

DERWENT VALLEY PARTNERSHIP (DVP) BOARD MEETING AGM

25 May 2022, Salvation Army Hall, Consett at 6pm



PRESENT:

Elected Representatives

Cllrs Kevin Earley, Stephen Robinson (newly elected Vice Chair), Alan Shield, Michelle Walton and Alex Watson (outgoing Chair)

Partner Organisations

Mark Clelland (newly elected Chair) (Derwentside Trust), Craig Farrage (outgoing Vice Chair) (Co Durham & Darlington Fire & Rescue Service), Joanne Waller (Durham County Council (DCC)) and Sgt Ian Raine (stand in for Insp Dave Stewart)

Public Representatives

Linda Acres, Marlene Boyles, Lea McConnell, Susan Mellor (newly elected Vice Chair) and Fraser Neill

DVP:

Fiona Kelly (AAP Co-ordinator), Kath Clements and Laura Sloan (Community Development Project Officers) and Lynn Dougal (Support Officer)

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 22

PRESENTERS: Rosemary Morris, Vice Chair of Environment Task Group

APOLOGIES:

Elected Rep: Cllr Kathryn Rooney. Partner Reps: Paul Moralee (Karbon Homes) and Rachel Rooney (Co Durham Clinical Commissioning Group). Public Reps: Jeanette Harold (outgoing Vice Chair), Claire Holt, Helen Marley and Shelley O'Brien. Joanne Ashworth (AAP Towns and Villages Officer)

1. Meeting opened by the Coordinator

Fiona Kelly welcomed everyone to the meeting and went through housekeeping.

Board members introduced themselves and apologies were noted as above. There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes of Previous Board Meetings

23 June 2021 (AGM)

No comments/matters arising and the minutes were agreed.

30 March 2022

Matters arising

Page 2, regarding the public rep recruitment, Fiona advised that we have not yet contacted those who expressed an interest in applying and did not return an application form. This will be followed up in due course.

There were no further comments/matters arising and the minutes were AGREED.

3. Public Representative welcome and AGM

Public Rep update

The DVP recently undertook a public rep recruitment to fill five of the seven positions on the DVP Board (two of the public reps - Mike Clark and Susan Mellor - remain on the Board until May 2023). A warm welcome was extended to our newly appointed public reps who are Linda Acres, Claire Holt, Lea McConnell and Fraser Neill and to Helen Marley who is a returning public rep.

Fiona thanked the outgoing public reps – Marlene Boyles, Jeanette Harold and Shelly O’Brien for their time and contribution to the work of the Partnership.

Announcement of DVP Board Vice Chairs and rotation of the Chair for 2022/23

Each year at the AGM, as per the Terms of Reference, the Board elect a new Chair and Vice Chairs for the forthcoming financial year. Fiona thanked the outgoing Chair, Cllr Alex Watson and outgoing Vice Chairs, Craig Farrage and Jeanette Harold, for their support and commitment over the past year.

Nominations for Vice Chairs were received and AGREED as follows:

Public Representative – Susan Mellor
Partner Representative – Mark Clelland
Elected Representative – Cllr Stephen Robinson

Each year the Chair of the Board rotates to the next category, which is a Partner Rep for this financial year, and Mark Clelland was nominated and AGREED as the new Chair.

DVP Annual Report 2021/22

Unfortunately the Annual Report for 2021/22 is not available as yet and will be circulated to Board members once it is completed.

4. Task Group Updates

Towns and Villages Task Group Update

Fiona gave an update, in Joanne’s absence, on the task group.

Each AAP has been allocated a Towns and Villages (T&V) Improvement Fund of £210k which is to be awarded to organisations to help deliver local projects to revitalise and enhance towns and villages.

The T&V Task Group was set up to look at how best to allocate this fund in the Derwent Valley area. Following the findings of the AAP Priority Survey, which included a question around the T&V, and the consultation with local community groups, two meetings outside of the task group have taken place with partner organisations and representatives from the community to look at the main issues and how best to address them.

The task group agreed to an open call out for projects and this was issued on 29 April, with expressions of interest to the DVP Team by 6 June 2022. The task group will review the project proposals and eligible projects will be recommended to the DVP Board at the July Board meeting to consider funding.

Employment, Enterprise and Training (EET) Task Group Update

Laura Sloan gave an update on the underspend from the EET Task Group project call out 2021/22.

Following the withdrawal of the Delta North project proposal in March 2022, an underspend of £44,574 remained to be allocated by the EET Task Group. It was agreed that an EET Subgroup would meet to discuss options to utilise the underspend.

The subgroup received and reviewed 4 project proposals (that were also sent to the wider task group for comments) and would like to recommend the following to the DVP Board:

To fund the following two project:

Derwentside College - Progression and Transition Readiness for Young People Finishing Compulsory Education project. Funding request £37,165.29.

This project will focus on young people, initially in Year 11 and then Years 10 and 9, who may be identified as becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET).

STEAM Ahead – Improving Social, Emotional and Mental Health through engaging Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) activities. Part fund of £7,408 (full request £7,500).

This project will work with young people to encourage them to consider a career in STEM related industries through a range of STEM activities.

Points to note: The subgroup agreed to recommend Derwentside College's project for funding on the basis that the college and STEAM Ahead work in partnership given the common themes running through their respective projects. Laura advised that Derwentside College and STEAM Ahead have now met, and both agreed that they will investigate opportunities for collaboration.

The subgroup chose not to recommend the following two projects:

Consett Air Cadets - STEM project. Funding request of £18,251 which would be split across the DVP and Stanley AAP. Although the EET Subgroup were positive about this approach they felt the two project proposals above for recommendation were more aligned to the delivery plan

themes. However they were encouraged to re-apply should the DVP have EET as a priority in the new financial year.

Groundwork - Derwentside Building Better Prospects project. Funding request of £2,412.50. The EET Subgroup chose not to support this project as they felt the two project proposals above for recommendation were more aligned to the EET delivery plan themes.

Cllr Shields asked how the outcomes will be measured. Fiona advised that should the proposals be supported by the Board; the applicants will be asked to complete a full funding application which will include outlining what their targets will be in relation to the performance indicators. The project will also be subjected to quarterly monitoring to ensure they are making progress as they indicated in their application.

The Board supported the EET subgroup's recommendations and APPROVED to fund the Derwentside College project proposal for £37,165.29 and STEAM Ahead's project proposal for £7,408.

Environment Task Group

Rosemary Morris (Vice Chair of Environment Task Group) gave a presentation on the Footprint Conference 2022, which has received funding from the DVP.

Three years ago Durham University and Durham County Council sponsored the first Carbon Footprint Conference which was to show the impact of climate change on our lives. It was a great success and another conference was planned in 2020. Due to lockdown in 2020, the conference was cancelled but it was held online in 2021 with over 200 joining online.

This year's conference will be held in Durham Town Hall on 16, 17 and 18 June 2022. It is free to attend and everyone is welcome. More information about the conference can be found at <https://www.footprintconference.co.uk/>.

Rosemary gave a presentation on the organisations and speakers that will be involved in the Footprint Conference over the 3 days.

A free bus will be provided from Consett to Durham and back again over the 3 days the conference is on. The DVP Board has priority seating on the bus and more information about the conference and how to book the bus will be circulated to Board members.

Mark thanked Rosemary for her presentation.

5. AAP Funding 2022/23

Fiona gave an update on the funding available to the DVP in 2022/23 of which Board members received a copy of prior to the meeting.

All AAPs receive an annual budget which they administer in their respective AAP area. In 2022/23 the DVP will have the following budgets:

- £210,000 Town and Villages Funding (TVF). A TVF Task Group is already set up and a call out for projects is currently underway (this funding has to be fully allocated by March 2024)
- £100,000 Area Budget Funding
- £51,651 Fun and Food to cover Easter, Summer and Christmas 2022 school holiday periods (additional resources for half-term holidays are yet to be confirmed)
- £25,000 Older Peoples Social Isolation Funding (for projects linked to tackling social isolation in the over 50s)
- £9,902 Youth Funding
- £10,000 Welfare Reform Funding
- £10,000 Young Peoples Healthy Relationships Funding. This is a new budget issued to all AAPs on behalf of Public Health that addresses projects that promote healthy relationships targeting 11–18-year-olds (up to 25 years old if participants are care leavers or have special educational needs or disability). More information around eligibility and decision-making support will be brought to the Board for consideration in due course.

The Board were asked to note the report and were advised that further information will be made available at the July Board meeting on the options linked to allocating the budget.

6. DVP Priorities 2022/24

Fiona went through the DVP Priorities report that Board members had received prior to the meeting.

Earlier this year, all AAPs consulted with local residents, partners and voluntary and community organisations on which priorities their AAP should focus on in 2022/23 (and would also continue focusing on in 2023/24). The AAP Priority Survey closed on 11 March and the DVP received 128 responses from across the DVP area.

The following outlines the key findings from the responses received in the DVP area:

- 82% agreed that the DVP should retain a single priority of community recovery.
- Within the community recovery priority, additional comments were made to address issues that included enhancing the local environment, tackling climate change, providing more activities for young people and transport, traffic and road safety.
- Those that disagreed with keeping a single priority, suggested that the DVP should address issues linked to improving the local environment, improving community safety and improving town and village centres.
- The comments received in relation to improving towns and villages within the survey is being considered by the Towns and Villages Task Group who will use this information to inform their work.

It was noted that the results of the priority survey represent the views of a small number of residents. Based on some of the issues raised at DVP Board meetings and in existing priority task groups, Board members may wish to take a view as to whether these concerns should have some weighting when discussing priorities for the coming financial year.

In 2021/22 the Board agreed to reconvene the 3 task groups and the budget was split equally via a call out for community recovery projects aligned to the 3 priorities of Health and Wellbeing (HWB), Employment, Enterprise and Training (EET) and Environment (Enviro).

Before the Board discussed whether to set up a single priority of community recovery or to retain separate priority task groups, Fiona advised that from the recent call out for projects, the HWB and Enviro Task Groups were oversubscribed with project proposals whereas the EET Task Group received very few reflecting the substantial amount of provision already in existence in the area.

A Forum member asked how the priority survey was advertised. Fiona advised that it was an online survey that was advertised through our networks, social media and a press release in local newspapers. Hard copies were available in the library and some community venues, however as Covid brought about many changes we have not been able to engage with the community as we would have done in the past to get the survey out there.

Vera Parnaby (Forum) asked if Ukrainian refugees will receive support locally. Cllr Watson said there is support countywide via DCC to address any issues.

John O'Connor (Chair of HWB Task Group/Forum) said that as we are still recovering from the impacts of Covid, he would like to see health and wellbeing kept as a priority. He feels that we are trying to get short term solutions to long term problems and does not think it wise to change priorities every year.

Cllr Shield said that the current economic situation, eg cost of living crisis, is having and will continue to have a huge impact on people in different ways. He recommended that the DVP keep the existing 3 task groups: HWB - as support around health and wellbeing issues, ie social isolation, mental health, is paramount and is cross cutting in all ages, EET – providing better and well-paid jobs can help people get out of poverty and Enviro – we need to understand the impact our carbon footprint is having on the environment and on future generations.

Cllr Earley concurs with Cllr Shield as these issues are not going away and Susan Mellor proposed that we accept the 4 priorities.

The Board AGREED to retain the existing priorities of HWB, EET and Enviro. The TVF Task Group is already in existence and will continue with its work.

Fiona said if anyone is interested in joining one or more of the task groups, please get in touch with the DVP Team.

7. Brass and Christmas 2022

Brass

All AAPs have been asked if they would like to support Brass this year. Should the DVP Board wish to support Brass in the Derwent Valley area, Fiona advised that a contribution of either £6k for a Big Brass Bash or £2,250 for a Little Brass Bash would be required from this year's Area Budget.

A discussion took place and the following comments were noted:

- due to lack of publicity in the area, some people were not aware of Brass taking place
- to consider using the large billboards in Consett for promoting events, eg Brass
- whilst there was support for Brass in general, it was felt that local brass bands should be included
- having local involvement could instil a sense of pride and help bring the community together
- Hexham Jazz Festival started off small (held on the bandstand in Hexham Park) and is now a successful annual event. It was suggested that something similar could be held in Blackhill and Consett Park, albeit on a smaller scale, that could include local brass bands and contemporary brass style bands.

Whilst the Board and Forum members thought that having some kind of brass festival was a good idea, the consensus from the Board was that they would not be involved this year but would be interested in Brass next year on the proviso that local bands were asked to be involved. Fiona said she would go back to DCC's Events Team with the Board's comments about involving local bands and that the publicity is well advertised in advance of Brass, both online and in other formats.

Christmas Event 2022

Fiona asked the Board if they wished to hold a Christmas event this year in Consett Town Centre. Should the Board agree to host an event, funds would need to be allocated from the 2022/23 Area Budget.

The event will be organised via an events management company who can put together a programme of events that could include a local brass band.

Cllr Walton referred to the issues around communication and people not hearing about things going on in the area. She suggested that we have a budget so we can develop a Consett website so that local community held events/news can be publicised. She also suggested having a publicity budget so information can be disseminated to those people who do not have or use the internet.

Fiona said that the DVP has a community website – Derwent Valley Life which is used to promote local events/news stories, etc and we also have our Derwent Valley NEWS which is distributed once/twice a year to households in the area.

A Forum member asked if we have engaged with Consett Magazine. Lynn Dougal advised that we have been in contact with them and that they have publicised information for the DVP.

Fraser Neill suggested setting up a database of different organisations who could be sent information and for them to circulate via their networks/print out and place on their notice board. Kath Clements said the DVP has a forum list that includes Community groups/organisations that we send information to and wherever possible we would promote information received from the local community.

Fiona said that the AAPs acknowledge that it is difficult to reach everyone and they try a variety of ways to communicate with the community. We also rely on our Board and Forum members to get the messages out as far as they can.

Cllr Watson and Cllr Earley both discussed the installation of electronic notice boards, but it was noted that these could prove to be very expensive.

Ivan Jewell (Forum) said that although Consett is a major town in the area, he reminded everyone that the DVP includes the outlying villages.

Craig Farrage wondered if it was possible to set up communication champions who would be responsible for certain geographical areas.

Fiona said if anyone is interested in becoming a champion for a specific area and helping get information out there, please get in touch with the DVP Team.

There were no further comments and the Board agreed to hold a Christmas event in Consett. Fiona advised that more details around the content and costs will be available in due course.

8. Meeting Close and Date of Next Meeting

Mark thanked everyone for their attendance. The next Board meeting will be on Wednesday 20 July 2022 at 6pm at The Salvation Army Hall, Consett.