

East Durham Rural Corridor Area Action Partnership Minutes of the
Board Meeting
Thursday 21st September 2023
Trimdon Station Community Centre,

Board Members

Attendance: Allan Blakemore, Melvyn Carr, Stuart Dunn, Mark Readman, Neighbourhood Insp Sarah Honeyman, Cllr Chris Varty, Cllr David Brown, Cllr Chris Lines, Parish Cllr Sandra Dowson, Cllr Jan Blakey, Cllr Gary Hutchinson, Malcolm Gray, Dave Tempest, Tim Dredge.

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

Presenter: Jeff Garfoot, Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services – Durham County Council (DCC)

Forum Members

Attendance: 4 forum members attended the meeting.

Apologies: Marie Ainscough, Kester Noble, Angela Stobbart, George Storey, Christine Carter

1 [Introductions and Apologies](#)

In the absence of Angela Stobbart, Cllr Chris Varty chaired the meeting. Everyone was welcomed to the Board Meeting of the East Durham Rural Corridor Area Action Partnership (EDRC AAP) and a round of introductions followed.

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 the board minutes are made public, therefore should anyone wish to remain anonymous they were to state this.

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.

2 Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 May 2023 & Matters Arising

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

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2023 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

3 Local Neighbourhood Issues (LNI)

3.1 Locality Policing Issues

Neighbourhood Insp Sarah Honeyman provided an update on local policing issues -

Update from Neighbourhood Insp Dave Clarke (Durham Team covering Bowburn, Cassop, Coxhoe, Hett Quarrington Hill, Kelloe and Croxdale)

PACT meetings for the EDRC AAP can be found on Police.uk.

Update from Neighbourhood Insp Phil Carter (Peterlee Team):

- Prolific shoplifter has been recalled to prison and will be there until mid-2024 after thefts across the area.
- Earlier in the month we did an operation with the DVLA – the results are from across Peterlee’s area including EDRC. This is due to many of our suspects and OCG’s using vehicles so we try and do some preventative work around vehicles. We completed 15 visits to centres who provide registration plates. The results were:
 - 9 warning letters issued for non-compliance (registration plates) of record keeping. All 9 suppliers received emails with their warning letter and an information pack.
 - 2 suppliers were removed, as they had given false information. However they were willing to come off the register.
 - 1 supplier, we are waiting on details as he has moved locations.

We are also waiting on an audit list of a motor factor so we can check their records and update any changes that are necessary.

9 vehicles have been reported whilst patrolling the roads for vehicle defects / registration issues.

- We continue our fight against ASB – The start of the month we had an Operation Trailblazer which all teams across the force conducted. PCSO's have visited the hot spot areas for ASB and carried out the Stamp it Out Stencils.

Update from Neighbourhood Insp Sarah Honeyman (Sedgefield, Trimdon Grange/Village and Fishburn):

- In recent weeks there has been a spate of burglaries across Sedgefield and attempted burglaries in Trimdon Village / Grange. The Trimdon burglaries seem to have targeted motorbikes and the Sedgefield burglaries cars/vans.
- This week has been rural crime week and the Sedgefield NPT has worked until midnight visiting local farms and reassuring our rural communities that we care and are there for them. The team also recently attended the Sedgefield show.
- In relation to staffing we have lost a PCSO, Amy Jorgeson who has left the organisation. The team currently consists of 1 PC and 1 PCSO. We hope to add another PCSO after the intake in November.
- We have taken part in Operation Trailblazer to tackle ASB. Our identified hotspot areas are Trimdon Village, Trimdon Grange and Sedgefield. This has increased patrols over the summer specifically for tackling ASB.

The following issues were raised by Board members:

- Off road bikes.
- Large scale theft from Coxhoe, through Quarrington Hill, Cassop, Ludworth, Wheatley Hill, Wingate and then towards Seaham within the last month.
- As there is funding from Trailblazer, could we use it to put up some cameras in Trimdon Grange due to ASB?
- Crimes have been reported in Trimdon Station but as names could not be provided, nothing was done. People are feeling nervous.

4 [Community Engagement Review update](#)

Jane informed Board members that groups are being established to focus on the different aspects of the review, and officers will be allocated onto those working groups. She will continue to update as progress is made.

5 Priority Updates (from Task Group and Project Leads)

5.1 Area Budget Projects

The closing date for Area Budget applications was noon on Thursday 24 August. Three applications were received totalling £21,870.90. Task Group members met on Monday 11 September to discuss applications. Board members received project summaries for each prior to the meeting as follows:

➤ **Police, Sedgefield Police E-Bikes - £6,020.94**

A member of the Task Group raised concerns that e-bikes funded in another AAP area weren't being used. Jane raised this with the project lead and has been assured they will be used. Updates will be provided on usage.

The Board was happy to support this project and the application was approved.

➤ **Sedgefield Cricket Club, Outdoor Seating - £5,202.96**

Jane advised that Task Group members suggested that for any future applications of a similar nature, the group be asked to approach local businesses for sponsorship.

Board members requested that the AAP asks the applicant to look at other suppliers as the benches seem very expensive. Jane agreed to go back to the applicant for further information.

➤ **Rose Cottage Community Hub, Rose Cottage Community Kitchen - £10,647.00**

Jane informed Board members that concerns had been raised with the group being based in a private building.

The Board agreed not to support this project.

The project call out will be relaunched on Friday 22nd September 2023.

The next Task Group meeting will take place at 10am on Tuesday 7th November.

5.2 October Half-Term 2023 Fun and Food

7 application packs were requested, and 6 applications were returned by the deadline. The AAP team are currently working through applications and raising any queries with applicants.

A panel meeting will be held via Teams at 10am on Friday 29th September with the AAP and Fun and Food Team. Several Board members have confirmed

their attendance. Any other Board members who are interested in attending should contact the AAP team.

Board members will be updated in due course.

6 Countywide Partner Issues:

6.1 Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24

Jeff Garfoot, Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services – DCC delivered a presentation providing an overview of Durham County Council's 2024/2025 Forecast Revenue Budget Consultation.

We would like to hear your views on our spending plans, the current savings proposals and on which areas you feel we should prioritise for further, future savings including:

- Our proposals for saving £3.7 million and how these may impact on you.
- Our proposal to increase council tax for 2024/25 by 4.99% (with 2% of that to help meet rising adult social care costs)
- What other service areas we should prioritise for savings to meet the shortfall of £6.2 million for next year, and also to achieve the remaining £43.5 million required in savings over the next four years.

To have your say you can:

- Complete an online survey on www.durham.gov.uk/consultation
- Pick up a paper survey at our libraries and Customer Access Points
- Attend one of the AAP Board meetings.
- Contact us at www.durham.gov.uk/consultation if you need the information in an alternative format.

The closing date for online comments is 5.00pm on Friday 20 October 2023.

Jeff was thanked for his presentation and the meeting was opened for discussion. The following points and questions were raised:

- What is the reason for the increase in children in care?
- One of the topics raised in the scrutiny board was about looked after children and the alarming rise. Some work needs to be done to investigate what is the root cause of that.
- I've heard people say what needs to happen is for councils that are well run to declare that they've run out of money to force the government to review. Could that happen?

- Is there an argument to say that service wise we look at bringing children's care homes back in house? Is there a consideration to bring that in?
- Do we have £260M worth of cuts from the government?
- Is it true the cost of reopening the DLI museum as an arts centre is £15M? Is that not somewhere we should be saving money?
- Do new developments make a difference to the council tax band levels?
- The council came up with a figure years ago on how to make money on student accommodation. Landlords are making money through renting but not paying it on council tax.
- Private taxis are taking children with special needs to schools in different locations. Surely there must be closer schools?
- Council tax support scheme – DCC don't advertise well how we support our most vulnerable people. Could this be advertised before the council tax bills go out?

7 Co-ordinator's Report

Jane will continue to attend countywide groups as well as local meetings and will update Board members as and when necessary.

8 Neighbourhood Budget Projects

The following Neighbourhood Budget (NB) projects were shared with the Board:

Name of Scheme: Sedgefield Christmas Tree Festival

Councillor(s): Brown / Lines

Interest Declared: Yes, Cllr Lines has booked a tree to decorate at the event.

Amount: £1,000.00

Name of Scheme: Sedgefield Police E-Bikes

Councillor(s): Varty

Interest Declared: No

Amount: £1,000.00

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

9 Date and time of next board meeting

Date and time of next meeting – Scheduled Tuesday 21st November 2023 – Jane asked Board members if there were any issues with changing the date.

Board members agreed to move the next Board meeting to Thursday 23rd November 2023 via Teams.

Subsequent Board Meeting Dates

- Wednesday 24th January 2024
- Thursday 21st March 2024, Cassop Community Centre

Everyone was thanked for their attendance and the meeting closed.