



## **Minutes of the Bishop Auckland and Shildon Area Action Partnership Board Meeting**

**Thursday 17 November 2022**

**Civic Hall, Shildon**

### **Present**

#### **Partner Representative**

Andy Palmer (AP) – Durham County Council

Rachel Edmunds (RE) – Believe Housing

Steven Robson (SR) – Business Representative – Vice Chair

Insp Andy Reeves (AR) - Durham Constabulary

Deborah Richardson (DR) - Community and Voluntary Sector Representative

#### **Public Representative**

Peter Quinn (PQ)

Tony Bird (TB) - Chair

Kirstie Hutchinson (KH)

Bernadette Crooks (BC)

#### **Elected Members**

Cllr George Smith (GS) – Elected Member

Cllr David Bell – Town and Parish Council Representative

Cllr Samantha Townsend (ST) – Elected Member

Cllr Joanne Howey (JH) – Elected Member

Cllr Charlie Kay (CK) - Elected Member

#### **Presenters**

Andy Palmer (AP) - Head Transformation, Planning and Performance, Durham County Council

#### **Officers**

Andrew Walker (APW) - AAP Co-ordinator

Sheilah Metcalfe (SM) - AAP Community Development Project Officer

William Lightburn (WB) - AAP Community Development Project Officer

Emma Walton (EW) - AAP Support Officer

Peter Henderson (PH) - CDPO Towns and Villages Team - Durham County Council

## **Apologies**

Tommy Taylor (TT)

Cllr Shirley Quinn (SQ) – Elected Member – Vice Chair

Cllr Andrew Jackson (AJ) – Elected Member

Cllr Cathy Hunt (CH) – Elected Member

Stephen Nicholson (SN)

## **Public / Other Attendees – 7**

### **A1. Introduction and apologies**

Introductions and apologies were made.

Please see page 1 & 2 for attendees and apologies.

APW welcomed Board and Forum members to the meeting and introduced and welcomed the following to their first meeting:

- Deborah Richardson - Community and Voluntary Sector Representative
- Cllr David Bell – Town and Parish Council Representative

### **A2. Agreement of minutes and matters arising from previous meeting held 20 October 2022**

Matters Arising:

APW explained there was an error reported in the Town and Villages – King James 1 Academy figures, this will be corrected.

The Board agreed the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

### **A3. Declaring an Interest**

Tony Bird declared an interest in the Dene Valley and Eldon ASB - Durham County Council project.

Kirstie Hutchinson declared an interest in the Wear Rivers Trust – John Muir in the Gaunless project.

Deborah Richardson declared an interest in the Woodhouse Close Church Community Centre – Greif and Bereavement project.

Steven Robson declared an interest in the Bishop Auckland College – Upskilling, Employability and Discretionary Fund project.

### **A4. Local Neighbourhood Issues**

#### **➤ Durham County Council Budget Consultation**

Board members received a presentation from Andy Palmer (AP), Head Transformation, Planning and Performance, Durham County Council on the 2023/24 County Council Forecast Revenue Budget Consultation.

AP gave an overview on the Council's budget for this financial year, the council tax position, the budget pressures, and the proposed approach for balancing the budget in 2023/24.

The consultation has been launched for the public to give views on the proposed approach to try and meet a £37 million gap in the council's budget in the next financial year, as a result of cost pressures such as increases in inflation, interest rates, energy costs and fuel prices. The Council will use reserves to meet the gap created to support budget pressures. The use of the reserves is only a temporary solution.

AP stated that the consultation will be live for 4 weeks. The deadline for comments is Tuesday 22 November 2022. Feedback from budget consultations will be presented to Cabinet in January 2023 with the budget report being presented to Cabinet in February 2023. Cabinet budget proposals will then be presented to Full Council on 22 February 2023 where budget approval and council tax for 2023/24 will be set.

The Board were asked to comment on the following questions:

- What is the AAP view on our approach to balancing the 2023/24 forecast budget shortfall?
- What do you feel will be the impact of this approach upon 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 government over the current 2.99% forecast?

The Board made the following comments:

CK stated that budget cuts are being made year on year and raised concerns that reserves are being used to alleviate budget pressure and queried if this was a sustainable way to balance the budget going forward. AP commented that £26.5million of reserves to support budget savings is unprecedented.

PQ raised concerns that in addition to the potential increase in council tax charges there may also be raises within the other elements contained within the council tax bill i.e Durham Police and Crime Commissioner, Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority and parish and town councils. He stated this could lead to a potential rise of 8%- 9% overall. AP to feedback the comments from the Board into the consultation.

A forum member raised issues with the levels of council tax charged in band A properties and felt that Durham County Council charged the highest rate of council tax in the country in this band. AP stated that other councils may raise additional income from the higher rates and queried the impact on those areas, given the current financial climate.

ST felt that given the current cost of living crisis, appreciating that council tax will increase it should not go above 2.99% even though it could be raised by 5%. If it was raised, it will be the local authorities that would receive the criticism from communities therefore didn't feel it appropriate. CK agreed that it shifted the burden to local government and away from central government.

Board and Forum members were encouraged to respond to the consultation. Further details in relation to the consultation are available via the website: <https://online1.snapsurveys.com/AAPBudget2324>

A copy of the presentation is available by contacting a member of the BASH AAP Team on [bishopshildonaap@durham.gov.uk](mailto:bishopshildonaap@durham.gov.uk) or 03000 268663.

TB thanked AP for the presentation.

## **A5. Priorities and Action Plans**

### **➤ Area Budget - Community / COVID 19 Recovery**

APW explained that the Board have agreed the single theme of 'Community COVID19 Recovery' as its main priority this year as such a specific Community COVID19 Recovery task group was established. The task group identified the key themes to be incorporated into the brief. Following the approval of the brief and the agreement to put out a call for projects, there were 26 applications requested, and 11 applications received. Applications have been submitted from a wide range of organisations. The funding requests totaled in excess of the Area Budget funding available.

This year Area Budget, Older Person Social Isolation fund, Youth Fund, Young People's Healthy Relationships Funding, Welfare Reform and the previous underspend reallocation gives a total fund available of £177,403.

With the support of the AAP team each application was assessed and considered by the funding panel which consisted of the following Board members: Rachel Edmunds, Andy Palmer, Cllr Cathy Hunt, Cllr Joanne Howell, Cllr Andrew Jackson and Cllr Shirley Quinn.

The panel met twice on 6 October 2022 and 3 November 2022 to consider the applications and to agree on which proposals to recommend to the Board for approval. Each application had been reviewed by the BASH AAP team and a number of factors were taken into consideration including:

- Fit to the brief
- Balance with previous AAP priorities
- Geographical balance across the AAP area
- Beneficiaries
- Value for money
- Funding available
- Fit with Budgets available

APW reported that after extensive consideration, the panel agreed 10 project proposals from the 11 submitted. Each project is subject to a full application and

satisfactory project appraisal. Further recommendations were made on the unsuccessful projects and support is being offered by the AAP team.

The Board were provided with the Area Budget and Task Group progress report.

The following project proposals were presented to the Board for consideration, and for any added value or comments:

- **Wear Rivers Trust – John Muir in the Gaunless**  
**Amount Requested: £16,001**  
**Match Funding: £41,602.**  
**Total Project Cost: £57,603**

The Board received the project proposal and subject to final application and full appraisal **AGREED** the recommendation of approval for an Area Budget allocation of £16,001.

- **If You Care Share Foundation - Emotional and Mental Health supporting young people**  
**Amount Requested: £14,994**  
**Match Funding: £1,500**  
**Total Project Cost: £16,494**

The Board received the project proposal and subject to final application and full appraisal **AGREED** the recommendation of approval for an Area Budget allocation of £14,994.

- **Woodhouse Close Church Community Centre – Greif and Bereavement**  
**Amount Requested: £12,420**  
**Match Funding: £3,727**  
**Total Project Cost: £16,147**

The Board received the project proposal and subject to final application and full appraisal **AGREED** the recommendation of approval for an Area Budget allocation of £12,420.

- **Woodhouse Close Church Community Centre – Day Club**  
**Amount Requested: £14,720**  
**Match Funding: £3,000**  
**Total Project Cost: £17,720**

The Board received the project proposal and subject to final application and full appraisal **AGREED** the recommendation of approval for an Area Budget allocation of £14,720.

➤ **Shildon Alive – Shildon Alive Food Solidarity**

**Amount Requested: £15,000**

**Match Funding: £17,000**

**Total Project Cost: £32,000**

The Board received the project proposal and subject to final application and full appraisal **AGREED** the recommendation of approval for an Area Budget allocation of £15,000.

➤ **Influence Church – Elevate Youth Group / Breakfast Hub**

**Amount Requested: £11,550**

**Match Funding: £6,588**

**Total Project Cost: £18,138**

The Board received the project proposal and subject to final application and full appraisal **AGREED** the recommendation of approval for an Area Budget allocation of £11,550.

➤ **Durham Deafened Support – Life After Deaf**

**Amount Requested: £11,580**

**Match Funding: £12,603**

**Total Project Cost: £24,183**

The Board received the project proposal and subject to final application and full appraisal **AGREED** the recommendation of approval for an Area Budget allocation of £11,580.

➤ **Changing Relations CIC - Sometimes it hurts creative support resources**

**Amount Requested: £12,312**

**Match Funding: £55,146**

**Total Project Cost: £67,458**

The Board received the project proposal and subject to final application and full appraisal **AGREED** the recommendation of approval for an Area Budget allocation of £12,312.

➤ **Bishop Auckland College – Upskilling, Employability and Discretionary Fund**

**Area Budget Requested: £56,551**

**Estimated Match Funding: £4,332**

**Total Project Cost: £60,883**

The Board received the project proposal and subject to final application and full appraisal **AGREED** the recommendation of approval for an Area Budget allocation of £56,551.

➤ **Northern Heartlands – ‘NOW’ social prescribing project**

**Amount Requested: £12,275**

**Match Funding: £1,625**

## **Total Project Cost: £13,900**

The Board received the project proposal and subject to final application and full appraisal **AGREED** the recommendation of approval for an Area Budget allocation of £12,275.

The Board **AGREED** the content of the report.

The Board **AGREED** the proposals detailed in the report and is recommended to approve £177,403 Area Budget funding allocation to the projects as identified in the report.

APW thanked funding panel members for their time and support.

### ➤ **Holiday Activities with Healthy Food**

APW reminded the Board that Durham County Council has secured funding from Department for Education and Durham County Council to deliver holiday activities with healthy food during the school holiday periods.

Funding was available for activities for children, young people, and families during the Christmas Holidays. Each application was assessed and considered by the funding panel. An update on the projects supported will be provided at a future Board meeting.

APW reported that additional funding has been secured from Durham County Council to deliver holiday activities with healthy food over the February half term 2023. The funding allocation is yet to be confirmed and the launch will be early December. Each application will be assessed and considered by the funding panel and an update provided at a future Board meeting.

APW reminded the Board that Wear Rivers Trust was funded to deliver holiday activities over the October half term period. This project was also supported by the Neighbourhood Budgets of Cllr's Sam Zair and Andrew Jackson.

KH gave a brief overview of the delivery and commented positively on the engagement taking place with new participants. KH thanked BASH AAP and Cllr's Sam Zair and Andrew Jackson for the funding. The Board were provided with a update handout.

APW highlighted that Wears River Trust have also been supported to deliver holiday activities in the Christmas Holiday Period. DR and TB requested to be involved.

JH commented positively on the work taking place through the Holiday Activities with Healthy Food programme.

### ➤ **Town and Village Revitalisation**

APW reminded the Board that BASH AAP has an additional £210,000 funding to address the priority of Towns and Villages over 3 years. To date approx.

£88k has been approved. In addition, the AAP team continue to work with Elected Members to support their budget allocation of £10,000 each.

The task group continues to meet and have several projects in development which are all at various stages. The projects are geographically spread across the whole of the BASH AAP area.

The Board received the following Towns and Villages application for information, comment and approval. Each project is subject to a full application and satisfactory project appraisal.

- **Dene Valley and Eldon ASB Project - Durham County Council**  
**BASH T&V Contribution – £37,430**  
**Match Funding - £17,000**  
**Total Cost - £54,430**

AR asked if Durham County Council will liaise with the police with regards to the CCTV and the proposed locations. PH confirmed partnership working will take place.

AR highlighted the wider issues of CCTV across the area, including that of partnership working agreements and data protection issues.

APW explained that there was an underspend from a previous year's security camera project that did not go ahead due to technical issues. This funding could potentially be used to support this project releasing capital funding to support an alternative project.

PQ asked if the council should be providing the dog waste bins. AP explained that the purchase of the dog waste bins, is in addition to those provided by Durham County Council.

There were no further comments from the Board.

The Board were supportive of the project.

The Board received the application and **APPROVED** a recommendation of approval of £37,430.

TB thanked PH for his work in developing this application.

JH thanked the BASH AAP team for their support with the Henknowle Community improvement scheme. This project has now been launched and a press release has been released earlier in the week.

#### ➤ **Neighbourhood Budget**

There were no Neighbourhood Budget applications to present at tonight's meeting.

#### **A6. Coordinators Update**



➤ **F & P Scotto Charitable Trust**

APW provided a brief overview of the work that has taken place with the F & P Charitable Scotto Trust. APW reported that the Trust visited in early September. 14 funding proposals were received. From the last visit the Trust has approved approx. £10k which included contribution to Woodhouse Close Community Centre and Shildon Town Council. BASH AAP are currently awaiting the outcome of the remaining proposals. The Board will be updated accordingly.

➤ **AAP Board Members**

APW informed the Board that, public representative, Phillipa May has resigned from the BASH Board. Recruitment for a public representative will take place in the coming weeks.

➤ **Review of Community Engagement**

APW reported that the review of community engagement is on track, and it is anticipated that a draft report will be available in December 2022. Once finalised the report will then be presented to council and AAP Boards.

➤ **Durham County Council Climate change webinars**

APW highlighted that several climate change webinars will be taking place in the coming weeks. The sessions will include information on reducing energy bills, decarbonising buildings, green space management etc.

APW encouraged Board members to attend.

**ACTION** – APW to circulate further information on the webinars to the Board.

## **A7. Countywide Partner Issues**

➤ **Police / PACT Update**

Insp Andy Reeves gave an update on the main priority issues for the BASH area.

- PACT meetings continue to take place. These are promoted on social media and via the Police website.
- There has been a rise in thefts and vehicle crimes at West Auckland, Bishop Auckland Town Centre and St Helens.
- ASB has reduced by 25% in Bishop Auckland.
- ASB has reduced by 32% in Shildon.
- The war memorial has been damaged at Shildon. The individual has been charged.
- Several drug warrants have taken place in the BASH AAP area. Operation Trident has seen a series of achievements across the area and continues to be a success due to vital community intelligence.

- Off road motorbikes remains an issue. Operation Endurance is in place to tackle this issue. Drones and long-range cameras have been purchased. AR reported that additional funding, to support this scheme, has been secured.
- 2 new PCSO's have been recruited.
- Crimes in Coundon have decreased by 7%
- Youth related crimes have decreased by 33%

#### **A8. Date / Time / Venue for next Board Meeting**

AP stated that this meeting will be his last face to face meeting as he will be retiring. APW stated AP is the longest serving BASH board member and thanked him for his time and dedication to the BASH Board as a board member, panel member and a task group lead. The Board thanked AP and wished him well.

TB thanked Board and Forum members for attending the meeting.

**Board - Thursday 15 December 2022, 4pm, Microsoft Teams**