



Better for everyone

## **GREAT AYCLIFFE & MIDDRIDGE PARTNERSHIP (GAMP)**

### **MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING TUESDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2024 (6:00PM) NEWTON AYCLIFFE YOUTH & COMMUNITY CENTRE**

#### **PRESENT:**

Cllr Eddy Adam – DCC, Cllr Jim Atkinson – DCC (Vice Chair), Cllr Michael Stead – DCC, Cllr Tony Towers – Midldridge Parish, Chris Hutchinson (Chair), Peter Shovlin, Simon Hocking, Glenis Simmonds, Andy Coulthard – Livin Housing Representative (Vice Chair), Liz Fisher – Voluntary & Community Sector Representative, Malcolm Woodward – Fire Service Representative, Oliver Sheratt – DCC Head of Service, Inspector Sarah Honeyman – Police Representative, Brian Riley – GAMP Coordinator, Victoria Grieves – GAMP Community Development Project Officer, Scott McInally – DCC Welfare Rights, Donna Whitfield – DCC Humanitarian Support, Joanne Thorns – Humanitarian Support

#### **APOLOGIES:**

Cllr Tony Stubbs, Jeff Watson, Sue Cooke, Natalie Whitworth, Cllr David Sutton-Lloyd, Paula Stockport

#### **OBSERVERS:**

Mr B Adamson

### **Standard Board Meeting**

#### **1. Introductions & Apologies**

CH opened the meeting, reminding Board members of the standard Declaration of Interest item on the agenda. CH informed observers they would be welcome to comment under Items 3 and 4 on the agenda.

CH confirmed that it was Malcolm Woodward's (Fire Rep) last Board meeting and thanked Malcom for his time on the GAMP Board and wished him well for his retirement.

Apologies for absence were noted, as above.

#### **2. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 23.7.24 – Matters Arising**

BR confirmed that the draft minutes from the Board meeting held on 23 July 2024 had been circulated in advance with the meeting papers.

BR confirmed that he had requested an update from DCC Highways in relation to the Central Avenue road closures; there has been no response to date but an Officer from DCC is looking into it.

There were no matters arising, and the minutes of the last meeting were **AGREED** by the Board as a true and accurate record.

### **3. Countywide Partner Issues**

#### **3.1 DCC Advice Services Consultation (Scott McNally)**

Board members received a presentation in relation to Durham County Council's Welfare Advice Service consultation. SM broadly outlined the current service provision and support, and advised that the aim of the consultation is to identify 'the gaps' and not a savings exercise. SM advised that budgets across the service are remaining the same. The aim is to benefit residents with increased support, and to make local residents aware of what financial support may be available to them.

SM noted that the consultation is keen to gather as much feedback as possible from local community members in relation to where support and advice is needed, and the issues that currently prevent people from getting this.

The following discussion points were noted:

- Cllr JA commented as to whether there any plans for the elderly in relation to supporting them making future financial personal arrangements, and was there advice available in this area? SM responded that there is currently no support in this area however DCC work closely with Age UK who have experience in this area, but it may be considered by DCC if the need is prevalent.
- Cllr EA asked what type of questions were being asked as part of the consultation. SM provided Cllr EA with a hard copy of the consultation.
- Cllr EA commented on the likelihood of DCC responding to the outcomes of the consultation. SM commented that all feedback would be considered.
- OS asked if DCC have any data in relation to the underclaiming of residents, and is there support for these residents to access, how do they access? OS also asked how DCC notify residents or identify those entitled to financial support. SM responded that there have been media campaigns and publications notifying the public in relation to welfare benefits and DCC can now access DWP databases to target specific residents.
- Cllr MS asked what the uptake on the consultation has been like. SM responded to date not too good, he believes only those currently receiving benefits will have any interest in the consultation, and those who don't will likely not know about it.
- LF asked about plans to ensure DCC engage with the public. SM commented that the consultation has been publicised on partner websites, with events running in conjunction with Age UK and Durham Carers to encourage responses. LF invited SM to speak with some users from the Pioneering Care Centre; SM advised he would arrange dates around availability.
- GS commented that she works/volunteers with Household Crisis Fund and with small local charities and organisations, she commented this information is not being fed down to these smaller groups, she wasn't aware of any of the information or consultation SM spoke about. SM responded he would contact GS separately and speak about support to smaller organisations.

All Board members were encouraged to read further detail and take part in the consultation via the website.

The closing date for consultation responses is 5.00pm on Friday 20 September 2024.

*[SM left the meeting & SHo joined the meeting]*

BR will circulate a copy of the presentation slides with the minutes (**Action 1: BR**).

### 3.2 DCC Humanitarian Support Update (Donna Whitfield/Joanne Thorns)

Board members received a presentation in relation to DCC's Humanitarian Support service.

DW broadly outlined the current services, support and processes. DW spoke about Resettlement scheme and asylum accommodation. DW explained the Partnership model with stakeholders (MEARS) and the community support for groups out there supporting the most vulnerable.

The following discussion points were noted:

- Cllr MS asked if there is anywhere in Newton Aycliffe that the public can pass on concerns around refugees and asylum seekers. JT responded that the immediate contact should be with the DCC service who would then pass on to the community officer (this is JT for the Aycliffe area).
- GS asked who supports organisations when they are approached to support these vulnerable residents. JT responded that GS could contact herself, and would leave contact details via BR (**Action 2: BR**).
- There was a 30-minute open discussion around the subject.

BR will circulate a copy of the presentation slides with the minutes (**Action 3: BR**).

BR confirmed, for the minutes, all information circulated by email from the GAMP team since the last meeting:

- Council Plan Consultation Information (29.7.24);
- DCC Monthly Consultations Update (7.8.24);
- GAMP ebulletin (2.9.24).

BR reminded partners to get in touch if they need space on a future meeting agenda.

## 4. **Local Neighbourhood Issues**

### 4.1 Neighbourhood Policing Update

Inspector SH gave an update, outlining upcoming PACT meeting dates, PACT priorities, as well as current and emerging issues.

Cllr TT commented on the great work provided by the PCSOs on a recent incident in Middridge Village and asked Insp SH to pass on this thanks to those involved. PS requested an update on where we are with the Speedwatch Van. Insp SH confirmed that the van should be available for use in Newton Aycliffe in a couple of weeks' time.

## **5. GAMP Coordinator's Update**

### **5.1 2024-25 Area Budget (AB) Update**

BR updated Board members in relation to this year's Area Budget (AB) process. All projects bar one have now been circulated to the Board for approval and ratification, and are now with our Funding Team for technical appraisal.

BR anticipates these projects should hopefully be ready to start in November after full appraisal. BR thanked PSt and VG for their work on this year's process.

### **5.2 Community Engagement Review**

BR updated Board members. The Local Network Boundaries consultation is still open for comments (closing on 20 September). The responses will then be reviewed and Cabinet will make a final decision on the Local Network Boundaries in October or in advance of the LN launch in April.

Work is ongoing via the various workstreams, and AAP Coordinators have taken part in a number of development days to look at the future workings of the Local Networks in more detail; these are scheduled to take place every two weeks. Issues being covered are:

- 4 Year Plans
- Process for Declarations of Interest
- Town & Parish representative selection process
- Chair & Vice Chair rotation on Local Network Panel
- Terms of Reference for Local Networks

BR will keep Board members updated on progress.

## **6. Date/Time of Next Meeting:**

**Tuesday 26 November 2024, 6:00pm, Microsoft Teams**

CH thanked all attendees, and NAYCC for hosting the meeting, and the meeting was closed.