



Teesdale Area Action Partnership - Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting Held: 16 March 2022 (via Microsoft Teams)

Elected Members:

Cllr George Richardson
Cllr James Cosslett
Cllr Ted Henderson
Cllr Richard Bell
Cllr Robert Potts
Cllr Wendy Greenfield (Town & Parish Council's Representative)

Public Representatives:

Elaine Laurie
Linda Bird
Rachel Tweddle
Robin Brooks

Partner Representatives:

Alison Clark
Insp Ed Turner
Peter Locke
Tim Viggars
Bob Danby

Co-opted

Roger Peat

Officer Attendance:

Adam White, TAP Coordinator
Annalisa Ward, TAP Community Development Project Officer
Emma Walton, TAP Support Officer

Observers: 2 x Forum Members

Apologies:

Allan Hobson
Tracey Williams
Christine Watters

Teesdale Action Partnership Board Meeting

1. Welcome from Chair, Introductions and Apologies

Cllr RB welcomed everyone to the Board meeting of Teesdale Action Partnership (TAP).

Cllr RB reminded meeting observers they would be welcome to comment under items 4,5 and 8 on the agenda.

EW confirmed that apologies for absence had been received, as noted above.

2. Declaration of Interest and Meeting Protocol

AW made the Board aware of the declaration of interest procedure and informed all Board members that this is a standard item on the agenda. **AW** informed the Board and Forum Members of 'house rules/etiquette' for the meeting. **AW** asked Board members to be aware that the TAP team weren't recording the meeting but couldn't guarantee that other attendees wouldn't be making their own recording.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

The draft minutes from the meeting held on 12 January 2022 have been circulated in advance with the meeting papers. **AW** reviewed the minutes for matters arising, actions and accuracy.

Cllr RB highlighted that the Teesdale Mercury have reported that Woodland Primary School has become the first in the county to introduce a number of eco- friendly measures. As a result, the school now generates the lowest amount of CO2 of all schools across County Durham. **Cllr RP** commented positively on the eco measures in place. The Board commended the school on their success and agreed to send a letter of congratulations. **(ACTION 1: AW)**

AW confirmed there were no further outstanding actions. The minutes of the last meeting were **agreed** by the Board as a true and accurate record.

4. Library Consultation

4.1 Library Consultation – Alison Clark (AC) – Head of Culture Sport and Tourism, Durham County Council

Board Members received a presentation from **Alison Clark (AC)**, Head of Culture Sport and Tourism - Durham County Council on the Library Consultation. **AC** gave an overview of the library service and highlighted the current membership and usage.

AC highlighted the importance of the library services post COVID, and the lessons learnt during COVID.

AC provided an overview of the 3 phases of the transformation of the libraries. The consultation is currently in phase 1. Phase 1 is in place to provide a needs assessment from staff and public engagement. In phase 2 a full public consultation will take place seeking the views on the proposal for the future of library services. Phase 2 will explore viable, sustainable, affordable options in line with needs assessment and the council's statutory requirements. These proposals will be presented at a future AAP Board meeting. A final report on the recommendations will be submitted to cabinet in November 2023. The agreed service changes will be implemented in April 2024.

AC reported that Barnard Castle library has around 7000 members, has lent 63,000 books and has been visited 13,000 times.

Board and Forum members were encouraged to respond to the consultation. Further details in relation to the consultation are available via the website: www.durham.gov.uk/consultation

A Q&A session took place, and the following points were noted:

LB asked if individuals will be able to access library services online? **AC** confirmed that libraries will continue to deliver an online service. **AC** highlighted that digital books and potential e-checkouts will be introduced as part of the future delivery of library services. **AC** confirmed that digital books are purchased by libraries and as such this will not have an adverse effect on the publishing industry.

Cllr RB stated that Barnard Castle Library is also a Customer Access point and asked will feedback also be received on this aspect? **AC** confirmed the delivery provided through the co-location will also be considered. **AC** also stated that there is also the potential to explore future co-location of other libraries across the County.

A **forum member** asked how often and where the mobile library van operates in the Teesdale area. **AC** stated she will confirm the planned route and send information to **AW**. **AW** to feedback to the Board. **(ACTION 2: AC / AW)**

A **forum member** commented on the importance of visiting the library and highlighted that libraries provides individuals with the opportunity to interact and connect with others. In addition, providing a wide range of activities for all ages.

A copy of the presentation and a link to the consultation will be circulated to Board members. **(ACTION 3: EW)**

Cllr RB thanked **AC** for the presentation.

5. Economic Strategy - Our Big Econ-versation

5.1 Economic Strategy - Glenn Martin (GM) - Regeneration Policy Team Leader – Durham County Council

Board Members received a presentation from **Glenn Martin (GM)**, Durham County Council on the Economic Strategy. **GM** gave an overview of the inclusive economic strategy, the 3-stage development process, the proposed framework, and timescale for delivery. The adoption of the strategy will take place in late 2022.

GM highlighted the Teesdale specific feedback that has been raised so far, which includes:

- Need to attract more higher paying jobs
- Need to improve and broaden the offer of town centres
- Need to improve roads, public transport, and broadband
- Need to improve and reuse properties to retain the character of the area and protect green spaces from development
- Mixed feelings on the impacts of home working (e.g. reduced need to travel vs impacts on mental health)
- Important to retain young people and support older people

Board and Forum members were encouraged to submit their comments through the consultation. Further details in relation to the 'Our Big Econ-versation' is available via the website: www.durhamecon-versation.co.uk. The deadline for comments is the 22 April 2022.

A Q&A session took place, and the following points were noted:

AW highlighted that Teesdale AAP was active in providing responses through the County Durham Plan consultation and suggested forwarding this report to GM. **(ACTION 4: AW)**. **AW** stated that the response from TAP addressed the following salient points and highlighted that any strategy needs to be mindful of these:

- To ensure that 'Rural Proofing' of any strategy is considered so the bespoke needs of rural communities are met, especially around transport and broadband connectivity.
- Consider individual rural development plans, especially in areas such as Teesdale and Weardale.
- Make consideration towards the continued uncertainty of Brexit across the county and the impact of this on the farming community.
- Encourage business development in rural areas, especially the development of existing or new industrial sites.
- Future enhancement of tourism throughout the Dales.

AW requested feedback on the consultation throughout the process.

A **forum member** asked the meaning of 'social sustainability'. **GM** explained that 'social sustainability' includes health care, social care, local services, local amenities, and the tackling of deprivation.

A **forum member** asked how are the voluntary and community sectors involved in the consultation process? **GM** stated that there are questions within the survey regarding social issues, access to services and transport. Work is also taking place with Northern Heartlands to distribute questionnaires to local community centres and organisations. **GM** notified the Board that a workshop was due to be held, yesterday, however this was postponed due to low uptake.

A **forum member** highlighted the issue of poor broadband coverage and reliability for business owners and farmers. This was echoed by **LB**.

WG highlighted that school children required to undertake home learning and people working from home faced problems due to issues surrounding Broadband in the area. The issues include cost, availability, and the reliability of connections. This was echoed by **Cllr RP**.

AW to invite Digital Durham to a future Board meeting. **(ACTION 5: AW)**

A **forum member** asked how the consultation is publicised to small businesses and farmers. **GM** stated he is happy to speak to any local organisations, local farmers, or small businesses. The **forum member** suggested speaking to UTASS.

WG suggested publicising the consultation through Town and Parish Clerks.

Cllr RP stated that Durham County Council are looking at investing in renewables and stated this would be a good opportunity for the Teesdale area.

TV stated that it is important that individuals working from home don't become isolated as this can affect individuals' mental health. It is important that facilities are available, and that people feel connected in their community.

Cllr RB thanked **GM** for the presentation.

A copy of the presentation and a link to the consultation will be circulated to Board members **(ACTION 6: EW)**.

6. Area Budget

AW confirmed that a copy of the full Area Budget applications has been circulated in advance with the meeting papers. **AW** highlighted that Board members were given the opportunity to provide any comments to the TAP team in advance of tonight's meeting. No comments were received.

All applications have been considered by the Board Expression of Interest Group and relevant service providers and are recommended for Board approval.

AW gave a brief outline of each project:

6.1 Woodland Village Hall - Woodland Village Hall and Recreation Ground Charity

Area Budget request: £10,000

Match Funding: £27,939

Total Project Cost: £37,939

No comments were raised, and the Board **APPROVED** the application.

6.2 Cornerstone Christian Centre - Building Refurbishment

Area Budget request: £8,000

Match Funding: £3,350

Total Project Cost: £11,350

No comments were raised, and the Board **APPROVED** the application.

AW to forward the AB applications to the DCC Funding Team for technical appraisal.
(ACTION 7: AW)

AW informed the Board that the previously agreed Toft Hill Play area application has since been amended. **AW** explained that the application will now be led by Toft Hill Parish Council. The application is currently at appraisal.

As a result of the change of applicant **Cllr RP** declared an interest in his capacity as a Toft Hill Parish Councillor.

No comments were raised, and the Board **APPROVED** the new project applicant.

7. Neighbourhood Budget

AWard confirmed that a summary sheet for both NB proposals has been circulated in advance with the meeting papers. **AWard** gave a brief outline of each proposal.

7.1 St Marys Church Middleton

AWard notified the Board that this project is an alteration to an existing application (20NB-TEES011). **AWard** confirmed that the original grant for repair work has been suspended following spend of £7,991 and that the remaining balance of £11,805 will be used to conduct a feasibility study.

No comments were raised and the revised proposal was **approved.**

7.2 Woodland Village Hall

AWard confirmed that the request for NB is £6,000 (£3,000 each from Councillors Potts and Cosslett).

No comments were raised and the proposal was **approved.**

7.3 Cornerstone Church Hall

AWard confirmed that the request for NB is £3,000 (£1,500 each from Councillors Potts and Cosslett).

No comments were raised and the proposal was **approved.**

7.4 Hamsterley School

AWard confirmed that the request for NB is £4,967 (£2,483 from Councillor Potts and £2,484 from Councillor Cosslett).

No comments were raised and the proposal was **approved.**

AWard highlighted that an additional neighbourhood application for Barnard Castle Scouts had been received after board papers were issued. This application is for information and comment only.

7.5 Barnard Castle Scouts – building works

AWard confirmed that the request for NB is £1,800 (£700 each from Councillors Bell and Henderson and £200 each from Councillors Richardson and Rowlandson £200 each)

No comments were raised and the proposal was **approved.**

AWard to forward the NB applications to the DCC Funding Team for technical appraisal.
(ACTION 8: AWard)

8. Locality Neighbourhood Issues

Insp Ed Turner gave an update on the main issues for the TAP area:

- Vehicle crime in Middleton -in-Teesdale
- Several dwelling burglaries in Barnard Castle.
- An increase in fraud and internet crime. **ET** stated that information on fraud prevention has been posted on the Barnard Castle Police Facebook page. Board and Forum members were encouraged to be vigilant. **EW** to promote through the TAP networks **(ACTION 9: ET/ EW)**.
- The Rural Community Speed Watch Van will be delivered shortly.

- **ET** reported that Joy Allen, Durham Police Crime Commissioner raised several local issues with the Rural Minister. Issues included poaching, livestock, pressures on manufactures to make quad bikes more secure. **ET** suggested circulating the response to the queries raised to **EW**. **EW** to circulate to the Board. **(ACTION 10: ET/ EW)**

AW confirmed there has been several neighbourhood issues raised by forum members in advance of the meeting. One forum member raised concerns with regards to Barnard Castle Town Centre Wi-Fi and the violations on Barnard Castle Bridge. **AW** reported that the Town Centre Wi Fi is now up and running again. Kathryn Watson, Durham County Council will be attending the May Board meeting to provide an update on the project. **Cllr RB** reported that Durham County Council intended to replace the camera on Barnard Castle Bridge with a new system. The current equipment isn't the most suitable and the process itself isn't user friendly. It is hoped that the new camera will be in place by April 2022.

In addition, **AW** informed the Board that the priority voting exercise had highlighted an issue of reduced visibility due to street parking on the corner of St Mary's, Barnard Castle. **BD** stated this was raised at the parish council meeting and the parking lines are due to be reinstated.

Cllr RP asked what the perception of speeding is verses the reality. **ET** stated complaints of speeding are often a perception of speed or an inappropriate speed for the condition of the road. If speeding is present the appropriate measures will be put in place. **ET** explained that 'Community Speed Watch' is a scheme to allow volunteers to monitor the speed of passing vehicles using a hand-held speed detection device. The volunteers record the details of vehicles which are exceeding the speed limit. These details are passed to the Police, who will issue a letter to the vehicle owner, advising them of the dangers of speeding, and reminding them of the law. If the speeding continues speed measuring devices can be installed and enforcement action taken.

9. Coordinators Update

9.1 Area Budget Spend Profile

The Board were provided with the Area Budget Spend Profile for 2021/22. The report includes the status of each project. A copy of the spend profile was circulated, in advance of the meeting, with the meeting papers.

AW gave an overview of the projects supported and the funding allocated.

Cllr RB commented positively on the geographical spread of the projects supported.

9.2 TAP AGM

The TAP AGM will be held on Wednesday 18 May 2022, 6pm at the Witham, Barnard Castle. The AGM will provide an opportunity to showcase a number of projects that have been supported by TAP.

AW reminded the Board at the AGM the Chair and Vice Chairs for TAP will be elected for 2022/23. It is the turn of the partner representative sector to take the Chair during 2022/23. **AW** explained the process and encouraged Board members to consider the roles of Chair and Vice Chair.

AW to email the TAP Board for nominations for the role of Chair and Vice Chair from each sector of the Board. **(ACTION 11: AW/ TAP Board members)**

9.3 Public Representative Recruitment

Due to the resignation of a public rep from the Board and LB's public rep term coming to an end the Board will have 2 vacancies. The recruitment for public reps will take place in due course.

9.4 TAP Delivery Plan 2022/23

AW stated that as previous years the delivery plan for 2022/23 will be presented at the AGM. The plan will outline funding available to TAP and recommendations for its allocation.

AC suggested limiting the number of times an organisation can apply for funding.

9.5 Proposed Review of Community Engagement

The Proposed Review of Community Engagement has been circulated in advance with the meeting papers. **AW** gave a brief overview of the review. **AW** stated the report was presented to cabinet today. External independent consultants will be appointed. **AW** suggested inviting the consultants to a future TAP Board meeting to observe procedures, discuss the work taking place and speak with Board members. **Cllr RB** encouraged Board and Forum member to feed their comments into the consultation.

Cllr RP asked how the level of match funding from AAP's compares to other public bodies. **AW** to seek clarification on match funding figures with the DCC Funding Team. **(ACTION 12: AW)**

A **forum member** stated the minimum grant level of £5k will deter smaller groups in applying for funding. In addition, highlighted that the level of scrutiny needs to be proportional to the amount of funding awarded. **Cllr RB** suggested feeding these comments into the review.

9.6 TAP Annual Report 2021/22

AW reported that the team will be pulling information together for the annual report which will then be submitted to DCC Design and Print. The report will be available at the TAP AGM.

9.7 Priority Voting Survey

The priority survey has been live over the last few weeks. Teesdale has the highest number of responses across all AAP's, however, this is significantly down on the last

survey results. A report will be presented at the AGM to update the Board and outline key recommendations.

AW thanked those Board members and partner organisation for their support throughout the priority voting process. In addition, **AW** thanked the TAP team and PH.

9.8 TAP Press Articles

The Board were provided with an update on the press coverage TAP has received in Teesdale Mercury over the January – March 2022 period.

10. Partner Updates

Cllr RB suggested receiving an update, at a future Board meeting, from the NHS on the new structures. **(ACTION 13: AW)**

11. Date/Time/Venue for Next Meeting

Cllr RB thanked Board members for attending the meeting.

The TAP Board meeting will be held on Wednesday 18 May 2022, 6pm at the Witham, Barnard Castle.