

# DERWENT VALLEY PARTNERSHIP (DVP) BOARD MEETING MINUTES

20 March 2024, Salvation Army Hall, Consett at 6pm



## **Present:**

### **Elected Representatives**

Cllrs Stephen Robinson (Vice Chair), Kathryn Rooney and Alex Watson.

### **Partner Organisations**

Mark Clelland (Vice Chair) (Derwentside Trust), Allan Hobson (Co Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS)), Alison Lazazzera (Durham County Council (DCC)) and Philip Pollard (Karbon Homes).

### **Public Representatives**

John Marshall, Lea McConnell (Chair) and Rosemary Morris.

### **DVP**

Corinne Walton (AAP Co-ordinator), Lynn Dougal (Support Officer), Kath Clements and Laura Sloan (Community Development Project Officers).

### **Members of the Public: 10**

**Presenter:** Allan Hobson, CDDFRS

### **Apologies:**

Elected Reps: Cllrs Veronica Andrews, Michelle Walton and Watts Stelling. Partner Reps: Kathleen Berry (Integrated Care Board) and Donna Tunney (The Hub). Public Reps: Helen Marley and David Scott.

## **1. Meeting opened by the Coordinator**

Corinne Walton welcomed everyone to the meeting and went through housekeeping.

Board members introduced themselves and apologies were noted as above. Apologies were also received from Cllr Alan Shield, who was due to give an update regarding premises in Middle Street - a brief update is at Agenda Item 8. Allan Hobson was acknowledged at the meeting as he was giving a presentation. There were no declarations of interest.

## **2. Minutes of Previous Board Meeting (31 January 2024)**

### *Matters arising*

Page 5/6. Regarding the £10k PGT Discretionary Fund, £7,496 was allocated to the third ranked project from the Contingency Budget (NHS Foundation Trust) to support the shortfall. The remaining £2,504 was offered to the next ranked project (Sportworks) who unfortunately could not accept the money due to commitments to other projects. Therefore the £2,504 was offered to 1st Dipton Scout and Guide Group (as the next ranked project) and they welcomed the

contribution.

There were no further comments/matters arising and the minutes were AGREED.

### 3. Partner Update

*Allan Hobson gave a presentation on the County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2024-2027, and the consultation linked to it.*

The presentation gave an overview on the fire service, their achievements and performance and the CRMP. The CRMP considers and meets the changing risks in the community and ensures the safety of the public and the fire and rescue service staff. The public are asked for their views on the Plan which will help shape the service for the next three years (a copy of the presentation is available upon request).

The Plan and Community Risk Profile is available online at: <https://www.ddfire.gov.uk/service-plans>.

The public are asked for their views/agreement on the following:

1. Do you agree with the Service's approach to keeping you safe?
2. Do you agree with their commitments outlined in the plan?
3. Do you have any comments on their plans for 2024-2027?

Hard copies of the questionnaires were given out at the meeting. The survey is available online at <https://www.ddfire.gov.uk/community-risk-consultation>.

The consultation closes on 10 May 2024.

Following the presentation, the following questions/comments were noted:

- What types of premises/industries are most at risk?  
Generally commercial takeaways/fast food restaurants are most likely to take risks. Larger commercial premises tend to have good practices in place; however, we do keep an eye on them as well as the smaller outlets.
- Do you share your ideas in schools?  
Community Safety Teams are active in schools and have programmes for those children potentially falling out of the education system. They also reach out to schools with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Do you know of or have any issues with electrical vehicle chargers and cars catching fire?  
They have noticed an increase in these and have safety guidance on their website. If any fire service nationally has a particular trend in something that is causing fires, it is highlighted and shared with all the services.
- It was suggested that bike retailers could give out leaflets to those who buy an electric bike/upgrade their pedal bike to electric to make them aware of the possible dangers with electrical charging.

This was considered to be a good idea, especially as the quality and cost of batteries vary which can bring additional risks.

- Does the fire service still have a young fire fighters' squad?  
Yes, they have young fire fighters and cadets.
- Does the fire service still provide emergency support for health services?  
They did provide additional help during covid. They also trialled 'first responders' where they would attend if an ambulance was unavailable, however this support tends to be mainly in rural areas.
- Are you linked to the utility companies who offer priority services to vulnerable people?  
Allan was unsure about this and said he would find out more about it.

Lea McConnell thanked Allan for his presentation and input at the meeting.

#### **4. DVP Task Group Update**

Corinne gave an update on the 4 Task Groups, which the Board received copies of and the associated paperwork prior to the Board meeting.

##### *Environment Task Group*

The group met on 12 March and are continuing with their work around project development.

Regarding the DVP Environment Conference, the planning subgroup met on 6 March and came up with a few suggestions around invitees, target audience and format. The Board were asked for their ideas/suggestions relating to the conference that the subgroup could consider at their next meeting on 5 April.

Following a brief discussion, the following comments were noted:

- To get in touch with the National Farmers Union (NFU) as they will have a specialist for looking into future sustainability.
- Organisations who can offer advice about alternative energy sources other than wind/solar power. For example, the untapped resource in Durham of geothermal heating, hydros.
- As well as raising awareness on using heating appliances efficiently to save money and energy, could also include the safety aspect of using these appliances.
- Find out who has responsibility for the willow growing near Ushaw College and invite them along. Lea said he is involved in this which is a biomass process.

The Climate Fresk Workshop is on 17 April at St Patrick's Church Hall. Places are limited and need to be booked in advance.

Discussions are continuing around a Derwent Valley Schools Walking Bus scheme. The group are looking at running a pilot project with 5 schools in the DVP area.

A Repair Café (for small electricals) will be launched in June in Medomsley with other venues in the DVP area being explored.

A Pre-loved Fashion Show is still being explored with possible links to it being held during a summer festival in Consett Town Centre.

The group would like to recommend the following project for the Board to consider funding:

- ❖ **Derwent Valley Community Growing and Food Network** - Community Growing, £17,020.  
To add value to the current Food and Growing Programme which will offer networking, training, workshop and funding opportunities for those involved.

John Marshall has concerns about the project as it produces not much other than giving advice and feels there are other people who could give advice free of charge. Corinne said that there are costs initially for setting up the network. However, money will be spent on tools, equipment and 60 hours of worker time. OASES offer practical support to help to make the sites sustainable with each site awarded £900. It was also noted that the project is over 2 years.

Rosemary Morris suggested that as the project develops and nears its end, they are able to demonstrate what the outcomes are and provide an update.

After a brief discussion about the benefits of learning to grow sustainably, knowing when and how to plant seeds, community cohesion and being outdoors the Board then voted on the proposal. The majority of the Board APPROVED to fund the Community Growing project £17,020 from the 2023/24 Area Budget.

As there will be no further meetings of this task group, due to the DVP having one overarching priority task group in 2024-25, Corinne thanked Ann English (Chair), Rosemary Morris (Vice Chair) and task group members for their time and input to the work of the group.

#### *Employment, Education and Training (EET) Task Group*

The group met on 7 March and discussed one expression of interest proposal and ideas around ringfencing money for future projects.

The expression of interest proposal received from Foundation for Good (creation of Connecting the Derwent Valley website) for £10,500 was rejected by the group. It was felt that it did not meet the action plan themes, it duplicated existing website provision and concerns were raised regarding the long-term sustainability of the website.

The task group has £16,545 remaining (£10,500 plus clawback of EMBOSS project funding £2,828.49 and underspent funds from previous projects) and would like to recommend to the Board that this money be ringfenced for a project aimed at achieving the following:

- increased employer engagement;
- increased employer and prospective employee interaction in both a face to face and digital capacity and;
- the creation of a centralised information source for local job vacancies, training, apprenticeship and skills opportunities

The £16,545 will be added to the DVP's 2024-25 Area Budget and further discussions will be undertaken by the new priority task group to ascertain costs/deliverer and more details will be available in due course.

The Board APPROVED the task group's recommendation to ringfence £16,545 towards an EET related project.

There will be no further meetings of this task group, due to the DVP having one overarching priority task group in 2024-25, and Corinne thanked Mark Clelland (Chair) and task group members for their time and input to the work of the group.

#### *Health and Wellbeing (HWB) Task Group*

The group met on 28 February and the main focus of the meeting was to discuss suicide prevention and support for those in crises. If U Care Share, who provide a range of services aimed at prevention, intervention and supporting those bereaved by suicide, gave an update on their work locally.

Based on the discussions above, the task group would like to recommend to the Board that their underspend of £8,530 be ringfenced for a suicide prevention awareness and training related project.

The Board APPROVED the task group's recommendation to ringfence £8,530 towards a suicide prevention project.

As with the other task groups, there will be no further meetings of this task group, due to the DVP having one overarching priority task group in 2024-25. Corinne thanked John O'Connor (Chair) and task group members for their time and input to the work of the group.

Kath Clements also thanked everyone who has been involved in the work of HWB Task Group.

Mark Clelland thanked the DVP officers for their time and support in the task groups. Lea concurred with Mark's comments and said that everything functions well due to the support of the DVP Team.

## **5. DVP Towns and Villages Programme**

Corinne gave an update on the Towns and Villages (T&V) Programme on behalf of Joanne Ashworth.

The T&V Programme will officially end on 31 March 2024 and Joanne Ashworth, T&V Officer, has taken up a new position of Community Development Project Officer with Mid Durham AAP. Corinne thanked Joanne for her work on the T&V programme and wished her well in her new role.

All AAPs were allocated £210k to spend on towns and villages related projects. The DVP's allocation supported 5 projects (which brought in additional matching funding of £144,373):

- **Speed and Traffic Management Project, £72,260**  
Local initiatives to address speeding and traffic related concerns in villages across the area.
- **Community Speedwatch Vehicle, £37,740**  
Community Speedwatch vehicle to be used by volunteers to help tackle speeding issues across the area. It is anticipated that the vehicle will be ready late spring/early summer.
- **Zero Carbon project (BEEP), £56,000**  
Support to businesses to reduce carbon emissions and support them to be more sustainable.
- **Supporting Consett Town Centre, £40,745**  
Events for the town centre, improve signage around the town and promote the businesses and events in the area.
- **Visit Consett website development, £3,255**  
Enhancement of Visit Consett website to include business information and events.

Cllr Watson asked what would happen if there were no volunteers for the community speedwatch vehicle. Corinne said it would be used in other areas. It would be a resource that we have paid for and would be used elsewhere in the county, therefore it is imperative that we get volunteers to help run the project. There are plans for a recruitment campaign to get volunteers which will give advice on volunteering, training, areas to be covered and more.

A Forum member said it could be difficult to know what the speed limits are as several signs, particularly in the Consett area, are unreadable/faded.

Each councillor was allocated £10k to spend on town and villages related projects in their locality. The following projects were supported by our 11 local councillors:

- **Cllr Alan Shield and Cllr Watts Stelling**  
£20,000, Hamsterley and Low Westwood play improvements.
- **Cllr Alex Watson**  
£10,000, Access improvements Consett (CCTV project in Middle Street arcade).
- **Cllr Angela Sterling and Cllr Michelle Walton**  
£11,256, Templetown and Delves Lane play area.  
£8,744, 49 Crookhall pitch improvements.
- **Cllr Declan Mulholland and Cllr Veronica Andrews**  
£20,000, Flint Hill and Burnopfield play area improvements.
- **Cllr Dominic Haney**  
£10,000, Moorside play area improvements.
- **Cllr Kathryn Rooney**  
£4,963.50, Blackfyne park playing pitches.  
£5,037.50, Kennedy Care Centre.
- **Cllr Kevin Earley**  
£5,000 Zero Carbon Consett.  
£5,000 Zero Carbon Consett website.
- **Cllr Stephen Robinson**  
£10,000, Pemberton Road traffic calming.

Corinne read out a short message from Joanne which thanked the DVP Board, T&V Task Group members and the Chair, Rosemary Morris. She thanked everyone for making her so welcome

and for helping to make this such a successful programme.

Rosemary gave her personal thanks to Joanne.

## **6. DVP 2024-2025 Budget Confirmation, New Funding and Notice of Election**

### *DVP 2024-2025 Budget*

The DVP's budget for 2024/2025 will be £110k and is made up of:

- £90k Area Budget (AB) (split between £60k revenue / £30k capital)
- £10k Youth Fund (£10k revenue)
- £10k Poverty Action (can be used for capital and revenue projects)

Funding from the Department for Education (DfE) is available for delivery of Fun and Food activities during the Easter, Summer and Christmas school holidays, approx £57k.

### *New Funding*

Funding of £10k from Public Health for The Big Arts Project which focuses on projects that promote good mental health and its links to culture and art.

Projects should work across all age groups and abilities and encourage people to come together in local community venues. Activities could include dance/movement, music, drama, visual/performing arts, painting and sculptures. There is a requirement that 25% match funding is obtained. The minimum funding request is £2,500. All projects must commence delivery by 30 September 2024.

Corinne advised that a project call out will go out in April. The DVP Board will review all funding applications and agree award allocation. Projects will be monitored monthly. A display of all projects will take place within local community facilities during the week of World Mental Health Day which is 7-13 October 2024. An end of project report will be developed for Public Health by November 2024.

### *Notice of Election*

Due to the Durham Police and Crime Commissioner and Mayoral elections on Thursday 2 May 2024, the pre-election period (formerly Purdah) will be in place and the notice for this is likely to be issued on Friday 22 March 2024. The pre-election period will run from the date of the election notice up until (and including) the date of the election.

## **7. Agreement of DVP priorities for 2024-2025**

At the January Board meeting, the Board agreed to focus on one overarching priority for 2024-2025 with various themes incorporated.

The Board were then asked to discuss and agree on the specific areas of work that the group should focus on in 2024-25 and what the task group priority should be called.

As an example, the task group could be called Community Resilience, and themes to consider, but not limited to, could include:

- cost of living / welfare
- community safety
- activities for young people (11-16 specific)
- social isolation
- mental health and wellbeing
- environment
- support for community facilities
- art, culture and heritage
- employment

Based on monies ringfenced (from 2023-24 AB) for employment, environment and mental health and wellbeing, Corinne suggested that these themes are included to allow for project development.

Following a brief discussion that included having themed meetings to cover multiple topics, getting data on some of the themes and adding education and training to the employment theme, Corinne suggested that at the first meeting of the task group they discuss which themes they wish to take forward. Although there will be key areas the group will look at, there will be no project development or action planning as they were considered too time consuming for the one year that the group would be operating.

The Board agreed to a Community Resilience Task Group and at the first meeting they will decide on which themes they would like to pursue.

The first meeting is on Wednesday 17 April. An email will be sent to current task group members asking them if they wish to be involved in the new task group. Further details regarding venue and time will be sent out in due course to those who have expressed an interest in joining the Community Resilience Task Group.

## **8. Update from Cllr Alan Shield on Middle Street retail premises**

As Cllr Shield sent his apologies for the meeting, Corinne received an update from Cllr Shield regarding the Middle Street retail premises.

‘Cllr Shield has been in discussion with Phil Crawford (one of the project leaders); Phil Crawford advised that they are waiting for a structural engineer’s visit and a detailed report on the condition of the building before making any further decisions on how to proceed.

Whilst they would welcome the opportunity to present their vision and business plan for this project, which should help the regeneration of Middle Street and Consett Town Centre, they did not feel there was enough information to share with the DVP Board.

Once they have more information, they will attend a future Board meeting to give an update on the project.’



## **9. Meeting Close and Date of Next Meeting**

Lea thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

The next Board meeting will be the AGM on Wednesday 22 May 2024, 6pm at The Salvation Army Hall, Consett.