergency planning equipment including sandbags, sacs and any other emergency equipment required locally.

The impact of climate change is set to exacerbate the flooding issues and it is hoped to take a pre-emptive and proactive approach to flood resilience within this area.

This project has previously been discussed at the Board as part of the wider Flood Resilience scheme led by the Business Association, this project is designed to run in partnership with the original scheme.

A discussion took place.

Howell Davies asked where the equipment would be stored. Clare Todd highlighted that most would be aqua sacks. Two areas are being looked at which are out of the flood plain area.

The Chair asked if there was potentially any spare room at the One Point Hub. Michael advised that the building was pretty full to capacity.

The Chair suggested using Durham County Council buildings where possible. Clare Todd noted she was also speaking to Riverside staff.

The Board Agreed to allocate the remaining £4,652 to the project.

Michael added that he would like to give his thanks to the partnership for allocating the Towns and Villages funding in a timely and structured fashion.

The Chair thanked Michael and the wider team on behalf of the Board.

Monitoring Report

Michael noted the report was extensive and was for Board Members' information. Michael encouraged Board Members to read the report and contact him if they had any subsequent questions.

Michael highlighted the work of Oases and the Climate Friendly Schools project. It was noted that this project won an Environmental Award at the recent countywide event. Michael suggested inviting Oases to a future Board Meeting.

Action: Helen Pinkney to invite Oases to a future Board Meeting

Board Champions. It was suggested that Board Members be reallocated projects as some of the projects had now finished. Michael agreed that this would be done.

Action: Helen Pinkney to arrange for the Board Champion information to be circulated to Board Members

Neighbourhood Budget Report

Small Grant Allocations

Cllr Julie Scurfield – Parish Centre – Notice Board

The aim of this project is to provide a new notice board for the Parish Centre, to advertise what's on alongside other local information.

Declaration of Interest: None

NBSG Allocated: £825

Neighbourhood Budget Allocations

Cllr Paul Pringle – Ouston CA – Installation of CCTV

The aim of this project is to install 16 cameras, both internally and externally, to the centre. This is due to acts of vandalism against the centre, but also the whole system needs upgrading in line with current legislation. The work will be carried out by a local supplier.

Declaration of Interest: None

NB Allocated: £4,800

The Board supported the project

Cllr Bill Moist and Cllr Paul Sexton – Emduk Keep Fitness Association – KFA Youth Moves National Dance Festival

The aim of this project is to create choreography in workshops, weekly rehearsals, the design of costumes and organising travel arrangements and accommodation, so the young people can take part in the KFA National dance Festival in the Nottingham Royal Albert Hall on Saturday June 8th 2024.

Declaration of Interest: None

NB Allocated: £2,637 (£1,318.50 per councillor)

The Board supported the project

Cllr Craig Martin – Chester-le-Street Parish Church – Café Upgrade

The aim of this project is to support the Parish Church with the provision of new tables and chairs for the Parish Centre Café area. This will support the Parish Centre overall to help the community when using the space.

Declaration of Interest: None

NB Allocated: £6,617

The Board supported the project

Holiday Activities with Healthy Food (HAWHF) Report

Helen talked through the report. Helen highlighted that funding of £64,791 was available to allocate across the Easter, Summer and Christmas 2024 holiday periods.

A Call Out for Projects had previously took place and five applications had been received with four projects being funded through the Chester-le-Street and District AAP allocation (please see table below for details). The remaining project was funded through a central pot meaning that all applications were successful for the Easter Holiday period.

Organisation	Project Title	HAWHF Funding Allocated	Beneficiaries	Geographical Area/s Covered
Cornerstones To provide three (in-person) sessions. Make Lunch provides space and resources for free play, colouring activities, board/card games, an active activity and a reflective activity.	Make Lunch Chester-le-Street	£526	20	All areas – Building is located on North Burns, Chester-le-Street
Craft Cabin Easter craft activities, free play and food	Easter Activities at the Craft Cabin	£2,257	40	All areas – Building is located on Front Street, Chester-le-Street
Community Fitness 60-minute fitness session, nutrition workshop and food	Food for Fitness	£4,320	270	All areas – Building is located on Front Street, Chester-le-Street.
Pelton Fell Community Partnership Breakfast Club / Lunch Club / Tea Club with physical activities	Youth Café	£6,121	100	Pelton Fell and Chester-le-Street West/Central Ward
Total		£13,224	430	

Partner Updates

Police

Inspector Morris highlighted that, over the past few weeks, his resources were needed in the East and within Derwentside. He had also supported the Fire Service with road traffic management at a fire within the town.

Inspector Morris advised he would be working with businesses in the town to support them with shoplifters. He also stated that the Trailblazers scheme was working within The Avenues, Grange Villa and Pelton.



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Inspector Morris added that a pilot project was taking place to monitor traffic parking at Red Rose School. This was a joint project with Durham County Council Traffic Wardens, where a QR code would be available to upload traffic offences.

Board Members were very interested to receive the feedback from the project.

Karbon

Suzanne Jobson highlighted that Karbon were running an Easter Holiday Activity Holiday Squad. Full details can be found online.

Business

Joanne Malki advised that an Easter Egg Competition would be held on Good Friday.

Voluntary Sector

Colleen Baker highlighted a new breakfast club initiative that was taking place every Friday morning at Aspire.

AAP Co-ordinators Update

Big Arts Funding – Michael advised that the AAP had received £10,000 for mental health based projects. Projects can be supported with funding from to a minimum of £2,500 per scheme. Michael noted that the criteria would be circulated to the Board in due course. Michael asked for agreement to go to a call for projects to invite applications to come forward.

The Board agreed the recommendation put forward.

Public Rep Vacancy – Michael highlighted that Ian Pearson would be joining the Board from May.

Community Engagement Review – Work was going on behind the scenes with AAP Co-ordinators to look at processes and individual elements. A report will be available at a subsequent Board Meeting.

Any Other Business

Michael advised he had received none.

Date and Time of the next meeting

Monday 20th May 2024. Venue TBC