

**East Durham Rural Corridor Area Action Partnership Minutes of the Board Meeting
Monday 23 November 2020
(Virtual Meeting – held via Microsoft Teams)**

Present: Malcolm Gray (Chair), Councillor Stuart Dunn, Clive Crosby, Chris Varty, Councillor John Robinson, Angela Stobbart, Councillor Maura McKeon, Councillor David Brown, Neighbourhood Inspector Sarah Honeyman, Jen Straughan-Hawley, Councillor Lucy Hovvels, Christine Carter

Officer Attendance: Jane Bellis – AAP Co-ordinator
Claire Craft – Community Development Project Officer
Marie Ainscough – AAP Support Officer

Presenters: Alison Clark, Susan Robinson – Durham County Council

Forum Members: 5 forum members attended the meeting

Apologies: Michelle Atkinson, Lynne Watson, Councillor Jude Grant, Mel Carr, Allan Blakemore

Introductions and Apologies

Malcolm Gray welcomed everyone to the virtual board meeting of the East Durham Rural Corridor AAP and apologies were noted for those who were unable to attend the meeting.

A warm welcome was offered to the five forum members who had joined the meeting.

Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 October 2020 & Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2020 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

A petition against the closure of Trimdon Station Post Office has been submitted to the Royal Mail.

Declarations of Interest/ Meeting Etiquette/ New Ways of Working

Jane reminded everyone present of the meeting etiquette.

Declarations of interest were received from -

- Councillor Stuart Dunn – Coxhoe Village Hall Foodbank application – Stuart is making a neighbourhood budget contribution of £1,500.00.

- Councillor Maura McKeon – Coxhoe Village Hall Foodbank application – Maura is contributing neighbourhood budget as match funding and has also been involved in organising this project.
- Chris Varty – Coxhoe Village Foodbank application – Chris was a volunteer at the village hall.
- Chris Varty – Trimdon Grange Community Centre application, Chris is a volunteer.
- Chris Varty – Trimdon Community College Association application, Chris is a volunteer.
- Amy Stewart – associated with Rose Cottage.

Claire Craft notified Board members that she had received two neighbourhood budget proposals and summary sheets for these will be circulated electronically. They had not been included in the neighbourhood budget schedule (item 5 below). **Action: Claire Craft**

Priority Updates (from Task Group and Projects) Area Budget (including Welfare Reform, Youth Fund and OPSIF) COVID Recovery

Board Members had received a report on progress made through and following the task and finish group/panel meeting held on Thursday 19 November 2020.

Jane ran through the report and thanked everyone for taking part in the meeting. The fund was massively over-subscribed; the projects totalled £135,526.87 which meant that there was a shortfall of £37,264.81.

Councillor John Robinson commented in the chat function – could you advise how much has been allocated for each County Ward in the AAP and how much covering whole AAP area. **Action: Jane Bellis**

The Board approved the proposals and actions made by the task group.

Councillor Stuart Dunn thanked everyone who had participated in the task group/panel meeting and to the AAP team for their continued hard work.

Paul Howell reiterated the ‘thank yous’ above. He understood the difficult decisions the panel had to make due to the Covid-19 Recovery fund being massively over-subscribed and process involved so the Area Budget spend was within budget. He notified the Chair that he would be leaving the meeting at 10.30 am therefore if anyone had any questions for him, if they could do so before this time.

Su Jordan commented in the chat function - How are you going to encourage the Trimdons to work together to ensure there is no duplication of effort?
Jane replied - we work closely with the centres and volunteers in the Trimdons at all stages....any ideas would be welcomed though.

Discussion ensued around how best we can all work together to get the community centres to work as close to one another as they can. It was highlighted that the need of the villages was very different and although they do work together sometimes, it's

not always in the way we want them to as the needs and activities of the local community differ somewhat. The AAP agreed to continue working on the relationship between the centres across the AAP area, encouraging partnership working as appropriate as they have done in the past.

Local Neighbourhood Issues

Police Update

Neighbourhood Inspector Sarah Honeyman provided an update on local policing issues -

- There have been reports of 'things going on' in the layby at Netpark. Work is being done on the bushes to make it difficult for people to hang around there.
- There have been anti-social behaviour problems in the woods at Fishburn and this is occurring in Coxhoe at present.
- The farming community are feeling isolated. There have been a lot of incidents whereby vehicles are driving around in the fields and wrecking the crops. Councillor John Robinson asked if Sarah could let him know what the concerns of the farmers were. A date for a meeting is to be set.
- There have been incidents of arson in the Easington/Peterlee area. Councillor John Robinson asked if the number of fires included the nine cars in Sedgefield and in the Trimdon area. Sarah was sure these figures were included in the statistics but agreed to find out and feedback.
- The closing date for the questionnaire ran by the MPs Office is 31 December. The date may be extended if need be.

Councillor Lucy Hovvells thanked Sarah for making contact in sharing the information around the concern she had. She asked if the responses to the questionnaire could be shared.

Chris Varty asked Sarah if she was aware of the dog thefts happening around the Trimdons. There had been no incidents of this type recorded however; Sarah said she would check with the Peterlee and Durham Teams.

Amy Stewart asked if the questionnaires could be left in the community centres for those who don't have IT. She said she knew of young people who would be willing to hand deliver them. Jane highlighted that Durham County Council had a volunteer database that had been collated at the beginning of lockdown which could be useful.

Paul Howell advised that if anyone could offer direction and support, the MPs Office would be delighted to use these connections.

In relation to the Post Office in Trimdon Station, conversations are ongoing with Paul, the Royal Mail and chief officers.

Councillor Lucy Hovvells said that the post office staff had not been informed that their role would be changing in February and communication was atrocious and unacceptable. It was agreed that Paul and Lucy have a conversation outside of this meeting to discuss the issue.

Councillor Stuart Dunn asked Sarah to pass on his thanks to the Sherburn Road Beat Team in the Durham Division for their efforts as a result of the 20 fires and 50 anti-social behaviour reports around the leisure centre. The Police have not been able to gain evidence to prosecute.

Paul Howell offered to do a question and answer session going forward should the AAP feel this would be useful. He thanked everyone for their engagement and time and left the meeting.

Councillor Maura McKeon thanked the arson team around the serious issues in Coxhoe. There had been a lot of leadership from the Police, the Fire Service and Councillor Stuart Dunn as leader of the Parish Council.

Countywide Partner Issues

Leisure Transformation Presentation

Alison Clark and Susan Robinson, Durham County Council delivered a presentation on Leisure Transformation.

In January 2020 plans were approved in principle by the council to progress with a leisure centre transformation programme. Lockdown and the pandemic will continue to impact on leisure for some time to come, and Durham County Council want to make sure that they can plan for the facilities and activities that will be needed in the future.

Objectives

- To support health and wellbeing in the county, especially in light of Covid-19 health impacts
- To increase participation
- To generate additional income to keep the service affordable
- To improve ageing buildings with high maintenance cost
- Wider regeneration benefits

The plans are all different to provide the right mix of facilities across the county, aiming to provide similar standards and to make the most of our facilities and spaces.

- At Newton Aycliffe, Consett, Wolsingham and Teesdale we are progressing options to refresh the building presentation, to make essential maintenance improvements and update the activity programme.
- At Abbey, Freeman's Quay, Durham; Louisa Centre, Stanley; Peterlee; and Spennymoor we are progressing options to make more substantial building improvements and introduce a range of new activities and services that will complement the existing and improve the overall offer.
- At Bishop Auckland; Chester-le-Street and Seaham, where facilities are very poor we are progressing options to build new leisure facilities
- Options for Meadowfield & Shildon will be developed in the new year

New Build Leisure Centres

Seaham • Existing site • The Dock Top • St John's Square
Chester-le-Street • Existing site • Riverside • Civic site
Bishop Auckland • Existing site • Football Club site • Bishop Auckland College

2 Stage Process

Stage 1 – November to December 2020 • Consultation on shortlisted sites •
Engagement on the activity/facility mixture

Stage 2 – Up to and continuing beyond February 2021 • Continuous engagement
starting after the stage 1 process to engage with advisory forums, young people,
users and others (This will remain throughout the life of the project)

- An external reference group with Sport England and other regional and national bodies with an interest in the project.
- Consulting on the individual and site specific proposals

Follow up queries: leisuretransformation@durham.gov.uk

Site Consultation: <http://www.durham.gov.uk/article/24543>

Engagement Website: <http://durhamleisuretransformation.co.uk/>

Questions

1. What are your views on the possible locations for the new leisure centres to be built?
2. What else do you feel we need to consider to improve access and increase participation?
3. What may we have missed that you think we should consider?

Councillor Stuart Dunn thanked the officers for their presentation and supported the proposals. It was noted that a lot of people were going outside of the county to use leisure facilities and that we should be reducing the travel to facilities as not everyone could afford to do this. He highlighted that a number of centres had closed – Coxhoe, Ferryhill, Sherburn which are now community assets delivering health benefits to people. As part of the strategic review of leisure and sport provision, Stuart appealed to the County Council team to be looking at third sector providers and the support and advice that could be recycled.

Councillor Maura McKeon asked a question about the Woodhouse Close, Bishop Auckland centre which she had visited last year; and it seemed to be quite a new centre. She queried what was wrong with it and why the decision was made to rebuild a new one.

She also asked if there was any provision for bowling facilities in Durham.

Alyson said they were unsure where the bowling facilities would be located but that it would be located in place that would attract the most people to allow the centre to operate efficiently and attract revenue. Further consultation on this will take place in February.

With regards to the Bishop Auckland centre, it is a combination of an old building and the ability to do the kinds of things they would want to but are limited by the building as it stands now. It is most cost effective to rebuild.

Councillor Lucy Hovvels said she was pleased to see that the County Council were seeking the views of service users. She felt that affordability for the villages we serve was very important and hoped this was considered within the plans. Public transport issues, both lack of and expense are an issue in the AAP area which prevents people to go to the leisure centre. She hoped there would be some links with the environment team about improving a healthy lifestyle around the natural environment eg walking, running as well as sporting facilities in leisure centres.

Neighbourhood Budget Approvals

The following Neighbourhood Budget projects had been shared with the Board -

Name of Scheme: Keeping Coxhoe Park Safe

Councillor(s): Dunn / McKeon

Interest Declared: Yes - Councillor Dunn is Director of Active Life Centre and FliC, and a Coxhoe Parish Councillor

Amount: £10,000.00 (£5,000.00 each)

Name of Scheme: Kelloe, Croxdale and Coxhoe Planters

Councillor(s): Dunn / McKeon

Interest Declared: Yes - Cllr Dunn is a Coxhoe Parish Councillor

Amount: £4,000.00 (£2,000.00 each)

Name of Scheme: West Lane, Trimdon - Road Safety Measures

Councillor(s): Hovvels

Interest Declared: No

Amount: £3,174.00

This request had come from residents who were concerned about the number of accidents occurring. The road safety measures will include improving the street signs and road markings.

Name of Scheme: Trimdon Grange Community Centre

Councillor(s): Hovvels

Interest Declared: No

Amount: £2,000.00

Name of Scheme: Sedgefield Show

Councillor(s): Brown / Robinson

Interest Declared: Yes, Councillor David Brown is a Committee Member

Amount: £2,768.11

Name of Scheme: Improvements to Trimdon Village Hall Play Area

Councillor(s): Brookes

Interest Declared: No

Amount: £29,887.00

Name of Scheme: Improvements to Trimdon Village Hall
Councillor(s): Brookes
Interest Declared: No
Amount: £1,500.00

Name of Scheme: Sedgefield PTA – Outdoor Trail
Councillor(s): Brown / Robinson
Interest Declared: No
Amount: £5,000.00

All children in Sedgefield can use this.

Name of Scheme: Sedgefield Rugby Club Equipment
Councillor(s): Brown / Robinson
Interest Declared: No
Amount: £5,000.00

The Board was happy to approve the projects and the interest as declared.

Date and time of next board meeting

Thursday 21 January 2021, 9.30 am via Teams

Everyone was thanked for their attendance and the Chair wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Councillor John Robinson informed the meeting that on Christmas Eve at 6.00 pm the community will stand outside and ring the bell. He encouraged everyone to promote this.

Amy Stewart added that she had heard that there was going to be a Christmas lights/display walk but was unsure who was organising this.

Guy Bashford, Business Engagement Officer (East Durham) provided information on Business Durham. The website to the online Covid19 Business Support Brochure provides an overview of over 50 other business support offers for County Durham businesses. It highlights the support currently available for businesses from Business Durham and business delivery partners across the North East. The brochure is now live and can be found via the link below and is going to be updated on a monthly basis.

<https://www.businessdurham.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/50402-REG-BD-Covid19-Recovery-Brochure-Version2-P6.pdf> (Link to guide itself)