

Chester-le-Street & District Area Action Partnership (AAP) Board Meeting Minutes of Meeting held Monday 20th May 2024.

Present:

Councillors: Alison Batey, Emma Waldock. Julie Scurfield, Alan Bell and Maureen May (Deputy Parish Council Representative).

Partner Organisations: Inspector Lee Morris (Police) Joanne Malki (Business Association) Colleen Baker (VCS Representative) 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 Elsie Forrester (Parish Council Representative), Cllr. Tracie Smith, Suzanne Jobson (Karbon Homes) and Graeme Carr (Durham & Darlington Fire & Rescue)

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 Maureen May as the Deputy Parish Councillor.

Election of the Chair and Vice Chair

Alison thanked Board Members for their support. She also thanked Michael and the team for the support received during this transitional period.

Michael asked for ratification of the following;

Jake Rollings, Chair and Suzanne Jobson, Vice Chair for the Partners. **The Board Agreed.**

Michael noted that the Vice Chair for the Councillor section of the Board would be agreed and in place for the following Board Meeting.

Alison highlighted she had brought a card for Board Members to sign for Gordon Elliott, Head of the Partnership, who is retiring from Durham County Council.

Jake took over the Chair of the meeting.

Declaration of Interest

Insp. Lee Morris declared an interest in Market Activity Week.



Better for everyone

Agreement of minutes from the previous meeting held on Monday 7th March 2024 & Matters Arising

Jake Rollings, Chair, went through the minutes page by page.

The Minutes were agreed.

Matters Arising:

Page 7 – Oases attending tonight's meeting to give a presentation.

Board Champions will be circulated in June after Qtr. 1 monitoring has been sent out.

The Board agreed the minutes of Monday 7th March 2024.

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 issues were forthcoming.

Customer Access Points Presentation

Sarah Welsh, Strategic Manager, Customer Access Points (Durham County Council), gave an update on the current service.

The current face to face service

- Customer Access Points (CAPs) support residents who need help accessing our services if they are having difficulty completing their transactions online or over the phone.
- We currently have eight CAPs across the county located in Barnard Castle, Stanley, Seaham, Spennymoor, Durham City, Crook, Chester-Le-Street and Consett.
- Demand for face-to-face services in our CAPs has been decreasing over a number of years with 90% of resident contact now received by phone, email or online.

Demand in Chester-le-Street

- Usually when people come into the CAP in your area, they are looking for support with bus pass applications or blue badge support.
- Over the last 6 months (data to 31 March 24) around 52% of available appointment slots go unused across the whole CAP estate.
- In Chester-le-Street CAP the unused appointment slots are around 62%.
- Our aim now is to develop a more responsive offer which delivers customer service support to the places it is most needed and reduces the time we spend in our current locations to better reflect the demand
- This would mean adjusting the days we have appointments available in your closest CAP from Monday, Tuesday and Friday to Mondays.
- The aim is to benefit residents with increased choice, reduced travel requirements.

Get Involved

Go to our consultation website for more information and to complete the survey online.

<https://www.durham.gov.uk/consultation> or Visit one of our libraries or CAPs to complete a paper survey.

Consultation Next Steps

- The deadline for feedback is 5.00pm Sunday 28 July 2024.
- Analysis of feedback will be carried out August and September 2024.
- Decision making report scheduled to be presented to Cabinet by December 2024.

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

The Chair opened the floor to questions.

It was suggested that the Customer Access Points are not in the right place.

Sarah advised that this was the kind of information that was needed. If people wanted them in libraries or community centres then this information would be useful in positioning them where they were needed the most.

It was highlighted that the suggested day for the Customer Access Point to open in Chester-le-Street was a Monday. How do you know that is a good day for people? It was also highlighted that if it was a Bank Holiday, people would miss out.

Again Sarah agreed that, should it be a bank holiday, another day should be considered/be available and reiterated that residents need to provide such feedback by completing the questionnaire.

It was suggested that, rather than having appointments, people would prefer to just walk in. The venue needed to be better publicised as residents don't know it is there and what help people could get.

It was highlighted that Citizens Advice used to help with housing benefits documents, some of which were 20 pages long. It was suggested that this kind of help was needed as CAB were no longer physically available in Chester-le-Street.

Sarah agreed this service is not available at the moment. She highlighted that the last consultation was in 2019 and what was needed then isn't what people require now. She encouraged everyone to promote the consultation within their areas to enable a better view of what was needed.

The Chair thanked Sarah for the presentation.

Oases Climate Friendly Schools Project Presentation

Emma Hawthorn gave a presentation highlighting what their project delivered and what the AAP funding had been used for.

Just as no one person can solve the issue of climate change, no one person can enable an entire school community to become climate friendly. OASES consequently recommend that schools form a Climate Friendly Action Team. This team should ideally contain:

- Pupils
- Teachers
- Senior leaders
- Business Managers
- Caretakers

- Governors
- Community members
- Parents

To help schools identify what they are doing well/areas for improvement, each school begins by completing a Climate Friendly Schools Audit. The audit answers are used to generate a Climate Friendly Action Plan.

To be recognised as a Climate Friendly School, a Climate Friendly Action Team must be set up and be able to demonstrate that they have taken at least ten steps towards delivering their Climate Friendly Action Plan every year

Emma highlighted this was a two-year project and thanks to the Chester-le-Street and District Area Action Partnership, OASES has funding to support ten schools through the Climate Friendly Schools process. Five schools are taking part this year and five additional schools will be participating from September 2024.

Current schools are Edmondsley Primary School, West Pelton Primary School, Lumley Primary School, Red Rose Primary School and Ouston Primary School.

Emma advised work is ongoing to recruit for September with one school, St Cuthberts Catholic Primary School, signed up.

It was suggested that it would be beneficial to transport children to Riverside Park and Waldrige Fell as alternative sites as opposed to taking children to much further afield.

Michael highlighted the Environmental Award that Oases had received for their work with schools.

The Chair thanked Emma on behalf of the Board for the presentation.

AAP Budget Report

Chester-le-Street & District AAP's total Area Budget for the 2023/24 financial year was £136,071, comprising of a project underspend from the previous financial year as well as an aggregation of the core AAP Area Budget, Youth Fund and Welfare Reform Funding. The Board has allocated £136,071 to nine projects.

An additional £61,814 was allocated to 26 projects through the AAP to Fun and Food projects during the school holiday periods throughout 2023/24.

An additional £119,293 was allocated to five projects through the Town and Villages funding.

Financial Resources Available to the AAP in 2024/25

The AAP will have the following resources available to allocate in the current financial year:

- £90,000 Area Budget Funding
- £105,973 Fun and Food Programme to cover Easter, Summer and Christmas 2024 school holiday periods
- £10,000 Youth Funding
- £10,000 Poverty Action Funding

Fun and Food Programme Funding



Better for everyone

On 8th November 2020, the Government announced that the Fun & Food Programme would be expanded across the whole of England in 2021. The programme would provide healthy food and enriching activities to disadvantaged children and would be administered by the Department for Education. The Government announced on 27th October 2021 that this programme would continue into 2022, with Durham County Council receiving funding for a further three years.

The Government Fun & Food Programme covers the Easter, Summer, and Christmas holidays but not the half-term holiday periods. Previous half term holiday periods have been supported by Durham County Council.

Area Budget, Youth Fund and Poverty Action

The remaining funding to be allocated comprises of the regular Area Budget as well as the Youth Fund and Poverty Action monies, all of which the Board are familiar with and have been involved in allocating over the past few years.

Next Steps

The work of the merged Task Group to continue in line with the priorities agreed at the AGM on 9th May 2022.

The Board Agreed to:

- i) Note the content of this report and recognise our end of year position as well as the anticipated starting point in terms of funding levels across various strands.
- ii) To anticipate any further guidance on the funding strands to be provide to Board Members in due course, as and when required.

AAP Joint Task Group and call for projects

Michael highlighted that the Board had agreed to adopt a joint Task Group for the 2024/25 financial year at the meeting held on 5th February 2024. It was also agreed that a call for projects process would be undertaken to ensure all funding was allocated in a timely manner. It was agreed that the themes under the previous Task Groups would be considered by the Joint Task group.

The Board agreed to top slice the Area Budget at the meeting on 18 March 2024 to fund a Christmas Event and a BRASS Event, meaning that a minimum of £93,500 is available to the Call Out for Projects process.

First Joint Task Group Meeting

The first meeting was held on Tuesday 23th April 2024 at the Parish Centre, Chester-le-Street and was attended by 22 individuals.

The group discussed format of meetings going forward and agreed meetings would be held monthly where appropriate, at 6pm. It was agreed that a Chair and Vice Chair would be selected via email.

Two nominations for Chair/Vice Chair were received and it was agreed by those nominated that Clare Todd would take on the role of Chair and Chris Hoy would take on the role of Vice Chair for future meetings. As there was consensus, there was no need for a formal voting process by the group.

The Task Group also discussed the call for projects and agreement was obtained on the outline of themes to be considered through this.

Call for Projects



Better for everyone

Alongside the Chair and Vice Chair, and based on the discussions by the Task Group, a draft Call for Projects has been formed:

Theme 1: Tackling Inequality

Impact might include:

Tackling food poverty

- Improving personal health and wellbeing
- Increasing access to affordable activities to communities in the AAP area
- Support for community facilities
- Employability support, confidence building and training

Theme 2: Towns and Villages Improvements and Environment

Impact might include:

Increasing footfall in towns and villages, usage of facilities through events or activities

- Support of businesses and organisations, supporting local employers and local people
- Physical improvement and environmental improvements of local towns and villages
- Environmental projects and activities

Theme 3: Mental Health and Wellbeing

Impact might include:

- Benefits to mental health and wellbeing
- Tackling social isolation
- Improving access to mental health provision
- Improve the mental health and wellbeing of people locally.

Board Members were asked to consider the above in a Call for Projects.

Once the call for projects has been agreed by the Board, it is hoped that it can be launched as soon as is practicable to seek applications.

The Joint Task Group will consider applications but will not make final decisions on projects, it is envisaged that the Task Group will pass comment on applications to inform the process.

It is anticipated that there will be oversubscription for projects and due to time constraints in a full Board Meeting, some form of funding panel will be required for Board Members to make decisions on projects. Board Members are asked to delegate power to the panel made up of at least two members of the Board from each sector for decision which will then be ratified by the wider Board.

Agreed

- i) The Board Agreed to ratify Clare Todd and Chris Hoy as Chair and Vice Chair of the Joint Task group.
- ii) The Board Agreed to the proposed Call Out for Projects themes as above.
- iii) The Board Agreed to a Funding Panel subgroup to consider applications and where appropriate volunteer as panel members It was agreed that 2 members from each third of the Board be involved in the panel.

Neighbourhood Budget Report

Neighbourhood Budget Small Grant Allocations

Cllr Alan Bell and Cllr Phil Heaviside – Practice Net and Protective Ground Sheet, Bournmoor Cricket, Lawn Tennis Club and Institute

The project is to replace the mobile net and ground sheets used for the junior cricket pitch. The net has been damaged and has large holes in it making it unsafe for use.

Declaration of Interest: None

NBSG Allocated: £950 (£475 per Councillor)

Cllr Alan Bell– TA1795 Great Lumley (Cocken Lane replacement sign) - Durham County Council

The project is the replacement of the current village nameplate to move to a more modern sign.

Declaration of Interest: None

NBSG Allocated: £240

Cllr Tracie Smith – Street Nameplate Installation – Durham County Council Neighbourhoods

The aim of this project is to install various new and missing nameplates across South Pelaw, to aid residents and visitors.

Declaration of Interest: None

NBSG Allocated: £500

Cllr Julie Scurfield – Parish Centre Notice Board – St Mary’s & St Cuthbert’s Church

The aim of this project is to supply and install a new stand alone notice board outside of the Parish Centre. This will help the centre advertise ‘what’s on’.

Declaration of Interest: None

NBSG Allocated: £825

Cllr Alan Bell and Cllr Phil Heaviside – Body Cage – DCC Clean and Green

The project is to provide a body cage for Great Lumley Community Centre to cleanse the site in preparation for the redevelopment of the building.

Declaration of Interest: None

NBSG Allocated: £320 (£160 per Councillor)

Cllr Bill Moist and Cllr Paul Sexton – Community Defibrillator Accessories – Chester-le-St Cricket Club

The project will enable the purchase of a new battery and pads for the defibrillator.

Declaration of Interest: Cllr Bill Moist

NBSG Allocated: £250 (£125 per Councillor)

Neighbourhood Budget Allocations

Cllr Alan Bell and Cllr Phil Heaviside – CCTV and Lounge – Fencehouses Community Association

The aim of this project is to upgrade CCTV and add an extra camera in a vulnerable area of the building. The project will also replace furniture, tables and chairs.

Declaration of Interest: None

NB Allocated: £1,872 (£936 per Councillor)

Cllr Alan Bell and Cllr Phil Heaviside – Continuation of Toddler Group – Great Lumley Toddler Group

The aim of this project is to help with the general running costs of the group, including room hire charges, provision of snacks, cleaning/hygiene/first aid supplies, repair/replacement of toys/games/books. The funding will also help purchase a santa suit for the various Christmas events.

Declaration of Interest: None

NB Allocated: £1,098 (£549 per Councillor)

Cllr Simon Wilson – Women’s Health Project – Sacriston Youth Project.

The aim of this project is to host a range of women's health and wellbeing sessions, to support positive health and wellbeing for women. A therapist will provide tasters and teach basic skills to empower people to use holistic/natural ways within their personal wellbeing action plan/framework.

Declaration of Interest: None

NB Allocated: £1,494

Cllr Craig Martin, Cllr Simon Henig, Cllr Tracie Smith, Cllr Danny Wood, Cllr Paul Sexton, Cllr Alison Batey, Cllr Paul Pringle, Cllr Karen Fantarrow, Cllr Phil Heaviside, Cllr Julie Scurfield, Cllr Alan Bell, Cllr Bill Moist – Market Activity Week – Durham Constabulary



Better for everyone

The aim of this project is to support the delivery of the free Activity Week for all the family in Chester-le-Street & District AAP area.

Declaration of Interest: None

NB Allocated: £9,000 (Cllr Craig Martin £1,000, Councillor Simon Henig £1,000, Cllr Tracie Smith £1,000, Cllr Danny Wood £500, Cllr Paul Sexton £1,000, Cllr Alison Batey £500, Cllr Paul Pringle £500, Cllr Karen Fantarrow, £1,000, Cllr Phil Heaviside £250, Cllr Julie Scurfield £1,000, Cllr Alan Bell £250, Councillor Bill Moist £1,000)

Cllr Alison Batey, Cllr Paul Pringle & Cllr Danny Wood – Defib Outside Storage – Grange Villa Community Enterprise

The aim of this project is to install a defibrillator case to the external wall of the Grange Villa Community Enterprise building, which will house an already purchased defibrillator.

Declaration of Interest: None

NB Allocated: £1,173 (£391 per Councillor)

Cllrs Craig Martin, Simon Henig & Simon Wilson – Durham Pride 2024 – Durham Pride UK

The aim of this project is to support arrangements for Durham Pride 2024.

Declaration of Interest: None

NB Allocated: £700 (Cllr Craig Martin £300, Cllr Simon Henig £300, and Cllr Simon Wilson £100)

Cllr Alan Bell and Cllr Phil Heaviside – Updating of Camping Equipment – 1st Great Lumley Scout Group

The aim of this project is to provide new tent equipment to support outdoor camping experiences for the scouts.

Declaration of Interest: None

NB Allocated: £1,050 (£525 per Councillor)

Cllr Bill Moist and Cllr Paul Sexton – Malvern / Hambledon Avenues, Chester-le-Street Parking Areas – Durham County Council

The project will widen four parking laybys into existing grass verges at the land to the east of Malvern Avenue and to the east of Hambledone Avenue.

Declaration of Interest: None

NB Allocated: £32,653 (Cllr Bill Moist £16,363 and Cllr Paul Sexton £16,290)

Partner Updates

Police



Better for everyone

Inspector Morris highlighted that, over the past few weeks, his resources were needed to dismantle cannabis grows at the Halifax, Front Street and in Consett. He advised that any suspicious behaviour seen within empty properties should be reported to 101. It was highlighted that this was a national problem, targeting mainly empty properties/business units.

Inspector Morris advised his team had been working with businesses in the town to support them with shoplifters and, to date, the figures and incidents were decreasing.

Inspector Morris advised that Park Safe pilot project was subject to review at Red Rose School. He advised that thirty referrals were received. Board Members were very interested to receive the feedback from the review.

Inspector Morris highlighted there were a lot of instances of people gaining access to roofs and causing damage. He advised there were preventions that could be put into place to prevent access. Clare Todd asked that, if there was any information to hand out to businesses, she would be visiting all businesses this week and would deliver it.

Insp. Morris highlighted that Paul Jones was the new Sgt for the Chester-le-Street area.

Business

Joanne Malki advised that the date for the Christmas Event would be Saturday 30th November. She added that the RSPCA shop had offered the shop to be used as Santa's Grotto. Joanne highlighted that they had received the Town Map for the notice Board but the AAP logo needed to be added.

Cllr Alison Batey asked that Board members receive a PDF copy when available to promote the town.

Joanne noted that the artist for the Selfie Wall had now been secured and that work was due to start in the 1st week in July.

The Northern Wall was highlighted that this was in need of attention. The Chair advised this would be looked at.

Voluntary Sector

Colleen Baker highlighted that the new breakfast club initiative every Friday morning was becoming very popular at Aspire, with 120 meals given out each week. She added that the Gardening Club and exercise group was also popular. Colleen advised that they now had essential cleaning products available for people in need.

This week has been Mental Health Awareness Week where participants have been taking healthy walks and wearing green.

AAP Co-ordinators Update

Annual Report – Michael advised this was being checked ready to send to Design & Print. A mock up would be sent to Board Members for comment.

Fun & Food – Summer applications close on Wednesday 22nd May at 12 noon.

BRASS 2024 – Michael highlighted that unfortunately The Big Brass Bash was unavailable to Chester-le-Street. We could however have a Little Brass Bash. This would be communal event held within the Park or within the Town. Michael asked Board Members which they would prefer, he highlighted that the event company had advised that the town centre would be better placed to have more supporting acts/entertainers. The cost would be around £6k.

The Board Agreed to hold the event within the Town Centre.

Big Arts Funding

Michael highlighted this funding was a £10,000 pot from Public Health to promote Mental Health. He advised six projects had been received. He asked for agreement to support the following projects.

Alison highlighted there were a good mix of projects. The Board Agreed to the following four projects being supported.

Organisation	Project Name	Amount	Headline Description
MONA LISA Arts and Media	Artful Minds: Navigating Mental Health Through Creativity	£2,500	Artful Minds: Navigating Mental Health Through Creativity project is an initiative which seeks to foster emotional wellbeing and promote mental health awareness through artistic expression.
Bullion Community Resources Centre	Wellbeing through Nature and Creativity	£2,500	A fifteen-week project exploring how the natural world contributes to mental health and wellbeing.
RLRC - Real Lives Real Choices	WMC - Wellbeing Men's Club	£2,500	An art and creativity-based project targeting support for men including men with learning disabilities; mental health needs; barriers and risks to increase their participation and exploration of the benefits of creativity and creative approaches for their mental health and wellbeing.
Woodshed Workshop CIC	ASB – Arty Social Behaviour	£2,500	An art and creativity-based project using 2D and 3D art forms and techniques supporting young people involved or at risk of being involved in anti-social behaviour in the village of Sacriston including those who are engaged with probation and reparation services.

The Board agreed to support the above four projects.

Date and Time of the next meeting

Monday 22nd July 2024. Venue TBC