



Better for everyone

4 Together Partnership Minutes of the AGM & Board Meeting Wednesday 1 May 2024 Dean Bank & Ferryhill Literary Institute

PRESENT:

Carole Atkinson, Tony Cutmore, Susan Kirby, Dennis Ramsey, Cllr Peter Atkinson – DCC, Cllr Julie Cairns – DCC, Cllr Janet Snowball – Cornforth Parish Council, Cllr Joe Makepeace – Ferryhill Town Council

OFFICER ATTENDANCE:

Lee Copeland – Principal AAP Coordinator, Louise Porter – Principal Community Development Project Officer, Paula Nixon – Community Development Project Officer

APOLOGIES:

Cllr Curtis Bihari, Nigel Jones, Mike Sammut, Cllr Joe Quinn, Joanne Burnip, Vicki Murray, Inspector Barry Evans, Mark Booth, Paula Stockport

Annual General Meeting

a. Introduction from Outgoing Chair

DR opened the meeting; he thanked Board members and the AAP team for their support during his time as Chair, which he has thoroughly enjoyed. LC thanked DR for his input and support with the Partnership over the past year. DR expressed that he had especially enjoyed the last few months, and in particular representing the AAP at the Local Bus Board meeting and also the County Durham Partnership Forum meeting, both of which were really informative.

LC took the Chair.

b. Election of Chair & Vice Chairs

LC confirmed that she has been in touch with all three sectors of the Board to seek nominations for the 2024-2025 Vice Chair positions. LC confirmed that she has had a partner representative nomination from Nigel Jones and elected member nomination from Cllr Joe Makepeace. DR has put his name forward to be Vice Chair on behalf of the Public Representative third and was willing to remain in position for a second term if the board so wished. LC asked the Board's permission for DR to remain Chair for 2024-25.

c(i). 2023-24 Area Budget (AB) Summary

PN confirmed that a copy of the Area Budget spend update for 2023-2024 had been circulated in advance with the meeting papers, to note for information.

c(ii). 2023-24 Neighbourhood Budget (NB) Summary

LP confirmed that a copy of the Neighbourhood Budget spend update for 2023-24 for all DCC Elected Members had been circulated in advance with the meeting papers, to note for information.

LP has also been working on moving the NB Expressions of Intent to Fund from the 2022-2023 financial year forward.

Standard Board Meeting

1. Introductions & Apologies

DR took the chair, welcoming everyone to the meeting of the 4 Together Partnership Board. Apologies for absence were noted, as above, and a brief round of introductions was given. Cllr JS was welcomed to the Board in the Town & Parish Council rep role.

LC highlighted that Insp Mike Sammut would no longer be attending meetings due to his change of job role and we look forward to welcoming his replacement, Insp Barry Evans, in the future.

2. Agreement of Minutes from Previous Meeting (1.3.23) - Matters Arising

LC reviewed the previous minutes for matters arising, actions and accuracy.

There were no outstanding actions or matters arising, and the minutes were **AGREED** as a true record.

3. Countywide Partner Issues

Nothing raised.

4. Local Neighbourhood Issues

LC confirmed that no local neighbourhood issues had been submitted to the AAP team to bring to the Board.

4.1 Neighbourhood Policing Update

No update given.

5. Area & Neighbourhood Budget Update

5.1 Area Budget (AB) Update

PN gave a brief update on the background to date in relation to this year's AB project callout process that had been previously agreed by the Board. PN reminded Board members that we have a total AB of £117,740 to allocate for 2024-25; this is made up of a £77,740 revenue budget (£60k Area Budget + £10k Youth Fund + £7,740 AB underspend from 2023-24), £30k Capital budget, and £10k Poverty Action funding. The project callout for 2024-25 will be launched by our team on Friday 3 May, with a deadline for Expressions of Interest of Friday 14 June 2024.

PN highlighted that we also have an additional allocation this year; £10k available via 'The Big Arts' which has its own unique remit and criteria and will be processed separately to the wider AB funding. PN agreed to circulate information on this to the Board via email (**Action 1: PN**).

LC gave an overview of the upcoming mental health awareness project for Chilton, which will see a focus on the development of a working group and action plan to support the community in relation to being identified as a hotspot area for suicide. Cllr JM asked whether any data is available on the number of cases; LC advised she would need to check to see what information could be relayed (**Action 2: LC**). CA talked about her community role which involves contact with a number of people with poor mental health and believes that relocation is the greatest issue. CA gives information and signposts people. Cllr JM expressed that it is good to have local organisations at the forefront of contact as access to GPs can be a challenge.

5.2 Neighbourhood Budget (NB) Update

LP advised that the NB spend for 2024-2025 and starting figures are in the information packs.

LP confirmed that we have 5 x NB applications in process at the moment and a number of proposals currently being negotiated, we anticipate this will rapidly increase over the coming months.

5.3 Community Engagement Review

LC advised that there is Cabinet strategic management meeting due to take place on 16 May, which will include discussion in relation to changes to funding criteria and Terms of Reference. Elements of the Council's constitution will be brought into AAP constitution, in readiness for the Local Networks commencing from 1 April 2025. The Boundary Review consultation will be considered as well during the Cabinet meeting, and LC is hopeful that we will have additional information on this within the next month. LC highlighted that as part of recent MTFP savings, 6 x AAP teams have been displaced and are now moved to centralised areas. The 4 Together base at Haig Terrace has now closed down and the decommissioning process is being finalised. LC advised that the team's base is now an open-plan space at Chilton Depot, and so there is no option for drop-ins or meetings at this location (alongside Great Aycliffe & Middridge Partnership AAP). DCC have tried to keep AAP bases broadly within their current geography.

LC noted that Gordon Elliott (Head of Partnerships & Community Engagement) is due to leave the Service at the end of the month. Gordon's service area is being disbanded and the 4 main service elements are being transferred to different directorates. AAPs will be moving to Economic Development under Andy Kerr.

5.4 Fun and Food Update

LP advised that during Easter across the county 1,544 unique children attended 5,500 sessions, of which 90% of the children were in receipt of benefits-related free school meals. LP has asked for this information to be broken down for the 4 Together Partnership area, this is awaited.

LP confirmed the allocation amounts for 2024-25, and explained that additional funding has been received from UK Shared Prosperity Funding. LP explained how the UKSPF funding will be allocated to support the DFE funding. LP also

highlighted that applications for the Summer programme have been launched today, with a deadline of Wednesday 22 May.

Any Other Business

- Cllr JM asked about officer responsibility for empty properties and stated that the Licensing officers need to be called to a future meeting so they can be questioned on the legalities and answer for why there are so many issues in relation to empty properties being allowed to fall into disrepair. They never seem to be held accountable. Cllr PA did say they attend local PACT meetings and referenced some particular houses and issues that have been discussed. Cllr JM asked why compulsory purchase wasn't looked at more often. CA explained how difficult the process of taking property over is and how impossible it would be for councils to financially cover this option. Cllr PA advised Cllr JM that he may wish to attend a future PACT meeting to speak to officers direct.
- TC referenced the specific hardships facing numerous families he is supporting in his area, who are facing homelessness due to landlords not adhering to set standards. The tenants don't necessarily want to move out, but the landlords can't afford to pay for the works that have been identified so it is leading to people losing homes they've lived in for years.

**6. Date & Time of Next Meeting:
Wed 3 July 2024, 6:00pm, venue tbc**

DR/LC thanked everyone for their attendance, and the meeting was closed.