

# DERWENT VALLEY PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING

Held via Microsoft Teams on 25 November 2020 at 1pm

## **PRESENT:**

### **Councillors**

Derek Hicks, Ivan Jewell, Alan Shield, Watts Stelling (Vice Chair), Owen Temple and Alex Watson

### **Partner Organisations**

Mark Clelland - Derwentside Trust, Craig Farrage - Co Durham & Darlington Fire & Rescue Service, Paul Moralee - Karbon Homes, Gary Scott (Vice Chair) - Do Business Network (DBN) and Insp Dave Stewart (Sgt Stephen Clegg also joined the meeting) - Durham Constabulary

### **Public Representatives**

Jeanette Harold (Chair), Helen Marley and Susan Mellor

### **DVP:**

Corinne Walton - AAP Co-ordinator, Pete Garrod and Kath Clements - Community Development / Project Officers and Lynn Dougal – Support Officer

### **PRESENTERS:**

Gordon Elliot, Head of Partnerships and Community Engagement, Durham County Council (DCC) - DCC Budget Consultation,  
Alison Clark, Head of Culture, Sport and Tourism, DCC and Susan Robinson, Head of Corporate Property and Land, DCC – Leisure Centre Transformation and  
Craig Farrage, Co Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS) - Response to Covid-19

### **MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 7**

### **APOLOGIES:**

Partner Reps: Alison Lazazzera and Joanne Waller - DCC and Rachel Rooney - County Durham Clinical Commissioning Group. Public Reps: Marlene Boyles, Shelley O'Brien and Mike Clark.

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

Corinne Walton welcomed everyone to the virtual meeting. For the benefit of Board members, she briefly went through the Teams functions such as the mute button and turning camera on/off. Board members were asked to write RTS (request to speak) in the chat facility.

Board members introduced themselves and Corinne welcomed Insp Dave Stewart to his first Board meeting, albeit virtually. Apologies were noted as above.

There were two declarations of interest – Gary Scott, DBN project proposal and Mark Clelland, Glenroyd House project proposal.

Before moving onto the next item on the agenda, Jeanette Harold offered her condolences on behalf of the DVP and Board members to former Board member and Chair, Rosemary Morris whose husband Julian died last week.

Corinne shared the agenda which gave a brief overview of the business to be conducted at the meeting.

## **2. Minutes of Previous Board Meeting (30 September 2020)**

The matters arising from the minutes were:

Page 3 – regarding the e-bulletin, the DVP team is working on a draft e-bulletin and will circulate this to the Board for comments in due course.

Page 3 – regarding the OPSIF funding of £8,776 that is no longer going to Derwentside Mind, both applicants were approached to ascertain if they were willing and able to deliver their projects under the current circumstances. Unfortunately, due to current restrictions around Covid-19, it is not possible to deliver the IT Skills for Over 50s project and the Positive Changes project is currently on hold. Therefore the £8,776 will go back into the DVP budget and will form part of the Covid-19 Recovery fund.

Page 7 – regarding Shotley Bridge Hospital and the engagement process that was due to start in November, we received a circular from the CCG stating that they needed further clarification from Central Government around the financial provision. Therefore, the engagement process will not be starting in November. Further updates will be provided by the CCG in due course.

Page 8 – regarding the Transport Survey, Mr Richard Holden MP was contacted to provide an update on the survey and his office telephoned Corinne to discuss this. Mr Holden is keen to engage with the DVP and will attend a Board meeting in the early part of 2021 to give an update on the Transport survey and an overview on his work plan/ideas for the area.

Page 9 – following the online AAP event that took place on 20 October, the event went well, and the Board were sent an after-event summary. Corinne advised that she has sent a copy of the Towns and Villages Strategy Consultation to the Board for them to make comments on, if this wish to take part. The deadline for the consultation is 4 December 2020.

Cllr Shield said Elected Members received a copy of the North East Transport Plan 2021-35. He said he will send a copy to the DVP team to be circulated to everyone to allow them to put forward their views on a local and regional level.

There were no further comments and the minutes were AGREED.

## **3. DVP Covid-19 Recovery Fund and Task Group update**

Corinne gave an update on the project call out. Following the Board's agreement on 30 September to a project call out, the Task Group met on 2 October and agreed a detailed call out specification document around the 8 Covid-19 Recovery themes and specific areas of focus. The call out went out on 8 October, we received 20 expressions of interest and by the deadline date of 2 November we received 18 completed funding applications. The total funding requested was £217,378, the total Covid-19 Recovery

Budget available was £143,678 therefore we were oversubscribed by £73,700.

On 6 and 10 November, the Task Group met to review and discuss the project applications. Based on the initial review, 3 projects were declined by the task group as they felt they did not meet the requirements of the Covid-19 Recovery themes and did not progress to the scoring stage. Therefore, these projects were not recommended to the Board to consider funding:

**Medomsley CAG - Space for all - Garden and Play Area Enhancement. Funding request £9,500**

Maintenance and enhancement of the village community garden and provide metal railings for the local play area to keep dogs out.

**CBS Theatre Group - CBS Theatre Group and CBBees. Funding Request £5,500**

Venue and costume hire, licenses and script charges and production costs for local pantomime.

**Duk Moo Academy - Derwent Valley Duk Moo Academy. Funding request £5,607**

Korean Martial Arts sessions for young people to help improve physical and mental wellbeing.

The Task Group also chose unanimously to recommend 2 project proposals to the Board to consider funding as they felt they had met the Covid-19 Recovery specification themes well and were not required to go through the scoring process.

**Derwentside Trust - Glenroyd House Covid-19 Recovery. Funding request £20,000**

Improved kitchen facilities at Glenroyd House to provide hot meals for those in need and to use the facility as a community café. Improved facilities would allow activities such as teaching basic cooking skills and educating families around healthy eating on a budget.

**Learning for Life - Wellbeing, Wildlife and Wonder. Funding Request £8,086.54**

To develop nature workshops in their Garden House for environmental education / appreciation, linked with nature walks, trails and activities.

The remaining applications had a number of queries and more information was requested from the applicants. Once the responses were received, they were sent to individual task group members along with a scoring matrix so they could score each proposal based on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Each project proposal was given a total average score, ranked in order (from highest to lowest) and funds were allocated until the Covid-19 Recovery budget was exhausted.

Based on the Task Group's review and scoring, the following outcome was recommended to the Board:

**Clart About Ltd - My Mammy/Mummy Matters. Funding request £11,480**

Creation of a facilitated support group for new parents who have given birth during lockdown. The group will offer sessions around sensory play, peer support and bonding through parent led activities.

**PACT House - PACT Post Covid Mental Health Support. Funding request £11,038**

Counselling and mental health support delivered through 1-1 support, drop-in

<p>sessions and sign posting. Sessions would take place face to face, online and via telephone.</p>
<p><b>Do Business Network - Fit for the Future Business Support. Funding request £6,510</b></p> <p>An intensive programme of support for micro and small businesses in Derwent Valley delivered by local experts and comprising of 24 online business training workshops.</p>
<p><b>CDC Enterprise Agency - Plan B. Funding request £15,000</b></p> <p>25 businesses would receive bespoke one to one coaching and practical support to redesign their business models allowing them to thrive in a post Covid-19 economy.</p>
<p><b>The Community Network CiC - New Girls Code. Funding request £14,450</b></p> <p>Aimed at teenage girls to help them understand finance &amp; entrepreneurship, journalism, dealing with friendships and fallouts, parents, personal issues and goal setting. The project is mainly delivered online with some face to face content, when possible.</p>
<p><b>Consett Rugby Club - Junior Rugby Restart &amp; Wellbeing Initiative. Funding request £19,182</b></p> <p>To upgrade current kitchen facilities within the club to develop existing and new programmes to use sport as a vehicle to combat issues such as holiday hunger. The aim is for the club to be a community hub and be a safe place for those most in need.</p>
<p><b>St Ebba's Church - Can you hear me now? Funding request £5,260.80</b></p> <p>To purchase equipment such as an up to date sound system for church services to be relayed outside and a laptop to livestream church services and play downloads via YouTube.</p>
<p><b>Rotary Club of Consett - Connecting Youth through Songs and Stories. Funding request £8,600</b></p> <p>A weekly programme engaging vulnerable young people and families in musical and storytelling activities supported by musicians and drama experts to promote wellbeing and reduce social isolation.</p>
<p><b>MHA Communities - MHA Derwent Valley Project. Funding request £10,167</b></p> <p>To reduce social isolation and loneliness in the elderly through a befriending service, accessing classes and activities to promote and support health and wellbeing. Funding will be used for staff costs to assess member's needs, recruit volunteers and work in partnership to develop referral pathways.</p>
<p><b>Watling Spaces CiC – The Roxy Access for all project. Partial funding of £13,993.20</b></p> <p>The aim is to create a fully Covid-19 secure accessible community arts venue, comprising of rehearsal spaces, a 360-seat theatre with grand circle and orchestra pit, office space and a cafe bar. To make the venue accessible to all, a purpose-built lift would allow full access to all floors.</p>

Due to a lack of funds available, the following project proposals were not recommended:

<p><b>Consett and District Golf Club - Covid Response and Recovery. Funding request £5,328</b></p> <p>To provide safe, secure and accessible toilet and disabled facilities and a new touchscreen PSI (Player Score Input) system.</p>
<p><b>Spartan Weightlifting and Strength Sports Club – Spartan Covid-19 Recovery. Funding request £10,325</b></p> <p>Delivering physical activity and nutrition sessions (face to face and online), funding core running costs and providing digital sessions for users.</p>

**Equal Arts - Skills for Life Top Trumps. Funding request £12,000**

An intergenerational activity (face to face and digital) involving school children, their families and local care home residents in the Dipton area. The project aims to get young people thinking about their future via the card game 'Top Trumps'.

Regarding the Rotary Club of Consett's proposal, Jeanette asked if we could be invited to the virtual performance. Corinne said we should get an invite and also said that any project that delivers anything virtually we will be asking the applicant for an invitation.

Jeanette said as the Task Group had done a thorough job in scrutinising the project proposals, she suggested, unless there were any comments, the Board accepts the Task Group's recommendations as per Corinne's report.

There were no comments raised and the Board AGREED to support the project proposals as per the Task Group's recommendations above.

#### **4. Partner Updates**

***Gordon Elliot gave an update on Durham County Council's 2021/22 Budget and 2021/22 to 2024/25 Medium Term Financial Plan***

Gordon said there may be some last-minute adjustments to the budget based on the Chancellor of the Exchequer's announcement in the Government's Spending Review today. He then went through the presentation (a copy is available upon request).

Cllr Shield said DCC is in a much better position than some local authorities, thanks to the prudence of John Hewitt and his team, and said Leeds City Council, for example, has a shortfall of around £63m for this year.

Jeanette acknowledged what Cllr Shield said but she said the knock-on effect of services and monies going into areas is far greater than we often see. She said investment in children's SEND is around 0.6% compared to other areas that spend around 2%. Although finances have to be balanced, reduction in service provision is impacting negatively on people in our communities.

Gordon said he would take those comments back and also said as there are no further comments on the presentation, he will assume that the AAP is happy with the Council's budget reserve approach moving forward.

Jeanette thanked Gordon for his presentation.

***Leisure Centre Transformation presentation given by Susan Robinson and Alison Clark***

The first part of the presentation was from Susan Robinson looking at the site and building aspects of the leisure centres. The second part was from Alison Clark around the proposed building refurbishments and changes and the mix of leisure activities within the different buildings (a copy of the presentation is available upon request).

As part of DCC's Leisure Centre Transformation strategy, phase 1 of the Council's two stage consultation and engagement process is ongoing.

The first phase is running until 6 December where members of the public can give their views on 3 proposed sites which have been shortlisted for new leisure centres in Bishop Auckland, Chester le Street and Seaham. This is available at <http://www.durham.gov.uk/article/24543>.

The consultation also includes an Engagement Website available at: <http://durhamleisuretransformation.co.uk/> where members of the public can give their views on the potential activities/facilities mix.

Phase 2 will begin in February 2021 and will include a detailed consultation on the individual and site-specific proposals.

Cllr Watson said as there have been problems at Consett Leisure Centre, particularly the pool area, and nothing appears to have been done, he asked for an update on when these issues can be resolved and when the pool will reopen. Susan said the issues with the pool at Consett Leisure Centre is a priority, but there are some complications around the insurance and history of the building. A technical report is due shortly which will give us an indication of what the issues are and until we receive the report to ascertain what needs to be done, a date for reopening the pool cannot be given yet.

Cllr Shield asked what capital outlay is expected with the 3 new build leisure facilities and as £60m is allocated to a new HQ, he wondered if financial prudence needs to be reconsidered in light of expected grant cuts from Central Government to address Covid-19 debt. Alison said the current capital programme is partially from borrowing and from a capital allocation grant. The business model for the leisure facilities is designed to attract more users and bring in more revenue, which pays for part of the capital costs. However, the first business model was based on pre Covid usage and we are looking at the business plan assumptions to be sure that the revenue generated, which we thought was the case a year ago will be the case going forward.

Cllr Jewell feels that parks in smaller communities have a role to play and they can include play areas, places for people to sit and enjoy, have exercise facilities, etc. Not everyone wants to use a formal facility on a regular basis, and he feels there is a lot of focus on the commercial side of sports and leisure and ignoring the less formal side which could attract and benefit many members of the community. Alison agrees it is a valid point and said this presentation is currently looking at leisure centre transformation and although that is a large part of the leisure provision within the county, it is not the only one. Parks, walking/cycling paths, outdoor spaces, etc all form part of the overall picture and more work is planned next year to work out how we make the most of that.

Cllr Temple agrees with Cllr Jewells comments and said the Derwent Valley area has some wonderful outdoor leisure and recreational facilities. Regarding Consett Leisure Centre he seems to recall there were problems with the floors lifting and asked for assurances, when leisure centres can re-open, that the rest of the facilities are in tip-top condition. Susan said the floors in the sports hall were repaired during lockdown and there are some additional areas that need further work which should be completed when the leisure centres can re-open.

Jeanette added that she thinks the facilities on offer in Consett Leisure Centre are very limited, i.e. a few classes, pool and gym and the new builds seem to have more variety on offer and are more inclusive. She also said, Consett has a 5-year-old building with issues and it does not make it very appealing to individuals and families.

Jeanette thanked Alison and Susan for their presentation.

Corinne said people can make comments via the website as mentioned in the presentation or they can send them directly to the DVP Team, and we will pass them onto the Leisure Centre Transformation team.

***Craig Farrage gave a presentation on County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service's Response to Covid-19***

Craig gave an update on the Fire and Rescue Service's actions in response to the pandemic and outlined what responses were made, the changes to business models and how they maintained front line/emergency services (a copy is available upon request).

There were no comments/questions raised and Jeanette thanked Craig for his presentation and gave special thanks to Craig and his colleagues for the work of the Fire and Rescue Service during the lockdown and beyond.

**5. DVP Board Meeting Schedule 2021/22**

Corinne asked the Board to note the dates for next year's Board meetings. It is hoped that face to face meetings could resume from May onwards but until further notice, Board meetings will be held virtually via Microsoft Teams.

Wednesday 27 January 2021  
Wednesday 24 March  
Wednesday 26 May (AGM)  
Wednesday 14 July  
Wednesday 29 September  
Wednesday 24 November

Cllr Shield said as the local elections are due to take place in May 2021, elected members will be subjected to purdah restrictions and will not be involved in any decision-making processes, should there be any, at the 24 March Board meeting.

Corinne said that should local elections go ahead as planned next year; we will not be able to hold the March Board meeting during Purdah. Board members will be advised as soon as possible if it is cancelled.

The Board AGREED to the above dates. Corinne stated that she would circulate the Board meeting schedule electronically to all members and diary invitations would be issued in the new year.

**6. DVP Thank You Videos**

Corinne said as part of the online DVP 'Better for Everyone' event on 20 October, the DVP Team created a video which gave an overview of the work carried out and how the community came together in the area and their response to Covid-19. The video was shown to everyone. The remaining video will be circulated to everyone at a later date due to the limited time remaining.

**7. Meeting Close and Date of Next Meeting**

Jeanette thanked everyone for their attendance, wished everyone best wishes for a happy Christmas and confirmed that the next Board meeting will be on Wednesday 27 January 2021 at 1pm via Microsoft Teams.

Signed as a correct record: .....

Date: .....