

**East Durham Area Action Partnership Board Meeting
6pm on Wednesday 13th March 2024 at The Lisa Dixon Centre, Haswell**

PRESENT:

Elected Members

Cllr Angela Surtees (AS) (Chair)
Cllr Kevin Shaw (KS)
Cllr Jake Miller (Cllr JM)
Cllr Terry Duffy (TD)

Partner Organisations

Graham Easterlow (GE)
Sgt Alex Davison (AD)
A/Sgt Graham Hughes (GH)
Kevin Bell (KB)
Jim Murray (JMurray)
Joanne Angus (JA)

Public Representatives

Rona Hardy (RH)
Gill Rodgers (GR)
David Blackwell (DB)
Annabelle Lumsden (AL)

Co-opted Members

Amanda Moon

Officer Attendance:

John Murphy (JMurphy) – AAP Coordinator
Laura Towers (LT) – AAP Support Officer
Wayne Gibson (WG) – Community Development/Project Officer

Presenters:

Kevin Bell, County Durham & Darlington Fire & Rescue Service

Public Attendance:

One member of the public was in attendance.

Apologies:

Cllr Julie Griffiths, Cllr Ivan Cochrane, Ian Porter, Susan Robinson, Danny Dickinson, Alison Paterson, Andy Cammiss, Edna Connor

1. Introductions & Apologies

JM ran through housekeeping and health and safety.

AS welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were made.

Apologies were noted, as above.

AS highlighted the input of former councillor Isabel Roberts over the years, both as a Board Member and a community champion. A minute's silence was held in recognition of Cllr Roberts.

2. Previous Minutes & Matters Arising

The minutes of the previous East Durham AAP Board Meeting on 7th February 2024 were approved by the Board as an accurate record of the meeting.

No matters arising.

3. Police Report

Sgt Alex Davison – Peterlee

A set of improvements have been made to Vibe nightclub, including the retraining of security staff. Bar 23 is being looked at also.

ASB has peaked in the Peterlee town centre. An operation has been taking place all week, using Operation Trailblazer funding to carry out more patrols.

Warrants were executed last week. A large cannabis grow was found in the industrial estate – three people were arrested. A grow was also found in Horden.

A man has been charged with four offences and remanded following a robbery. This will result in a prison sentence.

AM asked whether the ASB involved young people.

AD confirmed this was the case.

GR highlighted the issues with Peterlee bus station.

AD advised that there were extra patrols in place. The area is covered by cameras and this has also been highlighted with the security company.

GE asked whether the new bars and pubs in Peterlee have had any effect. GE noted that it is good to have a safe and vibrant night-time economy.

AD advised that early visits have been done and there have been no issues. This gives people other places to go.

A/Sgt Graham Hughes – Seaham & Easington

GH noted that there has been rise in ASB, particularly in the Murton and Easington areas. This is often the case once the light nights come. There is extra youth provision and the police are also contacting schools.

Andy's Man Club will be starting at The Glebe Centre from 8th April. Please share this on social media or where appropriate.

ACTION: GH to forward Andy's Man Club information on to LT for circulation.

Replacements have been paid for at the damaged community garden. This should hopefully be open by the summer.

There has been an increase in vehicle crime in the Seaham area. Some people have been identified.

Three people have received custodial sentences for shoplifting.

A suspect was identified and arrested in relation to a stabbing in Easington Colliery.

The Illegal Money Lending Team has received increased reports from our area, so they will increase their time in the area. Proceeds of Crime money can be used to link in with any groups with people who may be susceptible.

4. County Durham & Darlington Community Risk Management Plan – Kevin Bell, County Durham & Darlington Fire & Rescue Service (CDDFRS)

KB delivered a presentation on the Community Risk Management Plan which covers the period April 2024 to March 2027. This is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure plans are always up-to-date and to reflect changes in national and local risks, policies or finances.

CDDFRS plans how to tackle the risks our communities face every year. The plans include deciding where and how to use their resources. It is important to take into account what people think about the impact of any changes.

CDDFRS remains committed to protecting front line services to the public. Financial pressures mean they have to closely monitor spending and look at different ways of delivering services.

The challenge is to balance the resources against the risks faced. A progressive approach will continue to manage finances, making sensible and sustainable efficiencies to offset known cost pressures.

The 2023/24 annual budget is £32.1M and to set a balanced budget for 2024/25 it will be necessary to continue to closely monitor our spend and any income from central government. 2023/24 saw the implementation of our option to reduce the overall operational workforce so that fire appliances always have four crew members of trained staff on them.

Despite the reductions in funding, the same number of fire stations continue to operate, albeit some have different crewing systems. The eight-minute turnout time will also be maintained. The aim is to deliver the best possible service to the communities of County Durham and Darlington with the funds available.

Board Members were asked to fill in the survey to answer the following questions on the CRMP:

1. Do you agree with the Services approach to keeping you safe?
2. Do you agree with our commitments outlined in the plan?
3. Do you have any comments on our plans for 2024 – 2027?

AS thanked KB for presentation and asked the Board if they had any questions.

DB asked regarding the fastest rural response time of eight minutes.

KB confirmed that is from when an appliance is mobilised to getting to the incident.

GE asked whether the reduction of crew has had any impact.

KB advised that it has not. Incidents can be responded to with four crew members and other resources can assist if required.

GE asked in relation to the MTFP and the lower council tax yield in the area whether there was any threat to fire stations?

KB advised that no fire stations were currently under threat, but he could not confirm this for the future.

GE noted that it was a great achievement that the number of safety visits was a lot higher than the national average.

5. Neighbourhood Issues

None raised.

6. Priority Group Updates

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

The approved minutes of the MSFOOC meeting on 18th January 2024 were circulated to the Board.

DB chaired the meeting on 29th February 2024. DB updated that the Argus proposal had previously been agreed in principle and this came back to the meeting as an updated application. The group recommended it should go to the Board. Kaye Stephenson had updated on the call out and outlined the process. JA had updated on the NEFirst Credit Union recruitment. There were also updates on the East Durham Transformation mental health project and from the Foundation of Light on a violence reduction programme. GR reported that Horden Together had recruited two new trainee Community Navigators.

Argus Community CIC – Community Learning – Bright Futures

AB amount requested: £7,200

It was noted that the priority group had looked at this in detail and Argus had worked with partners before submitting the application.

The Board approved the application.

Children, Young People & Families (CYPF)

RH updated on changes to the Fun and Food programme from Easter. The focus will be on children who are eligible for means-tested free school meals. Parents will receive a code to book on sessions. There was a reduction in applications at Easter. DCC have circulated a list of other funders.

It was noted that many families who may be at crisis level do not qualify for free school meals. Schools are indicating there is a greater need.

Discussion took place around submitting a response to voice concerns on this through East Durham AAP.

ACTION: The Board agreed to a response being written which would be circulated to Board Members.

Neighbourhoods & Place (N&P) – Danny Dickinson, Vice Chair

The approved minutes of the N&P meeting on 13th February 2024 were circulated to the Board. Another meeting took place on 5th March 2024.

The eight Towns & Villages projects have now received offer letters.

7. NBs for notification or endorsement of a declared interest & AB Position

The Neighbourhood Budget (NB) spreadsheet was circulated to the Board prior to the meeting.

JMurphy highlighted the following NB project with conflicts of interest. The Board approved these projects.

Project Name: Easington Colliery Parish Council Play Area Improvements

Councillors: Boyes & Surtees

Project Cost: £39,547.87

NB Amount: £10,000

Description: Easington Colliery Parish Council are applying for funding to improve equipment in three play areas in Easington Colliery.

Conflict of interest declared by Cllr Surtees & Cllr Boyes. Cllr Surtees is married to the Easington Parish Council Operations Manager. Cllr Boyes is a Parish Councillor. The Board approved this project.

Project Name: Miners Heritage Event

Councillors: Adcock-Forster & Griffiths

Project Cost: £1,200

NB Amount: £980

Description: We are planning to hold an afternoon event to commemorate the miners strikes and pit closures.

Conflict of interest declared by Cllr Adcock-Forster & Cllr Griffiths. Cllr Adcock-Forster is a member of the Welfare Committee. Cllr Griffiths is a paid member of staff at the Welfare. The Board approved this project.

Project Name: Armed Forces Day & Youth Event

Councillors: Batey & McKenna

Project Cost: £4,500

NB Amount: £2,000

Description: Seaham Town Council are applying for funding towards holding the 2024 Armed Forces Day and Youth Event. The two events are held on consecutive days to maximise event organisation costs.

Conflict of interest declared by Cllr Batey & Cllr McKenna. Cllr Batey's daughter-in-law works for Seaham Town Council, Cllr McKenna is one of the admin volunteers with Seaham Town Council for the project. The Board approved this project.

The Board made no comment regarding the other NBs which were presented in the spreadsheet.

AB Position

The AB report was circulated to the Board prior to the meeting.

Following Board approval in February, JMurphy updated that the final amount for the Area Budget call out was £22,105. The deadline for expressions of interest was March 1st 2024.

By the deadline, we had 25 Expressions of Interest with a combined total request of £152,643. A panel comprising of Cllr Surtees, Amanda Moon and Danny Dickinson met on March 5th to appraise and score the Expressions of Interest.

The Board agreed to ring fence a small amount of the next financial year's Area Budget (commencing April '24) to cover the shortfall between what the panel wish the Board to approve i.e. £3,630 and our remaining AB.

Cllr JM took the Chair as AS declared a conflict of interest, as detailed below.

JMurphy put forward the top four expressions of interest for approval, as assessed by the panel:

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training – Seaham & Murton NPT (Durham Police) (cascading learning in suicide prevention to local partner organisations)

Conflict of interest declared by Sgt Alex Davison & A/Sgt Graham Hughes.

AB amount requested: £5,000

The Board approved this project.

You're Not Alone – Creative Youth Opportunities (working with young people to highlight mental health and wellbeing)

Conflict of interest declared by AS, RH & GE.

AB amount requested: £6,853

The Board approved this project.

Talking Therapies project – East Durham Veterans (telephone counselling for local residents)

Conflict of interest declared by KS.

AB amount requested: £7,000

The Board approved this project.

True Colours – Hart Gables (supporting the emergent LGBTQ+ population in East Durham)

Conflict of interest declared by GE.

AB amount requested: £6,882

The Board approved this project.

Finally, in the instance of any project withdrawing, JMurphy asked the Board for their approval for this to go back to the Chairs to decide how the money should be split. The Board agreed.

The applicants will be notified tomorrow of the outcomes.

AM noted that the oversubscription is an indication that there is a lack of funding out there.

AS noted that all projects approved at the meeting covered the whole of East Durham and provide additionality.

AS resumed as Chair.

8. Any Other Business

None raised.

AS thanked everyone for attending.

9. Date and time of next meeting

6pm on Wednesday 8th May 2024, 6pm at Greenhills Centre, Wheatley Hill