



Better for everyone

**GREAT AYCLIFFE & MIDDRIDGE PARTNERSHIP (GAMP)
MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING
TUESDAY 31 JANUARY 2023, 6:00PM (via Microsoft Teams)**

PRESENT:

Cllr Eddy Adam – DCC, Cllr James Atkinson – DCC (Chair), Cllr David Sutton-Lloyd – DCC, Cllr Tony Towers – Midldridge Parish, Sue Cooke, Julie Dudley, Simon Hocking, Chris Hutchinson, Peter Shovlin, Natalie Whitworth (Vice Chair), Daniel Blagdon – Health Representative, Andy Coulthard – Livin Housing Representative (Vice Chair), Carol Gaskarth – Voluntary & Community Sector Representative, Andy Kerr – DCC Head of Service Representative, Rosie Woodward – Business Representative, Brian Riley – GAMP Coordinator, Victoria Grieves – GAMP Community Development Project Officer, Paula Stockport – GAMP Support Officer, Angela Blanchard – GAMP Towns & Villages Community Development Project Officer

APOLOGIES:

Insp Sarah Honeyman, Cllr Neville Jones, Oliver Sherratt, Sue Hughes

OBSERVERS:

Mr B Adamson

Standard Board Meeting

1. Introductions & Apologies

Cllr JA opened the meeting, reminding Board members of the standard Declaration of Interest item on the agenda. Cllr JA informed observers they would be welcome to comment under Items 3 and 4 on the agenda.

Cllr JA welcomed Andy Kerr (DCC Head of Economic Development) to his first meeting; Andy has joined alongside Oliver Sherratt as a DCC Head of Service representative and will alternate attendance at meetings going forward.

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

BR highlighted that he had received feedback after the last meeting from a couple of Board members who weren't comfortable with the some of the discussion around Council budgets and felt that this was taking a slightly political tone. BR had picked this up at the time with the members concerned, but wanted to remind all Board members again that, as per our Terms of Reference, the AAPs are a non-political body, and respectfully requested that all Board members, whatever their political leanings may be, refrain from using AAP meetings as a platform for political discussion or 'point-scoring'.

2. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 29.11.22 – Matters Arising

BR confirmed that the draft minutes from the Board meeting held on 29.11.22 had been circulated in advance with the meeting papers; there were no outstanding actions.

There were no matters arising, and the minutes of the last meeting were **AGREED** by the Board as a true and accurate record.

3. Countywide Partner Issues

BR confirmed there were no specific partner presentations scheduled for this evening's meeting, but some space is available on the agenda for any partner reps to give a relevant service update.

AC gave Board members an update on Livin and the Community Partnership's work in the Western area over the last four months. A 'community conversation' exercise was carried out on the estate during the autumn of 2022 via Groundwork. Over 100 conversations took place and concerns highlighted included antisocial behaviour, internal housing improvements, better use of open space, fly-tipping, paths/highways and the development of a new community hub. The Western Partnership has formed a draft Action Plan based upon the conversation, this will now be promoted around the estate during February/March for feedback and to gain community sign-off. Livin and partners have recently secured £75k lottery funding, along with contributions from the Neighbourhood Budgets of Cllrs Eddy Adam and Ken Robson to fund a development worker for the next two years to implement the Action Plan. AC will summarise the community message that will go out in a newsletter for the estate in mid-February and pass onto the GAMP team to circulate to Board members (**Action 1: AC**).

Cllr DSL asked if there is any opportunity for input from other local Cllrs outside of the Western area as part of the scope of Livin's work. AC clarified this piece of work is specific to Western (as one of the two specific 'target' areas Livin are concentrating on for the next few years). AC added that Livin wouldn't discard other areas and would be more than happy to work with Cllrs to look at what could potentially be delivered.

RW highlighted that she feels she's still 'finding her feet' in the Business Rep role, particularly around identifying where the role could help build better connections between, in particular, Aycliffe Business Park and GAMP. Cllr JA commented that the Business Park falls within his ward and he regularly attends meetings there. Cllr JA would be happy to have a chat with RW outside of the board meeting to look at ways to support better links. BR added that items such as GAMP's annual report as well as details of any projects we have funded could be shared with partners on the Business Park, and RW would be welcome to bring any relevant updates from them back to the GAMP Board, the role is about two-way dialogue.

Cllr EA suggested there could potentially be local businesses who would be looking to get more involved in supporting voluntary and community groups, and potentially funding groups and/or projects. This could be an area RW may want to look at through the Business Rep role.

BR confirmed, for the minutes, all information circulated by email from the GAMP team since the last meeting:

- Durham Youth Council Engagement Plan (13.12.22)

- Police Precept Consultation (3.1.23)
- DCC Digital Strategy Consultation (12.1.23)
- DCC Winter Warm Well & Hydrated Campaign (16.1.23)
- DCC Review of Customer Access Points consultation (23.1.23)
- DCC Review of Public Space Protection Order for Dog Ownership consultation (23.1.23)
- DCC Review of Traffic Sensitive Streets consultation (23.1.23)
- DCC Development of a New Play Area at Hardwick Park consultation (23.1.23)

There were no additional partner updates. BR reminded partners to get in touch if they need space on a future meeting agenda.

4. Local Neighbourhood Issues

4.1 Neighbourhood Policing Update

BR updated Board members on behalf of Insp Honeyman; a copy of the update report will be circulated with the minutes. If any Board member has any specific queries for Insp Honeyman, please either forward directly or via the GAMP team.

5. GAMP Coordinator's Update

5.1 GAMP Priorities for 2023/24

BR advised that now is the time AAPs would usually be looking to agree their chosen priorities for the coming financial year. BR reminded Board members that we have been focusing on COVID Recovery and then more recently Community Recovery for the last few years, and this has encompassed the following key themes:

- **Employability initiatives**
- **Advice and Guidance**
- **Mental Health & Wellbeing**
- **Organisational sustainability**
- **Food provision and support**
- **Social Isolation**
- **Support for the Voluntary and Community Sector**
- **Tackling antisocial behaviour**
- **Support to small businesses (through a third party, not-for-profit organisation to complement existing DCC and external opportunities)**
- **Emerging community issues**
- **Targeting Older Peoples Social Isolation**

BR feels that these themes are sufficiently broad-reaching to give us scope to support a wide range of projects. The last two Area Budget project callouts have seen us heavily oversubscribed for funding, which BR feels demonstrates that we've been focusing in the right areas for the issues that continue to affect our communities. BR proposed therefore that the Board consider retaining the Community Recovery priority, with the current subthemes (above), for 2023/24. BR highlighted that AAPs are still awaiting final confirmation of budgets for next year, including the other various funding pots that sit alongside the main Area Budget, but BR is keen that we are 'ready to go' from the start of the new financial year.

CG asked whether the Community Engagement Review would potentially impact on arrangements for the 2023/24 financial year. BR will update on this at Item 5.6, but understands the Review should not impact on 2023/24 priorities.

Cllr DSL stated he feels that the key themes within the overarching Community Recovery priority give us scope to look at pretty much anything we may wish to support/fund, and is happy to retain this priority for the coming year. Cllr JA and AC expressed the same view. Board members **AGREED** to retain Community Recovery as the overarching GAMP priority for 2023/24.

5.2 Area Budget (AB) Update

BR confirmed that the majority of our 2022-23 funded projects are now getting underway. BR plans to visit a couple of projects over the coming weeks, particularly some of the newer groups we haven't previously funded, just to see how things are going. If any Board member has a particular interest in going along to visit any of the 'live' projects, please get in touch with the team so we can look into arranging this for you.

5.3 Neighbourhood Budget (NB) Update

BR confirmed that all Elected Members have recently been contacted by our Head of Partnerships & Community Engagement (Gordon Elliott) reminding them of the year-end arrangements relating to NB this year. Cllrs are only permitted to carry forward any unallocated NB funding where there is a clear 'expression of intent to fund' in place, so that the funding can be ringfenced by our Funding Team. Victoria has emailed all Cllrs to confirm their current funding balances and requesting details of any pipeline schemes, which we are now working on. For information, the collective NB balance across the 7 x GAMP Cllrs (as at 11 January) was £126k. Vic will continue to work with Cllrs on this over the coming weeks.

5.4 Towns & Villages (T&V) Funding Update

BR confirmed that we still have approx. £51k remaining in our T&V budget, which AAPs have until 2024 to allocate. The next subgroup meeting is scheduled for 9 February and BR will keep Board members updated accordingly.

5.5 Fun & Food Funding Update

As a refresher, BR reminded Board members that this is a separate pot of money the AAPs manage on behalf of DCC. The school holidays can be a pressure point for some families because of increased costs (such as food and childcare) and reduced household incomes. For some children, this can lead to a holiday experience gap - with children from disadvantaged backgrounds less likely to access organised out-of-school activities; more likely to experience 'unhealthy holidays' in terms of nutrition and physical health; and more likely to experience social isolation. This funding aims to provide the opportunity for groups and organisations to apply for a grant to help them deliver Fun and Food projects locally during the school holidays.

There are two separate allocations, one from DCC's internal Poverty Action Steering Group (PASG), which covers half-term holiday periods, and one from the Department for Education (DfE) which covers Easter, Summer & Christmas holidays.

For the 2023-24 holidays, the GAMP allocations are as follows:

- PASG - **£26,532** (to cover Feb, May, October 2023 & Feb 2024) – from a Countywide total of £425k
- DfE - **£52,636** – from a Countywide total of £800k

BR noted that this is a substantial budget for the GAMP team to manage alongside mainstream budgets. BR has recently discussed this with Cllr JA and AC. AC had suggested setting up a subgroup to look at how we can potentially better coordinate the funding to ensure a good spread across our area, perhaps working with partners who are already delivering, and ensuring that those most in need benefit from the funding. Cllr JA was in agreement with this proposal.

BR highlighted that the criteria and monitoring requirements for this funding are very specific, and can potentially be off-putting for some applicants. BR will circulate a request to the Board by email, seeking interested volunteers to sit on a subgroup to look at this funding going forward (**Action 2: BR**).

5.6 Community Engagement Review

BR confirmed that AAP Coordinators have had no official updated communication to share with Boards in relation to the Review. We have been advised that an 'initial findings' report from the consultants has gone to DCC's Corporate Management Team for review, and a Cabinet report is expected to be released in June 2023. Coordinators have not had sight of the report at this stage. BR will keep Board members updated on this once further information is available.

5.7 Quarter 3 Project Monitoring Updates

BR confirmed that a copy of the collated update reports for Quarter 3 for all ongoing Area Budget funded projects was circulated in advance with the meeting papers, for information. If any Board member has any queries or would like to arrange a visit to a project, please contact the GAMP team.

Items Not on the Agenda

BR reminded Board members of the importance of responding to emails where we are asking for decisions, particularly in relation to funding applications. Where we circulate an application for approval by email, our Funding Team will not process this for appraisal without a quorate response, i.e. a minimum of 3 x responses from each sector of the Board. We only need Board members to respond with the word 'approved', there is no need to technically appraise projects or provide reams of information, but decisions will not be deemed quorate without the required minimum number of responses. BR highlighted that it can cause additional work for the team having to chase up where responses are short, and also results in delays to projects being passed for appraisal.

6. **Date/Time of Next Meeting: Tuesday 28 March 2023, 6:00pm, Microsoft Teams**

Cllr JA/BR thanked all attendees, and the meeting was closed.