

Cabinet

22nd January 2009



Area Action Partnerships

Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive

1 Purpose

To outline for Cabinet discussion and decision the proposed geography, function, governance arrangements, broad budgetary criteria and transition arrangements for the 14 Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) to be established in County Durham.

Subject to these proposals being agreed, the report also sets out a number of issues that will need to be addressed in order to hold a series of inaugural AAP meetings across the County in April 2009.

2 Background

The County Council's original proposal for unitary status outlined a model for community engagement and local partnership working through the development of between 12 and 14 Area Action Partnerships. A joint county and district officer team, the Areas and Participation workstream, was convened as part of the County Durham unitary programme in January 2008 to carry out research and development work around the Area Action Partnership model throughout 2008/09.

Following the May 2008 election, the new County Council Cabinet expressed a wish to consult stakeholders and members of the public on the AAP model. A major consultation exercise was therefore conducted during July - September 2008 with 17 facilitated major events, over 70 discrete representations from organisations and over 1000 individuals involved. The consultation findings are available on the Council's website at:

<http://county.durham.gov.uk/sites/lgraks/Pages/AAPConsultation.aspx>

On 1st October 2008 Full Council took cognisance of the findings from the summer consultation process, and agreed its High Level Blueprint document making reference to fourteen new Area Action Partnerships based around the following focal points: -

- Bishop Auckland
- Chester-le-Street
- Consett
- Crook/Willington
- Durham
- Easington
- Ferryhill/Chilton
- Lanchester/Durham Rural West

- Newton Aycliffe
- Sedgefield Rural Corridor/Durham Rural East
- Spennymoor
- Stanley
- Teesdale-(based around Barnard Castle)
- Weardale- (based around Stanhope)

In order to deliver on the mandate provided by the Blueprint document, a significant amount of further development work was undertaken by the Areas and Participation workstream to address the detailed issues and develop options for Elected Members around the final:

- Geography of the 14 AAPs;
- Function of AAPs (roles and responsibilities);
- Governance of AAPs (membership, decision making processes and 'fit' within the overall County Durham Partnership structure);
- Broad criteria and processes for area and member budgets; and
- Transition from District Local Strategic Partnerships to AAPs.

In developing further proposals the workstream had regard for:

- The proposals within the original unitary bid
- Feedback from the summer consultation events
- National drivers – including the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act, Communities in Control Engagement White Paper and the Comprehensive Area Assessment guidance
- Best practice evaluation

This development work was distilled into a further consultation document which was subject to debate and discussion in a series of seminars and presentations with stakeholders, the County Durham Partnership framework (Thematic Partnerships and District Local Strategic Partnerships), Town and Parish Councils and County Council Councillors in November and December 2008. Copies of the consultation document were also sent to over 2500 stakeholders, and an online questionnaire was available on the County Council's website during this period, with a published end date of the 5th January. The findings of this consultation process are outlined in Appendix 2 and will be compiled into a summary document to be placed on the Council's website.

The most frequent responses to the recent consultation are set out the remainder of this report where relevant to the issues for decision. Prior to considering those specific issues, it is worthwhile reflecting on the main messages from what has been an extensive process. Whilst inevitably there are a number of issues where a vast range of differing views were given, there are many areas where there was a consensus that should not be overlooked. These included:

- Geographies – in the vast majority of cases a very clear steer was given as to which AAPs areas preferred to be located, and many public responses welcomed the move to a more local approach.

- Role and Function – although a number of respondents requested more clarity on the precise role of AAPs, there was general assent to the role and function as set out in the consultation document.
- Staffing Resource – there was general agreement that AAPs will need a dedicated staffing resource if they are to be successful.
- Involvement – there was a cross sector desire to be involved in the AAP process, that does pose a selection issue given the proposal for limited positions, but is clearly preferable to the alternative of struggling to generate interest.
- The Forum/Board structure – whilst there were a limited number of comments regarding the proposed frequency of both sets of meetings, there was general assent to the overall model.
- The need for Action – this was by far and away the area of greatest agreement, in all of the consultation exercises there was a strongly expressed desire for AAPs to live up to their title and to clearly demonstrate results.

Many other responses were not so much suggesting alternatives to the model as proposed in the consultation, but were seeking clarity as to how AAPs would work in practice. While the recommendations in this report will hopefully go some way to providing that clarity, it also needs to be recognised that many issues will only become clearer when the tasks set out in Section 8 of this report are completed and AAPs are in operation.

In terms of the recommendations in the remainder of this report, the approach taken has been to benchmark against the key area of agreement - the desire for AAPs to lead to action and make a difference – and to suggest an approach that has the greatest chance of making this a reality.

3 Proposed Geography for AAPs

Section 2 above outlines the 14 focal points for AAPs agreed by Full Council in October.

Elected Members were aware that the summer consultation process had generated options for some specific settlements in relation to their alignment with an AAP. In order to resolve the issue of final geography of AAPs, thirty six parish areas (and one non-parished electoral division) were identified as having options around AAP alignment, and to help clarify the AAP boundaries in these areas, thirteen meetings were organised for local facilitated debate on the issue. Using parish and town council boundaries as the ‘building blocks’ for the new AAPs, local community organisations were invited along with the relevant Parish/Town Councils and County Councillors.

The Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Local Partnerships were clear with attendees that if a consensus could be reached either at the conclusion of each consultation meeting (or by a specified period thereafter), then Cabinet would be requested to endorse the view of local people during the decision making process unless the preference would lead to geographic anomalies such as ‘islands’ of parishes within an AAP.

Appendix 3 provides a summary of the debate at each of the thirteen geography consultation meetings, updated where appropriate with follow-up responses from the attendees. As detailed in the appendix, a consensus view was received from all areas consulted with the exception of Bear Park in the City of Durham. Whilst there was a consensus reached in Tow Law in Wear Valley and Etherley in Teesdale, the preferences raise the prospect of irregular AAP boundaries.

The approach taken for all areas has been to, wherever practical, comply with the results of the consultation as this would have the greater chance of buy-in to the AAP and therefore increase its prospects of leading to action. So whilst placing Tow Law in the Crook and Willington AAP would mean it is an 'island' in the neighbouring AAP, it is only separated from its preferred location by an extremely narrow strip of agricultural land. As for Etherley, whilst placing it in the Teesdale AAP would create an irregular border with the Bishop Auckland AAP, it would not be totally isolated geographically from the Teesdale AAP, and with a 7 to 1 vote by the Parish to be located in the Teesdale APP, the County Council has received a clear steer as to the preference in the community.

As for the area where no consensus was achieved, Bear Park, account is taken of the fact that on the night of the consultation, there was a very small majority in favour of being located in the Durham AAP, a view which is strengthened by the much clearer majority of 77% in a survey carried out by local County Councillors (details of which are contained in Appendix 4) in favour of the same.

Taking these factors into account, **Cabinet is asked to agree the RECOMMENDATIONS for Tow Law, Etherley and Bear Park as set out below:-**

Bearpark	<i>Options are Mid-Durham Rural West and Durham City.</i> Recommendation Durham City
Tow Law	<i>Options are Weardale, Mid-Durham Rural West and Crook / Willington.</i> Recommendation Crook / Willington
Etherely	<i>Options are Teesdale and Bishop Auckland</i> Recommendation – Teesdale

Subject to the agreement of the above **Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to agree the AAP boundaries inline with the preferences expressed in the consultation process and as outlined in the AAP plans attached to this report in Appendix 5.**

In light of debate during the range of consultations undertaken, it is apparent that AAPs names will be of significance to local people. Ideally local people would feel an attachment and belonging to their AAP. It is therefore suggested that each AAP name is agreed at their inaugural partnership launch event, but in the interim period, and given the recommendations set out above, **Cabinet is asked to endorse the following working titles for AAPs: -**

- Easington AAP
- East Durham Rural Corridor AAP (*formally Sedgefield Rural Corridor AAP*)
- Bishop Auckland and Shildon AAP (*formally Bishop Auckland AAP*)
- Chester-le-Street AAP
- Consett AAP
- Crook, Willington and Tow Law AAP (*formally Crook and Willington AAP*)
- Durham City AAP
- Ferryhill and Chilton AAP
- Mid Durham Rural West AAP (*formally Lanchester/Durham Rural West AAP*)
- Newton Aycliffe AAP
- Spennymoor AAP
- Stanley AAP
- Teesdale AAP
- Weardale AAP

4 Proposed Function of AAPs

4.1 Context

In common with any Council services, a function of AAPs must be to contribute to the achievement of the new Council's vision, and that of the County Durham Partnership. But critically, AAP's also have the vital role of ensuring community views are taken into account when reviewing those visions.

It is clearly imperative that there is a common understanding of AAP functions amongst the many individuals and organisations that it is hoped will contribute to their development. Again, it is also clear that whatever functions are agreed now, they will need to be revisited as AAPs evolve.

4.2 Description of Functions

The proposed functions of AAPs as contained in the latest consultation exercise were based around the four themes of; Engagement, Empowerment, Local Action, and Performance.

As highlighted earlier in this report, overall the consultation did not raise any major issues with proposed functionality, with the one overriding comment that it will be imperative that the AAP's lead to positive action within local communities. Other comments tended to be requesting further clarity as to how AAPs would work in practice, with some of the key suggestions being:-

- The need for good local information within a Performance Management Framework that focuses the work of AAPs on addressing Local Area Agreement (LAA) and Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) outcomes.
- The need for a clear focus on a small number of priority issues relevant to each AAP area.
- The need to balance a focus on countywide issues with a requirement to react to local concerns.

Whilst partnerships and stakeholders all recognised the potential value of the AAPs and expressed a willingness to engage with the process, some did highlight that a move to a more local, settlement based approach, will pose a number of challenges that will need to be overcome as AAPs develop. These included a concern as to the level of data that might be available for some of the smaller AAPs without compromising the confidentiality of residents; as well as the need to develop a working relationship with some existing local engagement mechanisms – such as the Police PACTS (Police And Community Together meetings).

Work is currently on-going with the agencies concerned to address these issues, but given the general acceptance of proposals in the consultation (as well as the references to what AAPs are not i.e. district councils, LSPs, member area panels or town and parish councils), **Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to agree to the functions of the AAPs as set out below :-**

Engagement

AAPs will provide a means:

- **For the Council and partner organisations to engage in a meaningful, two-way dialogue with people in their local communities.**
- **To build and shape local identity in order that communities can speak with a clear and strong voice.**
- **To promote community cohesion and support debate, ensuring that all voices are heard.**
- **To encourage local people to engage with the local democratic process and to be involved in shaping their communities.**
- **To recognise, celebrate and support the role of individual activists and volunteers.**
- **To streamline and focus cross-public sector consultation with local people.**

Empowerment

AAPs will provide a means:

- **To clearly communicate issues and priorities to public sector partners, based on an analysis of local data and opinions, and to develop a shared vision for an area.**
- **To involve local people in the way local services are planned and delivered and to assist partners meet their duty to involve people in decisions, policies and services that may affect them or be of interest to them.**
- **To assist partners to effectively combine their efforts in a local area to improve local outcomes, narrow gaps between different areas of the County and improve quality of life.**

Local Action

AAPs will provide a means:

- **To resolve local issues through either:**
 - **Direct action through use of its own development funding or by means of engendering voluntary community action.**

- **By dialogue with the County Council service departments and County Councillors with regard to influencing use of their delegated budgets.**
- **Negotiation with the Council's partners.**
- **To develop a focussed Annual Action Plan for an area, targeting the key issues that the AAP will seek to resolve for a locality.**

Performance

AAPs will provide a means:

- **To improve the access to quality performance data to enable local people and service users to understand performance as it applies to their area.**
- **To support the impact of the County Durham Partnership in achieving its priority outcomes.**
- **To input into the Comprehensive Area Assessment process for County Durham.**
- **To monitor public sector performance in the AAP area.**

4.3 Further clarity on role

Clearly, there needs to be a balance struck between AAPs contributing towards LAA outcomes and the ability to focus on local priorities. Indeed, there needs to be an acceptance that the LAA may need to change to reflect local issues as they emerge, and as a result of influence from AAPs.

In order to achieve this balance **it is RECOMMENDED that the County Durham Partnership (supported by the County Council) undertake an analysis of data at AAP levels (utilising information from District LSPs and the Place Survey) to provide a local area profile, highlighting relative distances from LAA targets for each AAP, to act as a stimulus for debate at the AAP Forum around priority setting.**

In order to translate 'talking' into action **it is RECOMMENDED that:**

- **There needs to be a focus on a small number of priorities to concentrate efforts and help ensure results. These need to be, based on LAA priorities but allowed to reflect local issues. Ideally, each AAP would be asked to identify one to five priorities on an annual basis where they feel they can have the greatest positive impact and to develop Action Plans setting out how they are to be addressed.**
- **Council service areas and partner agencies will identify link officers to respond and champion the priorities, as well as take up local issues as they arise throughout the year. These officers would attend AAPs when required but would not necessarily have a seat on the AAP Board – particularly Council service link officers.**
- **Whilst the major focus of AAPs will be on the identified priorities, it is proposed meetings should commence with a time limited standard agenda item where (i) the AAP Coordinator will raise**

local issues requiring action (ii) feedback is given on local issues raised at the previous meeting.

5 Proposed Governance Model / Terms of Reference

5.1 Overall Structure

Building on the principles of inclusivity and flexibility outlined above, it is anticipated that each AAP will seek to reflect the overall interests of the Community it serves and offer a forum of participation for all with an active interest in their area. In order to balance the need for inclusivity with effective local decision making, a dual structure was proposed in the consultation, both of which will build on the existing network of local neighbourhood groups to bring together at the area level:

- An Area Forum for each AAP area facilitating debate and participatory activity for 'all comers' twice on an annual basis to consider issues such as:
 - Defining local priorities
 - Agreeing an annual local 'plan'
 - Dialogue with partner organisations around their key decisions and strategic plans for the year
 - Reviewing progress against LAA Outcomes
 - Innovative approaches to community-led decision making and engagement (e.g. participatory budgeting exercises)

- An Area Board for each AAP area which would meet initially on a monthly basis to consider issues such as:
 - Delivery against the Area Action Plan
 - Directing local interventions / problem solving (task and finish groups)
 - Dialogue with partner organisations (operationally-focussed representatives) around service issues and performance
 - Manage and monitor spend against Area budgets
 - Seek dialogue with Councillors to provide alignment between the Area Action Plan and their neighbourhood budgets
 - Regular updates regarding performance, progress against LAA targets; and
 - Feedback on issues escalated to the County Durham Partnership or to partner organisations.

By taking this dual approach, it is intended not only to strike a balance between the need to provide a means for all to be directly involved in the AAP process whilst ensuring there is focus to achieve action, it should also help ensure there is capacity within partners to support the process (as set out in the following section). Although the proposal for bi-annual Forum meetings and monthly board meeting might need to be reviewed overtime, but it does tend to reflect the proven practice in a number of district LSPs. It is therefore **RECOMMENDED that Cabinet agrees the dual approach of a Forum and Board for AAPs.**

5.2 Membership

It is anticipated that the Area Forum referenced above would be open to all-comers without the need for formal governance arrangements. Area Forum events would

clearly need to be managed and facilitated to ensure effective participation, but it is anticipated that this would be through a workshop and participatory approach rather than through a formal decision making committee or Board. It is envisaged that in recognition of capacity issues with partner agencies, senior representation would be encouraged to these limited number of large scale events, which is likely to result in an overall reduction in calls on their time compared to the current district LSP requirements.

Whilst there was general acceptance in the consultation of the need for a Board with limited membership to help ensure action, the actual format of that structure generated the most comments overall – and there was little consistency in their nature.

As to what was proposed in the consultation to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of partnership working, it was suggested that the Board model must eliminate the potential for a single partner or sector to dominate membership. It was therefore proposed that a starting point for Board's membership would be a 'thirds model' made up of:

- One third Elected Members
- One third members of the public
- One third representatives of partner organisations

It was suggested that each Area Board will have a limit to the overall size of membership, with each 'third' above nominating 7 representatives, limiting the overall Board size to 21 members with public attendance and open observation of meetings. The Board may however co-opt individuals from outside of the full membership for specific time bound tasks 'task and finish' groups,

As for the response to these proposals, as highlighted, a range of views were expressed, the key ones being highlighted below: -

- The majority of Elected Members wished to have a presence at the AAP Board, particularly when discussing Neighbourhood (Member) budgets.
- Town and Parish Councils expressed a need for a larger proportion of seats for Elected Members (including Town and Parish Councillors) – a total of nine with at least four from Town and Parish Councils. (i.e. moving away from the concept of an equal balance.)
- Some partners were concerned not with the proposed numbers on the Boards but with capacity to support 14 AAP's.
- There was a general concern by the 'public' that they will be excluded from the process.
- Elected members and partners felt there needs to be a robust and transparent process for the selection of 'public' representatives, ensuring there is a balance of representation with some mandate from existing neighbourhood/special interest organisations.

Clearly, it is not possible to meet all of the findings from the consultation process and a balance needs to be struck, measured against the yardstick of ensuring AAPs lead to positive action. Taking this into account, **Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to agree**

- **that the need for balance in the AAP Boards is maintained.**
- **That formal (voting) membership is limited to a maximum Board of 21 members. However, this needs to take into account:**
 - **meetings should be open and accessible to all who may want to attend;**
 - **as referred to under the Function Section, each AAP should commence with a standard agenda item for the AAP Coordinator to raise local concerns and seek a response;**
 - **where there are more than six county councillors in an AAP area, membership will operate on a rolling basis, reviewed every 2 years and with each representative having a nominated deputy ;**
 - **when Member budgets are discussed by an AAP, all relevant County Councillors will be in attendance to outline their proposed use of the funding.**
 - **The aim at meetings will be to, wherever possible, agree by consensus and not rely on the need for formal voting on items**
- **Town and Parish council representation on AAPs should be safeguarded by means of having a minimum of one of the Elected Member Board positions where they exist in an AAP area. (Where an AAP has more than six Unitary Councillors they would have one position, but where there are less, they would make up the remaining places.)**
- **Based on latest relevant government guidance, in terms of Comprehensive Areas Assessments and the Communities in Control White Paper, as well as the consultation results (including early results from the Place Survey) it is proposed the seven partner positions should be made up of : The County Council (a lead senior officer for each AAP), the Police, the PCT (or a nomination by them), The Fire Service, a VCS umbrella organisation, a business representative and a relevant major social housing provider.**
- **The public representation is sought through the proven method used within the health sector when establishing Foundation Trusts: by a recruitment campaign for ‘general members’ (in this case AAP Forums) and selection from the ‘general members’ for positions on the Board. This method should also help raise awareness of the AAPs within their local communities, opening them up to all for general membership, but having a selection process that will help ensure there is balance on the Board and that they represent a cross section of society.**

5.3 Decision-Making and Representation

Clearly, to operate effectively, it will be necessary for the AAP boards to have in place a set of procedures and protocols. Initial work on these procedures is about to commence with the support of the County Council's legal officers. In order to set the framework for that work, **Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to agree the outline decision-making and representation framework as set out in Appendix 6 of this report.**

6 **Proposed Funding Models**

As highlighted throughout this report, the overriding message from the consultation on AAPs has been the desire for them to lead to action and to result in improved services that meet local needs. Assuming this is achieved, then the funding influenced by AAPs will ultimately encompass the mainstream budgets of public sector agencies working in the county. However, the consultation also recognised that in order to help stimulate change, attract interest in the AAPs and demonstrate more immediate impact, then it is critical that there are locality budgets that AAPs have a direct influence in allocating.

In recognition of this need, the consultation has consistently highlighted the proposed availability of two County Council locality budgets – an Area Budget allocated to each AAP and Member budgets. Not surprisingly, the issue of budgets generated a significant amount of comments within the consultation process. Whilst there was general agreement for the need for Area Budgets to fund AAP Coordinators, there was less agreement on the decision making processes for Members budgets – the issue being the extent of influence AAPs have over the funding.

The background research and analysis suggests that for both Area and Member budgets, the development towards a more inclusive scheme would be the most effective. A more inclusive scheme will increase the voice of local people, strengthen local democracy, enhance awareness and transparency of public budgets, target spending, build community cohesion, improve legitimacy and reputation.

Whilst acknowledging that the Council's budget process is yet to determine the final allocations made to Area and Member budgets, the amount is likely to represent a substantial investment for the Authority. As such, both funds will require a comprehensive set of criteria to be developed in consultation with the Council's Section 151 Officer. However, to assist in that process, and taking into account best practice and the results of the consultation, **Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to agree the following core principles for the development of criteria for Area and Member budgets: -**

Member Budgets: -

- **Member budgets should be renamed as Neighbourhood Budgets to reflect their purpose.**

- Individual projects or service/facilities improvements must have a minimum spend of £2,000.
- Members will make the final recommendation for spend, but in doing so, this must be in discussion with the appropriate Area Action Partnership Board. These discussions should be quarterly, where Members outline proposed spend and the Board is able to comment on the extent proposals meet local priorities and whether there may be duplication with mainstream budgets or the capacity for added value through matching resources. These presentations will be made by all Members in an AAP area and will not be limited to nominated to the AAP Board.
- Uncommitted funds identified at the end of the financial year should not be carried forward and shall be returned to the council's central reserves, unless approval is sought in exceptional circumstances from the Section 151 Officer (e.g. building up a reserve for a large priority project)
- AAP coordinators will be required to assist in technical appraisals and to help alignment with local priorities.
- To assist in administration of budgets, wherever possible, Members will aim to seek sign-off for proposals on a quarterly basis

Area Budgets: -

- It was envisaged in the unitary bid that each 'area' (as defined by Area Action Partnership boundary) will have a budget of c.£250,000 of which £100,000 is to cover administration and staffing costs and £150,000 is for local initiatives (final amount will be subject to decision within the ongoing budget process) .
- Individual projects or service/facilities improvements must have a minimum spend of £5,000 (with the exception of a Small Grants Scheme), meet local priorities.
- Decisions on expenditure from Area budgets must be made through the Area Action Partnership, and demonstrate community involvement.
- An element of the resources must be utilised for a Small Grants Scheme to allow for some projects below the general thresholds of £2,000 and £5,000.

General Criteria:-

Expenditure on Area or Member / Neighbourhood budgets will be formally delegated to the Assistant Chief Executive acting in consultation with the AAP Board and individual members as appropriate.

Eligibility will be limited to non profit making groups and organisations. Individuals and profit making organisations will not be eligible.

All investments in projects, facilities and improvements will:

- Meet identified need
- Contribute to locality and county wide outcomes especially LAA outcomes.
- Improve social, economic and environmental well-being

- **Not undermine council or partners' policies or service delivery**
- **Be lawful**
- **Adhere to County Council audit processes around spend of public money**
- **Not incur ongoing revenue costs unless agreed with the relevant service provider(s).**

7 Next Steps - Implementation and LSP Transition

Assuming agreement can be gained on the issues set out in this report, it is envisaged that the inaugural meetings of the 14 AAP Forums will aim to take place in April 2009.

In seeking approval for the recommendations set out in the report, it is accepted that Cabinet is being requested to make some sensitive decisions. While the report attempts to take a balanced response to the extensive consultation carried out on AAPs, it clearly cannot meet all of the varying opinions expressed over the last 6 months of development. When reaching a decision, it should be noted that: -

- This is only the start of the process, if AAPs are successful, then they will inevitably evolve and the framework agreed by the Council will have to amend and change.
- AAPs are only one form of engagement mechanism with communities and other processes will remain open for communities to influence service provision.
- The proposals set out in this report are not the full picture, further clarity will be achieved once these key issues are agreed and further work can then be carried out on the outstanding issues that remain to be resolved.

Given the scale of the change to a settlement based AAP model, it is not surprising that the scale of the outstanding issues is extensive. Some of these have been highlighted in the report, but the list includes, in no particular order of priority: -

- Liaison with the new Head of Property and Assets to identify potential accommodation for the AAP Coordinators within communities- as well as meeting locations for the Forums and Boards.
- The development of 'meeting procedures and protocols' in liaison with the County's Legal Section.
- Developing area profiles, in partnership with the County Durham Partnership and district LSPs for the inaugural AAP meetings, as well coordinating 14 such meetings
- Clarifying with stakeholders any areas of outstanding uncertainty with the AAP framework.
- Engaging with partner agencies over representation and finalising arrangements for recruiting public representatives.
- Developing a series of performance measures for AAPs to assess their impact.
- Working with district LSP's on transition plans that pass on local knowledge, best practice and ensure ongoing local initiatives and programmes have

delivery mechanisms in place following the cessation of district LSP's in March, 2009.

- Working with the County Durham Partnership framework to ensure there are mechanisms in place to progress the work of District LSP Thematic Partnerships
- Liaison with the Head of Human Resources to ensure the recruitment of AAP Coordinators is progressed and the associated community engagement resources are structured to support the AAP framework.

Clearly, this is an extensive work programme and it will be necessary to engage with the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee to determine if the Council's scrutiny function can be of assistance in progressing these any of these items.

8 Recommendations

8.1 Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to agree the proposals as set out in this report with regard to Area Action Partnership:-

8.1.1 Geographies (Section 3)

8.1.2 Working titles(Section 3)

8.1.3 Functions(Section 4)

8.1.4 Role(Section 4)

8.1.5 Overall Structure(Section 5)

8.1.6 Membership(Section 5)

8.1.7 Decision making and representation framework(Section 5)

8.1.8 Core funding principles(Section 6)

8.2 Cabinet is asked to note that the proposals set out above will be kept under review as Area Action Partnerships are developed throughout the County.

Appendix 1 – Implications

LGR

Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) were a key facet of the original bid for unitary status. The development and consultation work leading to the recommendations in this paper has been directed through the LGR Programme by the Areas and Participation workstream.

Finance

The original unitary bid document outlined indicative figures for AAP budgets and Member / Neighbourhood budgets. The final allocations regarding AAP and Member / Neighbourhood budgets are currently being evaluated and considered by Elected Members through the 2009/10 budget process.

Staffing

Similarly, the original unitary bid document proposed that an area coordinator should be appointed for each AAP with appropriate administrative support, with this support funded from part of the AAP budget. The final staffing structure which will drive and support the AAP model is currently being developed by the Assistant Chief Executive and new Head of Partnerships and Community Engagement.

Equality and diversity

N/A

Accommodation

It is anticipated that AAPs will be managed and supported locally through an office presence in each of the relevant 14 areas. In advance of the launch of AAPs in April 2009, accommodation requirements will be developed to ensure the 'best fit' with arrangements for Customers and Access and Local Elected Member Support.

Crime and disorder

AAPs will provide a key forum for community engagement around community safety issues, and the Community Safety Partnership has been a key consultee in the development process.

Sustainability

AAPs will provide a key forum for community engagement around sustainability issues, and the Environment and Sustainability Partnership has therefore been a key consultee in the development process.

Human rights

N/A

Localities and Rurality

AAPs are envisaged as the key bridge between the unitary council and the diverse needs of the County's various communities. The geography of AAPs has reflected local people's views around natural community areas based on extensive consultation, and in a number of instances local views re-enforced the aggregation of communities at the area level to better reflect, recognise and articulate the needs of rural communities.

Young people

AAPs will provide a key forum for community engagement with young people in a specific geographical area, and the Children's Trust has therefore been a key consultee in the development process.

Consultation

There has been extensive consultation in the development of these proposals. All information relating to the consultation process can be accessed at the following link:

<http://county.durham.gov.uk/sites/lgraks/Pages/Consultations.aspx>

Health

AAPs will provide a key forum for community engagement around health issues, and the Health and Wellbeing Partnership has therefore been a key consultee in the development process.

Appendix 2 (a)– Findings from Autumn consultation with Stakeholders regarding Function, Governance and Budgets for Area Action Partnerships

Issues	Frequency
County Durham Partnership	
See full response below	
County Durham Partnership Thematic Groups	
See full responses below	
District Local Strategic Partnerships	
Function	
Need for good local information	√ √
Realistic outcomes/targets	√
Need clarity – what we want AAPs to do	√
Focus on service delivery issues	√
Performance management – area action plan relate to LAA and SCS	√ √
Conduit to influence County Durham Partnership	√
Thematic action plans	√
Need to be able to take action and take ownership of service delivery	√
Budget	
Resources available are clear and open, available used defined and how decisions are taken	√
Need to map resources now	√
Need finance to attract key players to the table	√
Governance	
Monthly board should deal with everything	√
7/7/7 – need right people on board with right skills – job description, how will choose	√ √ √
May be more than 7 major partners, business??	√
Previous chairs of LSPs as initial chair for continuity	√
Clarity over roles and expectations/governance doc	√ √ √ √
Need proper representation from communities – geog and interest	√
Number of meetings a potential problem	√
Use community empowerment networks/community partnerships/residents assoc	√ √
Innovative ways to seek views	√ √ √
Need for thematic groups	√ √ √ √ √ √
Remove barriers to participation, deal with equality – value members, listen and respond	√ √ √
Build on what exists	√ √
Use VCS infrastructure organisations as have mandate and are accountable	√
Equality – voting etc	√
Membership to be resolved locally	√
Gap between board and larger 6 monthly meetings	√ √
Other	
Work will continue whether 'groups' exist or not	√
Identify early success – quick wins	√
Need to have clout	√
Need to give AAPs time to evolve	√
Written statement of commitment by all partners	√ √
Need to deliver results	√
AAP need to develop to meet the needs of its own locality, strict rigid model not helpful that dictates membership, function, structure	√
Stakeholders	
Function	
How will AAPs fit in with PACTS (police and community	√

Issues	Frequency
together meetings) and MAPS	
Priorities currently set in different ways, how will this come together – potential for conflict	√ √
Support model	√ √
Challenges for partners with performance management	√
Focus on priorities	√ √
How will 2 way dialogue work	√ √
Will analysis of local information be strategic or tactical	√
Need to be clear what going to do	√ √
Budget	
Proportionality of staffing and budgets	√
Governance	
Thematic groups	√ √
Focus on communities, bottom up	√
Membership may have to be flexible depending on the areas	√
Challenge on public 1/3 who will they represent, accountability	√
Town & Parish Councils need to be at heart of process – clarity of role	√ √
Worries around representation as currently servicing 7 LSPs and going to 14 groups	√ √ √
Police Authority members will be elected – representation	√
How will link in with CDP thematic groups/do not reinvent current structures – i.e community safety boards MAPs	√ √
Other	
Need a can do attitude	√
Don't lose what is currently happening/good practise	√ √
Different sizes of AAPs present challenges with the use of information and meaningful data	√
Need practical examples to see how will work	√
Flexibility to adapt to local need	√ √
Public sector bodies are not accountable to AAPs and are already accountable to other bodies. Accountability and scrutiny of AAPs an issue.	√ √
Alignment with all planning cycles	√ √
County Durham Partnership and thematic groups need to change	√
Opportunity	√
CAB would like to be on board	√
Town & Parish Councils (response from CDALC)	
Function	
Budget	
If a unitary member division is split how will this affect budgets and representation.	
Unitary members should consult stakeholders within the AAP membership before budgets allocated	
Governance	
No specific reference to local councils within the consultation document	
Confusion as to where local council representation fitted into and what level of involvement and representation there would be	
Democratically elected sector too few members and should increase to 9 and this membership be split between unitary and local councillors.	
Concern as to how the other 2/3 rd would be recruited	
Code of Conduct may inhibit councillors from speaking freely in AAP meetings	

Issues	Frequency
Other	
Could use Annual local council meetings as a conduit for dissemination of AAP information to local communities	
Could use local councils facilities as information points/administrative centres where such facilities do not exist	
Durham County Councillors	
Function	
General agreement with consultation document	√
Need full public participation and accessible	√√
Performance role key	√
More work needed at next level down	√
Not just talking shops	√√
Strategic v local – clarity	√
Establish local issues first	√√
Need to influence, engage communities, show community leadership and avoid democratic deficit	√
Functions woolly – what do they mean	√
AAPs should not be the only consultation mechanism	√
Budget	
Members should have full discretion over their budgets and not go through AAP	√√√√√
Partners monies – what will they bring	√
? what happens if members division straddles more than 1 AAP	√
Need to attract external funding	√
What assistance/capacity building/support can we put in place to help the community to achieve successful funding applications	√
Should budget allocation be weighted based on deprivation	√√
£50k per member or division	√
Members budgets for members but need to consult with AAP	√
Priorities, criteria, best value	√√
Staffing allocation would be better spent on local priorities	√
Funding level low for AAPs as compared with district council spend in these areas	√
Governance	
All meetings open to the public	√
Elected members 7 should be DCC members	√
How will be elected if more than 7, need to ensure all divisions are represented on board	√√√
All DCC members should be on the board/ at least 51% board should be DCC members	√√
Role of partners needs to be clearer	√√
What would task and finish groups do	√
Barriers to participation need to be removed	√√√√
Mechanisms need to be clear how get elected to board	√√√√√√√
Need formal code of conduct and be accountable to Standards Board	√
Terms of office and rolling membership to ensure equality of participations	√√
Representative bodies should have some form of accreditation	√
AAPs should have SLAs with service providers	√
What is definition of member 7	√√√
Is x2 per year for Forum enough and is Forum a decision making body	√
21 should be flexible	√√√√√
Other	
Build on what already there	√

Issues	Frequency
One size does not fit all	√
AAP staff should be permanent and have suitable professional capacity	√

County Durham Partnership Consultation Response

What are the County Durham Partnership's expectations of AAPs and does the proposed model meet these?

Within the County Durham Partnership Framework the AAPs will replace the role played by LSPs in relation to community consultation, engagement and involvement. The CDP will therefore expect AAPs to pick up this role on behalf of the CDP (e.g. in relation to the development and review of the Sustainable Community Strategy, identification and review of LAA priorities etc.)

The CDP will expect AAPs to reflect LAA priorities in developing their local priorities where appropriate.

The CDP's Delivery & Improvement Group will rely on AAPs to gain a clear understanding of local issues affecting performance.

The CDP will want the AAPs to monitor the impact of the Sustainable Community Strategy and LAA on localities and make recommendations to the Board accordingly and work with Overview & Scrutiny on this.

The CDP will want the AAPs to work with the Delivery & Improvement Group and thematic partnerships to respond to requests for information on local performance.

The CDP will want the AAPs to work with the Delivery & Improvement Group and thematic partnerships to address cross-cutting issues in localities.

The CDP will want the AAPs to ensure effective communication in localities about the SCS and LAA.

The CDP will look to AAPs to provide local knowledge on specific issues. To ensure that the specific needs of localities are taken into account by the CDP and thematic partnerships, particularly in relation to gap narrowing.

The CDP may ask the AAP to facilitate community engagement on specific issues.

The CDP will expect AAPs to respond to requests from Members through Overview & Scrutiny and participate in Scrutiny Reviews when requested.

Are there any elements of your / our approach that need to change before the model is finalised?

The Partnership would like to see greater clarity in the model regarding how local delivery by LSPs will be picked up in the future, and particularly how services and service standards will be maintained during the transition period.

The CDP would like to see more detail on how the principles within the model will be achieved, particularly the gap narrowing element.

Partners would like the model to provide further information regarding any circumstances under which the AAPs will commission services and how this will work.

Members of the CDP recognise the importance of AAP membership and would like to see more information and clear links with other partnerships within the County Durham Partnership Framework.

Partners would like to see assurance that the model will help build more aspirational communities.

Partners would like to see the full structure illustrating how each element fits with others. Alongside this they would like to see exactly what local action, empowerment and performance might look like.

What can AAPs expect from the CDP, how can we ensure there is effective two-way dialogue?

To achieve an effective two-way dialogue representatives from AAPs need to be members of the County Durham Partnership. (How this will work in practice needs to be discussed – could have an impact on the Structure of the CDP)

The CDP should provide clear information to AAP about the priorities set out in the SCS and LAA and opportunities for Review & Refresh.

The CDP will provide clear information to AAPs on the full County Durham Partnership Framework and the links between partnerships.

The CDP should ensure that the AAPs are provided with clear information on local performance (where this is meaningful) against LAA targets and National Indicators.

The CDP should provide the opportunity for AAPs to raise key local concerns on a broader platform.

The County Durham Partnership Framework will support AAPs in dealing with difficult problems through practical officer support and informal support as required.

The CDP will ensure AAPs are provided with information on legislation, guidance, CAA etc. relating to partnership working, NIS and LAA.

The CDP will play a key role in ensuring that all partnerships within the County Durham Partnership Framework work together effectively. As part of this the CDP will ensure that the five thematic partnerships are able to address the needs and aspirations of local communities. This will involve working with thematic partnership and AAPs to ensure that thematic partnership have appropriate structures and terms of reference to address issues specific to geographical areas, building on the work previously carried out by LSP sub-groups.

The CDP will provide support to ensure fitness for purpose across the Partnership Framework.

The CDP will support the AAP Coordinator's induction process.

The CDP will steer work on consultation, engagement and involvement through the AAPs.

County Durham Community Safety Board and Area Action partnerships

Response to consultation document on AAP function, governance and budgets

What are the Community Safety Board's expectations of AAPs and does the proposed model meet these?

- The CS Board will expect AAPs to have a key role in facilitating community engagement in respect of the community safety agenda. The model appears broadly to meet this expectation;
- The CS Board will expect AAPs to consider the agreed county-wide community safety priorities in developing their key issues and annual action plans. It is not clear from the consultation document whether this will be expected and how the local and county-wide will be reconciled;
- The CS Board will expect AAPs to contribute to the discussion locally in respect of what key issues for community safety are, what specific local community safety problems communities are concerned about and how they should be tackled. The model appears broadly to meet this expectation;
- The CS Board will expect AAPs (as non-statutory entities) to take into consideration the statutory roles and responsibilities of all partners; and
- The CS Board will expect the AAPs to liaise with its existing and developing structures as it implements its action plans, and not duplicate those structures. There is nothing in the paper in respect of such matters.

Are there any elements of your / our approach that need to change before the model is finalised?

- Given the stage of development we are at in moving to a single county-wide Community Safety Partnership (with thematic sub-groups and local problem-solving groups), and in the multiplicity of geographical approaches across partners, we will need to work together to determine how the CS Board and the AAPs will collaborate effectively on performance, problem-solving, partner engagement, etc. This can however be considered at a later stage, provided there is flexibility built into the AAP model – as there appears to be.

What can AAPs expect from the CS Board, how can we ensure there is effective two-way dialogue?

- AAPs can expect the CS Board to advise them what the over-arching priorities for community safety are across the county and how they can influence these;
- AAPs can expect the CS Board to keep them informed of local progress against these priorities, the LAA targets and National Indicators (where appropriate and achievable as part of a developed and agreed approach to sharing information at a locality level);
- AAPs can expect the CS Board to keep them advised of what the key local issues are in respect of crime and anti-social behaviour locally and of what is being done to tackle these; and
- AAPs can expect the partners involved in the CS Board to co-operate with AAP co-ordinators.

COUNTY DURHAM HEALTH AND WELLBEING PARTNERSHIP & AREA ACTION PARTNERSHIPS – CONSULTATION RESPONSE

What are the County Durham Health and Well-being Partnership's expectations of AAPs and does the proposed model meet these?

The Health and Wellbeing Partnership expects to liaise with AAPs in relation to consultation, engagement and involvement with the health improvement agenda for both county-wide issues and specific local health related issues. There may be a degree of aggregation of AAPs require for certain issues.

The Health and Wellbeing Partnership expects AAPs to reflect relevant health related LAA priorities in the development of their action planning / priority setting process.

The Health and Wellbeing Partnership expects AAPs to provide relevant health related information on local issues as appropriate.

The Health and Wellbeing Partnership expects to develop links with AAPs or groups of AAPs in relation to the local performance of health-related issues.

The Health and Wellbeing Partnership expects support and involvement of AAPs on cross cutting issues that impact on health and wellbeing.

The Health and Wellbeing Partnership expects AAPs to support the development of appropriate community links in relation to health issues and would welcome further dialogue with AAPs to explore this in 2009.

The Health and Wellbeing Partnership expects APPs to proactively support developments to reduce health inequalities within County Durham.

The Health and Wellbeing Partnership expects the AAPs to facilitate engagement with the community on specific health related issues.

Are there any elements of your / our approach that need to change before the model is finalised?

The Health and Wellbeing Partnership is concerned about the loss of delivery, support and local intelligence / knowledge on health related issues as the LSP thematic health groups disappear. It is apparent in the consultation document that AAPs are not expected to establish sub groups but is clear that there needs to be an element of infrastructure established to enable community support and involvement in the health agenda. This process is unclear in the consultation document and further dialogue is necessary.

It is unclear how and for what purposes APPs can use their allocated budget. Can they commission, work collaboratively together and also with the Health and Wellbeing Partnership?

Is the Health and Wellbeing Partnership expected to have representatives from 14 APPS. If not, how will communication and local activity be developed and supported?

What type of action will AAPs engage with in relation to health issues? How will they know what they are proposing will be effective/

AAPs will not be able to have very local data and information about health related performance, depending on the population size. There are many reasons for this including validity of data and confidentiality when looking at small numbers. There needs to be a pragmatic approach to this.

What can AAPs expect from the H&WP, how can we ensure there is effective two-way dialogue?

The H&WP wants to ensure there is effective dialogue with the AAPs on health related issues and would welcome further discussion to understand how this might take place. The H&WP also recognises that changes in its terms of reference may be required to facilitate this engagement.

The H&WP will provide clear information to the AAPs and involve them in the opportunities to prioritise health related indicators for the LAA.

The H&WP is keen to engage with AAPs on the health

agenda and will seek the most effective mechanism for this.

The H&WP is keen to ensure that AAPs are able to raise local health related issues with the partnership and to look for solutions.

The H&WP is keen to explore fully its role in relation to the AAPs, recognising that they are different to the LSPs.

The H&WP is keen to ensure that the engagement with the AAPs is at the appropriate level, dependent on the specific issue.

The H&WP will ensure that health related information and data is provided to the AAPs based on the most appropriate denominator for the relevant data field. This will necessarily link into the appropriate organisations performance frameworks.

The H&WP is keen that an effective mechanism is developed that incorporates the AAPs in local delivery, particularly focused on reducing health inequalities.

Consultation Response from the County Durham Economic Partnership

The County Durham Economic Partnership (CDEP) welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation and looks forward to working with the Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) under the framework of the Sustainable Community Strategy, the Local Area Agreement and especially the County Durham Economic Strategy 2008-2013.

The CDEP was established in 1994 and comprises nearly 50 public, private and voluntary sector organisations involved in the economic development of the County.

As the existing Strategic Partnership Board is reviewed (as a result of the move towards a Unitary Authority) there is also a need to reconsider the role and structure of the CDEP. A review of the CDEP is dependant on the outcomes of the review of the governance arrangements for the strategic partnership and there is also a need to examine the CDEP membership following the loss of the current District Council representatives.

We regard the impending AAPs as a valuable source of local economic and community intelligence through the bi-annual AAP Forums. It is our intention that a representative of the CDEP will attend each of these forums for every AAP. We will remain focused on strategic Economic Development and Regeneration, engaging with partners who can help deliver our vision and working in particular with the business community and other communities of interest.

We are keen to share our understanding of the County Durham economy, our experience gained from a strong history of engaging in partnership working and for the AAPs to actively inform our policy priorities and to use their understanding of grassroots issues to create and sustain prosperous communities.

The CDEP reviewed the governance arrangements for skills and employability throughout the summer of 2008. As a result the partnership has sought to implement the recommendation of the Leitch Review commissioned by the Government which advocated the establishment of employer-led groups. Moving forward, the County Durham Employment and Skills Group will be capable of sharing employer-driven information with community-led AAPs. Employer-driven groups and community-led partnerships working closely together perhaps offers a model for the future.

Previous operations of the Local Strategic Partnerships

The CDEP is aware that the delivery of some regeneration activities has previously been undertaken by Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs). This primarily relates to Area Based Grants (ABG), such as the Working Neighbourhoods Fund.

It is vital that a circular feed-back loop exists between strategic investment decisions and on the ground community/business intelligence in order to maximise the economic impact of investment decisions. In the new AAP structure, we feel that AAP Boards should be able to feed-into the prioritisation of ABGs and economic policy priorities through the provision of evidence to the CDEP. We will actively encourage the involvement of AAPs in CDEP activities.

It is proposed that all economic development and regeneration functions, including ABG, will be managed by the new authority's Economic Development Division. In this way, all activities will be clearly delivered within an overall strategic policy framework. The precise

delivery mechanisms are yet to be decided, but are likely to include a mixture of strategic commissioning, area-based delivery bodies such as Durham City Vision, Enterprise Agencies, County Durham Development Company and in-house Teams.

It is intended that investment prioritisation will be achieved through the circular feed-back loop discussed earlier. The CDEP would welcome input from AAPs on where they feel they can contribute to realising the vision of the County Durham Economic Strategy 2008-2013 and where they feel there are gaps in provision or missed opportunities. This enables local decision-making to address local issues whilst set within an overall strategic framework. In instances where officers are developing and delivering specific locality based projects, we propose that there should be extremely close working relations with the relevant AAP.

We look forward to engaging with the Area Action Partnerships through discussion of policy priorities in order to deliver the County Durham Economic Strategy 2008-2013 and associated Action Plan (currently being consulted upon).

In addition, we look forward to supporting the AAPs as they develop their local investment plans, using the spatial framework of the County Durham Economic Strategy 2008-2013 (see below) as the basis by which we can assess together what the strengths and opportunities of the local areas are.

Local Children's Boards Response to Consultation in relation to AAPs:

We want AAPs to lead to action, how do you feel this could be achieved in terms of your operations?

Ensure there is a managed transition from LSP to AAP. Currently LCBs are thematic sub-groups of the LSPs and this has provided the Boards with opportunities to ensure links between the different thematic groups takes place at a local level to facilitate a joined up approach – although this has happened with different degrees of success across the various LSPs. Clear plans should be developed by the AAPs and the Children's Trust would anticipate the Children & Young People's Plan, together with the Key Improvement Priorities would be adopted by the AAPs so that there is a shared approach to priorities and delivery against these within the localities. We would wish there to be a strong link between the Boards and the AAPs to ensure real consolidation and co-ordination of effort which places the needs of children and young people and their concerns and wants as important considerations for the work of AAPs.

Are there any elements of your / our approach that need to change before the model is finalised?

It was felt that the Thirds Model would require further exploration – for example, there is some confusion in relation to how the "community" voice will be represented and this needs further clarification, in particular in relation to the voice of children and young people.

How do you feel your partnership/agency could be represented on an AAP (in relation to both the Big and Small 'tents')?

Chairs of the Local Children's Boards felt it was important the Boards, as the local representation of the Children's Trust, were represented at both Big and Small Tents. It was also strongly felt that particular attention will need to be paid by the AAPs to listening and responding to the views of children and young people as citizens in their own rights with their own views. Concern was expressed at the potential isolation of children and young people from the AAPs and the Boards would be keen to support the AAP facilitate strong communication links between children and young people which would support the setting of priorities and plans that take account of children and young people's views, wishes and aspirations for their areas.

How can AAPs add value to your activities in a locality?

Ensuring robust community engagement with setting priorities and delivering actions to improve outcomes – improving communication with the community so that there is a good understanding of the work of the Board and demonstrating joined-up approaches that are intelligent and take account of local need.

How can your/our performance framework be best adapted to meet the needs of effective engagement with the community at AAP-level around service delivery and performance?

There is a robust performance management framework around the work of the Children's Trust and Boards receive Locality Profiles annually and performance information in relation to our Key Improvement Priorities quarterly. This can be shared with the AAP to ensure good use of information to inform effective planning.

County Durham Sustainability and Environment Partnership – AAP Consultation Response

Can I first of all apologise for the late response from the County Durham Sustainability and Environment Partnership (CDSEP). This was primarily due to confusion over the Chair of the partnership. For the record, I am currently Chair, although this will obviously change once the new directors are in post and decisions have been made about future structures etc.

As you will be aware from the discussions at our CDSEP Board meeting, the Partnership is happy to endorse the model that is proposed for the Area Action Partnerships as the locality model for the new Council and broader partnership framework. The Board asked you a series of questions for clarification, but gave their support to the overall model.

We are concerned that environment and neighbourhood needs continue to be taken forward where they are currently addressed by the LSP thematic groups; and the CDSEP will therefore need to adapt to have a remit to cover both immediate and long term community requirements.

As you are aware, however, a key issue was raised around how we facilitate a voice for communities, through the AAPs, on the thematic partnership itself. As the Board commented, it would not possibly be feasible for representatives from all partner organisations to regularly attend 14 separate meetings. In addition to this, we want to explore the best ways to facilitate the Positive Contribution element of CDSEP (LAA NIs on people feeling able to influence local decisions, % of people who believe that people treat each other with respect and dignity locally, and regular volunteering, with a much larger series of CAA indicators behind that).

In order to ensure strategic issues are provided with a locality dimension, there is a need to ensure a cohesive role for the CDSEP partnership at the Area Action Partnerships, with the interests of local level being addressed by an appropriate strategic lead partner on the CDSEP. It is feasible therefore, that one partner from the CDSEP could act on behalf of the broader partnership by attending AAPs to listen to local concerns, aggregate issues back up to the strategic level and work with AAPs to address work around shared priorities. This role would be allocated across agencies according to theme and nature of the local issue at the specific AAP concerned.

Therefore, with a degree of adaptation, local area needs could be addressed at a strategic level regarding CDSEP issues. The arrangement would also facilitate the engagement of both the Environment portfolio holder to drive the issue and local members to help deliver it. The detail of how the issues are properly fed into the CDSEP Exec would need further consideration but as Chair of the Partnership, I believe this to be the preferred and most practicable solution.

Best wishes,

John Richardson

Chair,
County Durham Sustainability and Environment Partnership

Appendix 2 (b)– Findings from Autumn consultation with the Public regarding Function, Governance and Budgets for Area Action Partnerships

Q1 What are your views on the proposed model for Area Action Partnerships?	Number of comments	Rank
Theme 1 Membership	300	1
Theme 2 Acceptable model	152	4
Theme 3 Communication	20	7
Theme 4 Budget	36	5
Theme 5 Governance	163	3
Theme 6 Geography	232	2
Theme 7 Misc comments & issues	22	6

Q3 How would you like to access/take part in AAPs?	Number of comments	Rank
Theme 1 Membership	28	4
Theme 2 Want to participate	68	2
Theme 3 Communication	29	3
Theme 4 Meeting Organisation	120	1

Q4How can we support you to enable this to happen?	Number of comments	Rank
Theme 1 Inclusion of existing organisations	18	5
Theme 2 Support/resources	82	2
Theme 3 Communication	138	1
Theme 4 Meeting Organisation	31	4
Theme 5 Governance	43	3

Q5 Any other comments?	Number of comments	Rank
Theme 1 Geography	8	5
Theme 2 Existing organisations	12	3
Theme 3 Miscellaneous comments	54	1
Theme 4 Budget	11	4
Theme 5 Membership/representation	28	2
Theme 6 Governance	8	5
Theme 7 Communication	5	7

Appendix 3 – Findings from Consultations on Geography (Nov / Dec 2008)

Purpose

1. To inform the Cabinet decision around Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) with a summary of the findings of the consultation carried out on the geographic make up of the fourteen AAPs.

Background

2. Between July and September 2008 a number of consultation events were held at which the future of the new unitary council was discussed. In particular the events focused on the development of AAPs with people being asked questions in two key areas; a) the role and function of AAPs and b) the geography of AAPs. The collated information on the geography was discussed by the County Council Cabinet on 1st October with fourteen focal points for new AAPs agreed.
3. However feedback from the summer consultation events generated options for a number of areas in relation to which AAP they should sit within. Thirty Six Parish and Divisional areas were identified and to help clarify the AAP boundaries in these areas, thirteen meetings were organised (Annex A). Local community organisations were invited along with the Parish Councils and the County Councillors.
4. At the meetings a presentation was given to update people on progress made so far and this was followed by a round table discussion at which people were asked to debate the positives and negatives of each of the proposed AAP areas. These discussions were followed by a question and answer session and then people were asked to come to a consensus on which AAP their area should sit with.
5. All discussions were recorded and will be used to inform Cabinet and Full Council when they make the decision on the final AAP boundaries, early in 2009.

Feedback from meetings

Please note that AAP titles are working titles and subject to change.

Areas where a consensus was reached

6. **Pittington and Shadforth**
 - Pittington. There were strong affiliations with the areas directly to the east of the city such as Belmont, with strong links to Durham through transport, services, churches etc. There was no support for the Peterlee/Seaham AAP. **Consensus – Durham City AAP**
 - Shadforth. Historical links with the city area already exist with all major services being accessed in the city. There were some concerns that the city area might marginalise the more rural areas. **Consensus – Durham City AAP**
7. **Brancepeth, Brandon and Byshottles**

Brancepeth. Most local services are accessed in Durham City with people feeling a real affinity with the city. However there was concern that the geographic area for the Durham AAP was too large and the distance between Brancepeth and the likes of West Rainton were too great. It was felt there was no connection with the Crook / Willington area. In terms of the rural area it was felt this could open up funding opportunities in Brancepeth. **Consensus – Durham City AAP – but recognised that this might not be an available option given that Brandon and the Byshottles would provide a ‘bridge’ between Brancepeth and a Durham City AAP, so the second choice would be Mid Durham Rural West AAP**

- Brandon and Byshottle. There was a real feeling that the villages in the parish shared many issues which would not be shared by the city. Issues of transport around the rural area were raised and this would have to be considered when meetings and events were being organised. **Consensus – Mid Durham Rural West AAP**
8. **West Rainton**
- There was general agreement that the West Rainton area should be part of the Durham AAP. **Consensus – Durham City AAP**
9. **Shotton, Haswell & South Hetton**
- Haswell. There is a real affinity with the Peterlee and Seaham area with no clear links to the Durham area. **Consensus – Easington AAP**
 - Shotton. There is a real affinity with the Peterlee and Seaham area with no clear links to the Durham area. **Consensus – Easington AAP**
 - South Hetton. There is a real affinity with the Peterlee and Seaham area with no clear links to the Durham area. **Consensus – Easington AAP**
10. **Burnopfield and Dipton (Divisional Area)**
- Burnopfield. The area felt no affiliation with Stanley due to it's different priorities even though it is closer geographically. There was more of an affiliation with the Consett area and in particular with the similar villages such as Ebchester and Medomsley.
 - Dipton. Although access to services in Stanley is good it was felt that there were a number of issues impacted on the decision. It was felt that Stanley's new town council would take the focus away from the Dipton.
 - **Consensus – Consett AAP**
11. **Satley, Greencroft, Healyfield, Hedleyhope, Muggleswick**
- Satley. Felt strong links with the rural areas. **Consensus – Mid Durham Rural West AAP**
 - Greencroft. Felt strong links with the rural areas. **Consensus – Mid Durham Rural West AAP**
 - Healeyfield. Views were mixed with some people feeling that there were already good links and relationships with the Consett area. However there was also a feeling that Castleside would be on the fringes and may not have a strong voice. Further correspondence from the Parish Council has indicated they wish to be part of the Mid Durham Rural West AAP. **Consensus – Mid Durham Rural West AAP**
 - Hedleyhope. No representatives from Hedleyhope were able to attend the meeting but the issue had been discussed by the Parish Council who had expressed the preference to be in the Mid Durham Rural West AAP. **Consensus – Mid Durham Rural West AAP**
 - Muggleswick. Although the parish is currently in Derwentside it does share a long boundary with Wear Valley. No consensus was reached on the night of the meeting but a formal response from the Parish Council indicated that their preference was the Weardale AAP. **Consensus – Weardale AAP**
12. **Sacrison, Kimlesworth and Plawsworth**
- Sacrison. Very strong links with the Chester le Street Area with current network and links being in this area. There was no support for the Durham Area. **Consensus – Chester le Street AAP**
 - Kimblesworth and Plawsworth. Very strong links with the Chester le Street Area with current network and links being in this area. There was no support for the Durham Area. **Consensus – Chester le Street AAP**
13. **Thornley, Wingate, Hutton Henry, Sheraton and Hulam, Castle Eden, Wheatley Hill**
- Castle Eden. The view was that the area was already well connected with the Peterlee / Seaham area and was already linked with the appropriate networks although there

was a slight fear that Peterlee, Seaham and Murton could swallow up funding and resources. **Consensus – Easington AAP**

- Hutton Henry. Felt more association with the Trimdon Sedgefield areas. **Consensus – Easington AAP.**
- Sheraton and Hulam. Sheraton would feel comfortable in this area as they associate themselves with Wingate, Hutton Henry, Trimdon. **Consensus – Easington AAP**
- Wingate. There were strong links with Peterlee in terms of heritage, identity and transport. It was also felt that the Peterlee/Seaham AAP was more likely to attract external funding that Wingate could benefit from. There were a few concerns that Wingate could be overshadowed by the main centres. **Consensus – Easington AAP**
- Wheatley Hill. There was a strong identity with the Peterlee Seaham area with good links to existing local structures. Funding was an issue with advantages identified for being in either area. There were concerns about the lack of transport links into the more rural area. A previous correspondence had been received from the Parish Council (September 2008) which had favoured alignment with the East Durham Rural Corridor AAP. However, the view 'on the night' favoured alignment with Easington, and this superseded the previous correspondence. **Consensus – Easington AAP**
- Thornley. Again the strong links with the Peterlee / Seaham area were identified along with knowledge of the existing networks and good transport links. Some concerns were raised regarding the possible size of the Peterlee / Seaham area and would Thornley's voice be heard. As one of the larger villages there could be an opportunity to have a louder voice in the rural area although links and networks would need to be made. **Consensus - Easington AAP.**

14. **Cassop cum Quarrington Hill, Coxhoe, Shincliffe**

- Cassop cum Quarrington. Although all major services are accessed in the city it was felt that the issues of concern would have more in common with the surrounding rural villages. Some concerns were expressed about the geographic size of the rural corridor area. **Consensus – East Durham Rural Corridor AAP**
- Coxhoe. There are already a lot of links with the networks and partnerships in the Durham City area along with the major services. However there was more of an affinity with the surrounding villages as they were 'similar communities'. Concerns were raised about transport links in the rural area. Similarities were also expressed regarding the Ferryhill/Chilton area. However, consensus favoured the East Durham Rural Corridor, and this was supported with correspondence from the Parish Council **Consensus – East Durham Rural Corridor AAP**
- Shincliffe. There is a very strong affinity with the city in terms of identity and access to services. A concern was expressed that they could be a small fish and big pond but this was felt that this could apply to both possible areas. This view was reinforced through correspondence from the Parish Council. **Consensus – Durham City AAP**

15. **Shildon**

There were strong views in favour of alignment with both Newton Aycliffe and Bishop Auckland.

It was felt that strong links via schools (forming a trust between schools in Newton Aycliffe and Shildon), CAVOS and the current Sedgefield Borough networks and partnerships which align Shildon to the Newton Aycliffe Area.

There were also strong links with Bishop Auckland, again through schools, residents' use of local shops and with transport links (rail). There were also comments that Shildon people had more in common with Bishop Auckland people. There were concerns that there were areas of high deprivation in Bishop Auckland which could potentially divert funds.

Following the meeting further discussions took place within various AAP organisations. Shildon Town Council responded outlining that their preference would be with the Bishop Auckland AAP. New Shildon Residents association also replied with their preference being Bishop

Auckland. However the Children and Young Peoples Network expressed the view that they would prefer to be aligned with Newton Aycliffe.

Consensus – Bishop Auckland (2-1)

16. Tow Law

- Although some common issues were identified with the Weardale area it was felt that these were not as strong as with other areas.
- A lot of similarities were identified with the Mid-Durham Rural West Area and it was felt that organisations in this area could work well together.
- Tow Law has very strong links with the Crook area and the hill top villages. It was felt there would be opportunities to access funding. There was a concern that the deprivation in some of the Crook / Willington area could impact on the AAP.

No consensus was reached on the night and organisations were asked to go back and think some more. The Town Council did respond with their preference being for the Crook / Willington Area.

Consensus – Crook and Willington – creates geographic anomaly – Cabinet decision Required.

17. Bearpark and Witton Gilbert

- Witton Gilbert. There are very strong affiliations with the city through transport, shopping, social activities and transport. NO clear links were identified with the Chester le Street Or Rural AAP areas. **Consensus – Durham City AAP**
- Bearpark. A number of mixed views were expressed. The village is close to Durham City centre and has good transport links with the centre and an affinity to the area (rather than the rural area). It was also felt that there may be more opportunities to access funding as the village would have higher needs than the rest of the city area. There were some concerns that the Durham City AAP might not understand the needs of the villages and that the city had changed over the years and was very 'student' dominated and that Bearpark might have more in common with the more rural villages. It was also felt that there might be a better balance of discussion between the villages, although this could also lead to villages competing.

As well as the engagement event the local County Councillors also did a survey of residents' views. There was approximately a 10% return on the survey and of these 160 returns, 37 expressed the view that they wished to be with the rural area with 123 people saying they wished to be with the Durham City area.

No Consensus – Cabinet Decision Required

18. Woodland, Copley, Cockfield, Etherley, Evenwood and Barony, Hamsterley, Lynesack and Softley, South Bedburn.

- Woodland. There was a feeling that whatever AAP the Woodland area was in it would be on the fringes. There were comments that the links to services in Bishop Auckland were strong, and a formal response from Woodland Parish Council aligning the area with Bishop Auckland. **Consensus – Bishop Auckland**
- Cockfield. There was a feeling that people in Cockfield don't always feel like they are part of Teesdale and that there are stronger links with the Bishop Auckland Area. **Consensus – Bishop Auckland**
- Etherley. There was a strong identity with Teesdale and the common issues that would be shared in this rural area. However the proximity of services in Bishop Auckland was raised and that Teesdale was Barnard Castle centric. The Parish Council felt they could have more influence in the Teesdale area and that would be their preferred AAP – which was reiterated in a follow-up letter.

Consensus – Teesdale, creates potential anomaly – Cabinet Decision Required

- Evenwood and Barony. There was a feeling that people in Evenwood don't always feel like they are part of Teesdale and that there are stronger links with the Bishop Auckland Area. **Consensus – Bishop Auckland**
- Hamserley. Although the area is close to Bishop Auckland the feeling was that the identity of the area was with Teesdale. **Consensus - Teesdale**
- Lynesack and Softley. The common rural issues that exist with the rest of Teesdale were recognised but it was also felt that anything in Teesdale is focused on Barnard Castle and that people in the Gaunless Valley have a different identity. People tend to access services in Bishop Auckland but it was recognised that deprivation levels in the Bishop Auckland area could take funding away from the rural area. **Consensus – Bishop Auckland (2 – 1 vote)**
- South Bedburn. The rural and farming nature of the area fits with the rest of Teesdale. **Consensus - Teesdale**

The nature of Teesdale's geography dictates that the feedback from all Teesdale parishes will have to be considered together to ensure that a workable pattern of areas can be formed. This may result in elected members deciding against the consensus view in a small number of cases to avoid anomalies ('islands') in the geography of the proposed AAP.

It is to be noted that further correspondence was also received from Trimdon Parish Council, Trimdon Foundry Parish Council and Ferryhill Parish Council, with all such responses aligning with the proposed placement of their parishes in Appendix 5 below.

Appendix 4 – Bear Park Elected Member Survey

*From your County Councillors
Rev Crooks & Mark Wilkes*

**IMPORTANT
INFORMATION
ABOUT THE FUTURE
OF BEARPARK**

Dear Bearpark Residents

Councillors are being consulted on November 24th about which Area Action Partnership they feel is best for Bearpark.

What is an Area Action Partnership?

An area partnership will bring together groups across an area including:

Unitary councillors, town and parish councillors, voluntary sector, businesses and service providers (eg. Police, health, schools).

They will identify the priorities for areas and will have a local budget. Each partnership will have employed co-ordinators. The partnerships will be as the name suggests - about action – not talking shops.

Which partnership for Bearpark?

Bearpark is at the boundary of two proposed partnership areas.

One area, “Durham Rural West” will cover an area from Lanchester, through to Brandon. It is roughly outlined on Map 1 over the page.

The other area will include the area around Durham City, including Neville’s Cross and Framwellgate Moor. It can roughly be seen in Map 2.

Please think about where you work, do your shopping or go to the doctors. You may also have a general feeling about which “community” you feel you belong to. Or which area would be best for the long term development of Bearpark.

We feel as your county councillors that your views should be included in these discussions. Please talk to your friends, family and neighbours about this.

When you have decided your preference please return the form ticking your choice. There is also space to give your views.

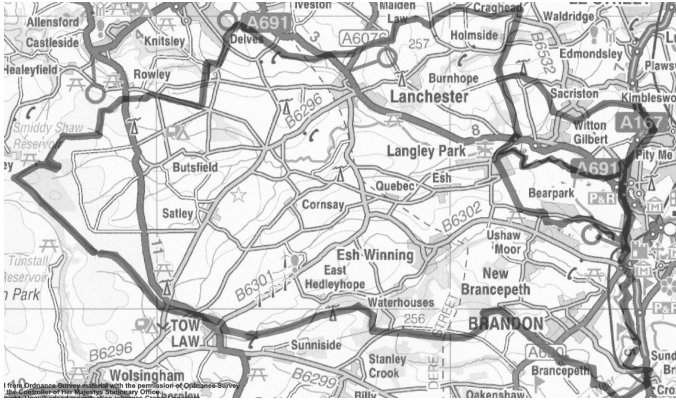
Kind regards

Mark
Councillor Mark Wilkes

Rev
Councillor Rev Crooks

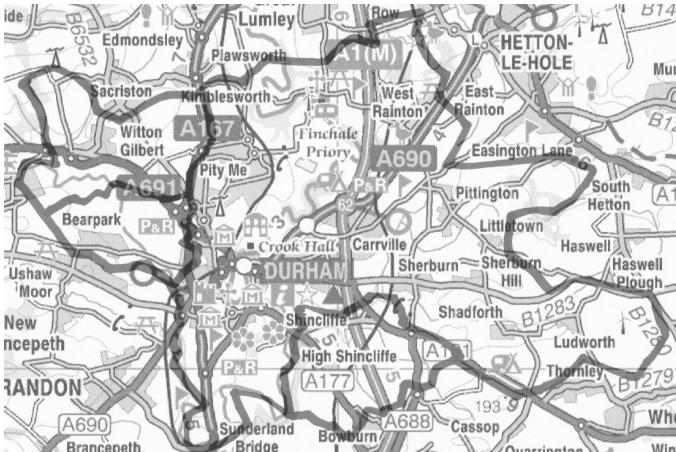
This consultation is paid for by Mark & Rev & Durham Lib Dems – Not by taxpayers

Map 1 - Possible Durham Rural West AAP



This area includes Lanchester, Brandon, the villages in between them and the rural areas to the west as far as Satley. Witton Gilbert may choose to be in this area.

Map 2 – Possible Durham City AAP



This area includes Durham City, its suburbs and some of the villages around it. Witton Gilbert & Shinccliffe Parishes may choose to be in this area.

Please fill in your name and tick which area you would prefer:

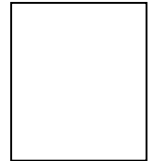
Your name	Durham City AAP	Durham Rural West AAP	Email (if you want us to keep you updated)

Any additional comments:

Please fold the page so the address below shows in the envelope window:

Bearpark AAP Consultation
Durham Liberal Democrats
FREEPOST RRSZ-ZHTA-CATA
Durham
DH1 3HN

The Liberal Democrats would like to use the information provided to contact you from time to time to keep you informed of campaigns we think may be of interest to you. Please let us know if you don't want to be contacted in this way.



Appendix 5 - Maps of Emerging AAP Geography

<u>Area Action Partnership / Map Number</u>	<u>Parish Areas</u>
Map Number 1 - Crook / Willington / Tow Law	Tow Law Greater Willington Crook (No Parish) Hunwick (No Parish)
Map Number 2 - Weardale	Witton le Wear Wolsingham Muggleswick Stanhope Hunstanworth Edmonbyers
Map Number 3 - Teesdale	Barforth Barnard Castle Barningham Bolam Boldron Bowes Brignall Cleatham Cotherstone Eggleston Eggelstone Abby Etherley Forest and Frith Gainford Gilmonton Hamsterley Headlam Hilton Holwick Hope Hunderthwaite Hutton Magna Ingleton Langleydale and Shotton Langton Lartington Lunedale Marwood Mickleton Middleton in Teesdale Morton Tinmouth Newbiggin Ovington Raby with Kerverstone Rokeyby Romaldkirk Scargill South Bedburn

	<p>Staindrop Startforth Stretlam and Stainton Wakerfield Westwick Wholton Winston Wycliffe with Thorpe</p>
<p>Map Number 4 - Bishop Auckland</p>	<p>Schildon Bishop Auckland Dene Valley Eldon Evenwood and Barony Cockfield Lynesack and Softley Woodland West Auckland Coundon (No Parish) Escomb (No Parish) South Church (No Parish)</p>
<p>Map Number 5 - Durham City</p>	<p>Sherburn Village Shincliffe Shadforth Pittington West Rainton Framwellgate Moor Belmont Witton Gilbert Bearpark Durham City Centre (No Parish)</p>
<p>Map Number 6 - East Durham Rural</p>	<p>Cassop cum Quarrington Coxhoe Kelloe Trimdon Foundry Trimdon Sedgefield Fishburn Mordon Bradbury and the Isle</p>
<p>Map Number 7 - Easington</p>	<p>Seaham Seaton with Slingley Murton Dalton le Dale Hawthorn South Hetton Haswell Easington Village Easington Colliery Shotton Peterlee Hordon Castle Eden</p>

	Monk Hesledon Nesbitt Sheraton with Hulam Hutton Henry Wingate Thornley Wheatley Hill
Map Number 8 -Consett	Burnhope Field ED (No Parish) Consett (No Parish)
Map Number 9 - Stanley	Stanley
Map Number 10 - Chester le Street	Great Lumley Little Lumley Bournmoor North Lodge Ouston Urpeth Pelton Edmondsley Waldrige Sacriston Kimblesworth and Plawsworth Chester le Street Town (No Parish)
Map Number 11 - Newton Aycliffe	Great Aycliffe Middridge
Map Number 12 - Ferryhill and Chilton	Windlestone Chilton Ferryhill Cornforth Bishop Middleham
Map Number 13 - Spennymoor	Spennymoor Croxdale and Hett
Map Number 14 – Mid Durham Rural West	Brandon and Byshottle Esh Lanchester Burnhope Greencroft Satley Cornsay Hedleyhope Healeyfield Brancepeth

Maps of each proposed AAP area are appended as separate PDF documents.

Appendix 6 - Outline Decision-Making and Representation framework

It is anticipated that each AAP Board will have a Chairperson and two Vice-Chairs to reflect each of the 'thirds' represented. The membership of the Area Board would collectively elect these time-limited roles with a policy of rotation in place.

It is anticipated that the Chair of the AAP Board would chair the AAP Forum meetings.

Whilst the preferred process of decision-making would be through debate, shared understanding and achieving consensus, in the event of a required vote there would be one vote per individual with the Chairperson having the casting vote in the event of a tie.

AAP Board representation on external bodies or partnerships, for example on the County Durham Partnership or Thematic Partnership locality groups, would be agreed and refreshed at the rotation of the Chair. Such bodies, and individual partner organisations, will need to consider how they will formally consider and respond to such involvement from AAP representatives.

Where appropriate to the terms of the 'thirds', if a member of the Board changes to a different employer, relocates, or loses his or her elected position or paid post, their membership of the Board will automatically cease with immediate effect. The vacancy will be referred back to the appropriate nominating organisation/sector to fill the vacancy as soon as it reasonably practicable.

Should the Board consider the need to terminate the membership of an individual or organisation for good and sufficient cause it may so resolve, acting by two-third majority of the members present and voting at a meeting of the AAP.

The AAP may resolve to remove any member of the Partnership who fails to attend (or send a substitute) for three consecutive meetings. If any member is so removed, the appropriate nominating organisation/sector shall be requested to appoint a new member. Any member of the AAP who is unable to attend a meeting may nominate a named substitute to represent that member for up to three consecutive meetings.

The Partnership may from time to time invite representatives from other organisations, who shall not be members of the Partnership, to attend and speak but without voting rights.