

Durham Area Action Partnership Minutes of the Board Meeting
Wednesday 24 August 2022
Sherburn Hill Community Hub, Front Street, Sherburn Hill, DH6 1PA

Board Members

Attendance: Ian Moore, Chris Tindale, Gary Tidbury, Cllr Bill Kellett, Parish Cllr Maureen Boettcher, Jen Straughan-Hawley, Paul Howard, Neighbourhood Sgt Kevin Hall (for Dave Clarke), Victoria Ashfield, Cllr Richard Ormerod, Rev Joanne Thorns, Joe McGarry (co-optee)

AAP Officer

Attendance: Craig Morgan – AAP Co-ordinator
Wendy Lavelle – Community Development Project Officer
Lyndsey Hunter – Community Development Project Officer
PJ Harding – Community Development Project Officer (Towns and Villages Team)
Marie Ainscough – AAP Support Officer

Presenter: Jenny Wood, Principal Consultant, ERS

Apologies Board: Sam Humble, Lee Alexander, Cllr Liz Brown, Sarah Burns, Hannah Shepherd, Cllr Eric Mavin, Cllr Lesley Mavin, Alice Wilkes, Cllr Lucy Hovvels

Forum Members: 7 forum members attended the meeting

1 [Welcome, Introductions and Apologies](#)

In the absence of Cllr Liz Brown, Ian Moore chaired the meeting. Everyone was welcomed to the Durham AAP Board Meeting and a round of introductions followed.

Apologies for absence, [as above].

A warm welcome was offered to Joe McGarry who was the new Durham University Student Union co-optee on the board.

A special welcome was offered to Jenny Wood, the Principal Consultant from ERS, the organisation who are leading on the Community Engagement Review.

2 [Presentation: Review of Durham County Council Community Engagement](#)

Jenny Wood, Principal Consultant, ERS delivered a presentation on the Community Engagement Review: ERS Research and Consultancy Approach.

The consultants are planning to take an inclusive and informed approach to consultation, to inform possible options by looking at 3 elements – Needs and Opportunities: AAP Evaluation and Innovation and Best Practice.

Once the review is complete, the recommendations and options will be consulted on, and the final report and implementation plan will go to DCC Cabinet in December 2022.

The Chair thanked Jenny for her presentation and the meeting was opened for discussion –

- We need to make people aware of the consultation timetable and ensure they are prepared. There are a lot of groups/organisations which the AAPs had funded over the last 12 years who would feel ‘short changed’ if they were unable to participate in the consultation. Jenny agreed and thought this was important feedback and would look to take this on board. She highlighted that there was going to be a survey as well as workshop-based consultations and task group consultations.
- This is an opportunity for change, and we need to get the right people around the table.
- You mentioned ‘left behind neighbourhoods’, do you envisage trying to identify those parts of the county which qualify as ‘left behind?’ The information behind ‘left behind’ are like some of the levelling up ideas. They had been working with local trusts who try to identify places where there is less community infrastructure of activity for example.
- I wonder if this review might give some feedback about what AAPs say is right for their locality and what the county council’s overall strategic policies are.
- Are you aware of the changes being made to the electoral ward boundaries? We are going to build something in that is going to work in a resilient way.

The Chair thanked Jenny for her presentation.

A copy of the presentation will be circulated to those forum members present at the meeting.

3 [Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 12th July 2022. Agreement and Matters Arising](#)

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

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2022 were agreed as a true and accurate record subject to the following amendments -

Rev Joanne Thorns and Victoria Ashfield said they had submitted their apologies, and these had been omitted from the minutes. The minutes will be amended to note their apologies.

4 Task and Finish Group Feedback and Project Approvals

Covid Recovery

At the Covid Recovery Task Group meeting held on 9 August 2022, it was recommended that the following applications be brought to the Board for wider consideration.

❖ **St Aidan's Church Hall Improvements**

Amount of funding applied for: £5,000.00

Total project cost: £14,140.00

Durham AAP approved a project a few years ago to refurbish the scouts building at Framwellgate Moor however, the project never actually happened so the funding was returned. In theory the funding should have been lost but permission had been granted to use it for a similar project in a similar location. It had been agreed that this application could be considered alongside the returned funding.

The project will involve efforts to reduce the church hall's carbon footprint and increase the energy efficiency. There are three strands to the work:

1. Replace the current windows (18) and two doors – one with a push bar
2. Replace the current lighting with LED lights
3. Insulate the roof / loft space (400mm thickness)

The Board approved the project.

❖ **Heritage Walks**

Amount of funding applied for: £12,400.00

Total project cost: £25,150.00

The project builds on the momentum created by the Big Smile and Home Walk projects and will work with local communities to create and develop five fully signposted circular walking routes at: Brasside and Newton Hall; Witton Gilbert; Bearpark; Sherburn Hill & Sherburn Village; Shadforth.

The circular walks will utilise public rights of way, will be 5 to 6 miles in length and will take around 2 or 3 hours to complete. Once complete each walk will have a community launch led by a team of local volunteers assisted by staff. The community volunteers will adopt the route and will continue to organise regular walks along the route after this project is complete.

The applicant will work with local schools and communities to organise, publicise, and deliver community launches for each of the walks which will include a school walk and a community walk in each area (10 walks in total). These walks will be led by experienced walk leaders and will include members of the local community and local schools. They expect

around 30 people to attend each launch walk.

They will capture and monitor take up and participation in the walks through simple questionnaires that measure engagement with the project, benchmark participants, and records outcomes of before and after. This will give them a body of robust evidence that will help to inform the project's impact.

They plan to develop 100 heritage walks throughout County Durham (5 walks already created). Each of these walks will be collectable and they hope will attract visitors from County Durham and further afield helping to generate spend in local community facilities.

The Board approved the project.

❖ **Framwellgate Moor Wellbeing Project**

Amount of funding applied for: £5,500.00

Total project cost: £9,474.00

The funding would see the successful Community Wellbeing Recovery Programme project (approved last year) being extended for another 6 months, with less funding requested this time.

Its purpose is to welcome people who had experienced loneliness, mental health issues and social isolation during Covid-19 to attend the community centre for companionship, a chat, to take part in an activity and to have refreshments.

The Board approved the project.

Improving Our Villages and City

At the Improving our Villages and City Task Group meeting held on 11 August 2022, it was recommended that the following applications be brought to the Board for wider consideration.

❖ **Pity Me Play Area**

Amount Requested - £10,000.00

Total Project Cost - £30,073.87

Durham County Council (DCC) Outdoor Facilities working in partnership with local councillors is looking to fund improvements to the access and safety surfacing of the play area located at Hudspeth Crescent play area in Pity Me.

Feedback to local Councillors and complaints from members of the public had highlighted the need for the improvements as the current safety

surfacing is deteriorating due to age and there is no current link path to equipment from the site entrance.

In poorer weather the site becomes waterlogged and difficult to access and improvements means that access to the park could become all-year access and provide an opportunity to improve disability access to the site.

The new surfacing would have educational elements built in such as different shapes and colours making the area more attractive to the site.

The project will be led and managed by DCC's Outdoor Facilities Coordinator and procurement will be carried out through DCC's existing Fixed Play Space Refurbishment framework.

Once the surfacing and access path are installed DCC Environmental Services will cover all ongoing inspection and maintenance costs required.

The Board approved the project.

❖ **Sherburn Hill Hub Car Park**

Amount Requested - £20,255.00

Total Project Cost - £35,255.00

After being open a year, it had become clear that the car park facilities on-site (and with little to no off-site parking availability as an alternative) has become a limiting factor.

The County Council's design team were asked to look at what can be done to expand the car park without removing valuable recreational space and make it easier and safer to use and transit. They have come up with an impressive expansion using limited space to create 15 new spaces, plus improve pedestrian accesses, ground markings to assist safe pedestrian transit of the car park, improved disabled parking facilities and access, and mini-bus area and turning-circle, so cars don't get stuck if the car park were to become full, or cars need to turn around.

This is vital for the future of the centre and what it can provide and will allow the charity to increase the services, activities, and intensity of use that the building is capable with the right car parking facilities.

To note: Cllr Bill Kellett asked if it was possible to see the accounts of Sherburn Hill Hub or recent figures before a decision was made. CM offered to enquire about this for Cllr Kellett but the consensus was that they had offered enough information and as the application was the County Council and not the Hub then it should be approved.

The Board approved the project.

5 Neighbourhood Questions

The following neighbourhood budget projects were shared with the Board -

Name of Scheme: Artstops Project
Councillor(s): A Hopgood / M Simmons / M Wilkes
Interest Declared: No
Amount: £2,000.00

Name of Scheme: Land Transfer Fees
Councillor(s): A Hopgood / M Simmons / M Wilkes
Interest Declared: Yes, all of the Councillors are also Parish Councillors
Amount: £1,735.00

Name of Scheme: Moorfield Dog Exercise Area
Councillor(s): E Mavin / L Mavin
Interest Declared: No
Amount: £8,513.00

Name of Scheme: Laurel Avenue Community Centre
Councillor(s): C Fletcher
Interest Declared: Yes, Cllr Fletcher is a member of Laurel Avenue Community Association Management Committee
Amount: £1,300.00

Name of Scheme: Belmont Recreation Ground
Councillor(s): E Mavin / L Mavin
Interest Declared: No
Amount: £5,669.00

Name of Scheme: Durham Alliance for Community Care – new IT equipment
Councillor(s): C Fletcher
Interest Declared: No
Amount: £1,985.00

The Board was happy to approve the projects and the interest as declared.

Fun and Food Funding Approvals (Autumn Half Term)

£4,501.00 had been made available for the Fun and Food Scheme for October Half Term 2022. The closing date for the submission of completed applications is 7 September. Three applications had been received and more are expected.

The Board was asked about the process for approving the applications received. They agreed that if the fund was oversubscribed then a panel would be arranged to go through the applications if not, then they would receive the applications electronically.

The Durham Area Youth Fun and Food scheme held over the summer holidays had been well attended. 50 young people and 10 young people with special educational needs played and had lunch together and took part in a wide range of activities. Craig and Wendy had arranged a monitoring visit on 23 August at Pittington.

6 AAP Funding Update

Towns and Villages Fund

- £210,000.00 to allocate
- Approved projects totalling £35,000 [plus £30,000 at this meeting]
- £144,000.00 is left to allocate
- There are also several pipeline projects

Area Budget

- £197,500 to spend before 31 March 2023 this includes money carried over
- £64,000 had been allocated

Discussion ensued around the Rothbury Road project. No consultation had taken place, the path was supposed to be tarmacked and what had been written in the application had clearly not been done.

It was agreed that the original application be referred to the Towns and Villages Task Group as the Board felt the AAP should be clawing back all of the money that had been allocated towards this project.

7 Chair and Coordinators Update

There was no update from the Chair.

Craig thanked the team for their work.

8 Partner Updates

Hannah Shepherd, Community Liaison Manager, Durham University

- Vacation period is in full swing, but the weeks fly by quickly. A few key dates for your diary are:
 - *Community Response Team operational* – Friday 23rd September to Sunday 11th December
 - *Induction Week* – Monday 26th September to Sunday 2nd October
 - *Matriculation* – Wednesday 28th and Thursday 29th September
 - *Michaelmas Term* – Monday 3rd October to Friday 9th December
- Freshers Fair will continue to be at Maiden Castle Sports & Wellbeing Park during Induction Week this year helping to ease footfall around Elvet Riverside.

- We will be operating a new ‘Community Surgery’ during term time on a Thursday afternoon with appointments available to book to help address community concerns. Contact us on our new email address community.liaison@durham.ac.uk to access this community liaison service.
- We will have not two, but four [Student Community Wardens](#) this year - please follow their work on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).
- Our latest updates on the [Estates Masterplan](#) include our purchase of Boldon House for our Professional Support Services teams, the approval in July 2022 by DCC for a change of use so The Sands can become a new home for Durham University Business School and all updates on our programme of staff/student decant and relocation and building / site refurbishment projects.
- It’s worth checking out our procedures for tackling [Anti-Social Noise](#) and our [Student Pledge](#) as a reminder of what you can expect from our student community and what to do if you experience anti-social noise from students in your local community.
- We have a new video developed with Campus Life and the support of Durham University Residents Forum members for our students living out in local communities this year. You can access this at our [You Tube](#) pages.
- Durham University Residents Forum’s annual welcome leaflets to students living out in the community is in production – watch out for copies landing in September!
- Last but not least, don’t forget to sign up to our [Community Newsletter](#) for invaluable information about our wider community engagement work and ways to get involved with the University.

Ian Moore – Fire Update

- The fire service had been very busy due to the lack of rain and hot weather.
- Primary fires figures are in line with what they would expect.
- Secondary fire figures are higher than what they would expect for this time of the year.
- Ian explained that they were working closely with the Police and the MAPS group trying to alleviate the issues around the mental health crisis.

Paul Howard – Durham BID

- Working on Christmas campaigns with partners across the city
- Milburngate development opening soon
- Book Festival taking place 24 and 25 August

- Mascot Day taking place this weekend

Rev Joanne Thorns – VCS Update

- Increase in the usage of the foodbanks, debt advice and support and they are expecting this to get worse in the Autumn.
- Work is being done in community buildings including churches to make them more sustainable. There is a need to create more hub spaces and conversation are taking place as they are under a lot of pressure due to the cost-of-living crisis.

Neighbourhood Sgt Kevin Hall – Police Update

- There had been positive feedback in relation to the Facebook weekly round-up and community events that are being promoted
- PC recruitment is open

Parish Councillor Maureen Boettcher – Smaller Councils

The Levelling Up White Paper is currently much under discussion. Specifically (a) enabling an easier formation of individual town and parish councils; (b) discussion of funding streams where there is no elected mayor and (c) devolution generally

Comparisons of greater and lesser degrees of proposed devolution in North-East.

9 [Any other Business](#)

None.

10 [Date and time of next meeting](#)

29th September, 2:00pm, Online

Subsequent Meetings

- 26th October, 6:00pm, Newton Hall Community Centre
- 24th November, 2:00pm, Online
- 13th December, 6:00pm, Durham Town Hall
- 26th January 2023, 2:00pm, Online
- 21st February 2023, 6:00pm, Durham Town Hall
- 29th March 2023, 2:00pm, Online

Everyone was thanked for their attendance and the meeting closed.