

Chester-le-Street & District Area Action Partnership (AAP) Board Meeting Minutes of Meeting held Monday 5th February 2024.

Present:

Councillors: Alison Batey, Tracie Smith, Julie Scurfield, Phil Heaviside, Elsie Forrester (Parish Council Representative) and Emma Waldock.

Partner Organisations: Inspector Lee Morris (Police), Suzanne Jobson (Karbon Homes), and Marion Ingleby (Durham County Council).

Public Representatives: Clare Todd, Jake Rollings,

Officer Attendance: Michael Wilkes (Principal AAP Co-ordinator), Laura Sloan, Allyson Rose (Community Development Project Officers), Peter Garrod, (Principal Community Development Officer) and Lesley Lines (Support Officer).

Apologies: Howell Davies (Public Representative), Joanne Malki (Business Association Representative), Colleen Baker (VCS Representative), Colin Stephenson (NHS), Cllr. Bill Moist, Janet Ford Davidson (Public Representative), Chris Hoy, (Public Representative), Graeme Carr (Durham & Darlington Fire & Rescue) and Khaled Malki (Public Representative),

Public Attendance: Three members of the AAP Public Forum were present at the meeting.

Introductions, Apologies and Virtual Housekeeping Code of Conduct/Protocols

Cllr Alison Batey (Chair) opened the meeting. Housekeeping arrangements were noted. Apologies were also noted as above.

The Chair highlighted the Board was not quorate. Item 6 would therefore be circulated around the Board.

Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Agreement of minutes from the previous meeting held on Monday 27th November 2023 & Matters Arising

The Chair went through the minutes page by page.

The Board agreed the minutes of Monday 27th November 2023.

Matters Arising

Page 2 – Michael advised the presentation had been circulated to Board Members with regards the Council Budget Consultation.

Page 2 – Chester-le-Street Flood Resilience – Peter advised he was still awaiting further information regarding the full application, based on enhancing the programme to request the remaining Town & Villages funds. This will be circulated electronically given the time scales.



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Page 4 – MK Youth Sports CIC – Peter advised that the delivery plan had been made available with the full application on Teams.

Neighbourhood Issues

Michael advised that no neighbourhood issues had been raised prior to the meeting. The Chair asked Board Members if they would like to raise any. No issue were forthcoming.

The Chair highlighted the reinstating of car parking charges in Chester-le-Street from 1st January. The Chair advised a motion had gone to full council last month, requesting for the charges to be reconsidered.

The Chair also advised there was a petition online where residents could have their say.

Clare Todd highlighted that there was a massive concern amongst businesses in the town after 2pm. She advised she had spoken to businesses who were reporting a fall in business during the afternoon when children were collected from school.

The Chair highlighted there was full cross-party support for bringing back free, after 2pm parking.

Cllr Julie Scurfield asked if a letter could be sent to The Leader of the Council on behalf of the AAP Board, highlighting the impact.

Clare Todd also asked that the Chair send a letter to the Business Association asking for support.

The Chair asked for a show of hands in favour. The Board were in full agreement.

Marion highlighted as the Durham County Council Representative, she would be unable to take part in the vote.

Action: Chair to liaise with Michael with regards a letter being sent to the Leader of the Council.

AAP Project Presentation

Warm Packs Project – Clare Robinson, Pelton Community Association, gave an overview of the two-year project. She highlighted the money had gone farther than expected by buying in bulk and involving groups to knit hats and scarfs. To date, 416 packs had been distributed. Partnership working and residents have brought people together and networking has helped with social isolation.

The project aim was to try and encourage people to get into better habits within the home. Included in the packs were water bottles, to pop into bed before going to bed to save having to put on an electric blanket. Also included was a flask to try and encourage people to fill the flask and drink from this during the day instead of keep boiling the kettle. All of these little things add up to a big saving.

The project has already run a full year with another roll out this November, working with different service providers i.e. The Police, Fire & Rescue, Aspire, local churches/chapels, MK Youth, schools, craft groups.

Clare highlighted that the packs would only be given out once to each person but it is hoped this year the project will reach even more people. With new partnerships working together and people connecting with neighbours, the project has had a knock on effect with social isolation. Clare thanked the AAP Board for the funding.

The Chair opened the floor to questions;

Inspector Morris highlighted the Police had worked very closely with Clare distributing packs to people in need and advised of the great work the community centre had achieved.

Suzanne advised Karbon have now made their teams smaller and that will enable Karbon staff to become more involved with the project. She advised she would e-mail her Team Leaders to introduce them to Clare. She also highlighted Silver Friends, which could potentially include residents who would benefit from the project.

Cllr Heaviside highlighted after attending a governor meeting, it was highlighted that the cost-of-living crisis has caused dental poverty. Clare advised that the dental practices in the area were now donating packs of toothbrushes and toothpaste and more practices were now getting on board.

Clare advised that the project would continue to help people in need with enough products for another 47 packs.

Mick highlighted that Pelton Community Association also had additional funding for food poverty.

The Chair highlighted the need to work with schools in order to hold packs to distribute to targeted families which would potentially be less embarrassing than them coming to community centres.

Clare also advised that 50 slow cookers were delivered this week. Clare also noted that a project that aims to teach people to cook with ingredients in order to stretch their money further, was underway.

The Chair thanked Clare on behalf of the Board for her presentation.

2024/2025 Area Budget Priorities Report

Peter talked through the report.

Peter advised the Board that the current priorities/Task Groups were as follows:

- Towns & Villages and Environment
- Community Support – focussed on mental health and wellbeing
- Cost of Living.

The primary focus of these task groups has been to consider projects which could be developed using Area Budget funding.

In the first financial year of having these priorities, the Task Groups supported 16 projects.

Peter highlighted that this is the final year as being operational as AAPs. He noted that, due to the tight timescales associated with the next financial year and the fact that we were collectively having to plan for the emergence of Local Networks, it is recommended that the Board agree we maintain the same priority themes for the upcoming financial year.

It was also noted that, in recent months, it has been increasingly difficult to develop projects through Task Groups but a 'call for projects' has proven to be successful. It is therefore recommended that the Board agree to allocate funds via a 'call for projects' process for next financial year.



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If those recommendations are agreed by the Board, it is suggested that the three current Task Groups merge into one. The focus of this group will be to develop and deliver a call for projects and provide project updates. Ongoing work and actions from the current task groups will also be carried forward.

It is recommended the combined Task Group meets on a monthly basis. This will be facilitated by the AAP Team and chaired by an AAP Board Member.

The rationale for the suggested changes is to ensure all the Area Budget is allocated in a timely manner in the lead up to the relaunch of the service area and that it will also encourage more attendance at Task Group meetings.

Peter highlighted that the Board could still support ongoing projects such as the Christmas Event if desired.

The Chair highlighted that the Board was not quorate, and this would need to be e-mailed for comment.

Suzanne agreed that this was a good idea, given the timescales associated with next financial year.

Agreed: It was agreed to e-mail Board Members the report for a full decision on the recommendations.

Holiday Activities with Healthy Food (HAWHF) Report

Peter talked through the report.

Peter noted that, for the first time in a long time, for the Christmas period, there was more funding available than we received applications for. Five applications were received and all five were supported.

February half-term saw a significant over bid of the funding available. Thirteen applications, totalling more than £20,000 were received with only £7,341 budget available. The panel therefore could only support five projects over this holiday period.

Peter thanked Ally and Laura for all the hard work that goes in to pulling everything together for Fun and Food. Peter highlighted the closing date for Easter is Wednesday 07th February.

Peter also gave a huge thanks to the Board Members who are able to attend the panel meetings. Peter encouraged as many Board Members as possible to attend future panels meetings.

Peter advised that, from, Easter the guidance around the HAWHF would change. Panel members will be briefed at the panel on relevant changes to guidance.

A discussion took place.

Clare asked if others thought there would be a drop in applications?

Suzanne highlighted that by projects increasing their match, the projects could keep going and deliver to non-free school meal children.

Cllr Scurfield noted the difficulties with the proposed changes in criteria and guidance but did agree, to an extent, that the projects needed to be as targeted as possible.

The Chair highlighted that elected members needed to meet up to discuss better supporting the projects.

Partner Updates

Police

Inspector Morris highlighted that the team in Pelton was growing and that a new Sergeant was due to start in the area as Kay was now being promoted to a Sergeant in the Peterlee area. The Chair asked Inspector Morris to pass on the regards of the Board.

He advised that he and his team were working closely with businesses and have had a lot of success with tackling shoplifting. He highlighted joint work with Trading Standards over the past three months relating to tackling illegal vapes. To date £19,500 worth of vapes had been ceased.

Trail-Blazer which is funded by the Police Crime Commissioner (PCC) has paid for overtime for more staff, tackling anti-social behaviour. He highlighted that anti-social behaviour figures are down, due to more officers being on the streets.

Inspector Morris highlighted the recent cannabis grows within the town. He highlighted that the less empty shops the less chance of these grows taking place. He asked that people be vigilant and report any suspicions. Intelligence is always welcome.

He highlighted that the Police are working closely with Karbon to stop anti-social behaviour, working to secure evictions.

Inspector Morris advised that he had once again applied for funding from the PCC to fund roadshows, giving out crime prevention equipment. He would update the Board on the outcome.

Inspector Morris noted that the force are working with Karbon to set up a facility for young people the Avenues.

Inspector Morris advised the Board that Market Activity Week had become too big of a project for the Police to solely maintain themselves. He highlighted that for this to continue, more help would be needed.

The Chair agreed it was a victim of its own success, after this year it was time to revisit this project. The Chair gave a massive thank you to Adrian and Christine for their key role in the project.

Michael advised he was happy to meet up with Inspector Morris with a view to taking this forward. **Action: Michael and Inspector Morris.**

Karbon

Suzanne highlighted the restructure of the housing teams making the teams smaller so they can get out onto their patches more and interact with residents.

Suzanne noted Silver Friends has moved premises as it is now too big for West Lane.

Inspector Morris highlighted that it was much easier working with Karbon's new smaller teams.

AAP Co-ordinators Update

Area Budget & Towns and Villages Update – Michael advised that the full amount was not yet spent. He highlighted that an application was due in soon. Once received it would be sent around the Board.

Staff Update - Michael advised that Peter Garrod was moving to the BASH AAP as a the Co-ordinator for a 30 month secondment period. The Board wished him well and thanked him for his support.

E Bulletin – Michael highlighted that a limited response had been received to the survey, however they were all positive comments which supported a fortnightly edition.

Public Representative vacancy – Michael advised that a Public Representative vacancy has now arisen. A recruitment process will now begin. It will be advertised on Facebook and through the E Bulletin etc.

2024 – 2025 Board Meeting Schedule – Full schedule would be sent to Board and Forum members electronically. Michael highlighted a change to March's date.

Community Engagement Review – An update will be brought to a subsequent Board Meeting.

Any Other Business

Michael advised that the AAP's would be receiving £10,000 from Public Health to be spent by October this year. The money to be spent on arts and culture projects. He advised further discussions will take place once the criteria has been received.

Date and Time of the next meeting

Monday 18th March 2025. Venue TBC