

DERWENT VALLEY PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING

A meeting of the **DERWENT VALLEY PARTNERSHIP BOARD** was held in Salvation Army Hall, Consett on Wednesday, 25 September 2019 at 6.00pm.

PRESENT:

Councillors

Derek Hicks, Ivan Jewell, Alan Shield, Watts Stelling and Alex Watson.

Partner Organisations

Mark Clelland - Derwentside Trust, Joanne Waller – Durham County Council (DCC) and Insp Keith Wardle - Durham Constabulary.

Public Representatives

Marlene Boyles, Mike Clark, Jeannette Harold, Helen Marley, Susan Mellor, and Donna Summerson.

APOLOGIES:

Cllr Owen Temple - Elected Representative; Craig Farrage - Co Durham & Darlington Fire & Rescue Service - Partner Representative and Shelley O'Brien - Public Representative.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Corinne Walton - AAP Co-ordinator, Pete Garrod - Community Development / Project Officer and Lynn Dougal - Support Officer.

PRESENTERS:

None

Members of the Public – 12

1. Meeting opened by the Chair

Corinne Walton welcomed everyone to the meeting and went through housekeeping. Board members introduced themselves and apologies were noted as above.

There were two declarations of interest: Cllr Shield regarding the Welfare Reform project proposal from Durham Christian Partnership (who he is employed by on a part time basis) and from Cllr Stelling regarding the Learning for Life project as his daughter attends the college.

2. Minutes of Previous Board Meeting (17 July 2019)

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

3. Area Budget (AB) and Older Persons Social Isolation Fund (OPSIF) project callout proposals

Corinne gave a brief update on the AB and OPSIF project callout proposals for the 3 task groups following the open project call out that was launched on 12 June and ended on 12 July.

The task groups met in August/September to review the eligible project proposals and applicants were invited to present their projects. The proposals were measured against criteria, as identified in their action plans, and scored accordingly. After a lengthy and thorough process, each of the task groups had made the following project recommendations for the Board to consider.

Environment (ENVIRO)

Before deciding whether to fund the projects or not, it was suggested that a brief summary was provided about each project proposal.

Corinne advised that Board members had received copies of all the project proposals one week prior to the meeting so there was an expectation that Board members had read the proposals in advance. Corinne then summarised the 2 ENVIRO project proposals:

1. Eco Friendly Schools project delivered by Outdoor and Sustainability Education Specialists (OASES). Funding request £10,625.

OASES will undertake an energy audit in 4 schools in the DVP area and identify how they could become eco-friendlier and help them to achieve the ECO Schools Award (Bronze, Silver or Green Flag Eco School Award). They will be looking at topics that have been identified in the ENVIRO task group action plan as well as linking into national campaigns such as Earth Hour.

Corinne reiterated that all the project applicants (for all 3 task groups) attended the respective task group and delivered a comprehensive presentation and answered questions from the task group.

Cllr Watson thought that once the task groups had made their recommendations, they would then be simply ratified by the Board. He said it seems pointless that they go to the task groups if the Board are going to debate them further.

Corinne said one of the key roles of the task groups is to make funding recommendations to the Board. There has already been a high level of scrutiny through the task group process and once the proposals have gone to the Board, the Board can ask further questions or choose to accept them as appropriate.

Mike Clark asked how much staff time is allocated to the cost of £7,200. Corinne said the task group raised this question and they received an answer that they were happy with that she did not have to hand but could circulate if required. The questions and answers, for all the projects, have not been included in the Board papers as it would have generated a lot more documentation.

Corinne also added that where staff costs have been identified, all the task groups have scrutinised this area and made sure the project is paying for delivery and not time and is also value for money.

The Board AGREED to fund the Eco-Friendly School project.

2. Waste Not Want Not, delivered by the Learning for Life College (LFLC). Funding request £5,000

This project is threefold:

a) This project would expand on their recycling and upcycling scheme by purchasing good quality equipment and materials to offer a better standard of upcycled goods. Apart from the environmental aspect, the project also helps build confidence and enterprise skills in its learners.

b) The college would like to expand its crisp packet recycling sites, 'terracycling', at 3 locations for the wider community to use.

c) The college would also like to create a community fridge at Citizens House, where learners from the college help run the Oasis Café. They will use unwanted food from the café as well as produce grown from their allotment.

Corinne added that should the Board agree to fund this project, the task group said they would like additional conditions linked to the development of the community fridge. They would like to ensure that food hygiene, health and safety and other regulations are in place and should those requirements not be met, then the money would come back to us.

Jeanette Harold asked if there is a partnership between the Food Bank, the Community Fridges and Citizens House. Cllr Shield said they were different organisations. He also said, as an option, if the community fridge is not well used, it could be relocated next to the Foodbank in Glenroyd House.

Mark Clelland said there is already a community fridge and freezer in Glenroyd House.

Cllr Jewell likes the project but wondered about the sustainability of it. Corinne said regarding the upcycling element of the project, once they have purchased the equipment and they can produce a better standard of goods, they should be able to generate more income to help sustain the project. Partnership working will be encouraged between the other community fridge organisations in the local area and the terracycling sites are already in existence they just need to be publicised widely.

The Board AGREED to fund the Waste Not Want Not project subject to the conditions (stated above) linked to the development of the community fridge.

Total funding request from the 2019/20 AB is £15,625.

Health and wellbeing (HAWB)

1. Emotional and Mental Health Training for Young People, delivered by If U Care Share. Funding request £7,776
2. Learning for Life (LFL) Sensory Room, delivered by Building Self Belief. Funding request £9,300
3. Socially Isolated Social Car Scheme, delivered by Supportive. Funding request £7,000

Total funding request from the 2019/20 AB is £24,076

John O'Connor (Chair of the HAWB task group) said the task group arrived at their recommendations through ensuring the applications met the criteria of the action plan, questions were sent to the applicants and the answers were then passed to the task group members. The applicants were invited to a task group meeting to give a short presentation on their project and each task group member scored the projects. The top 3 projects were then put forward for the Board to consider funding.

Regarding the Sensory Room project, Cllr Shield said he is concerned about the unsecured and unconfirmed £10,700 match funding. He would like some assurance that this can be provided, before committing the funding to this project, as he feels this is essential for the delivery of the project.

Corinne said we can put that in the terms & conditions of grant that they confirm and secure the match funding before we release the AAP funding.

There were no comments or questions raised about the If U Care Share or Socially Isolated Social Car Scheme projects.

The Board AGREED to fund the 3 HAWB projects with a condition attached to the Sensory Room project that confirmation of the £10,700 match funding is in place prior to the funds being released.

Employment, Enterprise and Training (EET)

1. Bridging the Gap between Education and Work, delivered by Building Self Belief. Funding request £8,600
2. Inspiring Young People through STEM Camps, delivered by STEM for Life. Funding request £11,650
3. STEM Mentoring Programme, delivered by RTC North. Funding request £6,417

Total funding request from the 2019/20 AB is £26,667.

There were no comments or questions raised regarding the EET project proposals and the Board AGREED to fund the 3 projects.

OPSIF

Corinne advised there was one OPSIF project proposal that has come through the HAWB task group for the Board to consider funding:

1. Singing and Talking Together Dementia Café, delivery by Medomsley Community Action Group. Funding request £5,000

Corinne said this is linked to the dementia friendly communities work that is going on in the DVP area and also mentioned the Dementia Memory Café at St Patrick's Church Hall which opened today. Representatives from the DVP team and John O'Connor, as chair of the HAWB task group, attended the opening.

There were no comment/questions raised and the Board AGREED to fund this project.

Corinne advise that the AB and OPSIF project proposals are subject to full appraisal by the Funding Team.

4. Welfare Reform Fund project callout update and proposals

Corinne said an open callout for Welfare Reform projects went out mid-July with a closing date of 30 August 2019. There were additional criteria attached to the Welfare Reform funding such as support from the Welfare Rights team and evidence of a case management system in place.

These projects have not been recommended by any of the task groups and they are competing bids for the £10k Welfare Reform fund.

There are 2 expressions of interest for the Board to consider funding:

1. Consett Foodbank Debt Adviser, delivered by Durham Christian Partnership (DCP). Funding request £10,000
2. Identity Workspace, delivered by Optimistically CiC. Funding request £7,940

Brenda Bell (Forum), who is a volunteer at a foodbank, said she sees the need for a professional debt adviser as they do not have the specialist knowledge to give advice.

Cllr Jewell wondered if the Debt Adviser scheme could operate on less than the £10k, which could allow both projects to be supported. Cllr Shield said the scheme provides 13 hours of support – one and a half days, with both days split between advice and administration. He said that under the auspices of the Financial Conduct Authority, they are required to document any advice that is given. He also said that reducing the amount of funding to the service would not help to generate the savings people would make.

Mike feels that the Debt Adviser project offers better value for money in that it would be paying for time rather than the Identity Workspace project which is for office space and associated costs.

Jeannette agreed with Mike but acknowledged that there is insufficient money available in general for research projects.

The Board voted on the 2 projects and the results are:

Consett Foodbank Debt Adviser	10	(2 abstained)
Identity Workspace	0	

The Board AGREED to fund the Consett Foodbank Debt Adviser project.

5. Remaining 2018/19 and 2019/20 Funds

Following the Board's decision to fund the above projects from the AB and OPSIF, Corinne advised that the remaining budgets are as follows:

AB 2019/20:

ENVIRO - £11,042	HAWB - £2,591	EET - £0	Total AB remaining = £13,633
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Corinne said the ENVIRO task group were disappointed at the low number of projects they received but the group is planning to hold a project workshop on 8 October to develop project ideas and identify who could deliver them to enable the group to spend the remaining £11,042.

The HAWB task group will look at spending their remaining balance of £2,591.

OPSIF:

- ENVIRO – the task group received no applications and £8,333 remains for 2019/20. In 2018/19, £8,333 was ring fenced from OPSIF for a small grants scheme for environmental activities for the over 50s. The group received 2 applications, which were both ineligible, therefore an underspend of £8,333 remains for 2018/19.
- EET – the group received no applications and £8,333 remains for 2019/20.
- HAWB – the group received one proposal for £5k, which the Board has agreed to fund. £3,333 remains for 2019/20.

Total OPSIF remaining = £28,332

Corinne said it is a very disappointing response to the call out and it may be that the themes within the task groups' action plans as well as the OPSIF criteria combined are too restrictive.

Therefore, Corinne asked the Board to consider the following:

- The remaining 2019/20 AB to be retained by each task group (ENVIRO and HAWB) for project development
- The remaining OPSIF (£28,332) to be used as a wider open project call out but not restricted to the task group themes or through the task groups.

John O (HAWB Chair) said the HAWB task group felt it was better to commission something that could meet the objectives (i.e. mental health and reducing suicides) in their action plan. He suggested that If U Care Share could be commissioned to deliver something with the underspend.

Cllr Shield suggested looking at something that is cross cutting which would address the traffic speeding issue, which is a social blight. He said the 3 Towns AAP funded a Community Speed Watch van, which cost approximately £32k, through 6 of the local councillors Neighbourhood Budget.

Cllr Shield said he would like the DVP to support this initiative and suggested that if 9 Councillors each contributed £1k, the 3 task groups contributed £5k each and the revenue of £8k is funded by the police it could support a newly designed community speed watch vehicle.

A discussion ensued about combining the AB and OPSIF to give a larger pot of money to encourage higher value projects. Corinne advised that they are 2 different budgets, and each have different criteria. The AB is aligned to the priorities whereas the OPSIF has been given to the AAPs from another department within DCC to deliver projects aimed specifically at tackling social isolation in the over 50s. It was noted that by splitting the OPSIF monies between the 3 task groups, additional criteria had been created which had potentially proved very restrictive for applicants. Therefore, the response to the OPSIF element was very poor.

Further discussions took place around setting up a working group to look at the remaining monies for 2019/20 as well as looking ahead for 2020/2021. This group would also look at whether keeping Environment for 2 years is a viable option. The Board also discussed whether to do a further call out or a targeted approach for the remaining AB and OPSIF.

It was suggested that no further group is set up but to use the task groups to develop project ideas to address the underspend (AB) and anyone who is interested could join a task group.

The Board AGREED for the remaining AB to be retained by the respective task groups for project development (applies to ENVIRO and HAWB only). Recommendations will be made to the Board in due course.

The Board AGREED for OPSIF monies to be made available via an open project callout (not aligned to the task Groups, which will also include a targeted approach).

It was noted that the Board would like to set up a separate Funding sub-group to discuss the way forward for next year's budget.

6. Partner updates

Consett Neighbourhood Policing Team update from Insp Keith Wardle

Keith referred to Cllr Shields's comments about speeding. He said speeding is a huge issue and they regularly receive complaints from across the area. Several years ago, Durham Constabulary amalgamated their Road Policing Unit with Cleveland Police and went down to 2 camera vans that covered County Durham, Cleveland and Darlington. This is a very limited resource for all the speeding problems; however, this is under review.

Keith said the Community Speed Watch vehicle that has been funded in the Crook area is an excellent project and is a good educational tool. He said he would fully support it should there be anything for this area.

Cllr Stelling asked if the councillors supported a 'van', would it be policed? Keith said it would be used as his team of around 18 officers for the Consett area have 2 vehicles between them. However, he was unable to comment about the on costs.

Cllr Shield said the new Chief Constable has made a commitment to support this initiative (e.g. in Crook). He suggested that local councillors part fund it with the majority of funding from the DVP's AB or a Task Force and the on costs are met by the Police. Keith said he could not commit to that as it is not his decision to make, however he said he would try and get some information about this for the next Board meeting.

Cllr Stelling asked if the Chief Constable would consider installing fixed speed cameras. Keith said they are very costly to install/maintain and only slow down traffic in that particular area.

Cllr Shield said that mobile speed cameras placed at speeding hotspots have been known to be effective and could also be an income for the police. Keith felt that speeding needs to be tackled in several ways such as through education i.e. in schools and traffic calming measures i.e. 20s Plenty.

Jeannette wondered why speed awareness classes were not made as part of the driving test. Keith agreed that speed awareness courses would 'open people's eyes' to the horrors of incidents caused through speeding.

Before Keith moved onto the rest of the police update, Cllr Shield thanked him for all his support as Keith will be retiring at the end of the year.

Keith said he would like to thank Forum members for giving up their time and coming to the Board meetings. He also thanked the partners for their support to the local police and to Corinne and the DVP team.

Jeannette also thanked Keith for his invaluable support to the DVP over the last 6 years and for his work in the local community and wished him well for the future.

Keith continued with the police update and said in the last 6 months there has been an increase in violence linked to the night time economy in Consett town centre. Several arrests have been made with court cases pending for serious assaults. Durham Constabulary's Neighbourhood Policing team has worked with the Alcohol Harm Reduction Unit to ascertain which premises were problematic and they have identified one premises in particular. This has resulted in that licensed premise issued with a closure notice.

The Police are now looking at how they can reduce the hours that alcohol is available, particularly at weekends as licenced premises stay open until 4am. He also said that many takeaways are applying for a license until 5am and if this is granted, no license will be required between 5am and 11am which means they could stay open 24 hours. The Police will oppose this as well as recommending that licensed premises close at 2am.

He also said that they are still responding to a lot of vehicle thefts, particularly from keyless entry vehicles where thieves are using specialist equipment. He said there are people who wander the streets looking for unlocked vehicles and he urged everyone to secure their vehicles, especially now the dark nights are drawing in.

North Durham CCG, Shotley Bridge Hospital (SBH) update

Jeannette said unfortunately Rachel Rooney is not at the meeting and no update has been provided. However, Corinne advised that the CCG recently announced that the capital funds that were originally earmarked for SBH, which were in doubt recently, have been secured. There are no further details, but we will try to get more information for the next Board meeting.

There was also a request for the CCG to confirm as soon as possible when the consultation process will start.

Jeanette asked Corinne to send an email to Rachel advising her of the Board's disappointment that there was no CCG representative at the meeting, or any update provided, particularly in light of the recent announcement regarding SBH.

7. Greening Derwent Valley reminder and Christmas in Consett update

Corinne reminded everyone of the Greening Derwent Valley environment competition which closes on 30 September 2019. Copies of the flyer were available on the evening.

Corinne also said Christmas in Consett will be on Saturday 30 November between 5.30 and 6.30pm in Middle Street, Consett. The event is free and will include entertainment, walkabout characters and the popular Christmas jumper competition. Publicity for the event will be available shortly.

8. Meeting Close and Date of Next Meeting

Before the meeting closed Brenda Bell (Forum) mentioned that Go North East plan to make further changes to their services on Sunday 29 September. She said there is no information about the changes other than on Go North East's website.

A brief discussion ensued about what could be done about the proposed changes and whether DCC's Transport Department could intervene.

Joanne Waller said she will contact Adrian White, Head of Transport and Contract Services at DCC.

Jeannette thanked everyone for their attendance and reminded everyone that the next Board meeting will be on Wednesday 13 November 2019 at 6pm in the Salvation Army Hall, Consett.

Signed as a correct record:

Date: