

**East Durham Area Action Partnership Board Meeting  
6pm on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2024 at Shotton Youth Centre**

**PRESENT:**

**Public Representatives**

Rona Hardy (Chair) (RH)  
Danny Dickinson (DD)  
Alison Paterson (AP)  
Andy Cammiss (AC)  
David Blackwell (DB)

**Partner Organisations**

Graham Easterlow (GE)  
Insp Phil Carter (PC)  
Insp Adam Jassat (AJ)  
Ian Porter (IP)  
Jim Murray (JM)

**Elected Members**

Par Cllr Omide Deinali (OD)

**Co-opted Members**

Edna Connor (EC)

**Officer Attendance:**

Ian Moran - AAP Coordinator  
Laura Towers - AAP Support Officer  
Kaye Stephenson – Community Development/Project Officer

**Presenters:**

Stuart Wardle (SW) & Rona Hardy – Shotton Youth Centre  
Sarah Welsh (SWelsh) – Durham County Council

**Public Attendance:**

Two members of the public were in attendance.

**Apologies:** Cllr Surtees, Cllr Cochrane, Cllr Miller, Cllr Shaw, Cllr Duffy, Ian Hankin, Joanne Angus, Annabelle Lumsden, Amanda Moon

**1. Introductions & Apologies**

IM ran through housekeeping and health and safety.

RH welcomed everyone to the meeting and a round of introductions were undertaken.

Apologies were noted, as above.

## **2. Previous Minutes & Matters Arising**

The minutes of the AGM and Board Meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024 were accepted by the Board as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

No matters arising.

## **2. Police Report**

### **Inspector Phil Carter – Peterlee**

There has been a higher trend for arsons in the last couple of months. An operation is currently underway including joint protocol with the Fire Service.

Two people were detained with lots of petrol in the car. This is a good result. A male was also detained in the industrial estate.

There have been some issues at the community garden in Peterlee with hanging baskets being stolen.

There has been a trend of people stealing from primary schools. Two people have been to court and released. This has now stopped.

There has been an eviction following a dog bite in Peterlee.

Two males were caught for a burglary in Horden.

An OCG male from Wingate has been sent to prison for three years.

A male was remanded for shoplifting in Wheatley Hill.

Off-road bikes continue to be monitored. A male has appeared in court after stolen motorbikes were found. Some fencing has been secured around some of the grassed areas in Peterlee as a prevention measure.

Shopwatch has started.

Following a car wash immigration check, two people were detained and placed in a detention centre.

Blackhall Community Centre was broken into.

Some intelligence on fly-tipping in Horden resulted in a £1,000 fine. GE asked whether the information on the fines can be circulated.

### **Inspector Adam Jassat – Seaham & Easington**

An Amazon van was stolen from Ryton Crescent. A male is on remand and another male has been arrested. An Amazon bag was found in a shed.

Police have attended assemblies at schools in Seaham.

A cannabis grow was found on Seaside Lane. Plants were also found last week.

Four people are in prison for shoplifting from the Co-op in Easington.

Two premises have been closed on Church Street.

Memory Lane has now had its licence revoked.

A camera has been erected near to the Green Seat in Easington Village due to ASB.

An off-road bike was seized.

During the first month of Right Care Right Person, there has been a significant decrease in police demand, giving more time to concentrate on community and getting good results.

AC thanked AJ & PC for their assistance.

AC asked whether the police had seen a spike in suicides in the areas.

Data to be reviewed.

AP thanked the police for the compost which was decanted to the community.

RH thanked the Neighbourhood Inspectors for the reports. No Fire Report was available for this meeting.

#### **4. Presentations**

##### **Shotton Youth Centre – Stuart Wardle & Rona Hardy**

SW gave an overview of Shotton Youth Centre. Shotton Parish Council (SPC) and Shotton Partnership have worked together since 2009. The Parish Council owns the building and Shotton Partnership runs the building.

The funding granted for the Youth Centre is as follows:

**Pre-Capital/Development Grant:** YIF - £61,845; T&V - £20k

**Capital Grant:** Youth Investment Fund (YIF) - £1,026,876.00; AAP - £5k; SPC £40k + salary costs

**Revenue:** YIF - £205,375.00; Ballinger - £55,540 (three-year apprentice); NatWest Uni-Levy - £40k, SPC - £10k, East Durham AAP - £5K Digital Equipment.

The funding granted for the car park is as follows, including the resurfacing and improvement of the existing car park, 40 + overflow car park spaces and CCTV:

**Capital £228k:** (DCC Towns & Villages - Improving Community Resilience & Parking & Circulation - £150k & SPC - £78k)

Sustainability will be required by March 2025, however, there may be other funding streams.

The young people wanted a place of their own and they were engaged with on the design.

RH added that through Groundwork there are two youth apprenticeships and a Level 3 youth course. 179 young people have engaged so far. Fun and Food activities for under 11s will take place at the Shotton Community Hub during the summer and activities for over 11s will take place at Shotton Youth Centre.

## **Customer Access Points – a review of our face-to-face services – Sarah Welsh, Durham County Council**

Customer Access Points (CAPs) support residents who need help accessing services if they are having difficulty completing their transactions online or over the phone.

There are currently eight CAPs across the county located in Barnard Castle, Stanley, Seaham, Spennymoor, Durham City, Crook, Chester-Le-Street and Consett.

Demand for face-to-face services in our CAPs has been decreasing over a number of years with 90% of resident contact now received by phone, email or online. Usually when people come into the CAP in your area, they are looking for support with bus pass applications or blue badge support. The reasons for the decrease include the change to Universal Credit where the demand has shifted to the DWP and also people choosing other channels during/following the pandemic.

Over the last 6 months (data to 31 March 24) around 52% of available appointment slots go unused across the whole CAP estate. In Seaham CAP, the unused appointment slots are around 69%.

The aim now is to develop a more responsive offer which delivers customer service support to the places it is most needed and reduces the time we spend in our current locations to better reflect the demand. This would mean adjusting the days we have appointments available in the Seaham CAP from Monday to Friday to Fridays. The aim is to benefit residents with increased choice, reduced travel requirements.

The survey online is open until 28<sup>th</sup> July: <https://www.durham.gov.uk/consultation>

AP noted that there are high number of appointments taking place in community centres per week. Services could be located in the community.

**ACTION: GE requested that the information on what the CAPs offer is sent to LT for circulation.**

CAPs provide an appointment-based service which offers advice, support or act as a signposting mechanism to all the Council Services. This covers Council Tax, benefits, Blue Badge, Highways, Welfare Assistance, and all other general enquiries.

The advice and support covers everything from assisting completion of and understanding of forms/notification of Council forms or supporting agencies such as DWP and Housing Associations.

Support can be offered to customers in completing forms digitally either on our self-service PCs or on their own devices.

## **Local Network Boundary Consultation – Ian Moran, Durham County Council**

IM presented an overview of the Local Network (LN) boundary proposals.

The proposal is that the county should be made up of 12 LNs, and unlike the current AAP boundaries, the LN boundaries will be aligned fully to electoral division boundaries. This will mean county councillors are aligned to one LN only and their local priorities and commitments can be concentrated to one LN area.

The proposals aim to:

- Align LNs fully to the new electoral division boundaries
- Facilitate increased use of available data
- Provide more consistent population size

- Provide more consistent county councillor representation within LNs
- Align county councillors to one LN only
- Contribute towards achieving MTFP savings of £500K

Regardless of any changes to AAP/LN boundaries, the number of electoral divisions will reduce from 63 to 51 and the number of county councillors reduce from 126 to 98.

The main differences between East Durham AAP and LNs F & G are:

- Dalton, Dawdon, Easington, Shotton, Murton and Seaham move from East Durham AAP to LN F. Shadforth and Ludworth communities move into LN F from Durham AAP,
- Peterlee, Wheatley Hill, Horden, Wingate, Blackhall Colliery communities move into LN G from East Durham AAP, Trimdon communities move to LN G from East Durham Rural Corridor AAP,
- Estimated population from 92,536 to 49,300 (LN F) and 51,400 (LN G).
- Electoral divisions from 13 to 9 each for LNs F & G.
- 25 County Councillors to 9 County Councillors each for LNs F & G.

General comments and questions from AAP board discussions will be captured and fed into the consultation findings. AAP Board members are also encouraged to submit individual or group responses by 18<sup>th</sup> August.

The Board noted that partner representatives are likely to be affected the most as some work across the geography of the whole of East Durham and will potentially have to attend more than one meeting. It was highlighted that some police colleagues already cover more than one AAP area. A report is provided for meetings where they do not normally attend. Feedback could be sought on whether this works well.

It was highlighted that some Board Members who sit on parish councils will potentially be unable to sit on the Board going forward.

It was noted that the original intent of the review was not about cost savings.

A question was raised regarding a reduction of funding.

IM confirmed that the NB will reduce, but the reduction in the number of Cllrs will be going ahead regardless of any AAP/LN boundary changes. Each LN will have its own AB budget.

A question was raised regarding a reduction of funding due to the reduction in numbers of councillors.

IM confirmed that a reduction in councillors would reduce the total NB available in the LN areas, but the reduction in the number of Cllrs will be going ahead regardless of any AAP/LN boundary changes. Each LN will have its own AB budget.

The Board felt that there were questions and concerns that had not been answered from the previous feedback letter which was submitted as part of the community engagement review and more information is needed on the function of LNs.

**ACTION: It was agreed that a Teams meeting would be arranged before 18<sup>th</sup> August for any Board members who would like to attend to come together and formulate a group response. The Cabinet paper and previous response letter should be circulated to the Board. LT to arrange a suitable date.**

## **5. Neighbourhood Issues**

None noted.

## **6. Priority Group Updates**

The previous meeting minutes of the three East Durham AAP Priority Groups were circulated to the Board prior to the meeting and taken as read.

## **7. Neighbourhood Budget (NB) Applications for Notification of Endorsement of Declared Interest**

ACTION: As the meeting was not quorate, it was agreed that the NB applications would be circulated to the Board by email for endorsement. LT to circulate for response.

IM noted that there is £105,326 Area Budget available currently which needs to be allocated by December 2024.

## **8. Any Other Business**

IM highlighted that the Council is currently looking for residents of County Durham to serve as non-voting co-optees on three of its five Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Applicants are required to submit a completed application form by the 9<sup>th</sup> August 2024 and will need to go through a formal selection process.

For more information, please contact us.

### **Date & Time of Next Meeting**

**Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2024, 6pm, Eastlea Community Centre**