



4 Together Partnership Minutes of the AGM & Board Meeting Wednesday 4 May 2022, (Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams)

PRESENT:

Mark Booth – Clinical Commissioning Group, Sgt Pete Newman – Police (representing Insp Mike Sammut), Justin Parry – Fire Service, Mary Readman – DCC, David Stothard – Business Representative (Vice Chair), Carole Atkinson, Chris Cairns, Susan Kirby, Oliver Peeke, Dennis Ramsey (Vice Chair), Andrew Shaw, Cllr Peter Atkinson – DCC, Cllr Curtis Bihari – DCC, Cllr Julie Cairns – DCC (Chair), Cllr Pauline Crathorne – Cornforth Parish Council, Cllr Joe Makepeace – Ferryhill Town Council, Cllr Elaine Peeke – DCC, Cllr Joe Quinn – DCC, Callum Aitchison – Principal Community Development Project Officer, Paula Nixon – Community Development Project Officer, Paula Stockport – AAP Support Officer, Angela Blanchard – Towns & Villages Link Officer

APOLOGIES:

Liam Fellows, Angela Smurthwaite, Lee Copeland

Annual General Meeting

a. Introduction from Current Chair

Cllr JC opened the meeting and handed over to CAi to Chair the AGM section.

b. Election of Chair & Vice Chairs

CAi confirmed that he has been in touch with all three sectors of the Board to seek nominations for the 2022-23 Chair and Vice Chair positions. CAi confirmed the following:

- Cllr JC volunteered as Vice Chair representing the Elected Member third;
- DS volunteered as Vice Chair representing the Statutory Partner third;
- DR volunteered as Vice Chair representing the Public Rep third.

CAi clarified that, with the Board's agreement, Cllr JC will remain Chair for a further year (in line with previous years). The above roles were fully **AGREED** and ratified.

c(i). 2021-22 Area Budget Summary

CAi confirmed that a copy of the AB spend update for 2021-22 had been circulated in advance with the meeting papers, to note for information.

c(ii). 2021-22 Neighbourhood Budget Summary

CAi confirmed that a copy of the NB spend update for 2021-22 had been circulated in advance with the meeting papers, to note for information.

Cllr JM asked if it was a requirement for organisations to have a lease in place for AAP-supported projects. CAi confirmed it is a requirement for organisations

to have a minimum 5- year lease or freehold lease if carrying out capital works using AAP funding.

Cllr PC expressed disappointment that Cllr Peeke has provisionally allocated her full £10k Towns & Villages NB funding to a scheme in Bishop Middleham. It is Cllr PC's view that the T&Vs funding was to benefit all local communities within the 4 Together Partnership area, and she is disappointed that groups in West Cornforth have missed out on accessing this funding.

Standard Board Meeting

A1. Introductions & Apologies

Cllr JC welcomed everyone to the meeting of the 4 Together Partnership Board. Apologies for absence were noted, as above.

A2. Agreement of Minutes from Previous Meeting (3.3.21) - Matters Arising

CAi reviewed the previous minutes for matters arising, actions and accuracy.

CAi clarified there had been an action to invite a representative from the Community Pharmacy County Durham service to a future Board meeting to give an update, and this has been provisionally agreed for our July meeting.

There were no outstanding actions or matters arising, and the minutes were **AGREED** as a true record.

A3. Countywide Partner Issues

A3.1 Poverty Action Plan – Engagement Plan (Mary Readman)

MR updated Board members in relation to the Council's work around drafting a revised Poverty Action Plan. MR outlined the background to the Poverty Action Strategy, the scope of which was broadened in 2020 to include the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. MR also touched on the emerging issues and challenges that need to be considered as part of the strategy.

The overall vision for the revised strategy and action plan is: ***To work together with communities so fewer people will be affected by poverty and deprivation in the county.***

The four key objectives of the strategy are:

- ***Objective 1: Use intelligence and data to target support to low-income households***
- ***Objective 2: Reduce the financial pressures on people facing or in poverty***
- ***Objective 3: Increase individual, household and community resilience to poverty***
- ***Objective 4: Reduce barriers to accessing services for those experiencing financial insecurity***

MR highlighted a new [Help with Your Money](#) section hosted on the DCC website, which provides a range of information and sources of support for those who may be struggling. MR asked Board members to help promote this; hard copy leaflets are also available and can be supplied via MR if needed for use in the community.

MR requested that Board members review the draft [Strategy and Action Plan](#) document and feedback any comments or queries via for the 4 Together AAP team (fouraap@durham.gov.uk) – the consultation period will be open until 30 June 2022.

Questions/comments were invited from Board members and the following points were noted:

- OP commented that he believes jobs are out there for people who may simply require some upskilling, and this could be an effective use of DCC funding to help fill the gaps in skilled workers. MR noted the point, and commented that the Poverty Action Plan will closely link with the Economic Strategy.
- Cllr JM commented that he would be interested to see figures around how many people are turned down for support, fail the process or are prosecuted, and also how the means testing/eligibility checking system is vetted. MR will try and look into obtaining some data (**Action 1: MR**).
- CA commented that the local foodbank has seen a huge increase in demand over recent weeks, predominantly around energy costs. CA feels there should be more work done to advertise what help and support is available, and in particular for those who may not have access to online information. MR clarified that the Poverty Action Steering Group are working closely with DCC's comms team around promoting regular social media posts, as well as using bus shelters, leaflets, press releases, sharing information with partners etc. MR agreed to arrange for some hard copy leaflets to be passed on to CA.
- Cllr PA commented that people need help now, and that we should be using our local community venues, e.g. libraries, community centres etc, to provide 121 consultations for those who need it, perhaps where they don't have access to online sources of support and information.

A4. Local Neighbourhood Issues

CAi confirmed that no local neighbourhood issues had been submitted to the AAP team to bring to the Board.

A4.1 Neighbourhood Policing Update

Sgt PN shared details with Board members in relation to local crime and incident numbers and trends. Sgt PN commented that there are ongoing issues with antisocial behaviour, particularly around Ferryhill marketplace and work is ongoing to help tackle this. Sgt PN briefly commented on the current reduced staffing levels within the team.

Sgt PN highlighted that the policing team are currently working with the DCC ASB Team and various community representatives, with meetings taking place to discuss some Safer Streets funding.

Questions/comments were invited from Board members and the following points were noted:

- OP asked about rural crime and how this is assessed and categorised. Sgt PN clarified that there is a rural crime force lead based at Barnard Castle, who coordinates a WhatsApp group for farmers to sign up to so that information can be shared quickly. PCSO Edgar is the rep from the Ferryhill team in relation to rural crime.
- Cllr EP commented on ongoing issues with off-road bikes, particularly around West Cornforth and asked if any work is taking place from a police perspective

to try and tackle this. Sgt PN acknowledged that this is an issue both countywide and nationally. PCSO Edgar has been working with local landowners to try and develop some method of blocking entrances to land, thus preventing the bikes from getting into the wooded area. Warning letters are issued where possible to any registered vehicles in the area. Cllr PC advised that this is a longstanding issue, and she would be happy to work with PCSO Edgar on this in the West Cornforth area, attending at weekends if needed to provide support, to hopefully make some progress towards resolving the access issues.

- Cllr JM expressed concern at the current staffing levels within the neighbourhood policing team and asked whether the AAP as a Board could perhaps contact the Police & Crime Commissioner to request an update on progress with recruitment. Support from Board members for this proposed approach was unclear; CAi to seek clarification on this from Board members at July meeting (**Action 2: CAi**).
- Cllr JQ asked how the 4 Together AAP area compares with neighbouring areas such as Spennymoor, Newton Aycliffe etc in terms of crime/incident figures. Sgt PN agreed to look into this and discuss with Cllr JQ outside of this meeting.
- Cllr PA expressed disappointment at the lack of representation from the DCC ASB Team at the recent Safer Streets meetings, strongly believing they should be present. He has emailed the team to try and chase this but without a response to date. PN asked if Cllr Bihari could let her know when the next meeting is scheduled so she can make sure the correct representative has been invited in good time (**Action 3: Cllr CB/PN**).

A5. Area & Neighbourhood Budget Update

A5.1 AAP Community Priorities Survey & 2022-23 Funding Allocations

CAi confirmed that a report had been circulated in advance with the meeting papers, for Board members to note. CAi briefly outlined the key points from the report:

- The majority of respondents to the recent AAP Community Priorities survey (83%) either agreed or strongly agreed that we should continue to have the single 'Community Recovery' priority for 2022-23.
- The majority of respondents (over 55%) agreed that the current sub-themes were adequate.
- The 4 Together Partnership has been provided with a total Area Budget of £154,902 for 2022-23 to support projects which address local priorities. This allocation is made up from the following:
 - £100,000 – Area Budget
 - £25,000 – Older Peoples Social Isolation Fund (OPSIF)
 - £10,000 – Welfare Reform
 - £9,902 – Youth Fund
 - £10,000 – Healthy Relationships (new for 2022-23)
- For 2022-23 the AAP can amalgamate Area Budget, OPSIF, Welfare Reform and Youth Fund into one Community Recovery pot, as was the case in 2021-22. This would give an overall Community Recovery Area Budget of £144,902 (plus the £9,857.51 underspend from 2021-22).

CAi clarified that the 'Healthy Relationships' funding (£10k) is to support projects which engage young people (11-18 years) in learning about relationships, e.g.

domestic violence and consent. This funding must be ring-fenced to support projects that meet the specific criteria for this fund. Further information will be circulated to the Board once received from colleagues in Public Health.

CAi highlighted that we also have a 'Fun & Food' allocation of £29,941 to fund projects that provide positive activities and healthy food during the school holidays. This aims to target individuals who are eligible for free school meals. This funding is ring-fenced, with applications being welcomed at various stages throughout the school year. A percentage of the funding has previously been allocated to Easter 2022 projects.

CAi clarified that additionally, the AAP must allocate £210,000 to Towns & Villages Regeneration projects. The process for allocating this funding is currently being undertaken with expressions of interest being welcomed until 20 May 2022. Expressions of interest will be reviewed by the Towns & Villages Subgroup after this deadline.

CAi took Board members through the recommendations from the report:

- Board members were asked to note the content of the report.
- Board members were asked to agree to continue with the single priority of Community Recovery for 2022-23, keeping the same priority sub-themes as last year; **AGREED**.
- Board members were asked to agree to progress with 'project callout' for allocating Area Budget funding (£144,902) for 2022-23; **AGREED**.

A5.2 Towns & Villages Funding Update

AB updated Board members in relation to progress with the T&V funding. The request for project ideas was launched on 25 March and promoted across a range of sources. To date AB has received 11 enquiries, and is currently working with 8 of these to look at developing an Expression of Interest for consideration by the T&V subgroup. The deadline for funding enquiries is Friday 20 May, after which AB will look to convene a subgroup meeting.

OP raised the point about any potential scope to use some of the funding to help with upskilling/employability. AB clarified that any schemes funded via T&Vs must avoid duplication of existing provision, highlighting that DCC's Employability Team and Durham Works project currently provide this type of support.

CAi confirmed that Board members will be kept updated on progress with the T&Vs funding going forward.

Cllr PC commented that local groups such as The Cornforth Partnership and Ferryhill LADDER Centre are doing some fantastic work in our local communities, in particular around provision of support with employability skills etc, and this should be celebrated and promoted. PN commented that we have previously had representatives from local organisations come along to Board meetings to give project updates where they have received AAP funding in the past, and this is something that we could look at again for future meetings, both to help keep Board members updated on progress with projects and the great work that's happening locally, but also to help support promotion.

A5.3 Fun & Food Funding Update

CAi deferred this item due to the meeting overrunning slightly and confirmed that a written Fun & Food update will be circulated to Board members after the meeting instead, for information (**Action 4: CAi**).

Items Not on the Agenda

2021-22 Area Budget Project Callout

CAi highlighted that an email was recently circulated to Board members from Paula Nixon in relation to this year's Area Budget project callout (2021-22), seeking approval/ratification responses for the 7 x projects circulated;

- Bishop Middleham Parish Council – The Park Regeneration
- Endeavour Woodcrafts – Disabled Toilet Installation & Refurb
- Endeavour Woodcrafts – Support with Staffing Costs
- Enter CIC – Community Programme
- Seconds Out – Fighting Chance
- West Cornforth Community Centre – Welcome to the Centre
- Durham Christian Partnership – Ferryhill Debt Advice Centre

CAi asked if Board members could confirm their approval for the projects now in person to help support the email responses received to date, and this was **APPROVED**. PN will now progress with forwarding the project proposals to our Funding Team for technical appraisal. PN thanked Board members for their input with this year's process.

Format for Future Board Meetings

CAi asked Board members for their views on the format for future meetings, i.e. any preference for a return to face-to-face meetings/hybrid/virtual etc. Board members were broadly in favour of a return to face-to-face meetings, but with the facility to offer a hybrid option for any members who are unable to attend meetings in person. CAi will look into sourcing a suitable venue and the relevant hybrid equipment ahead of the next meeting (**Action 5: CAi**).

A6. Date & Time of Next Meeting:

Wed 6 July 2022, 6:00pm (venue tbc)

CAi thanked everyone for their attendance, and the meeting was closed.