

Chester-le-Street & District Area Action Partnership (AAP) Board Meeting Minutes of Meeting held Monday 7th March 2022 via Microsoft Teams.

Present:

Councillors: Councillor Beaty Bainbridge (standing in for Councillor Craig Martin), Councillor Alison Batey, Councillor Alan Bell, Councillor Bill Moist, Councillor Emma Waldock, Councillor Tracie Smith, Elsie Forrester (Parish Council Representative)

Partner Organisations: Graeme Carr (Durham & Darlington Fire and Rescue Service), Suzanne Jobson – (Karbon Homes), Vicky Murray (Durham County Council) Joanne Malki (Business Association Representative) and Ian Heaviside (Community & Voluntary Sector).

Public Representatives: Derek Briggs, Clare Todd, Howell Davies, Jake Rollings (Chair) Khaled Malki and Janice Rokni.

Officer Attendance: Michael Wilkes (AAP Principal AAP Co-ordinator), Fiona Kelly, (Principal Community Development Project Officer, Allyson Rose (Community Development Project Officer), Laura Sloan (Community Development Project Officer), Bill Lightburn (Towns & Villages, Project Officer), and Lesley Lines (AAP Support Officer).

Presenters: Belinda Snow (DCC) Deborah Hatfield (DCC) Nicola Gill (DCC) Vicky Murray (DCC) Sarah Glynn (DCC)

Apologies: Joanne Pugh (Public Representative), Lee Morris (Durham Constabulary), Jon Quine (North Durham Clinical Commissioning Group), and Councillor Craig Martin.

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

[Introductions, Apologies and Virtual Housekeeping Code of Conduct/Protocols](#)

Cllr Beaty Bainbridge noted that she was standing in for Cllr Craig Martin. Apologies are noted above.

[Agreement of minutes from the previous meeting held on 24th January 2022 & Matters Arising](#)

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

[Matters Arising & Neighbourhood Issues](#)

Neighbourhood Issues - Michael advised, due to the many issues discussed in relation to drug issues, he had confirmed with Jane Sunter (DCC's Commissioner for the Drug and Alcohol Service), that she would attend the May meeting to provide further information on services available within the Chester-le-Street & District AAP area. Further to this, a meeting would be set up to meet with

Elected Councillors.

Consett – Regarding the enquiry raised by Cllr Bell regarding the allocation of £1million for Consett Front Street. Fiona noted she would contact Cllr Bell after the meeting to update.

Litter - Fiona advised she had spoken to Jodie Graham, Park View School, regarding the litter complaint. Fiona was advised that the school followed a strict litter policy. However, they were happy to work with the DCC Civic Pride Team and for them to attend school assemblies/organise litter picks.

North East Ambulance Service – Michael advised that Kevin Lough, Occupational Health & Safety Manager, DCC, is working to identify and map all defibrillators within the area. Michael advised that Kevin would be invited to a meeting when appropriate to do so.

Town & Villages - Bill Lightburn advised a meeting had taken place with DCC Regeneration regarding the Fleece Public House site, Pelton and a potential project.

Bill further advised he had now met with all DCC Councillors across all the divisions regarding the development of potential projects. Ongoing communications were taking place with all Elected Members.

Fun & Food Programme – Michael highlighted that Lindsay Davison would be invited to a future meeting to explain changes to the new funding. **Action: Michael**

Open Water Safety – Dates are now in diaries with regards to school assemblies. The group would meet this week. A full update will be brought to the next meeting. **Action: Michael**

Presentations

DCC Libraries Consultation – Sarah Glynn, DCC gave an overarching presentation regarding the libraries consultation which is currently taking place. Consultation closes on Friday 1st April. Residents can get involved in the consultation by following the link [Get Involved](#)

- Howell Davies asked if refugees and others have access to the survey and if the survey is provided in other languages etc? It was confirmed that the survey is available in different formats upon request
- Cllr Smith noted that older people go to charity shops for their books, therefore was there an increase in people using digital and click and collect services during lock down? It was stated yes and that there was a question based on this in the survey asking about the availability of these services moving forward.
- Cllr Smith asked if they go into schools to encourage children to use the service? It was noted that yes this is the case but that it is carried out by Children's Services.
- Cllr Bell asked how did people's behaviour change during lockdown in relation to digital? Have they gone back to hard copies? It was noted that the service had to be transformed very quickly. Hopefully the survey will tell us what people what moving forward.
- Cllr Bell asked for more detail on the funding received from Central Government. It was noted that it allowed the service to carry a large range of digital stock and remove fines for late

returns. It was clarified that budgets needed to be a big consideration and that the survey results will be key.

- Cllr Bell asked if the survey is designed to reduce services and close buildings? It was stated it is not about closing buildings but about putting efforts into services that people want.
- Cllr Moist states that the town centre needed a library service. It was noted that, from the end of March, staff that have been redeployed will be back and the library will be open once again to pre-covid hours.
- Cllr Batey asked if there were figures in relation to the correlation between deprivation and library use. It was noted that this was not at hands but that this information could be provided in due course.

Action: Sarah Glynn

Community Safety, ASB and Neighbourhood Wardens – A presentation highlighting the work of the teams and how to report incidents was provided to Board Members.

- Cllr Moist highlighted that reporting problems digitally did not give any feedback to the customer. It was noted that sometimes there are three teams dealing with issues raised however it was agreed that if feedback is not given then this needed to be addressed.
- Cllr Moist suggested the three teams needed to be better integrated and asked for one point of contact. It was recommended that if there is an issue that needs raising then and people are unsure who to send it to then by all means copy in all three main contacts and they will ensure the correct person/service picks it up.
- Cllr Moist asked why can't Councillors, who are at the forefront of complaints, not be part of the MAPS meetings. It was noted that this had been investigated previously and that, because of the confidential nature of the meetings, this would not be appropriate.

It was noted that Gary Jackson was the Chair of the northern MAPS meeting. It was also noted that the names of the Service Leads for each area of work and responsibility would be forwarded to Board Members straight after the meeting.

Action: Nicola Gill

- Derek Briggs also noted that the online system was problematic and that he had experienced problems.
- Cllr Batey highlighted the ASB remit is wide but PACT meetings were useful for communities and Cllrs.

DCC Economic Strategy – Vicky Murray, DCC gave a presentation. To view the presentation, follow the link [Get Involved](#) phase one of consultation closes on 22nd April.

- Cllr Batey asked if consultations could be forwarded to Councillors in advance and not brought to meetings without prior notice.

The Chair thanked everyone for their informative presentations.

Older Persons Social Isolation Report

Fiona presented the report and gave an update summarising five projects recommended to receive funding by The Community Recovery Task Group.

Ian Heaviside registered an interest in item 3

- Aspire – Fifty & Beyond £6,000
- Bullion Community Resource Centre £9,950
- Pensioners Against Loneliness £8,320
- Nettlesworth Community Café £5,100

Fiona highlighted that, in order to fund all the above, the Board would need to agree an allocation of £4,370 from this year's Area Budget in addition to the £25,000 OPSIF.

Jake advised that the OPSIF funding needed to be approved by the end of the financial year. Jake asked the Board for a decision.

Cllr Smith asked for clarity of the rules around conflict of interest in approving OPSIF grants. Cllr Smith asked what safeguarding elements were in place regarding the avoidance of conflict of interest in relation to Board Members and their relationships with bodies/applicants applying for grants. Cllr Smith asked if there was anywhere on the OPSIF form that asked for disclosure requirements i.e. are you a family member or a member of the same group.

Cllr Batey highlighted she thought a declaration should be made on a members application form if a member of the family would benefit.

Ian Heaviside advised he had declared an interest because he was a director of one of the recipients of the OPSIF grant, nothing relating to DCC.

Jake asked if the Board was happy to approve. The projects were then agreed.

Cllr Smith asked Michael for the OPSIF application form to be forwarded to her.

Action Michael

Michael highlighted that there would be forthcoming changes incorporated to the new AAP application form/s with regards conflict of interest in the new financial year.

It was noted that Ian Heaviside was not a Board Member when the OPSIF applications were reviewed by the panel.

The Board Agreed to an allocation of £4,370 from this year's Area Budget

AAP Monitoring Report

Fiona advised that the report was for Board information

Neighbourhood Budget

No report this month.



Better for everyone

Pre-Notified Partner Updates – Key issues that need to be communicated at the meeting on any initiatives relevant to the area:

Police – No Update

Clinical Commissioning Group – No Update

Fire & Rescue Service – It was noted that the Fire Service were starting an Easter Campaign visiting schools to educate on the dangers of secondary fires.

Karbon Homes – It was noted that ‘Money Works Budgeting’ courses were being delivered at Bullion Hall. Also, a 3-day workshop open to everyone on ‘Digital Skills’

Business Sector – Joanne advised that an Easter Egg Hunt would be taking place on Good Friday, 15th April. Joanne also highlighted ‘Recyke y’ Bike’ had secured premises within Chester-le-Street and would be relocating from Durham to Ropery Lane.

Voluntary Sector – Ian highlighted that he was building up a network of contacts and encouraged groups to get in touch with him

Durham County Council - No Update

[AAP Co-ordinators Update](#)

Future Board Dates – Michael advised they would be discussed at the forthcoming AGM.

Public Representatives – Michael advised that seven applications for the six vacancies had been received. Michael noted that the interview panel would consist of the Chair, Vice Chair’s and himself.

AAP Priorities – It was noted that the priority survey was still online. Michael encouraged Board Members and the wider community to complete the survey. It was noted the closing date for the survey was Friday 11th March. Information collated would be forwarded to the Board and Forum in due course.

Date and Time of the next meeting 9th May 2022.