

Chester-le-Street & District Area Action Partnership (AAP) Board Meeting – Minutes of Wednesday 4th August 2021 at 6.00pm - Teams Virtual Meeting

Elected Councillors

Councillor Craig Martin
Councillor Alison Batey
Councillor Tracie Smith
Councillor Alan Bell
Councillor Bill Moist
Councillor Emma Waldock
Elsie Forrester (Parish Council Representative)

Partner Organisations

Graeme Carr (Durham & Darlington Fire and Rescue Service)
Lee Morris (Durham Constabulary)
Jon Quine (County Durham Clinical Commissioning Group)
Suzanne Jobson (Karbon Homes)
Joanne Malki (Business Sector)
Dave Wafer (DCC)

Public Representatives

Derek Briggs
Khaled Malki
Clare Todd
Howell Davies
Jake Rollings
Janice Rokni

Officer Attendance:

Michael Wilkes (AAP Principal AAP Co-ordinator)
Fiona Kelly, (Principal Community Development Project Officer)
Allyson Rose (Community Development Project Officer)

Invited Guest Speakers:

Joy Allen (Police, Crime & Victims Commissioner)
Diane Foster (DCC Public Health – Suicide Prevention Coordinator)

Apologies:

Joanne Pugh (Community Representative)

Public Attendance:

Six members of the AAP Public Forum were present at the meeting.

1. Introductions, Apologies and Virtual Housekeeping Code of Conduct/Protocols
 - 1.1. Jake welcomed members to the virtual meeting and introductions were made
2. Agreement of minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 1st July & Matters Arising
 - 2.1 The Chair went through the minutes page by page for clarity. The Board then agreed the minutes were a true and accurate record. **Agreed**
3. Neighbourhood Issues
 - 3.1 None were forthcoming.
4. Timescales for Public Representative Recruitment
 - 4.1 For this discussion item only, the Chair was passed to the Vice Chair, Suzanne Jobson, to oversee proceedings and existing Public Representatives were asked not to participate. Suzanne referenced the report already circulated to Board Members.
 - 4.2 Councillor Moist raised his concerns around inconsistency across AAPs commenting that several AAPs are currently recruiting for Public Representatives. Councillor Moist also raised concerns regarding the timescales making the assertion that, to wait until the end of the financial year to recruit, would potentially be more disruptive than if recruitment was to take place during the summer recess.
 - 4.3 Councillor Batey expressed concerns around continuity of the work of the AAP should the Public Representative recruitment take place in September at the point when the AAP needs to be seeking to approve funding applications. Of particular concern were any time limited pots of funding. MW confirmed that the AAP needs to defray at least £125,000 this financial year.
 - 4.4 Councillor Martin sought clarification as to whether the current representatives would stay on the Board until new ones are recruited which would mitigate the issues around continuity. MW confirmed they would and reiterated, as outlined in the report, that the timescales for recruitment and potential period of inactivity would be the same, whether the exercise takes place in September 2021 or in March 2022.
 - 4.5 Councillor Bell commented that, if public representative recruitment is going to impact upon the AAPs ability to make decisions, then this represents a flaw in the system that needs to be rectified to prevent the same issues from arising again in the future.
 - 4.6 Suzanne progressed with the vote and noted that this would take place via a show of 'virtual' hands and that public representative would not take part in the voting process. Voting then took place on the following two options:
 - Public Representatives recruitment to take office in September 2021 – 3 votes (Councillor Bill Moist, Councillor Craig Martin, Councillor Alan Bell)
 - Public Representatives recruitment to take office in April 2022 – 5 votes (Joanne Malki, Councillor Emma Waldock, Councillor Alison Batey, Suzanne Jobson, Councillor Tracie Smith)

- 4.7 It was therefore agreed that the AAP would advertise for Public Representatives in March 2022, with new Public Representatives taking up post as of the AAP Board meeting in April 2022.
- 4.8 Councillor Bell expressed his dissatisfaction with the way this issue had been handled stating in his view that it had been unprofessional and that it had been uncomfortable for existing Board Members, not least the existing public representatives. Councillor Bell reiterated the need to revisit the public representative recruitment process and timescales to prevent the same issues from arising again.
- 4.9 Councillor Batey concurred, stating that the way the timescales traditionally coincide with the elections are unhelpful and impact on the level of experience on the Board every election year.
- 4.10 MW noted that he hoped nobody did feel uncomfortable when discussing this item and that the discussion was about a process and not about personnel. MW did note that, moving forward, it would be better if the Board did not have such a big recruitment exercise to undertake at once and that he would speak to colleagues to explore options as to how this could be improved in the future.
- 4.10 Councillor Moist asked whether the details of the vote would be published, it was confirmed they would be recorded in the minutes.
- 4.11 The Chair was passed back to Jake Rollings.

5. Presentations

5.1 Joy Allen - Police Crime & Victims Commissioner (PCC)

- 5.1.1 Joy introduced herself and noted that she was visiting all AAPs across the County to inform them of the new Police & Crime Plan 2021 - 2024, as it was currently out for consultation (a copy would be circulated in due course). A presentation followed covering the priorities within the Plan, including:

- Safer Communities
- Safer Business
- Safer Online
- Safer People
- Safer Roads
- Safer Countryside

The above would be underpinned by intelligence led information, data provision, problem solving and a strong partnership approach.

- 5.1.2 A number of questions were raised by Board Members and answered by Joy including:

- The lack of ease of reporting crimes and anonymity when doing so
- Issues with off road bikes

- Drugs was noted as a major issue
- Anti-social behaviour and the demarcation line between when it is a police matter or one for the local authority.
- Impact of reduction of officers – the need to be the community interface/gain community intelligence.

5.1.3 Joy noted that a discussion was taking place regarding proceeds of crime funds and the potential for working with the AAPs on priority setting and allocation of funds.

5.1.4 Joy noted the need for further support funding around purchase of drones and long lenses and also joint support with the Fearless – Young Peoples Project. MW noted that he would be happy to discuss in further detail about an approach to AAPs for funding.

5.2 Diane Foster – DCC Public Health – Suicide Prevention Coordinator

5.2.1 Diane introduced herself and gave a synopsis of her role. Diane proceeded to undertake a presentation around Suicide Prevention (copy would be circulated in due course). Diane noted that World Mental Health Day would take place on 10th October 2021

Various comments and questions were raised in relation to the presentation.

6. AAP Towns & Villages Report

6.1 An outline report, developed by Andrew Megginson, had been circulated to AAP Board Members prior to the meeting and MW noted the contents. MW also noted that the new link officer/contact for all Town & Village approaches is Bill Lightburn. Bill will now be involved in the development of both Area Budget Town & Village approaches and work with local Councillors on their Town & Village allocations. MW noted that he would forward Bill's contact details in due course. **Action: MW**

7. Neighbourhood Budget

7.1 **Councillor Craig Martin – DCC Street Lighting – Decorating Northlands Christmas Tree 2021/2022/2023/2024**

The aim of this project is to dress and undress the tree at the start and end of each season of years 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024. This project also includes funds to purchase new lights for the tree.

Declaration of Interest: None

NB Allocation: £6,780

Supported

7.2 **Councillors Alan Bell & Philip Heaviside – Bournmoor Cricket Club – Summer Festival**

The aim of this project is to support the festival with funding to pay for marquee & bar hire, hire of music & live entertainment and bouncy castle hire.

Declaration of Interest: None

NB Allocation: £2,000 (each Councillor committing £1,000)

Supported

Neighbourhood Budget Small Grant Allocations

7.3 Councillors Allan Bell & Philip Heaviside – Bournmoor Youth & Community Project – Toddlers Group Visit to the Zoo – Contribution towards Coach Hire

The aim of this project is to support the group with a contribution to coach hire for a trip to the zoo. The organisers of this visit will follow all Government guidance around COVID.

Declaration of Interest: None

NBSG Allocation: £380 (each Councillor committing £190)

Supported

7.4 Councillors Simon Henig, Karen Fantarrow-Darby, Alison Batey, Danny Wood, Paul Pringle, Alan Bell, Philip Heaviside, Simon Wilson, Emma Waldock, Bill Moist, Paul Sexton, Beaty Bainbridge, Tracie Smith & Craig Martin - DLI – Chester-le-Street Division – Contribution towards coach hire

The aim of this project is to support the group with a contribution for coach hire to enable them to attend their Annual Reunion in 2022. The coach needs to be booked early to avoid disappointment. The organisers of this visit will follow all Government guidance around COVID.

Declaration of Interest: None

NBSG Allocation: £999 (each Councillor committing £71.36)

Supported

7.5 Councillors Beaty Bainbridge, Simon Henig, Craig Martin, Bill Moist and Paul Sexton – Chester-le-Street & District Business Association – Town Centre Lego Minifigure Trail.

The aim of this project is to promote the minifigure trail locally to all schools and residents. The funding will be used to provide promotional materials (leaflets & posters).

Declaration of Interest: None

NBSG Allocation: £300 (each Councillor committing £60)

Supported

7.6 Councillors Simon Wilson & Emma Waldock – Sacriston Colliery Cricket Club – Kids Big Birthday Party

The aim of this project is to organise a birthday party to be held at the Club for the children of the area. Due to lockdown, the children have had little to look forward to, so this will be a celebration everyone can enjoy.

Declaration of Interest: None

NBSG Allocation: £150 (each Councillor committing £75)

Supported

7.7 **Councillors Simon Wilson, Emma Waldock, Simon Henig, Tracie Smith, Karen Fantarrow-Darby – Durham Pride UK & The Rainbow Alliance - Durham Pride**

The aim of this project is to provide support funding so that Durham Pride can take place. This event, although held in Durham City, is for the whole of the County Durham area.

Declaration of Interest: None

NBSG Allocation: £500 (each Councillor committing £100)

Supported

Councillors' Towns & Villages Allocations

7.8 **Councillors Bill Moist & Paul Sexton – DCC Countryside Team - Waldrige Fell Footpath Improvements**

The project aims to upgrade the all-weather easy access path network (approx. 1,300metres) at Waldrige Fell SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest). This network consists of a circular footpath on the North Fell and a South Fell car park link route. To ensure the quality of the surface is maintained for the increasing amounts of users who are using the Fell, the existing routes require urgent refurbishment. The surface treatment is a specialist Fibredec material that is attractive, appropriate and enables year-round, all weather, convenient wheelchair, and pushchair access to areas of the site offering spectacular views of County Durham to the North and East and allows visitors to get close to the special natural attributes that make Waldrige Fell such a unique and valuable place. The popularity of the Fell has increased since lockdown as people exercise locally. The project aims to build on that popularity by improving access for regular visitors, whilst attracting more user groups from our local community. Specialist contractors are needed to install the surface and works are planned for later this summer. Waldrige Parish Council have contributed £5,000 match funding to the project with the remainder coming from the DCC Countryside budget

Declaration of Interest: None

Town & Villages Allocation: £10,000 (Cllrs Moist & Sexton committing £5,000 each)

Project Cost: £40,000 (match funding £5,000 Waldrige Parish Council & £25,000 DCC Countryside budget)

Supported

8. Partner Updates

8.1 Durham Constabulary

8.1.1 Inspector Morris responded to some of the issues raised following the presentation from the PCC.

- Reporting – the Police are trying to address the problem by encouraging people to contact the police via the most appropriate forum to report issues. Lee explained that the Police often experience reporting off issues more relevant to other agencies given that they're available out of hours which exacerbates the problem.
- Off Road Motorcycles – Acknowledged that this continues to be an issue and that a countywide TLP (time limited plan) has been initiated through multi-agency problem solving groups to address the problem. The use of long-range lenses is yielding some results.
- Drugs – Police are reacting to community concerns with six cannabis farms in the area having recently been dealt with. Lee reiterated that its not always possible to share lots of information about everything being done so as not to damage any potential projects but suggested the possibility of inviting members along on strike days.
- Hate Crime – Lee reiterated that hate is something the Police take very seriously and that he would discuss issues raised with Councillor Batey outside of the meeting.
- PACT (Police and Community Together) meetings – Lee invited feedback around how the Police and community interaction could take place moving forward. Lee gave an example of community walkarounds and adhoc PACT meetings which took place in Sacriston in response to some issues around ASB.
- Water Safety – Lee noted the recent case of a young child found in the water at Chester-le-Street Riverside Park. Discussion ensued around some potential measures to improve water safety, including an educational campaign as well as some physical interventions. It was resolved that MW would make contact with Lee and others outside of the Board meeting with a view to arranging a special meeting to discuss the issues and agree some actions.

Action: MW

8.2 Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Update

No update to provide

8.3 Fire & Rescue Service

No update to provide

8.4 Karbon Homes

Suzanne updated that Karbon would be running a holiday activity programme from three locations, one of which would be Bullion Hall. 96 children are already signed up but there is still some capacity on afternoons.

8.5 Business Association

Joanne updated that the town centre minifigure trail had been well received with quite a few people taking part.

8.6 Voluntary and Community Sector

Board members were reminded that the seat of the VCS rep is currently vacant and it was agreed that the AAP team should advertise the vacancy and invite expressions of interest at the earliest opportunity.

Action: AAP Team

9. AAP Co-Ordinators Update

9.1 Board Development Session – As a number of AAP Board Members were new to the work of the AAP, it was thought that a development session would be helpful by way of introduction and future work programme of the Board. A date and time for this will be circulated in due course.

9.2 Chester-le-Street Town Centre wi-fi – It was noted that this was now ‘live’. Members were requested to feed back any issues that they may have accessing the wi-fi. Information regarding this has been communicated via Facebook and to our networks.

9.3 Park View School/Train Station Project – Allyson noted that this work had stemmed from the mental health priority within the Supporting Task Group. This had led to support with setting up the Friends of Chester-le-Street Railway Station and their action plan, of which this project was one action. Funding for this had been sourced via Councillors Neighbourhood Budget. It was highlighted that Derek Briggs had been integral in liaising with the school for development of the art and with Northern Rail and the Vital Team for permissions and hanging of the artwork. Allyson noted that she had circulated an e-mail to AAP Board Members, attaching images of the artwork and a link to Park View Schools Facebook post regarding the project.

9.4 HAWHF Monitoring Visits – These were being undertaken by both the Fun & Food Team and AAP staff. They would inform the monitoring back to the Department of Education in due course.

9.5 Future Board Agenda Items – MW reminded Board Members to expect presentations in the upcoming months regarding Libraries and the Towns and Villages programme. MW also explained that the team would be approaching projects funded through the AAP to present updates at Board meetings.

9.6 Staffing Update – MW updated that Laura Sloan would be taking up the vacant part-time post in the team from the week commencing the 10th August.

10. Date and time of next meeting

Monday 13th September 2021 (6pm – 8pm) - Virtual Board Meeting