

**East Durham AAP Board Meeting Minutes**  
**6pm on Wednesday 12<sup>TH</sup> January 2022 via Microsoft Teams**

**PRESENT:**

**Elected Members**

Cllr Angela Surtees (Chair) (AS)

Cllr Terry Duffy (TD)

Cllr Jake Miller (JM)

Cllr Chris Hood (CH)

Cllr Leanne Kennedy (LK)

Cllr Julie Griffiths (JG)

Cllr Isabel Roberts (IR)

**Partner Representatives**

Graham Easterlow (GE)

Ian Porter (IP)

Insp Joanne Eales (JE)

Insp Gary Smith (GS)

Malcolm Woodward (MW)

Rachel Payne (RP)

Joanne Angus (JA)

Susan Robinson (SR)

**Public Representatives**

Gill Rodgers (GR)

Danny Dickinson (DD)

Bill Smithson (BS)

David Blackwell (DB)

Alison Paterson (AP)

**Co-opted Members**

Edna Connor (EC)

Amanda Moon (AM)

**Officer Attendance:**

John Murphy (JMurphy) – AAP Coordinator

Wayne Gibson (WG) – Community Development Project Officer

Ian Moran (IM) – Community Development Project Officer

Laura Towers (LT) – AAP Support Officer

PJ Harding (PJH) – Towns & Villages Community Development Project Officer

**Presenters:**

Susan Robinson, DCC

**Public Attendance:**

10 members of the public were in attendance

**Apologies:**

Cllr Stacey Deinali, Jim Shand

## **1. Introductions and Apologies**

AS welcomed everyone to the meeting and wished all a happy and prosperous new year.

AS ran through meeting etiquette and asked that all questions were raised through the Chair to avoid people speaking over each other. Additionally, it was noted that the chat function would be disabled during Board Meetings going forward, so that the discussions within the meeting could be focused on.

JMurphy updated the Board that Jane Jack would be joining the EDAAP team as Community Development Project Officer at the end of the month.

## **2. Previous Minutes and Matters Arising**

### **i. Previous Minutes**

IP highlighted that he had been in attendance at the previous Board Meeting on 08/12/21, but was not noted in the attendance list.

**ACTION: LT to amend the previous minutes accordingly.**

The minutes of the previous EDAAP Board Meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021 were approved by the Board as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

### **ii. Matters Arising**

It was raised that further information on Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour Risk Assessment Conferences (CASBRACs) was requested at the last Board Meeting. GS confirmed that JM had been provided with the actions from the meeting. It has been agreed that Cllrs will not attend CASBRACs.

JM updated that DCC will appoint an independent to look at the response from the Council in respect of Storm Arwen. The Civil Contingencies Unit invite to the Board will be held in review until this has been sorted. LT to note this.

EC thanked IP for the information sent following Storm Arwen.

## **3. Police and Fire Reports**

Cllr Surtees handed over to Inspectors Gary Smith and Joanne Eales to provide their police reports and to Malcolm Woodward to provide a fire report.

### **Inspector Gary Smith - Peterlee**

There has been a rise in burglaries across East Durham which has hit communities. There was an increase over the Christmas period, but this has tailed off in January. GS urged people to please pass on the information on crime prevention where possible including locking doors and cars. Proactive work is being done in a cross-command operation – Operation Omega – which has been going for about seven weeks.

A suspect was identified in relation to a burglary in Horden. Another suspect was identified for shoplifting and a residential burglary in Easington. Stop checks also led to nine vehicles being seized. There were also some good outcomes leading to the arrests of six wanted people over the Christmas period.

Activity from quad bikes has increased. Three off-road bikes were seized today.

PACT meetings are going back to online meetings at the current time due to the current Covid situation.

Police Officer recruitment is now open.

### **Inspector Joanne Eales – Seaham**

JE highlighted the issues which Covid has caused for the Police. PACT meetings will hopefully remain online for a short period only, however, it is necessary to safeguard staff in order to keep resources on the ground.

JE reiterated the importance of sharing crime prevention advice where possible. The increase in burglaries has been across the area. There has also been an increase in thefts from vehicles in Seaham. Please push out some common-sense advice where possible.

A good warrant was executed in Seaham. £43,000 worth of cannabis was recovered. A local has been charged and remanded. Another good result this morning also with cannabis plants being discovered.

The PCC has secured an additional £23,000 of Safer Streets Round II funding for the Easington area and that will go into digital, including packs for households and smart water.

Five people have successfully completed the Seaham motor mechanics project and will gain a qualification.

The Knack Club is hosting a Seaham Boxing Club tournament on 11<sup>th</sup> March.

The defibrillators which have been fitted are proving to be invaluable. Mapping is currently taking place to find the spread across the area.

The final Stay Safe women's self-defence class will take place next week, but the hope is to continue with them and roll them out further.

LK highlighted that some defibs have been funded by LK and Cllr Shaw around the harbour. IM can provide a list of these.

JE advised that the ones she was referring to were from police fundraising, but once the current ones are mapped, they can be publicised.

JM noted that a presentation on CASBRACs would be useful to understand the process from start to finish. AS asked whether it would be possible for GS & JE to deliver this.

GS advised that CASBRACs are an organisational process which he is involved in, so he could deliver the presentation. Cllrs aren't attending CASBRAC meetings due to confidentiality and data protection. It is a problem-solving approach to address the issues now. JE added that it is a multi-agency approach. Highly confidential information often gets discussed at the meeting eg mental health or safeguarding.

AS highlighted that it would be good to share what the meetings are going forward to be aware the issues and to understand the issues around data protection. GS added it is useful if the actions can be

shared. JM also noted that it is important that Elected Members are aware of what is going on, so that they can assist and be part of the solution.

**ACTION: GS to deliver a presentation on CASBRACs at a future Board Meeting.**

#### **Malcolm Woodward – CDD Fire and Rescue Service**

##### **Peterlee Station**

December - 44 secondary fires (down on previous month)  
1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to date – 466 secondary fires

December – 7 primary fires (down on previous month)

202 safety and wellbeing visits were carried out (1,948 carried out 1st April 2021 to date).

##### **Seaham Station**

December - 7 secondary fires (down on previous month)  
1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to date – 146 secondary fires

December - 2 primary fires  
1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to date – 35 primary fires

75 safety and wellbeing visits carried out (725 carried out 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to date).

##### **Wheatley Hill Station**

December – 8 secondary fires (down on previous month)  
1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to date - 105 secondary fires

December – 4 primary fires  
1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to date – 21 primary fires

The number of fires has been dropping off over this period. The information on the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) Consultation has been circulated. The closing date is 7<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

#### **4. Presentation**

SR delivered a Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Council Budget presentation.

SR noted the following points:

- A large proportion of expenditure goes on Adult and Health Services and Children's and Young People's Services.
- There are demands on the Council in terms of front-line services.
- There are also inflationary pressures, including energy costs in the care sector.
- Council tax references are calculated on Band D. DCC has few properties in Band D – a relatively low tax base. 83% of properties in Co Durham are in Bands A – C. 57% of Co Durham taxpayers live in a Band A property.

Average council tax per household in England - £1,428  
Average council tax per household in Co Durham - £1,258

The following comments and questions were noted:

Options are cutting services, raising council tax or using reserves. The revenue can't be raised from council tax alone. 21% of the budget is made from council tax. There is a lot of uncertainty which means long-term plans can't be made. Up to 2025, there is a £49m shortfall.

In reference to Slide 7 – *'Durham also has a significant safety net for vulnerable low-income households through its Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme – we are the only Council in the N. East and one of only a few nationally that does not cap the level of support available.'* More information was requested on what the plans might be and the impact on the lowest income earners.  
*SR to feedback on this question following the meeting.*

What is the income for business rates? Could more Band D homes be built?  
*The Government has been talking about business rates for some time. Retail and businesses have not done so well during the pandemic. Town centres have not been as buoyant as we'd like. More affluent areas raise more in council tax, but in terms of housing, we need to look at what is affordable for people to buy. Average wages and average house prices work against this Authority.*

What are the cost savings and where would they be?  
*It will depend on the level which needs to be made to meet the deficit. A raise of 4.99% would raise £12m. A raise of 3% would give the £7m needed for this year.*

How are towns and villages locally and centrally being invested in with infrastructure to provide for future income?

If council tax is increased, people will ask what they are getting in return for the increase. Is it possible to cut services and avoid a big impact on communities? Uncertainty about using reserves.

Are the electric/gas costs based on current services? Wouldn't a move of HQ save on this? *The biggest energy cost is street lighting. Increased pressure from the care sector in terms of rising energy costs and the contribution which is made. The HQ move would reduce energy costs.*

In the scenario of needing to propose service reductions, would the council envisage consulting on what service reductions were being considered (eg in case mitigations can be found)?

*SR to take this question away, however, consultation is unlikely due to timescales for Budget sign-off and the late financial settlement.*

Given greater potential for higher inflation / economic downturn than previously envisaged, is there a risk that the £7m gap for 2022/23 may increase?  
*The Council is in a relatively financially stable position. The CFO is prudent in their calculations. Numbers may change, but that is the best prediction.*

£7m doesn't necessarily have to come from one of the three options – could be a combination eg some council tax and some from reserves. If it only comes from council tax, people who fall just outside the area of receiving support will face increases – need to look at it being less harmful for those who receive no support. Should not be a reduction in services.

It is not clear on which reserve is being referred to which any money may be used from. The label on the reserve needs to be carefully thought out.

In terms of the 'financial settlement', what conversation and dialogue is happening to articulate the difficulties back to Central Government in the face of the cost-of-living crisis and the issues communities are facing?

*Lobbying goes on from Officers setting out the circumstances of DCC and the NE. Every opportunity is taken to feed back to Central Government.*

Due to the time scales, a council tax rise or using reserves look like the most likely options. It was noted that a proposal of a 3% council tax increase for 22/23 is in the Cabinet report for 19<sup>th</sup> January. The AAP would be unable to take a firm view without having all of the information, including which reserves are being referred to and which service cuts would be considered. The Chair and the Board thanked Susan for delivering the presentation and the Financial Team for all of their work and it was noted how beneficial it was that the presentation can be shared.

**ACTION: It was agreed that LT would provide a summary of individual comments/questions from the meeting as feedback to SR.**

## **5. Children, Young People and Families (CYPF) Priority Group Update**

**Rona Hardy, CYPF Priority Group Chair**

Area Budget requested - £11,026.00

The Young Carers Project application was circulated to the Board. RH handed over to WG to give a summary of the project.

WG noted that the Bridge Young Carers Service, Family Action, is already commissioned to identify and support young carers across the county. The project is to work in East Durham to identify hard-to-reach carers and put in support. They want to get into as many community centres and schools and work with them on the CYP charter to ensure volunteers are up-to-date on how to identify and support.

AS welcomed any comments or questions.

JM asked whether they have the staffing to ensure the whole of the area is covered. AS commented that they offer a brilliant service and they do travel out.

AP highlighted that a lot of community centres are working with carers. It is important that the hidden ones are identified. What plan have they got for finding new organisations?

WG advised that this won't fund work that is already ongoing. It is to identify new community centres and organisations, not active users. They will have a dedicated worker and their first six weeks will be used to identify the 'not' spots and talking to community centres who have not engaged in the past.

AS informed that they deliver very holistically across DCC. They also ensure that the child is still a child as well as being a carer and they can assist with career direction or the transition into adult caring, for example.

GR noted the importance of strong links into schools and any support for young people is the right thing to do. TD agrees that they are covering everything. WG informed that it will be working with schools as well as GPs.

AS asked whether the Board endorse the project with Area Budget.

**ACTION: Agreed. Fully supported. Application to be progressed.**

## **6. Neighbourhood Budget (NB) and Area Budget (AB) Update**

JM advised that there were two NBs for notification. There are no conflicts of interest. JM highlighted that a list of all NB schemes is available on the County Councillor website.

### **NB**

**Project Name: Blackhall Library**

**Councillors:** Crute & Deinali

**Project Cost:** £2,650

**NB Amount:** £2,500

**Description:** With this funding, we hope to bring in more activities into the library for both our adult and junior customers. These would include extra craft resources and externally led craft activities to benefit our Get Creative adult group members as well as the wider community. We would like to offer a Lego club for the children and would use the funding to buy furniture to provide storage for the Lego and a display space for the children's work. The display space could also be used for other library initiatives (chatterbooks) and book themes.

**No conflict of interest.**

**Project Name: Learniacs**

**Councillors:** Duffy, Howell & McDonnell

**Project Cost:** £999

**NB Amount:** £999 (£333 each Cllr)

**Description:** The aim of the project is to provide regular weekly sessions of baby massage and developmental baby yoga to residents of Peterlee with children under 1 years old. The funding will be used to pay for the venue, resources and refreshments associated with the project as well as a small token rate for the yoga and massage instructor.

**No conflict of interest.**

### **AB**

JM updated that £169,683 of Area Budget had been allocated. Taking into account the £11,026 for the Young Carers Project, that would leave just over £73,000 to March. Money can be carried over this year because of Covid. The £125,000 of OPSIF and Covid Recovery funding should be allocated before the end of March 2022.

## **7. Any Other Business**

RH highlighted that the Fun and Food funding is now open for applications for February Half Term 2022. The closing date is noon on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

AS thanked all for attending and advised that next month's Board Meeting will take place via Teams unless otherwise notified.

## **8. Date and time of next meeting:**

**Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> February, 6pm via Microsoft Teams**