

East Durham Rural Corridor Area Action Partnership Minutes of the Board Meeting

Tuesday 27 September 2022

Bowburn Community Centre, Durham Road, Bowburn, DH6 5AT

Board Members

Attendance: Cllr David Brown, Cllr Chris Lines, Cllr Chris Varty, Paul Cooper, Insp Sarah Honeyman, Angela Stobbart, Christine Carter, Mel Carr, Allan Blakemore, Kester Noble, Stuart Dunn, George Storey

Officer Attendance: Jane Bellis – AAP Co-ordinator
Claire Craft – Community Development Project Officer
Emma McLoughlin – Community Development Project Officer, Towns and Villages Team
Marie Ainscough – AAP Support Officer

Presenters: Lisa Taylor – Groundwork
Jack McGurk and Deborah Crinion - believe housing

Forum Members

Attendance: No forum members attended the meeting

Apologies from

Board Members: Parish Cllr Sandra Dowson, Mark Readman, Malcolm Gray, Cllr Jan Blakey, Cllr Gary Hutchinson, Cllr Maura McKeon, Tony Cutmore

1 [Introductions and Apologies](#)

Cllr Chris Varty (Chair) welcomed everyone to the East Durham Rural Corridor Area Action Partnership Board Meeting and a round of introductions followed.

A special welcome was offered to Paul Cooper, Head of Pensions who was covering as the Durham County Council Head of Service representative on the Board and who attended in Mark Readman's absence.

Apologies [see above].

The Chair highlighted that although the names of Board and Forum members are not included in the body of the minutes; advice given in relation to the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), is that as board minutes are made public, anyone who wishes to remain anonymous should state this.

Board members were referred to the Declaration of Interest statement at the top of the agenda.

Anyone present who had a conflict of interest in any item on the agenda was asked to declare an interest at the start of the agenda item to ensure this was formally recorded in the meeting minutes.

The following item of business was brought forward as Neighbourhood Inspector Sarah Honeyman had to leave early to attend another AAP Board meeting.

2 Local Neighbourhood Issues (LNI)

2.1 Locality Policing Issues

Neighbourhood Inspector Sarah Honeyman provided an update on local policing issues –

- There was no update from Insp Phil Carter from the Peterlee Team. Sarah said she would contact him and ask him to come along to the November Board meeting.
- There had been incidents of arson and a personal incident in Sedgfield.
- There continues to be concerns/confidence issues in Trimdon around the lack of policing. Surveys had been carried out and policing teams are doing what they can. Police officers had carried out a nightshift patrol until 3.00 am.
- There had been a focus on social media around the neighbourhood watch in Sedgfield and a meeting is to be arranged.
- Discussion ensued around the amalgamation of the neighbourhood teams attending PACT meetings.
- It was highlighted that graffiti on the motorway bridges were filtering into Coxhoe.
- Sarah said she would try to get representatives from other policing teams along to the November Board meeting.
- It was highlighted the rural crime figures were down and Sarah said she would feed this back.
- A Board member thanked the Police for their presence during the 2022 Tour of Britain.
- 100 police officers from the force had been sent to London for the Queen's funeral.
- It was noted that the A181 was a dangerous road and Sarah said she would look this in.

Update from Sgt Kevin Hall - Sherburn Team

The main issue was 'Autumn/Winter/Christmas' and the push for residents to ensure their properties are secure to prevent thefts/burglaries. Two leaflets had been circulated amongst our AAP network and hard copies were taken along to the meeting to be shared far and wide.

[Sarah left the meeting]

Note: No business could be formally agreed as the meeting was not quorum. The AAP Co-ordinator will seek consensus for any decisions taken in principle from absent Board members via email.

3 [Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 July 2022 & Matters Arising](#)

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

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2022 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

4 [Countywide Partner Issues:](#)

4.1 **Believe Housing Update**

Angela Stobbart delivered a presentation which included an overview of believe housing, how they work in partnership and how they engage businesses in the EDRC AAP area. For anyone wanting to contact her about the Values Group recruitment/queries, please email Angela angela.stobbart@believehousing.co.uk

- 18,000 properties across County Durham
- new builds beyond that county boundary e.g Sunderland and Stockton
- Over 1,100 properties in EDRC AAP areas of Bowburn, Cassop, Coxhoe, Kelloe, Quarrington Hill and Trimdon Station/Deaf Hill
- Housing partner livin housing limited covers areas of Fishburn, Sedgfield and Trimdons

From 2019 – 2022 they invested over £1.5 million in improvement schemes including heating works and internal and external works.

They had also invested in community projects -

- Cornforth Partnership - £2,500 for food and fuel vouchers for Trimdons, Kelloe, Coxhoe, Bowburn, Cassop. To be supported at the Coxhoe pantry and Trimdon Village Hall food banks where Cornforth are providing IAG and crisis support. There was £10,000 from the EDRC AAP and some repurposed money which was agreed.
- Coxhoe Primary School - for a community hub and garden. This had just been awarded a believe capital grant subject to match funding. £19,985.87 from believe, £10,000 from Councillors Neighbourhood Budget and they are applying to another AAP pot.
- Environmental / neighbourhood schemes – working with county councillors via AAP relationship

For further information on grants available, please visit www.believehousing.co.uk and search for grants.

She was accompanied by Jack McGurk, a believe housing customer and the Chair of their Values Group. He gave a brief overview on the work of the group and the difference they had made.

Deborah Crinion from believe's Tenancy Community Lead Team was also present. This is a new group helping to support residents. For anyone wanting to get in touch, please contact Deborah via email TenancyCommunityLeads@believehousing.co.uk

5 Priority Updates (from Task Group and Projects)

5.1 Withdrawn Durham Savers Project

The Durham Savers project which totalled £10,000 had been withdrawn by the applicant some time ago. It had been agreed to set up a working group of partners to look at developing a project in keeping with it. A draft project was developed, but unfortunately due to a significant amount of match funding not coming to fruition, meaning the project would not be able to be delivered, it was proposed that it be added to the next project call out round which will be launched on the 29 September.

Board members agreed to include the £10,000.00 withdrawn from the Durham Savers Project into the Area Budget pot to be allocated to a project in keeping with the original project.

5.2 October Half Term 2022 Fun and Food

Three fun and food applications were received for October Half Term 2022 totalling £3,673.77 (£197.77 oversubscribed).

1. Halloween Fun from Ground North-East and Cumbria – £1,008.00
2. Autumn Fun from Deaf Hill Ward Regeneration Partnership – £1,765.00
3. October Half-Term 2022 from DJ Evans Youth Club – £900.77

Deaf Hill Regeneration Partnership had already reduced their application by £200 and DJ Evans Youth Club were always oversubscribed. Bearing this in mind, the Board was asked if they were happy for Groundwork to be asked to reduce their application.

Board members agreed to fund all 3 October Half Term Fun and Food projects subject to decreasing the Groundwork application or finding additional funding to cover the £197.77 shortfall.

[Cllr Chris Lines declared an interest in the East Park Path Improvements Area Budget application along with the Neighbourhood Budget application from Fishburn Bowling Club]

[Stuart Dunn declared an interest in the Coxhoe Primary School application as he is a school governor]

Area Budget

Three applications were received for the latest round of the Area Budget project call out. It was decided to cancel the October task group meeting as it was felt best to bring them straight to this Board meeting to be considered so as not to hold up the process. Board members had received a copy of the applications prior to the meeting.

(1) Coxhoe Primary School – Coxhoe Community Hub and Gardens

An application had been received for £27,250.00 Area Budget towards a total project cost of £37,250.00.

The funding will be used to enhance phase 1 and complete phase 2. Community allotment garden (shed, tools and consumables); community sensory and play garden (barefoot sensory pathway, adventure trail/equipment with all-weather surface, surface markings to support play for all, artificial turfed area for community games/events).

(2) Deaf Hill Ward Regeneration Partnership – Trimdon Station Youthy

An application had been received for £9,700.00 Area Budget towards a total project cost of £15,604.00.

The partnership would like to deliver activities for children and young people. This would be two sessions of various ages on a Thursday. Sessions will be delivered in Trimdon Station Community Centre which will also support the building in terms of room hire and much needed resource in the community. The main age group been for under 11's, had seen an increase in numbers over the past months (average 20) but also a session working with over 11's (average 10). Sessions will be a mixture of arts and crafts, games, and informal exercise and those over 11 would access peer support to provide support for any issues that arise from the group. Sessions will be delivered by 3 members of staff (one for the younger session and two youth workers for the older session), with the younger session supported by two volunteers.

(3) Durham County Council – East Park Path Improvements

An application had been received for £24,000.00 Area Budget towards a total project cost of £47,000.00.

The project will involve the improvement, widening and surfacing of an access path in East Park, Sedgefield. The path connects the underpass at Hardwick Park to Station Road in Sedgefield Village. The improvements aim to enhance access for families and children on foot, wheelchair users and those with disabilities, cyclists and horse riders, widening the path to 3 metres and laying a hardwearing and stable recycled surface (road planer dust for groundworks and recycled whinstone for top surface aggregate). The project will also include repairing existing gates/access controls, and vegetation works.

Funding will be directly spent on the needed materials for the project and their supply, as well as the appointment of qualified and experienced contractors to complete the works involved. The funding will ensure effective delivery of the project implementation phase through to completion and use by the local community.

Towns and Villages Fund

Fishburn Youth and Community Centre – Community Centre Extension

An application had been received for £40,000.00 from the Towns and Villages Fund towards a total project cost of £150,000.00.

The applicant would like to build an extension to the community centre and reconfigure the internal space. The extension would house a much bigger bar, cellar, and storage area, in addition to this the existing bar/cellar will house a fully fitted professional catering kitchen; they currently use a domestic/home style kitchen with the addition of extra ovens; this unfortunately is no longer adequate for the quantity of meals being produced. Each element of the proposed extension project will allow them to expand services and generate additional income helping them to become self-sustaining.

It had been suggested that the application be put through as staged payments which is something the task group had raised.

Board members agreed to fund the three Area Budget projects and the Fishburn Youth and Community Centre project from the Towns and Villages Fund.

5.3 Fishburn Fringes Project, Groundwork - Update

Lisa Taylor from Groundwork provided a verbal update on the Fishburn Fringes Project.

The project focused on engaging local people on the former ironworks site at Fishburn. Groundwork have been working closely with the Brightwater Landscape partnership (of which we are part of) to coordinate our project and allow for additional activities to be carried out over and above that contained within this project.

Volunteer Sessions

A full programme of volunteer sessions were held to carry out a wide range of improvements. The volunteers are made up of local people, Durham Wildlife trust volunteers from across Durham and Brightwater volunteers. 1687 volunteer hours have been spent at Fishburn Woods which equates to 292 individual volunteer days at the site.

Discover Brightwater worked in Fishburn Woods from November 2019 until August 2021, with breaks during lockdown restrictions.

Volunteer sessions have focused on:

- Clear ups on site
- creation of a new entrance point with new gates
- installation of new steps
- footpath improvements
- installation of new way markers

Sessions with Young People

Sessions with Fishburn Primary school were held to get local children exploring the site and using it as a resource for their education.

Sessions with Fishburn Youth Club were held, focusing on engaging the young people in helping to identify and address local issues on the site and get them involved in social action to help tackle these issues.

Due to the COVID pandemic during the project it wasn't possible to go back into the primary school to complete the education element of the project it was therefore agreed with the school to utilise a different way of engaging the school children.

In advance of October half term packs were prepared and distributed to every child in Fishburn primary school. The packs included activities they could complete at home with their families focused on environmental themes and encouraging families to enjoy the local environment specifically the former colliery site.

We teamed with Brightwater to add in additional activities including creative writing around the Beast of Brightwater with 135 packs delivered to the school

The packs included:

- Map and wildlife identification guide for the site
- Craft materials and instructions
- Scavenger hunts
- Bird feeder materials
- Pens and colouring pens.

Environmental improvements made:

- Opening the ground cover in the front of the woods to make it more accessible for walkers.
- Scrub and brash was cleared and burned, damaged or leaning trees were felled and timber cross cut for locals to use as needed.
- Footpaths were maintained but raising the canopy of low trees to create wider paths and clearer areas to walk and to open the tracks to the sunlight to improve the ground conditions in the winter, to reduce the volume of mud
- Steps leading from near Front Street were removed and replaced with new sleeper risers and backfilled with soil

- Two new kissing gates have been installed on the site to improve access by removing stiles but to also limit antisocial behaviour.

The Future

Brightwater have funding secured to allow them to continue to continue volunteer sessions on the site past the end of this funding. Brightwater funding has also allowed additional work to be carried out to improve more footpaths and link the site to the wider Brightwater project. Discover Brightwater is continuing with access improvements between Fishburn and Bishop Middleham in developing a new bridleway along the disused railway which aims to further install barriers to anti-social behaviour.

6 [Co-ordinators Report including Update from County Durham Partnership Forum](#)

Quarterly monitoring returns are available to Board members upon request. Project leads had been issued with the Q2 reports covering the period 1 July 2022 – 30 September 2022.

The AAP team had put Marion Storey from Cassop Community Centre in touch with Tony Cutmore from the Cornforth Partnership regarding the Youth Links project following George Storey's request at the last meeting.

Jane delivered a presentation on the funding streams available and reminded the Board about the aim, objective and criteria for the Towns and Villages Fund.

It was agreed that the Review of Community Engagement be a standard Board meeting agenda item until it reaches its conclusion.

We received one application for the public representative vacancy on the Board. A process will be followed to fill the vacancy and the applicant will be invited to attend an interview.

Angela Stobbart provided an update following her attendance at the County Durham Partnership Forum meeting on 17 June 2022.

Cllr Amanda Hopwood welcomed everyone and introduced the session. There were two main items on the agenda:

- Review of Community Engagement, Funding and Processes, including Area Action Partnerships
- Levelling Up Funding Proposal Update

Review of Community Engagement

Andy Palmer presented an overview of current AAP picture and reasons for the review.

- Time was right for review with AAPs have been operating for 12 years.
- We have had a number of seismic events impacting our communities and urgent / changing needs such as Covid-19 pandemic and Storm Arwen.

- National policy changes including the introduction of Levelling Up agenda with its funding call outs.

There were breakout discussions led by ERS, consultants working on the review. These focused on:

1. How do you think stakeholders could best be involved in the review?
2. Identify strengths and areas of good practice in AAPs as they currently operate
3. Identify areas of further development you would like to see explored through the review

The discussions and feedback were very much supportive of AAPs and how they worked. The groundbreaking work of AAPs was acknowledged by ERS, it was noted that AAPs know the area and the huge number of local projects they funded was great. In breakout discussion:

- There was much support for the operation of AAPs with statements such as:
 - AAPs bring us all together for funding
 - True consultation takes place
 - AAPs are democratic
 - Builds capacity in the communities
 - Police and many other partners such as housing were well connected into AAPs from board to delivery level
- Suggestions for improvement were around:
 - For sustainability of communities need more human capacity building – centres need more support to build community leaders.
 - AAPs should inspire agency to get people to take action for themselves.
 - Can the AAPs reach more people, including young people
 - Better communication – raise awareness of AAP work
 - Can AAPs be more fleet of foot – adapting quickly when new issues arise e.g. cost of living crisis

Levelling Up Funding Proposal Update

Geoff Paul, Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth (temporary) delivered a presentation. Key points.

- There is £4.8bn allocated for infrastructure.
- Round 1 – the North-East had £100m; in County Durham Bishop Auckland being successful in their bid.
- Round 2 – Current round. County Durham had £20m available in the criteria with a July 6th 2022 submission deadline. Any money awarded to be spent by 2025. Announcement of successful bids will be the Autumn Statement in November 2022.

Proposed projects were in:

City of Durham, Easington, North Durham, North-West Durham and Sedgefield areas.

Durham City bid is about Enhancing and Maintaining the Durham City economy. As part of this and relevant to EDRC AAP area is:

- Bowburn relief road to reassign traffic from Bowburn Village and Junction 61 on A1(M). Aim is to reduce congestion and improving the quality of life.
- Next phase of Integra 61 to create 2,500 jobs.

The Sedgefield bid is about regenerating the Town Centre of Newton Aycliffe, so is about the wider area rather than Sedgefield itself.

The discussion was asked to focus on schemes of partners and any available data which could support the bids and any opportunities there may be to support delivery.

The next meeting of the CDP Forum, 14 February 2023, 10am-noon. Venue (tbc). It is expected to be face-to-face as requested by the Chair.

Emma McLoughlin, Community Development Project Officer from the Towns and Villages Team provided a verbal update on the Towns and Villages project(s).

7 Neighbourhood Budget Projects

The following Neighbourhood Budget projects; were shared with the Board -

Name of Scheme: Fishburn Bowling Club Watermain Repairs

Councillor(s): Chris Lines / David Brown

Interest Declared: Yes

Amount: £2,206.00

Name of Scheme: Coxhoe Primary School – Community Hub and Gardens

Councillor(s): Jan Blakey / Gary Hutchinson / Maura McKeon

Interest Declared: No

Amount: £10,000 matched with £27,250 Area Budget

Name of Scheme: East Park Path Improvements

Councillor(s): David Brown / Chris Lines

Interest Declared: Yes

Amount: £20,000.00

The Board was happy for these projects to go ahead and the interest as declared.

8 Date and time of next board meeting

Date and time of next meeting - Tuesday 22 November 2022

Subsequent Meetings

- Wednesday 25 January 2023
- Wednesday 22 March 2023

Board members preferred face to face meetings; however, were happy to be flexible over the winter period and would consider holding the meetings at 4.00 pm via Teams.

Everyone was thanked for their attendance and the meeting closed.