

DERWENT VALLEY PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING

A meeting of the **DERWENT VALLEY PARTNERSHIP BOARD** was held in the Consett Salvation Army Hall, Consett on Wednesday, 24 January 2018 at 6.00pm.

PRESENT:

Councillors

Ivan Jewell, Alan Shield, Watts Stelling Owen Temple and Alex Watson

Partner Organisations

Phillip Curran - Karbon Homes, Craig Farrage - Co Durham & Darlington Fire & Rescue Service, Catherine Findlay – CCG, Anne-Marie Parkin - Durham Community Action, Gary Scott - Derwentside Business Network (DBN), Alison Lazazzera - DCC and Insp Keith Wardle - Durham Constabulary

Public Representatives

Marlene Boyles, Helen Marley, Rosemary Morris, Shelley O'Brien and Donna Summerson

APOLOGIES:

Cllr Derek Hicks - Elected Representatives and Jeannette Harold - Public Representative

IN ATTENDANCE:

Derek Snaith - AAP Co-ordinator, Kath Clements - Community Development / Project Officer and Lynn Dougal - Support Officer

PRESENTERS:

Michael Lowe - Policy Officer, DCC; Stuart Carter – Senior Policy Officer, DCC; Jon Carling – Office of the Durham Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner; Cllrs Alan Shield and Alex Watson – Shotley Bridge Hospital Reference and Gordon Elliott - Head of Partnerships & Community Engagement, DCC

Members of the Public – 15

1. Introductions

Derek Snaith welcomed everyone to the meeting and to those who were giving a presentation. A warm welcome was extended to three new Board members: Helen Marley, Public Representative; Alison Lazazzera from Durham County Council and Catherine Findlay from the Clinical Commissioning Group both Partner Representatives.

Board members were asked to declare an interest, if appropriate, for any agenda items being discussed. There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes of Previous Board Meeting (18 October 2017)

There were no issues raised and the minutes were AGREED

3. Partner Updates

Michael Lowe gave a presentation on Neighbourhood Planning (joined by his colleague Stuart Carter)

The Localism Act, 2011, introduced neighbourhood planning and allows local communities to get involved in planning at a local level. DCC is the Local Planning Authority and decide on planning applications and these are determined against the saved Policies from the Derwentside Local Plan (Development Plan) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). A Neighbourhood Plan (NP) is community led and once a NP is adopted, it becomes part of the Development Plan (a copy of the presentation is available upon request).

A Forum member asked where the NP will be kept. Michael said the NP is likely to be kept with the organisation or forum that produced it as well as on the DCC website.

Rosemary Morris asked if the technical support of up to £6k and general support of up to £15k is available from either the Government or included in DCC's support. Michael said the Government's support is separate from the support DCC will give. If there was a Neighbourhood Forum/Group they would access the funding directly, through www.mycommunity.org.uk website, DCC would not get involved.

Rosemary also said there has been some negatives experiences with developers and with a NP you cannot include what you do not want but what you would like to see more of. Michael said the NPPF states it is supportive of development and would not be used as a means to stop development. However a NP could help in guiding development in terms of design or green spaces.

Cllr Stelling mentioned there will always be conflict around planning, whether it involves housing or open cast works and in the Derwent Valley area it has some fantastic landscapes that are being destroyed because of development. Michael said that open cast mining is excluded development and is not covered by a NP.

Cllr Shield said you make a NP what it is and read an extract from the Great Aycliffe NP:

"You can protect green space designations; you can degree in an area of separation; you can consider in fill and small housing proposals and also consider large scale housing proposals" that means that NPs carry some weight.

The Derwentside Local Plan carries little or no weight and the overriding characteristic is the reference to Paragraph 14 (in favour of sustainable development) of the NPPF. The challenge is when considering an application whether the NPPF has the overriding characteristic or whether the NP carries more weight. He suggested setting up a project team to look at this.

Michael said with the Great Aycliffe NP they wanted to retain the Beveridge vision with areas of open space. After the NP was adopted an appeal made by a developer was dismissed due to a policy within the Great Aycliffe NP.

Donna Summerson asked if there is a limit to the geographical areas covered in a NP. Michael said neighbourhood areas are based on parish boundaries, however, there are mechanisms in place to extend a large area or a smaller area. When you apply for a neighbourhood area you do need justification for where the boundaries are.

Gary thanked Michael and Stuart for the presentation and their input at the meeting.

Jon Carling gave a presentation on the Police Precept 2018/19 (a copy of the presentation is available upon request.)

Every January a community engagement exercise is held with the public on the proposed council tax increase for the Police Precept. For the last few years the Government has set a cap of 2% increase which members of the public have generally been supportive of. This year the Government has raised the cap to 7.1% for Durham which would generate an additional £2m for Durham Constabulary. Properties in Band A would see an increase of 15p per week which equates to £8 per year and for Band D properties this increase would be 23p per week and £12 per year.

Ron Hogg (Durham Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner) needs to increase the precept to protect local policing and would welcome the views of the public.

Comments can be made via the website www.durham-pcc.gov.uk, Facebook: PCC Durham or Twitter: Durham PCC.

Rosemary said people will generally be supportive of the increase and asked if this area would see additional police officers. Jon said the increase would not see additional resources but would keep the number of police officers at the current level.

Craig Farrage asked if the financial plan has a level of sustainability within it so you are not coming back each year for the same amount. Jon said in the longer term, if the precept is not increased this year it sets a lower starting point for next year.

Cllr Shield said if we are not getting extra police officers on patrol in the area, questions may be asked as to what the extra money is being spent on. He also said that if there is more of a police presence, it generally makes people feel safer and they have more confidence in the police. Jon agrees that more police presence increases public confidence in them and we are trying to get as many police officers out and about. However, the way the funding levels work the maximum number possible may be the same as what we have at present.

John Shaw (Forum) wondered if the more we agree to increase the precept the less chance the Government will increase the amount to the police. Jon said that may well be the case but Ron does not want to put communities at a disadvantage and he will continue to lobby government about it.

Gary thanked Jon for his presentation and encouraged everyone to take part in the consultation.

Cllr Alan Shield gave an update on Shotley Bridge Hospital (SBH)

On 15 September 2017 local members met to review SBH; the concern was that the existing building is not safe or fit for modern day health services, has a maintenance backlog of £4m and the operational costs of £1.8m per year was not considered sustainable.

There have been a number of meetings so far and the key issues were discussed:

- Sustainable population growth in NW Derwentside
- Limited employment opportunities
- Infrastructure concerns
- Friends of SBH are part of the stakeholder engagement
- There is a social case and an economic business case
- Number of options for the site are being evaluated
- Do nothing and extend the current GP services

The North Durham Clinical Commissioning Group (NDCCG) need to set out their clinical vision, ensure all NHS clinical staff are aware of the current service provision at SBH, there has to be a fair and equitable appointment provision and determine capacity availability at Acute Hospitals (UHND/Darlington Memorial Hospital)

At subsequent SBH Reference Group meetings they discussed a number of issues that included Health Care Plan/Service requirements; the One Public Estate option (multi agency/stakeholder); type of services required eg Urgent Care, Outpatients, etc and concerns regarding preferential appointments made elsewhere rather than at SBH.

On a personal note, Cllr Shield said he finds this quite frustrating and concerning that the evaluation of the data is taking so long (it started in September and the finalisation is due in March). With regards to the preferential appointments, SBH is not being offered as a first option, it is given as a second option and people have to ask for an appointment at SBH. Therefore the data which is extensive and proportionate could be flawed and any decision made could be biased against SBH.

He also mentioned there has been engagement with Project Genesis, as land availability needs to be looked at if they decide to build offsite.

Cllr Watson said the CCG did meet with the Project Genesis officer for development and looked at a possible site for a new hospital, if that was the decision taken, on the Derwent View site. It is a 10 acre site that could accommodate a new hospital and within budget. Although they were quite positive about this, they did mention they are a long way from that point and more work needs to be done.

Cllr Temple said he received an email in relation to the Endoscopy Clinic at SBH is closed, however a Forum member did indicate this was not the case. If this is the case he intends to raise this with the joint Health Overview and Scrutiny committee as changes in provision should not be made without going to them first.

He also said if anyone is willing to talk about their experiences about being given appointments elsewhere, he would like to hear from them.

Further discussion took place around appointments being offered elsewhere first rather than SBH.

Police Update

Neighbourhood Inspector Keith Wardle of Durham Constabulary provided the Board with a copy of the police report for the area and particularly mentioned one issue. A knifepoint robbery took place in Consett last week, which is unusual activity in this area. Some people have been arrested in connection with this and an investigation is underway. There were no injuries and there was not a lot on money taken, however it is quite a shift in the type of crime that we generally deal with.

Insp Wardle said should anyone wish to talk to him about any issues, he is available after the meeting.

4. Co-ordinators Report

Derek discussed the content of the Co-ordinators report that covered Task Group updates, project monitoring, review of the project 'call out' process, Welfare Reform outline proposal, recognition of DVP awarded projects and people, the Area Budget analysis and an outstanding project proposal for consideration.

Task Group updates (summary of key points only)

Health and Wellbeing

The launch of the dementia café in Sweetharts, Blackhill will take place on Monday 29 January at 2pm. Dean Richards MBE will be in attendance and if anyone would like to go along please contact John O'Connor.

Environment

The Environment Grant is available for local communities who wish to improve their villages and neighbourhoods. An application pack is available from the DVP and the closing date for applications is 28 February 2018.

Employment, Enterprise and Training

Regarding the Consett Destination Development Plan, which is to be discussed later, there is the potential to apply for European funding linked to the project.

Full details of task group activity can be found in the Coordinators report for this meeting.

Project Monitoring

Eleven project monitoring forms have been received this quarter equating to over £85k of projects that have been supported in furtherance of our priorities.

Review of project call out process

A more structured and measured process for the 'call out' of projects is being proposed. Projects received by the task group would be reviewed and scored against set criteria (as per the agreed scoring mechanism).

The final draft process and scoring mechanism will be presented at the Board meeting in February, which will impact on how the 2018/19 budget is utilised.

Welfare Reform funding outline proposal

There is £10k allocated for Welfare Reform projects and we are awaiting a full proposal from the Durham Christian Partnership where County Durham Money Advice Service will provide a money management/debt advice service through information and support sessions to local residents, who are struggling financially. A full detailed proposal will be available at the February Board meeting.

Derek wondered if the Universal Credit, which came into force in December 2017, has had an impact on local residents. Phillip Curran said it is difficult to say at the moment as it is too short a period. Karbon Homes, with over 26,000 homes, has set aside £300k to alleviate anticipated problems.

DVP awarded people and projects

The DVP Illuminating Waste project delivered through OASES (Outdoor and Sustainability Education Specialists) in 2016 received a 'Highly Commended' award at the County Durham Environment Partnership's annual Environmental Awards 2017. This project involved local primary school children and young people's groups creating window displays out of waste materials.

Local residents Richard Judd and Bob Sorley were highly commended in the Volunteer of the Year – over 18 category for their work in Leadgate and Burnopfield respectively.

A local young person was recognised in the young Volunteer of the Year category for their work with the local school in Medomsley.

Medomsley Community Garden and Burnopfield Gardening Team were also recognised through the Royal Horticultural Society's 'It's Your Neighbourhood' programme.

Area Budget (AB) Analysis

A total of £134,500.34 (£100k AB allocation plus £34,500.34 from clawback money from non-delivery of projects and underspent projects in previous years) was available for projects in 2017/18. Funding has been allocated to projects across the 3 task groups as well as supporting Derwent Valley newsletter, Christmas in Consett and other projects outside the priority areas. The remaining balance for 2017/18 is £7,997.37.

Of the £100k AB, £84,239.67 was allocated to revenue spending and £14,853.00 to capital. Therefore we are below our capital spending target as the recommended split of the AB is £76k for revenue and £24k for capital projects. Although we can offset this imbalance in capital/revenue spending with other AAPs we will need to ensure we spend our capital allocation in future.

Match funding is relatively low compared to previous years and of the projects we have supported to date we have achieved £65,494.78 of match funding, which equates to approximately 65p match for every £1 spent of the AB. Ideally we should be looking to a greater match funding level in order to maximise the value of the funding we have available for the area. Match funding (and capital funding) should feature in the projects call out process for the next financial year.

The Board were asked to consider a number of options for the use of the remaining balance of £7,997.37 for 2017/18.

Gary said as we have received the Go Green in Derwent Valley project, perhaps we could apply to fund Party in the Park from next year's budget.

Outstanding project proposal

The Go Green in Derwent Valley for £6,790 has been considered at previous Board meetings and the queries raised have been answered by Groundwork NE & Cumbria.

Cllr Jewell said he is in favour of funding a project that benefits the wider community.

The Board AGREED to fund the Go Green in Derwent Valley project from the remaining 2017/18 AB/underspend/clawback which gives a remaining small balance.

5. Destination Development Plan (DDP)

Derek asked the Board to note the attached Consett Destination Development Plan and advised that this is now complete and is to be formally adopted.

Derek highlighted the Action Plan at the end of the document which identifies 3 aims:

1. Raise the profile of the visitor economy in Consett with local businesses so they become proactive drivers of it.
2. Transform the Town Centre and its immediate surroundings to make it a go-to place for residents and visitors.
3. Promote Consett's heritage and develop its future potential through a range of social, cultural and environment attractions.

Linked to the DDP, Project Genesis Trust (PGT) - who have been named as the lead on the third aim above can submit an expression of interest for a rural development European funding programme linked to aim 3. Meetings have taken place over Christmas and New Year with a number of partners to discuss what this bid may do for the area as there is approximately 10km of land that could be enhanced through improved cycle ways, walkways, heritage trails, etc.

The DDP can support the application as it gives it credence in the bidding for European funding, which is approximately £400k.

Mike Clark from PGT is leading on the draft application and all partners have been given the opportunity to put forward project ideas/offer support. In addition to the bid it was suggested that letters of support are sought from partners.

Gary advised that the DDB has written a letter of support and is delighted that they have had partner involvement and given the opportunity to put forward their views. Derek felt a supporting letter from DVP would add weight linked to the use of our DDP as the foundation for that bid/expression of interest.

Helen Marley asked if the pathways will include disabled access. Derek said there is likely to be a modern standard in terms of accessibility and that an access audit should be carried out. Craig Farage added that sometimes gates on footpaths to restrict motorbikes and vehicles can be restrictive to wheelchair users.

6. Any Other Business

Gordon Elliott gave a presentation on the proposed Durham History Centre consultation

The Durham County Record Office and archives require specialist storage and a more suitable location. The proposed Durham History Centre will locate the archives (and potentially other collections), historic records and the registry office under one roof at a restored Mount Oswald manor house (a copy of the presentation is available upon request).

The consultation is open to everyone and DCC is seeking the public's views on the proposed Durham History Centre at Mount Oswald and what people would like to see included in the new history centre.

Gordon encouraged everyone to take part in the survey by completing a paper copy of the survey or visit www.durham.gov.uk/consultation.

The consultation will close on Sunday, 18 February 2018.

Gary asked if they are planning to digitise the archives to make them available online. Gill Parkes (Principal Archivist, DCC) said some material is in digital format but we have to weigh up the cost of digitising material and the need for it. Records that are consulted on a lot or need protection from excessive handling are digitised as well as anything that is likely to be of interest for a lot of people. Technology changes very quickly and we have to refresh the data as the format changes and this can be very costly.

Cllr Ossie Johnson said the DLI Trustees have received a grant to aid the digitisation of the DLI records. The DLI war diaries held in County Hall and the DLI collection in Spennymoor will bring all the records in to one place that will be accessible to everyone.

Cllr Stelling said with the building being a Grade II listed building, do they envisage any problems. Gill said the registry service will use most of the building for weddings and

ceremonies and an extension will be built on the side of the building which will provide modern storage facilities for the archives/records. We are planning to provide sufficient expansion space for the next 25 years as we keep records from the Magistrates' and County Courts and Coroner's records as well as historic information on families and buildings, therefore it is important they are preserved as evidence.

Cllr Johnson said it is very time consuming and expensive to bring a listed building into use but the costs involved are within our predicted budgets and we did a lot of research to see how other local authorities deal with their archives. DCC is looking to apply for Heritage Lottery funding circa £4m and it would be an advantage to obtain a letter of support from DVP to help achieve this funding.

7. Derwent Valley Partnership Board 2018 Schedule of Meeting

No comments were raised.

8. Meeting Close and Date of Next Meeting

Cllr Shield said before the close, as there are changes in the leisure provision within Derwentside and DCC will be taking on board all the leisure facilities in the area, he asked if a presentation could be brought to the next/future Board meeting.

Gary thanked everyone for their attendance.

The next Board meeting will be held on Wednesday 28 February 2018 in the Salvation Army Hall, Consett at 6pm.

Signed as a correct record:

Date: