

**East Durham Area Action Partnership AGM & Board Meeting  
6pm on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2022 at The Lisa Dixon Centre, Haswell**

**PRESENT:**

**Public representatives**

Rona Hardy (RH) (Chair)  
Danny Dickinson (DD)  
Gill Rodgers (GR)  
Alison Paterson (AP)  
David Blackwell (DB)

**Elected Members**

Cllr Ivan Cochrane (IC)  
Cllr Stacey Deinali (SD)  
Cllr Isabella Roberts (IR)

**Partner Organisations**

Insp Joanne Eales (JE)  
Ian Porter (IP)  
Joanne Angus (JA)  
Jim Murray (JM)

**Co-opted Members**

Edna Connor (EC)

**Officer Attendance:**

John Murphy (JMurphy) – AAP Coordinator  
Laura Towers (LT) – AAP Support Officer  
Wayne Gibson (WG) – Community Development/Project Officer

**Presenters:**

Jim Murray - Head of Education & Skills, Durham County Council

**Public Attendance:**

4 members of the public were in attendance

**Apologies:**

Graham Easterlow, Cllr Angela Surtees, Cllr Jake Miller, Cllr Julie Griffiths, Insp Phil Carter, Susan Robinson, Amanda Moon

**1. Introductions & Apologies**

JMurphy ran through health and safety and housekeeping.

Introductions were made and apologies were noted, as above.

**2. Previous Minutes & Matters Arising**

DB was missed from the apologies in October's minutes. LT to amend.

The minutes of the previous Board Meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2022 were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

JMurphy notified the Board that the Community Resilience Group has not been able to appoint a wellbeing worker. The funding has been split between three of the groups involved to deliver services/activities.

Following on from discussions at last month's meeting re Warm Spaces and the request, which was put forward on support for community buildings, the Board agreed to follow the figure of a £5,000 - £10,000 allocation for this. People would also be directed to the County Durham Community Foundation for their Warm Spaces and Poverty Hurts funding.

### **3. Police Report**

#### **Insp Joanne Eales – Seaham, Easington & Peterlee**

It has been a very busy month. There has been an influx of calls across the force.

There has been activity from PCSOs in Wingate and Station Town.

Four people were arrested for a burglary in Peterlee. Seven further burglaries were attributed to these individuals.

A large cannabis grow was found in Horden.

Talks have been taking place in local schools on bullying with Jet and Ben.

Bonfire Night was very busy. Some fireworks are sold illegally. A fire action plan is being looked at with the Fire Service.

There have been complaints re off road bikes. Pea gravel is being explored as a mechanism to combat the bikes. This would allow pushchairs and horses to use routes, but it stops anything with traction.

Issues with 4x4s were also highlighted.

There has also been issues at the nature reserve. A quad bike was seized and another quad was seized today at Seaham.

There has been an increase in ASB in the Murton area. A meeting will take place with Cllr Griffiths re youth diversionary activities.

AP asked whether people get the vehicles back when they are seized. JE advised that documents must be provided – proof of ownership and insurance.

JE updated that there will also be a response shift 24/7 in Seaham as well as Peterlee going forward which should provide greater visibility.

Issues were highlighted with trees getting burned in Horden.

### **4. Medium Term Financial Plan (Council Budget) Consultation Presentation – Jim Murray, Head of Education & Skills**

JM delivered a presentation on the MTFP Council Budget.

JM highlighted Children and Young People's Services as a pressure area. The net expenditure for 2022/23 is £141.9m for this area. The cost for every local authority has gone up. SEND and home transport is an element of this. There are two aspects; provision and supply of taxis and drivers and more chaperones and individual transport than pre-Covid. Durham is experiencing this due to being a rural authority. There are some challenging questions and work is ongoing.

Durham County Council is a low council tax base. In England, on average, 66% of all properties are in bands A-C. In County Durham, 83% of properties are in Bands A-C. The majority of Co Durham taxpayers (57%) live in Band A properties. Durham has a significant safety net for vulnerable low-income households through its Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

The council is operating in a period of significant uncertainty and volatility. For the next year and across the next four years, the budget setting process will be more difficult due to a range of financial factors outside of our control. It is very difficult to plan ahead with certainty and the budget next year could worsen if any further cost pressures arise or if the government's funding for council is reduced. The council estimates that additional unavoidable budget base pressures in 23/24 will total £75.6m.

The proposed approach for balancing the budget 23/24 involves savings proposals of £11.8m, comprising of savings from back office/further staff reductions (£7m), income raising (£4.25m) and savings from changes in the way we deliver front-line services (£0.5m).

A council tax increase of 2.99% (1.99% plus 1% adult social care precept) would equate to £7.2m. £25.6m of reserves would also be used as to support budget setting as a temporary solution.

JM welcomed any questions.

GR asked whether any other local authorities owe Durham money that they may not be able to pay back and is there any concern about money potentially not coming back.

JM confirmed that there is no concern regarding this and the government would step in if a local authority was unable to pay money back. Payback is sometimes slow due to central government.

DB asked if the need arises for the government to fulfil any loans whether the interest is still paid back. JM confirmed this is the case.

SD asked whether any devolution deal would impose on the government.

Devolution decisions will not be setting the budget year on year. In relation to the Skills Agenda, some of the funding ends in 2025. Some solutions may come out of devolution.

EC asked re the percentage of people in Co Durham who do not pay council tax.

JM noted that this is likely to be increasing which will affect income.

GR noted that those who cannot afford to pay should be protected. Putting families under pressure will cost more to the local authority in other areas.

DB noted that £25.6m is being used from reserves, roughly 1/8 of the reserves. JM advised that there is a safety net of what the council needs to hold. As this has been saved, it can be used now, but is not a sustainable position. A lot of cuts and other measures have already happened year on year. Grant cutting is going on all the time. The council also gets less for every academised school.

AP highlighted that if community buildings are charged more in terms of income generation, it will come back to the Third Sector which is already struggling.

The AAP Board was asked the following questions:

- What is the AAP view on the approach to balancing the 23/24 forecast budget shortfall?
- What do you feel will be the impact of this approach on you or those you represent?
- Do you have any alternatives to the approach whilst making the required savings?
- What is the view to the council utilising additional council tax raising powers if provided by the government over the current 2.99% rise?

The following comments were noted:

Savings from staff reductions (£7m) may cost more in the long run as it may affect things getting done. A balancing act is needed.

Raising income is needed.

Delivery of changes is needed by looking at where money is spent.

Some reserves need to be used whilst also looking at 'what next?'. Living costs may not decrease for some time so we need to look at how to survive this and do things differently.

Statutory and non-statutory needs to be looked at with long-term costs and consequences.

The council tax rise is unavoidable, but people who cannot pay it should be protected. Community centres need to be considered too. The increase in council tax would be to keep services as they are now.

A referendum would be needed for rises over 2.99% which is unlikely to be helpful.

There will be implications from the Spending Review.

**Action: LT to circulate the survey link tomorrow.**

## **5. Neighbourhood Issues**

None noted.

## **6. Priority Group Updates**

No meetings had taken place since the last Board Meeting.

RH noted that a Youth Strategy meeting would take place on 10/11/22 at Shotton Community Hub.

## **7. NBs for notification or endorsement of a declared interest**

The Neighbourhood Budget spreadsheet was circulated to the Board with the meeting papers. JMurphy highlighted the conflicts of interest noted below and the Board approved all of the projects.

### **Project Name: Book Vending Machine**

**Councillors:** Batey & McKenna

**Project Cost:** £1,500

**NB Amount:** £1,500

**Description:** Sea View Primary School in Seaham are applying for funding to purchase a book vending machine to help encourage children to develop a positive relationship with books.

**Conflict of interest declared by Cllr Batey. Cllr Batey is a governor at the school. The Board approved this project.**

**Project Name: Re-Loved Community Event**

**Councillors:** Hawley

**Project Cost:** £961.43

**NB Amount:** £300

**Description:** Peterlee Town Council are requesting £300 to go towards their one off community event to sell or exchange second hand items. Funding will go towards awareness and marketing and volunteer expenses.

**Conflict of interest declared by Cllr Hawley. Cllr Hawley is a Peterlee Town Cllr. The Board approved this project.**

**Project Name: Seaview Running Track**

**Councillors:** Charlton-Lainé & Purvis

**Project Cost:** £7,210

**NB Amount:** £5,000

**Description:** Seaview Primary School are applying for funding to install a running track around their playing fields. The track will be open for community use and used in community events and activities such as fun runs and charity events.

**Conflict of interest declared by Cllr Purvis. Cllr Purvis is a school governor. Additionally the labour to install the track will be a gift in kind from Cllr Purvis. The Board approved this project.**

**Project Name: Santa's Wish**

**Councillors:** Hawley, Cochrane & Howarth

**Project Cost:** £999

**NB Amount:** £999

**Description:** The project is Santa's Wish. Delivering toys and food to vulnerable families in Peterlee.

**Conflict of interest declared by Cllr Hawley & Cllr Howarth. Both Cllrs are Peterlee Town Council Cllrs. The Board approved this project.**

**Project Name: Roseberry Park U13s FC**

**Councillors:** Kennedy & Shaw

**Project Cost:** £1,500

**NB Amount:** £1,500

**Description:** Roseberry Park FC are applying for winter training kit (jackets) for the under 13 team.

**Conflict of interest declared by Cllr Kennedy. Cllr Kennedy's son plays for the Under 13 team. The Board approved this project.**

**Project Name: Café Together**

**Councillors:** Boyes & Surtees

**Project Cost:** £300

**NB Amount:** £300

**Description:** Café Together are applying for funding to put on a Christmas lunch.

**Conflict of interest declared by Cllr Surtees. Cllr Surtees is a trustee. The Board approved this project.**

**Project Name: Commemorative Cream Tea**

**Councillors:** Kennedy & Shaw

**Project Cost:** £600

**NB Amount:** £600

**Description:** Dawdon YCC are applying for funding for a community commemorative cream tea event to celebrate the late Queen.

**Conflict of interest declared by Cllr Kennedy. Cllr Kennedy is Chair of Dawdon YCC and Cllr Shaw is a trustee.**

**Project Name: Fire Starters**

**Councillors:** Batey & McKenna

**Project Cost:** £7,580

**NB Amount:** £4,000

**Description:** Creative Youth Opportunities CiC are applying for funding for detached youth work around the town park in Seaham and for youth sessions also in Seaham. The project is to target current ASB around the town park.

**No conflict of interest.**

**Project Name: New Strips**

**Councillors:** Batey & McKenna

**Project Cost:** £672

**NB Amount:** £672

**Description:** Seaham United Under 16s are a new football team and are applying for funding to purchase strips.

**No conflict of interest.**

**Project Name: My Time**

**Councillors:** Hawley

**Project Cost:** £1,650

**NB Amount:** £990

**Description:** AIMS wants to hold 2 weekly sessions to bring people together in the community from all backgrounds for social interaction, away from the stressors of home and work life.

**No conflict of interest.**

**Project Name: Road Surfacing Hillrise Crescent, Seaton**

**Councillors:** Batey & McKenna

**Project Cost:** £7,600

**NB Amount:** £4,000

**Description:** Seaton with Slingley Parish Council are applying for funding to resurface a road in on Hillrise Crescent in Seaton. This project was originally submitted to the AAP in March but the total project costs have risen.

**No conflict of interest.**

**Project Name: Peterlee: Then, Now and the Future**

**Councillors:** Duffy, Fenwick & McDonnell

**Project Cost:** £14,500

**NB Amount:** £4,500

**Description:** Peterlee: then/now and the future is an exhibition and accompanying book publication drawing together material from the collections relating to Peterlee that are held in the Durham County Records Office. Much of this material has not previously been seen by the public.

**No conflict of interest.**

**Project Name: Burt Close Anti Bikes Works**

**Councillors:** Howarth

**Project Cost:** £1,680

**NB Amount:** £1,680

**Description:** To install 2 anti-motorcycle barriers to prevent off road vehicle ASB & a boom gate for machinery access.

**No conflict of interest.**

**Project Name: Woodhouse Park Shed**

**Councillors:** Fenwick

**Project Cost:** £2,000

**NB Amount:** £2,000

**Description:** To build a new shed for the community garden group to help host meetings in a safe, sheltered space.

**No conflict of interest.**

**Project Name: A Warm Place**

**Councillors:** Howarth & Fenwick

**Project Cost:** £999

**NB Amount:** £999

**Description:** To provide people in Peterlee a place to keep warm and get fed with soup and a bun at the Methodist Church.

**No conflict of interest.**

**Project Name: New Cricket Nets**

**Councillors:** Batey & McKenna

**Project Cost:** £6,773

**NB Amount:** £5,000

**Description:** Seaham Harbour Cricket Club are applying for funding to replace the practice nets.

**No conflict of interest.**

**Project Name: Ark Therapies**

**Councillors:** Crute & Deinali

**Project Cost:** £500

**NB Amount:** £500

**Description:** Fencing for the animal enclosure to ensure safety of animals and children.

**No conflict of interest.**

**Project Name: Girl Guides (Jubilee Funding)**

**Councillors:** Crute & Deinali

**Project Cost:** £500

**NB Amount:** £300

**Description:** Support for a Guides event to celebrate the Jubilee / Queen.

**No conflict of interest.**

**Project Name: Residents Association Event**

**Councillors:** McLean & Roberts

**Project Cost:** £291

**NB Amount:** £180

**Description:** Support the costs of residents day trip.

**No conflict of interest.**

**Project Name: Allotment Path**

**Councillors:** Higgins

**Project Cost:** £998

**NB Amount:** £998

**Description:** Installation of a footpath from the rear of the allotment site to ensure users can access safely, especially children who use the community allotment site.

**No conflict of interest.**

**Project Name: Thornley Juniors**

**Councillors:** Miller

**Project Cost:** £999

**NB Amount:** £999

**Description:** Winter training costs and equipment for football club.

**No conflict of interest.**

**Project Name: Easington Colliery Community Friendship and Tea Dance Group**

**Councillors:** Boyes & Surtees

**Project Cost:** £800

**NB Amount:** £200

**Description:** The funding will contribute towards providing a three course Christmas lunch for group members. The event will be held in Easington Colliery Social Welfare Hall and catered for by Haswell Mencap.

**No conflict of interest.**

**Project Name: Age Concern Easington**

**Councillors:** Boyes & Surtees

**Project Cost:** £500

**NB Amount:** £200

**Description:** Age Concern Easington are applying for funding to contribute towards their Christmas lunch.

**No conflict of interest.**

**Project Name: Eden Hill People Centre - Horden Older People**

**Councillors:** McLean & Roberts

**Project Cost:** £990

**NB Amount:** £990

**Description:** Provide food packs to older residents of Horden over the Christmas period.

**No conflict of interest.**

**Project Name: St Mary Magdalene School Defib**

**Councillors:** Kennedy & Shaw

**Project Cost:** £3,611.31

**NB Amount:** £3,611.31

**Description:** St Mary Magdalene School in Seaham are applying for funding to install a community access defibrillator onto the school railings. The school have already got the defibrillator and the funding is installation costs only.

**No conflict of interest.**

**Area Budget Position**

JMurphy provided an update on the Area Budget position for November.



GR highlighted that centres had been given long timelines for the BEEP assessment to take place.

JMurphy updated that four expressions of interest have been received. JMurphy has spoken with the BEEP Team who may use an external company for the assessments or another option could be someone from the team sitting on the panel.

**8. Any Other Business**

None raised.

**9. Date and time of next meeting**

**6pm on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022, The Glebe Centre, Murton**