

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **All Together for Spennymoor** held in Livin', Farrell House, A2 Arlington Way, Spennymoor, DL16 6NL - Meeting Room on **Friday 6 December 2024 at 1.00 pm**

Present:

A Boddy (Chair)

Board Members:

Councillor L Maddison	Local Member, DCC
Councillor D Ranyard	Spennymoor Town Council
B Graham	Community Representative
D Stone	Whitworth Park Academy
RED Cannon M Tarling	St Paul's Church, Spennymoor
L Fellows	Head of office, Office for Alan Strickland MP for Newton
(substitute for A Strickland)	Aycliffe

Officers:

G Wood	Economic Development Manager, DCC
J Anson	Community Economic Development Manager, DCC
K Monaghan	Project Manager, DCC
J Gilroy	Deputy Area Lead, Cities and Local Growth Unit

1 Chair's Welcome / Introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the sixth Board meeting and introductions were made.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor E Scott and E Scott, J Allen, A Harhoff, I Geldard and A Strickland.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

5 MHCLG Programme Guidance Update

G Wood gave an update on the MHCLG (Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government) programme guidance. The submission date was still pending but a prospectus and technical guidance was to be released in the New Year which would establish a timeline for the programme. MPs including A Strickland had received a briefing from the Minister on the shape of the programme going forward and key points which were expected. The board was reassured that the prospectus would not take out any elements of the areas which had already been worked on so no work would be wasted. It would instead create additional areas of influence and opportunity which would bring broader priorities forward.

He clarified that the £200,000 capacity funding which had been received was not to be used as a route to bring elements of the programme forward. However, this was to be utilised for the design and feasibility of the programme but not investment activity. He noted that it was a little frustrating that clarity had not been given on how to move forward but was relieved that the allocation remained in place following the budget statement from the new government. The new prospectus and broad principles would give the opportunity to continue the core design so the grant fund mechanism would not be lost and the work would continue.

G Wood advised that work to invite business representatives to become members of the board was ongoing. He recommended that these invitations should wait until the new prospectus and technical guidance was released to shed light on how to work with businesses and clarify what business influence was required to improve the programme. This information would help encourage businesses to get involved.

A Boddy suggested that comms should be circulated to stakeholders and organisations who were integral to the programme to inform them of the delay and reassure them that work was still progressing well. K Monaghan to action.

G Wood stated that Spennymoor's Christmas market would provide an opportunity to provide comms on the progress to date regarding the programme and seek views from young people.

K Monaghan informed the board that there would be various activities at the Christmas market including an ice rink in the town centre along with a giant snow globe which would be a great opportunity for photos. He added that the Christmas market had been opened to various businesses to occupy stalls to sell jams, chutneys, cakes, gifts and crafts. He confirmed that market fees had been waived for Spennymoor businesses, Town Brass band and other local bands would play throughout the event. It was suggested to contact local schools to see if children and young people would join the choir.

G Wood reiterated that comms would go out in advance with a wrap around message to support the Christmas market and say thank you to everyone who had provided support and who had been involved with the engagement work.

There was capacity to monitor the footfall of the event to break down the number of people who attended to have follow up comms to advertise Spennymoor as having an active town. This was to be the start of the wider programme to have specialist markets in the town.

A Boddy mentioned that due to weather the Bishop Auckland Christmas market had been reduced and queried if there was an idea of the expected footfall to the Spennymoor Christmas market.

K Monaghan responded that the summer events which happened in Spennymoor every May had seen 1000 people come to the town. As the Bishop Auckland Christmas market had been reduced it was hoped that people would make the drive into Spennymoor and increase footfall and enjoy the event.

J Anson mentioned that the ice rink and giant snow globe were free which would be a big pull to encourage young people to attend. She added that this would be advertised on social media platforms from this point onwards up until the day of the event. Advertisement of the ice rink had not been carried out earlier, but this advertising would commence this weekend.

D Stone suggested that comms could go through the Director of Schools as part of the weekly output to get information direct to families. He agreed to liaise with K Monaghan to action.

Councillor D Ranyard agreed to speak to the parish clerk to advertise the Christmas market on their website.

A Boddy offered to deliver leaflets advertising the Christmas market as part of Livin's tenancy visits. This would be actioned through Andy Coulthard

6 Programme Update

The Board received a report of Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth which provided a progress update of the development of schemes to be taken forward under the Long-Term Plan for Towns Programme (for copy see file of minutes).

G Wood noted that the report gave an update on where they were with the programme. K Monaghan still attended the three working groups which continued to meet on a regular basis to feed into the draft investment plan and look at investment to come forward in the town.

Resolved:

- i) That the continued progress with LTPT programme development be noted.
- ii) That a virtual board meeting would be held following receipt of the amended prospectus from central government be agreed.

7 Spennymoor Youth Working Group

K Monaghan gave an update on the Spennymoor Youth working group which had been established to work with young people. The young people had been tasked to name their group. They opted for Spennymoor Youth Voice. Responses given by children and young people during the consultation work which had taken place throughout April and May needed to be expanded upon to highlight exactly what they were interested in seeing within Spennymoor. Young people had expressed an interest to see activities like yoga, volleyball and silent disco's in Spennymoor along with heritage activities – within Spennymoor Gala. Another questionnaire had been developed to further drill down their requests. This was to be explored at the next Spennymoor Youth Voice meeting on 29 January 2025. It would also be rolled out at further meetings in schools and local youth centres to understand more. He showed the board the types of questions which would be asked and requested agreement from the Board to start asking these additional questions in the new year.

J Anson stated that this work was to try to break down barriers in engaging with young people and potentially encourage them to attend youth clubs and safe spaces instead of congregating in the marketplace to provide them with a safer environment to utilize.

Councillor L Maddison queried how engagement was to be carried out with young people who did not want to be engaged with.

K Monaghan responded that he had been liaising with the youth workers from the Spennymoor Youth Centre around how to promote activities to young people and it was found that attendance at the centre was down to zero. It had been suggested that the Spennymoor Youth Voice meetings could be held at the centre. He acknowledged the fact that young people could not be forced into engagement but also with the Anti-Social Officer they would try to succeed. He responded to B Graham that he already liaised with the Outreach worker at Middlestone moor as part of this work and engaged young people in the streets. The youth council had offered to meet with the Spennymoor Youth Council to get different projects up and running.

D Stone admitted it was a challenge to keep a regular tally on attendance at various youth centres. It was important to keep communications open and suggested potentially creating a Spennymoor Youth Voice App as this generation took notice of items of interest that flashed up on their phones. It would produce a multiplier effect if one young person downloaded the app that would then encourage their friends to do the same.

G Wood commented that this would start to formulate what to do next year to roll out the programme to different generations and use the capacity to galvanize and embed the work with young people.

D Stone reiterated that most young people were nice but they were given bad press. He stressed that engagement was required for direct access to take them away from the town centre and steer them away from negative activities that they could be pressured into. The app may give them that excuse and permission to do so.

A Boddy noted that this work tied in with DfE's work to push young people to the top of the agenda.

D Stone added that this would be a real opportunity to not just work with the Spennymoor Youth Voice but the Community Partnership to understand what was happening in the area.

B Graham asked what role the Police would offer when trying to engage with young people.

J Anson responded that youth engagement was on the Police and Crime Commissioners Office's agenda.

Revd Cannon M Tarling questioned how engagement would go beyond youth and all people who were difficult to engage and targeted. Although the development of the app would be beneficial for young people it would not be suitable for a 90 year old.

A Boddy requested an action point to be noted around lessons learnt on what young people wanted. It was realistic to ensure the right people were contacted at every level.

J Anson stressed it was important to open up conversations with people whether it was face to face or via events as if people were made to feel comfortable, they would divulge more. Although this work would drill down on different interests, it would also look at ways to accommodate how young people could access these activities and try new things if parents were on low income.

Councillor L Maddison noted that the questionnaire may lead to further questions being asked like where young people liked to go to hang out and feel comfortable. It was however important not to try to manage the responses. She advised that many young people tended to hang out at Asda for the free Wi-Fi but they caused damage. The reasons why they did this needed to be identified.

A Boddy agreed that it was important to identify the reasons why young people did what they did to try to do more than diversion tactics but create something that was sustainable. In the past there had been a youth club structure through Sure Start but funding had now dried up. This programme was an opportunity to fund the setting up of this type of framework. The data collected could help in trying to achieve this. He suggested that Graham Hall should be contacted.

J Gilroy advised that the new prospectus and technical guidance would broaden youth engagement.

Revd Cannon M Tarling questioned whether the public had the expectation that the £20million would give rise to eligible grants that could be applied for. He asked if this was the sort of structure which would be established in 5 years' time, whether it was the government or the board who set the criteria and how it would be administered.

G Wood responded that there would be investment funds available. It was proposed to run events in the new year to raise awareness to co-produce the shaping of the funds. He did not want these expectations to be raised too soon. The funds would be passported from the government to the Council with Board agreement and DCC's Section 151 Officer on how the money was managed. A process would be developed and a structure in place on how the project funds would be managed.

J Anson advised that the authority would consider the use of previous processes of various funding programmes, which had worked well and been administered by the council.

A Boddy agreed to the principle that the programme would be self-sustaining after the 10-year period therefore it was important to get the right people involved to make the funds go further.

Resolved:

- i) That further work to be carried out with the Spennymoor Youth Voice be agreed.
- ii) That communications be drafted to update the stakeholders involved in helping shape the Investment plan.

8 Any Other Business

There was no further business discussed.

9 Date of the next and future meetings

Resolved:

- i) Future meetings to be held on a quarterly basis.
- ii) A meeting to be held in February 2025 at Livin'.