

**3 Towns Partnership Board Meeting  
5.30pm on Thursday 14 March 2024  
Crook Civic Centre**

**PRESENT:**

**Partner Organisations**

Gordon Elliott  
Jonothan Holmes  
Sgt Grant Cockerill  
Insp Ed Turner  
Helen Ward

**Public Representatives**

Pauline Moger  
Mary Hall  
Fiona Nicol  
Dianne Mackay  
David Dixon  
Chris Ebdon

**Elected Members**

Councillor Richard Manchester, Durham County Council  
Councillor Patricia Jopling, Durham County Council  
Councillor Anne Reed, Durham County Council  
Councillor Mike Currah, Durham County Council

**Co-opted Members**

Councillor Paul Stokes, Tow Law Town Council

**Officer Attendance:**

Sandy Denney	AAP Coordinator
Nicola Woodgate	Community Development Project Officer
Joanne Ashworth	Towns and Villages Community Development Project Officer

**Presenters:** Jonothan Holmes, County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service,  
Joanne Ashworth, Towns and Villages Community Development Project Officer

**Public Attendance:**

4 members of the public were in attendance.

**Apologies:** Councillor Margaret Elgie, Greater Willington Town Council, Councillor Fraser Tinsley, Durham County Council, Councillor Olwyn Gunn, Durham County Council, Liz Bradley, Graham Tomaszko, Jay Conlon, Susan Richardson

### **A1. Welcome and Introductions**

RM opened the meeting and thanked the Board for attending. RM informed the Board that ME will be standing down as the Greater Willington Town Council representative. He thanked her for her time on the Board. ET also informed the Board that this was his last meeting as he is retiring in April. ET told the Board that he had enjoyed his time on the Board and was pleased with how much had been achieved in his time in working with the partnership. ET said that the initiatives had definitely made the 3 Towns area a safer place. ET informed the Board that his successor would be Insp Mike Sammut. RM thanked ET for all of the work that he had done in his time on the 3 Towns Partnership Board.

### **A2. Agreement of minutes from the previous meeting 9 November 2024 – Matters Arising**

The minutes from the last meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.

### **A3. Local Neighbourhood Issues**

#### **Neighbourhood Budget Applications and Neighbourhood Budget Report**

NW gave an update on Neighbourhood Budget and said three applications had been circulated to the Board electronically since the last meeting.

NW said there were two applications for discussion at the meeting, both of which are for comment only as there were no declarations of interest

#### **1. Replacement Flooring at Howden le Wear Village Hall**

**Councillor Mike Currah and Patricia Jopling**

NB £4,000; Match £378.49; Total £4378.49

The Board were informed that Cllrs Currah and Jopling do not have a declaration of interest therefore the project is for comment only. No comments were received.

#### **2. Crook Street Food Market**

**Councillor Mike Currah and Patricia Jopling**

NB £2,000; Match £14,598.75; Total £16,598.75

The Board were informed that Cllrs Currah and Jopling do not have a declaration of interest therefore the project is for comment only. No comments were received.

### **A4. Priorities and Action Plans**

#### **Action Plan and Project Updates**

SD told the Board about the budgets which are available for the new financial year.

- Area Budget - £70,000 Revenue, £30,000 Capital
- Additional Area Budget returned grant £14,283.70.
- Big Arts Funding- £10,000 revenue
- Poverty Action Funding £10,000

SD explained that the Big Arts funding is new funding being offered to AAPs. It needs to be allocated quickly as projects need to be underway for World Mental Health day in October. The funding is to use Culture and Arts to enhance mental health, wellbeing and resilience focusing on protective factors and enhancing a sense of belonging. 3 Towns has £10,000 to allocate and the minimum grant

is £2500. SD reminded the Board that all budgets need to be fully allocated by the end of December this year and that this may be disrupted by the pre-election period for the May elections and the General election when it is called.

### **Fun and Food**

SD outlined the changes to the Fun and Food programme from Easter onwards. Only children who receive free school meals (FSM) are now eligible for holiday places funded by the DfE. Provision must now be at least 4 hours long. Tickets have been given out by schools to those who are eligible containing a link to a centralised booking system. Funding is no longer available for half term holidays. £425,000 has been secured from the UK Shared Prosperity fund for non-FSM places going forward. The details of how this will be managed is not yet available. A discussion took place and concerns were raised around the impact of the changes.

**Action – AAP team to arrange a meeting for all groups who have previously delivered Fun and Food projects once the details for the summer holidays are known.**

### **Feedback from Network event 28 February 2024**

SD told the Board that 45 people attended the network event representing community groups and partner organisations. The event went really well with groups feeding into a slido presentation and then discussions in groups around the issues which affect their organisation and their service users. Time was also given for networking, which was requested at the first event.

The main issues facing organisations were associated with funding, volunteers and transport related issues. The main issues facing service users were financial related issues; transport, health and wellbeing; social isolation, lack of activities for Children and Young People. All of these things would be covered under our community recovery themes. As transport was highlighted as a main issue under both sections, SD suggested that we create a task group to look at this issue. This was agreed.

**Action – AAP team to create a Transport task group and arrange the first meeting.**

The Board agreed that a call out for projects should be launched as soon as possible around the community recovery themes. Discussion took place around the possibility of including a maximum grant amount this year to ensure that the funding is available to as many groups as possible. The Board were given the statistics around the highest, lowest and average grants for the last 5 years. The Board agreed a maximum grant of £20,000 for this call out.

**Action – AAP to launch a call for projects with the Community Recovery themes as soon as possible.**

### **Towns and Villages Presentation**

JA gave a presentation on the projects funded via the Towns and Villages programme in the 3 Towns.

The Board were informed that this was also Joanne's last Board meeting and that she had secured another job within the AAPs. The Board thanked Joanne for her work and wished her well in her new job.

### **3 Towns Activities Timetable.**

SD reminded the Board that the activities timetable was created at the request of the Board a few years ago. The timetable has been updated on a quarterly basis as well as producing separate timetables for the school holidays. However, over the last few updates, the response from providers has been decreasing and activities cannot be included unless they have been confirmed as being up to date. This has resulted in much less information being available in the timetables. It was

suggested that we moved to update the timetables every 6 months in the hope that groups would respond better if the request was less frequent. The Board agreed to trial this approach and for the team to report back at a later date.

**Action – AAP Team to change to updating the activities timetable on a 6 monthly basis and report back to the Board at a later date.**

#### **A5. Countywide Partners**

##### **Community Risk Management Plan consultation – Jono Holmes, County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service**

JH gave a presentation on the Community Risk Management plan.

**Action – AAP to circulate the presentation to the Board and forum members present.**

**Action – JH to forward advertising suitable for social media to the AAP. AAP Team to circulate in the e-bulletin and on the partnership's Facebook page.**

**Action JH to send details of how to refer people for Home Safety visits to the AAP team. AAP to circulate this information to the Board, in ebulletin and on Facebook.**

#### **Locality Policing Update**

GC gave an update on policing in the 3 Towns. It has been a good few months for crime, the rise in thefts has been tackled and these figures are now decreasing. Operation trident had been tackling inquisitive crime around burglaries and these were now lower. Antisocial behaviour has also improved. There has been some targeting of cars around Glenholme Park but that arrests had been made. In Willington, there have been issues with eggs and mud being thrown at cars. Suspects have been identified and visits will be made soon. Willington Youth hub is also due to open in the coming weeks.

In terms of police numbers, some PCSOs have left to become PC's but recruitment has taken place and new PCSOs in will be in the team soon. The drone, funded by 3 Towns, has now been ordered. It is expected that this will be of huge benefit to the area especially in tackling issues such as off-road bikes.

A discussion took place around West Springs and perceived issues with some of the residents. The Board were informed that funding is currently not being given for any new residents to West Springs. The residents generally have issues with drink or drugs or other vulnerabilities and unfortunately are not receiving the support that they need.

A discussion was held around whether any issues existed in the community as a result of the increasing diverse population. No issues have been experienced and generally refugees have been warmly accepted. The Board were offered the opportunity to receive a presentation from the Humanitarian support team.

**Action – AAP team to arrange a presentation from the Humanitarian support team.**

#### **Feedback from Bus Board**

PS gave an update from the recent Bus Board meeting. Arriva have been bought out by another company. A new timetable starts on 31<sup>st</sup> March which includes a long awaited bus service to Tow Law on Sundays and Bank Holidays. Discussion had also taken place around anti-social behaviour in Stanley and Durham bus stations.

### **County Durham Partnership Forum**

RM gave an update on the last County Durham Partnership Forum meeting which he attends as chair of the 3 Towns. A presentation had been given about the Humanitarian support programme and Towns and Villages programme, both of which have already been discussed earlier in the meeting. RM commented that other AAP areas have funded very similar projects to 3 Towns from their towns and villages programmes – e.g. Traffic and play projects.

### **A6. Date and time of next meeting**

**5.30pm on Thursday 16 May 2024 at 5.30pm**