



Teesdale Area Action Partnership - Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting Held: 13 July 2022 (Mickleton Village Hall)

Elected Members:

Cllr George Richardson
Cllr Ted Henderson
Cllr Richard Bell
Cllr Wendy Greenfield (Town & Parish Council's Representative)

Public Representatives:

Elaine Laurie
Rachel Tweddle
Robin Brooks
Christine Watters
Roger Peat
Lynn Oxby

Partner Representatives:

Jeff Garfoot
Insp Ed Turner
Craig Jewkes

Co-opted

Bob Danby

Presenter

Debra Kitching (DK) – Strategy Team Leader – Durham County Council
Alli Walker (AWalker) – Digital Durham Manger - Durham County Council

Officer Attendance:

Adam White, TAP Coordinator
Annalisa Ward, TAP Community Development Project Officer
Emma Walton, TAP Support Officer

Observers: 5 x Forum Members

Apologies:

Cllr James Cosslett, Cllr James Rowlandson, Peter Locke, Linda Bird, Tracey Williams
Tim Viggars

Teesdale Action Partnership Board Meeting

1. Welcome from Chair, Introductions and Apologies

Insp ET welcomed everyone to the Board meeting of Teesdale Action Partnership (TAP).

Insp ET reminded meeting observers they would be welcome to comment under items 4,5,8 and 9 on the agenda.

EW confirmed that apologies for absence had been received, as noted above.

2. Declaration of Interest and Meeting Protocol

AW informed the Board and Forum Members of 'house rules/etiquette' for the meeting.

AW made the Board aware of the declaration of interest procedure and informed all Board members that this is a standard item on the agenda.

Cllr Ted Henderson, Lynne Oxby and Wendy Greenfield declared an interest in the Eggleston Parish Council – Parish Noticeboard project.

Bob Danby and Rachel Twedde declared an interest in the Teesdale Community Resources – Youth Partnership project.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

The draft minutes from the meeting held on 18 May 2022 have been circulated in advance with the meeting papers. **AW** reviewed the minutes for matters arising, actions and accuracy. **AW** confirmed there were no further outstanding actions or matters arising. The minutes of the last meeting were **agreed** by the Board as a true and accurate record.

4. Poverty Action Plan

4.1 Poverty Action Plan – Debra Kitching (DK) – Strategy Team Leader – Durham County Council

Board Members received a presentation from Debra Kitching (DK) – Strategy Team Leader – Durham County Council on the Poverty Action Plan.

DK provided the background of the Poverty Strategy and Action Plan, the partnership work taking place, the emerging issues, and challenges.

The poverty strategy works alongside the inclusive economic strategy whereby communities and businesses play a key role through the “Big Econ-versation”.

This strategy aims to build on strengths, ensure people and places are at the heart of all plans to rebuild a powerful economy.

The following objectives were highlighted:

Objective 1: Use intelligence and data to target support to low-income households

Objective 2: Reduce the financial pressures on people facing or in poverty

Objective 3: Increase individual, household and community resilience to poverty

Objective 4: Reduce barriers to accessing services for those experiencing financial insecurity.

Board Members received an overview of the Child Poverty Plan. The Child Poverty Plan is a multi-agency group that incorporates 4 key priorities to ensure that children, young people, and families have the resources to meet their basic needs including accessing opportunities to take part in society.

The consultation is currently taking place on the revised strategy and action plan. The plan is to be finalised in September 2022. In November 2022 the plan will be submitted to Cabinet for approval to launch County Durham's Inclusive Economic Strategy.

The Board were asked to comment on the following:

- Are these the right objectives?
- Where are the gaps / what more do we need to do?
- Are there any groups of people missing?

Board members were encouraged to respond to the consultation by 26 August 2022. Further details in relation to the consultation are available via the website: [Poverty Action Strategy and Action Plan \(snapsurveys.com\)](https://snapsurveys.com)

A Q&A session took place, and the following points were noted:

CW explained that previously Durham County Council has delivered healthy eating sessions in schools. The sessions encouraged young parents to cook healthy, cost-effective meals. Would this be feasible? **DK** stated that in other AAP's similar projects have been ran by local community groups in community centres. **DK** to feedback the comments received into the consultation.

AW reminded the Board that each AAP has received funding to deliver enriching holiday activities and healthy food during the school holidays. The YMCA, the Hub and

UTASS have secured funding to deliver activities in the Summer Holiday's in the TAP AAP area.

Cllr TH stated that there are numerous fun and food events being held across the County during the Summer holidays and suggested visiting the DCC website for further information on what is taking place locally

A **forum member** stated that Teesdale specific data would be welcomed and stressed the importance of rural proofing any future plans. **DK** stated that the rural nature of Teesdale will be disproportionately affected by poverty. Factors affecting Teesdale include higher food costs, higher fuel costs, poor public transport, and accessibility. **AW** reiterated that each strategy needs to be rural proofed to ensure TAP is not lost in the wider county statistics.

A copy of the presentation and a link to the consultation will be circulated to Board members. **(ACTION 1: EW)**

Insp ET thanked **DK** for the presentation.

5. Digital Durham

5.1 Digital Durham – Alli Walker (AWalker) – Digital Durham Manger - Durham County Council

Board Members received a presentation from **Alli Walker (AWalker)**, Digital Durham Manger - Durham County Council on Digital Durham.

AWalker provided an overview and background of the digital infrastructure.

AWalker highlighted the commercial investment plans for Teesdale as part of its market town and villages programme. This programme will be delivered between 2021 and December 2026. Openreach currently delivers in the TAP area and other providers are considering plans for other parts of TAP area.

AWalker gave an introduction to project Gigabit. The Government has committed £5bn to Project Gigabit which aims to maximise coverage in the harder to reach 20% of the UK. The North East is included in the first phase of Project Gigabit. DCC are playing a key role in the preliminary work to the procurement.

Digital Durham have suggested Teesdale as a suitable area for a small lot (up to 10k premises). **AWalker** stated that engagement has taken place with suppliers to scope a potential lot area where a supplier felt they could deliver under a Local Supplier Intervention at faster pace than a Regional Supplier Intervention. The Teesdale lot is estimated to be awarded in August 2022. Post contract suppliers will undertake surveys and planning in order to develop a detailed plan of delivery. Only at this

stage will suppliers be in a position to provide indicative timescales on delivery dates.

AWalker provided a brief overview of the gigabit broadband voucher scheme. The Government has provided £210 million worth of voucher funding. In addition, DCC has provisioned a £1.5 million top up fund to double the funds available. Digital Durham have engaged with several registered scheme suppliers interested in operating in the Teesdale area. It is anticipated that 900 properties will be supported. However, the voucher scheme has been paused until procurements has been awarded. The scheme will re-open in early 2023.

A summary of the broadband delivery was provided highlighting the future opportunities and developments for households.

AWalker explained that the Shared Rural Network (SRN) is a £1 billion mobile connectivity programme agreed between Government and Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) EE, O2, Three and Vodafone. This agreement will see the firms share a network of new and existing phone masts to boost mobile signals. Operators will collectively increase 4G mobile coverage to 95% of UK landmass by the end of 2025. **AWalker** stated that there is currently no data available on the new infrastructure locations however highlighted the forecasted improvements, within the County Durham area, subject to availability.

AWalker reported that the UK's original telecoms infrastructure, created to deliver analogue landline phone services, delivered via the Public Switched Telephone Network (PTSN) will be 'switched off' by December 2025. **AWalker** stated that DCC want to ensure that residents and council services are fully prepared for the changes. A working group has recently been established to consider the issues and develop plans to support the change. Workstreams will be focusing on areas such as vulnerable/isolated residents, business continuity, community resilience, communication, and engagement. **AWalker** reported that support can be provided by Digital Durham.

A Q&A session took place, and the following points were noted:

A **forum member** highlighted Lunedale has submitted 3 bids to the voucher scheme, and all have been unsuccessful. The **forum member** highlighted the ongoing issues with regards to accessibility and affordability of broadband at Lunedale. **AWalker** stated that if the voucher scheme isn't viable then the procurement scheme will apply. **AWalker** to explore any further delivery options available in the Lunedale area and feed this information back to the AAP team. **(ACTION 2: AWalker)**

Cllr RB stated that the communities highlighted in the presentation are yet to receive superfast broadband. Will superfast broadband be delivered in these areas, or will this be taken over by Gigabit broadband? **AWalker** stated that the announcement from government stated that the market has moved to deliver Gigabit broadband. Gigabit broadband is future proofed to provide a more reliable service.

CIlr RB asked how information on broadband will be promoted locally. **AWalker** stated that work is taking place with BDUK and supplies to provide the data and operate permission to create a postcode checker.

WG informed the Board of a number of issues that have arisen due to the recent storms. The only form of communication was through the analogue landline phone service. **AWalker** stated that DCC is exploring measures that can be introduced to eradicate some of these issues. Dialogue continues to take place with the government and Ofcom, however, the switch off has been agreed by Ofcom. DCC is aware of the impacts this has on isolated residents.

A **forum member** requested that further support is required to engage, inform, and support communities in understanding the complexities for providers to deliver in the area. **AWalker** stated that once the procurement process is complete and a delivery plan has been established, that identifies the gaps, analysis work will take place to see what developments can be made in each area. Once the scheme re opens in 2023 Digital Durham will restart the engagement process. **AWalker** stressed that delivery is supplier driven. **AW** suggested providing an update on the progress at a future Board meeting.

AW reported that a number of questions have been submitted prior to the meeting. These have been forwarded to **AWalker** and where possible a response will be provided shortly. A copy of the presentation will be circulated to Board members.
(ACTION 3: EW)

Insp ET thanked **AWalker** for the presentation.

6. Area Budget

AW confirmed that a copy of the full Area Budget applications has been circulated in advance with the meeting papers. **AW** highlighted that Board members were given the opportunity to provide any comments to the TAP team in advance of tonight's meeting. No comments were received. All applications have been considered by the task group and relevant service providers and are recommended for Board approval.

AWard gave a brief outline of each project:

6.1 Play @ Cotherstone – Refurbishment 2022

Area Budget request: £13,000

Match Funding: £1,146

Total Project Cost: £14,446

No comments were raised, and the Board **APPROVED** the application.

6.2 Teesdale Community Resources – Youth Partnership

Area Budget request: £14,000

Match Funding: £203,100
Total Project Cost: £217,100

Bob Danby and **Rachel Tweddle** declared an interest in this project.

The Board commented positively on the project and welcomed the collaborative approach of working amongst local organisations.

EL asked is mainstream funding available for training. **RT** stated that there is no mainstream funding or accessible training in Teesdale. **EL** suggested exploring funding through the Upskilling, Employability and Discretionary Fund delivered by Bishop Auckland College. This project has been funded by TAP.

No further comments were raised, and the Board **APPROVED** the application.

Award to forward the AB applications to the DCC Funding Team for technical appraisal.
(ACTION 4: AWard)

7. Neighbourhood Budget

Award confirmed that a summary sheet for the NB proposal has been circulated in advance with the meeting papers.

Award gave a brief outline of each proposal.

7.1 Eggleston Parish Council – Parish Noticeboard

Award confirmed that the request for NB is £1,000 (£500 each from Councillors Henderson and Bell).

Cllr Ted Henderson, Lynn Oxby and Wendy Greenfield declared an interest in this project.

AW stated that due to a number of declarations of interest the decision will not be quorate. As a result, the Neighbourhood Budget application will be circulated to the Board for their consideration, via email, tomorrow. The need for a quick response was highlighted. **AW** stressed that the applications would need to be approved by at least three members from each sector of the Board. This is to ensure a 'quorate' decision.

If a 'quorate' decision isn't reached an application won't progress towards technical appraisal by DCC Funding Team **(ACTION 4: AWard / Board members)**.

No comments were raised.

7.2 Egglestone Agricultural Society

AWard confirmed this application is for information only as it has been circulated previously via email.

AWard confirmed that the request for NB is £3,000 (£1,500 each from Councillors Henderson and Bell).

8. Locality Neighbourhood Issues

Insp Ed Turner gave an update on the main issues for the TAP area:

- The Teesdale AAP area remains one of the safest places to live and work.
- The migration of travellers to and from Appleby has now taken place. Preventative work and measures were in place for the lower parts of Barnard Castle. The police continue to support and encourage Barnard Castle Town Council to look at long term problem solving. There was one issue raised during the migration from Bowes Parish Council. Partnership work the GRT team and DCC Highways is taking place to mitigate the issue for next year.
- New legislation is in place to deal with trespassers who set up camp illegally on other people's land or in local communities. The new legislation states that this is now classed as a criminal trespass where historically this has been a civil trespass. Further work is taking place with the Police, the GRT team and DCC with regards to the intricacies. **AW** stated that an update from the GRT team, and the Police will be provided at the March 2023 Board meeting.
- The issue of trespassing is now being dealt with consistently across the County this will alleviate trespasses dispersing across the county.
- The rural watch, shop watch and pub watch groups continue to thrive.
- The speedwatch van has been mobilised across the TAP area. The van is available to local organisation and groups by contacting Liz Finn.

A **forum member** asked for an update on Whortlon bridge. **AW** to obtain an update on Whortlon Bridge (**ACTION 5: AW**). **Cllr RB** stated that should consent be granted work would start in September 2022 and would be complete by May 2023. Additional information can be found on the DCC website.

AW confirmed there has been no neighbourhood issues raised by Forum members in advance of the meeting.

9. Coordinators Update

9.1 TAP Press Article

The Board were provided with an update on the press coverage TAP has received in Teesdale Mercury over the May - July 2022 period. **AW** thanked Teesdale Mercury for the press coverage.

9.2 Area Budget Spend

The Board were provided with the Area Budget Spend Profile for 2022/23. The report includes the status of each project. A copy of the spend profile was circulated, in advance of the meeting, with the meeting papers.

9.3 Task Group Update

AW reported that the 'Community Recovery' task group has been established. As agreed at the recent AGM meeting, the initial meeting would involve only Board members. At the meeting the task group discussed the terms of reference for the task and finish group and also agreed that Linda Bird (TAP Partner Representative for the VCS) would chair the meeting moving forward. It was also decided that task group membership would be limited to circa 15 representatives from the Board and wider Forum. The first full meeting of the group will take place on Wednesday 27th July, 10am at Stainton and Streatlam Village Hall.

AW thanked those Board members that volunteered to be part of the task group.

A **forum member** asked for the timeline of the funding process. **AW** stated that the funding is allocated on a 'rolling programme'. Task group meetings will be dovetailed into the Board meeting schedule.

AW stated that for those Board members that can't attend the task group meeting can still be involved in the process by submitting their comments on applications electronically. These comments will be feed into the meetings.

9.4 Q1 Monitoring Update

AW confirmed that the quarter 1 updates (April – June 2022) has been circulated to project leads. Once received and collated the updates will be circulated to the Board, for information in the coming weeks. **AW** stressed; if any Board members would like to submit individual comments for circulation that they are more than welcome to do so.

9.5 Review of Community Engagement

AW confirmed that ERS Research and Consultancy have been appointed as the consultants to lead on the review of community engagement. The review will include consulting with chairs, vice chairs, organisation that have benefited from AAP funding, previous chairs, Board and Forum members etc. The review will explore the fundamental strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities within AAPs. It is proposed that the draft plan will be available in December 2022. It is anticipated that the consultants will attend a future TAP Board meeting.

The Board will be updated on the progress of the review accordingly.

Cllr RB strongly encouraged individuals to engage in the review.

9.6 AONB

A **forum member** stated that DCC have declared a climate emergency. An action plan has been developed. This plan was not very well rural proofed. The forum member requested an update at a future Board meeting.

AW suggested inviting a suitable DCC Officer to a future Board meeting.

10. Date/Time/Venue for Next Meeting

Insp ET thanked Board members for attending the meeting.

The TAP Board meeting will be held on Wednesday 21 September 2022, 6pm, Etherley Methodist Church