# 28 April 2014



Fit for Purpose, Fit for the Future - a review of Durham County Council's Area Action Partnerships – final update

# Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive

### Purpose of the Report

 To inform Overview and Scrutiny Management Board Members of the sign off by Corporate Issues OSC on 19<sup>th</sup> February of the scrutiny review of Area Action Partnerships – 'Fit for purpose, Fit for the future'.

### Background

- 2. In 2011, Overview and Scrutiny undertook a review of Area Action Partnerships (AAPs), to examine practices and processes, areas for improvement, whether they were "fit for purpose" and, in the context of the Government's Localism agenda and public sector funding reductions, "fit for the future."
- 3. The review concluded that AAPs had made immense progress from their inception, but that there was more to do and that it was essential that the Council, its partners and local communities continue to support them in striving for an 'Altogether Better Durham'.
- 4. Fourteen recommendations were agreed, following a wide-ranging review which included strengthening AAP terms of reference, a stronger approach to training, stronger approaches to engaging a wide range of partners including County Councillors, Town and Parish Councils, the local media, and local community groups, improved learning from good practice and improved performance reporting. The report was taken to Cabinet who agreed to progress the recommendations, including reaffirming the role of AAPs as a key mechanism through which the Council and partners consult upon service and policy reviews.
- 5. A systematic update on the progress of the recommendations was provided to Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2012 as part of the County Durham Partnership update report. There was also a recommendation within the report to carry out a follow on scrutiny review. However, following positive feedback from the Corporate Peer Challenge which also took place in July 2012, it was agreed that a further scrutiny review of AAPs would not be necessary.
- 6. It was therefore decided that a final update on the recommendations of the scrutiny review would be provided during 2013/14.

### Final outcome of the scrutiny review recommendations

7. The report presented to Corporate Issues OSC on 19<sup>th</sup> February provided a final update on the recommendations of the original scrutiny review. Members noted that there remained two of the recommendations for which ongoing work would be taking place. These were in respect of:

- a. AAP project funding arrangements and linkages with the developing performance management framework;
- b. The development of the AAP Performance Management Framework and how the County Durham Partnership/AAP conference can be utilised as a means of sharing best practice across AAPs.
- 8. The report also drew attention to the findings of the July 2012 peer challenge which showed the positive progress achieved, with particular comments:
  - The AAPs are a powerful demonstration of the determination and ability of the new council to deliver a fresh approach to involving its communities;
  - The AAPs have moved rapidly from 'idea' to 'implementation', they have a strong focus on action and proportionate local partnerships;
  - They have a clear partnership governance structure;
  - Partner agencies are generally involved and supportive;
  - The peer team's broad conclusion is that AAPs are sound, valued and have exceeded early expectations.
- 9. Members indicated that, whilst they were mindful to sign off the AAP review, it would be necessary to continue to monitor the progress of addressing the outstanding recommendations and also monitor the progress of the AAPs generally. It was agreed that this was best done through the County Durham Partnership updates which are periodically considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, which include regular information on AAP activity. These reports would provide an ongoing opportunity for Overview and Scrutiny to monitor the progress of the AAPs and their activity whilst also enabling the progress against outstanding AAP Review recommendations to be examined.
- 10. Notwithstanding this, the Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny members have also expressed a continued desire to retain the AAPs on their work programme.
- 11. The final update on the recommendations can be found at Appendix 2.

#### Recommendations

- 12. Members are requested to:
  - a. Note the information in this report;
  - b. Agree that progress and performance of AAPs can be monitored through the regular County Durham Partnership Updates which are presented to OSMB;
  - c. Agree that Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee retains the AAPs on their work programme.

Background papers: Overview and Scrutiny review of AAPs 'Fit for Purpose, Fit for the Future'.

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# Appendix 1: Implications

Finance - None

Staffing - None

Risk - None

#### Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty - None

Accommodation - None

Crime and Disorder - None

Human Rights - None

Consultation - None

Procurement - None

Disability Issues - None

Legal Implications - None

#### Appendix 2

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW - "Fit for Purpose, Fit for the Future" - A Review of Durham County Council's Area Action Partnerships

# Review of recommendations considered by Cabinet 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2011

Review Recommendation	Progress Report of Action taken to implement	Resib'ty	Timescale
<ul> <li>a review of the AAP Terms of Reference be commenced to cover:</li> <li>The inclusion of AAPs being non-political within the purpose and principles outlined within the AAP terms of reference;</li> <li>The list of alternative public representatives drawn up at the initial appointment stage to be revisited as it is over 2 years old;</li> <li>The rules regarding co-option and their application (currently co-optees have to stand down after 6 months but can be co-opted again formally);</li> <li>The rules relating to the rotation of chairmanship of AAP Board amongst the three Board groups and their application;</li> <li>The rules regarding speaking at AAP Board meetings and their application;</li> <li>Clarification on the roles of the AAP Forum and Board meeting; and which issues can be discussed at which meeting;</li> <li>The inclusion of information and guidance regarding "Conflicts of Interest" and the rules for declaring personal/prejudicial interests;</li> <li>The production of robust terms of reference for task and finish groups to ensure that their activity is conducted within appropriate governance arrangements;</li> <li>Where AAPs identify a need to alter their Terms of Reference, this should be done in compliance with the County Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>recommendation</li> <li>All issues identified within Review Recommendation (i) first examined by a working sub-group of AAP co-ordinators with principal lead.</li> <li>This work led to further examination of additional governing documents such as public rep recruitment in order to tighten up on other AAP processes.</li> <li>Draft documentation taken to a sounding board of AAP board members for further scrutiny, examination and input. This enabled the governing documentation to be reviewed by community representatives, elected members and partners and final terms of reference were agreed and then re-issued in January 2013.</li> <li>Further work is taking place on producing more guidance for Task and Finish Groups to ensure that attendance, discussion of potential project ideas and allocation of funds is a fair, open and above board process and to avoid any unfair bias towards projects.</li> </ul>	Lee Copeland Sandy Denney (covering for Lee Copeland – maternity leave)	Completed

(ii)	routine analysis of training needs and training to meet such development needs for both the board and staff should continue as this will enhance their effectiveness in the AAP.	<ul> <li>Training Team responsibility transferred to County Durham Partnership from 13<sup>th</sup> June 2011. The focus of this team since transferring has been developing and enabling consistent consultation and engagement across the Council. This has involved providing a range of consultation and engagement training, support and mentoring and sharing good practice particularly linked to MTFP savings plans.</li> <li>The training manual was re-issued in 2011 which falls into two parts: training for AAP Forum and Board members and training for AAP staff and Members. The main trainer has been on maternity leave since February 2013 and during this time the core training requirements have been provided via e-learning.</li> </ul>	Donna Jefferson	Complete
		A 2014/15 updated training manual will be circulated to boards when available.	Shealagh Pearce	June 2014
(iii)	all Durham County Councillors be encouraged to engage with their local AAPs.	Cabinet portfolio holder wrote to all councillors. Some AAPs after discussion with elected members now hold regular drop-ins. Recognition that we have had elections since the review took place. Lorraine O'Donnell held training and induction sessions for new members May 2013. All AAP co-ordinators held meetings with their new board members and a refresh can be offered.	Shealagh Pearce	Complete
(iv)	Cabinet reaffirm the role of AAPs as a key mechanism through which the Council and partners will consult upon service and policy reviews; that service groupings, via the Consultation Officer Group ensure that such consultation is timely, appropriate and consistent across all AAPs.	All elements complete.	Gordon Elliott	Complete
(v)	where Town and Parish Councils are members of the County Durham Association of Local Councils (CDALC) appointments to AAP Boards should be made via CDALC. However, not all Town and Parish Councils are affiliated to CDALC and where this is the case in a	Offer of presentation to CDALC made in September 2012 – no take up of offer. Selection of AAP representatives followed process as established at beginning of AAPs. The structure of CDALC is subject to ongoing discussions	Sandy Denney	Ongoing

(vi)       the key actions identified within the internal review of AAP project funding (Section 5.78 of the main report refers) be implemented, particularly in respect of those areas of training and development identified.       Members semian held May 2012. Funding Team manned a stand during information week at County Hall to disseminate info and be on hand to answer any queries. Gordon Elliott, Andrew Megginson and Marie Moore delivered documentation which was made available to new members.       Andrew Megginson         In addition to the above, an Audit Assurance review was conducted by Internal Audit to look at the processes used and also to consider how best to monitor completed projects given the breadth and number of projects that have been funded. This work led by Andrew Barnes from Internal Audit was conducted by Internal Audit to Cooker 2013.       More Mares from Internal Audit Was 2012 and a detailed action plan was put in place to deal with additional recommendations arising out of this Audit led review. This was implemented and signed off by Internal Audit to Cooker 2013.       Gordon Elliott         (vii)       Cabinet in determining its Medium Term Financial allocation to the AAPs, the value that AAP Area Budget(AB) and Neighbourhood Budget(NB) have bereadt for AAP forea gord f1.39 matched funding generates an average of £1.75 matched funding.       Budget for 2014/15 has kept AAP levels the same as at 2012 Capital/Revenue split now monitored to ensure minimum impact on the council's revenue budget, Regular financial updates provided to AAP boards.       Gordon Elliott         (viii)       AAPs look to develop the level of engagement and activity with the press and other media by:       AAPs engaged attendees in the recent 2013 MTFP exercise - high levels of feedback and engagement.		particular AAP area then every effort should be made to ensure that those Town and Parish Councils have an equal opportunity to become involved with their respective AAP;	as referenced in the Jan 2014 issue of Durham Association News. Links will continue with CDALC to discuss future link opportunities. In areas where Town and Parish Councils are not affiliated arrangements have been made to include non CDALC affiliated members to the board e.g. Weardale Action Partnership. Any future changes to be reflected upon.	
Plan (MTFP) take into consideration any financial allocation to the AAPs, the value that AAP Area Budget(AB) and Neighbourhood Budget(NB) have brought by way of matched funding opportunities namely, that each £1 of AB funding generates an average of £1.39 matched funding and each £1 of NB funding generates an average of £1.75 matched funding.2012.Capital/Revenue split now monitored to ensure minimum impact on the council's revenue budget, Regular financial updates provided to AAP boards.Elliott(viii)AAPs look to develop the level of engagement andMore AAPs using different mediums for engagement thanLee	(vi)	AAP project funding (Section 5.78 of the main report refers) be implemented, particularly in respect of those	<ul> <li>Members seminar held May 2012.</li> <li>Funding Team manned a stand during information week at County Hall to disseminate info and be on hand to answer any queries.</li> <li>Gordon Elliott, Andrew Megginson and Marie Moore delivered documentation which was made available to new members.</li> <li>In addition to the above, an Audit Assurance review was conducted by Internal Audit to look at the processes used and also to consider how best to monitor completed projects given the breadth and number of projects that have been funded. This work led by Andrew Barnes from Internal Audit was conducted between Feb – May 2012 and a detailed action plan was put in place to deal with additional recommendations arising out of this Audit led review. This was implemented and signed off by Internal</li> </ul>	 Complete
(viii) AAPs look to develop the level of engagement and More AAPs using different mediums for engagement than Lee Complete	(vii)	Plan (MTFP) take into consideration any financial allocation to the AAPs, the value that AAP Area Budget(AB) and Neighbourhood Budget(NB) have brought by way of matched funding opportunities namely, that each £1 of AB funding generates an average of £1.39 matched funding and each £1 of NB	<ul> <li>2012.Capital/Revenue split now monitored to ensure minimum impact on the council's revenue budget, Regular financial updates provided to AAP boards.</li> <li>Assurance audit for AB/NB processes has taken place.</li> <li>AAPs engaged attendees in the recent 2013 MTFP</li> </ul>	 Complete
Actively engaging with Town and Parish Councils     Local AAPs responsible for local press opportunities.	(viii)	activity with the press and other media by:	More AAPs using different mediums for engagement than ever before. Increased usage of facebook for example.	Complete

	<ul> <li>and utilising their publications to evidence and raise awareness of AAP activity.</li> <li>Enhancing relationships between AAP Boards and Co-ordinators with local media.</li> <li>Liaising with community groups/residents associations.</li> <li>Including dedicated AAP pages within Durham County News.</li> <li>further enhancing AAP activity via new ways of working using the Internet, Facebook, Twitter and SMS Messaging.</li> </ul>	e-bulletins/newsletters produced for each AAP. Distinct press contacts for each AAP to enable direct links with regional press. Usage of local radio stations. Dedicated pages within Durham County News.		
(ix)	that the AAP project funding approval, appraisal process and application forms include a requirement that reports be submitted to AAP Boards on a quarterly basis detailing project progress.	New documentation complete. Suite of outputs complete. Board reports subject to new performance management framework for AAPs to adhere to in order to be in a stronger position to track project outcomes during project delivery and to ensure timescales are met.	Andrew Megginson Marie Moore	Performance management framework from April 2014 after advice and consultancy work from internal audit.
(x)	performance reports for AAP activity be shared with the wider AAP Forum membership and that the AAPs further develop the process of publication and reporting of the delivery of and impact made by AAP projects against local priorities. That the 14 AAPs come together in an annual conference to celebrate their achievements and	As above and linked to the enhanced work around performance reporting. Conference held October 2011. 2 <sup>nd</sup> conference held October 2012 – focus of 2 <sup>nd</sup> conference around best	Andrew Megginson Lee Copeland	Complete plus additional work post April 2014 Complete
	successes in this respect.	practice sharing. Attended by peer challenge colleagues. Further work in planning stages to investigate the potential for joint CDP/AAP conference in order to strengthen links and share best practice.	Lee Copeland/ Sandy Denney	October 2014 – tbc following further investigation
		Held County wide Participatory Budgeting events – October – Dec 2013 to increase awareness, share best practice and increase AAP forum membership.		Complete
(xi)	AAPs undertake further work in conjunction with the ACE Planning and Performance team to enhance the	Linked to AAP input to CDP report to cabinet which is circulated to all board members as a tool to share best	Andrew Megginson	Complete

reporting of performance management information and indicators.	practice. Also linked to recommendations (ix) and (x) above		
the learning and evidence of good practice detailed within this review report be shared by AAP co-ordinators and their respective Chairs across all 14 AAPs and that bespoke improvement plans for each AAP be produced	Learning of good practice identified through the report of the scrutiny working group disseminated through presentations at all 14 AAPs	Lee Copeland Andrew Megginson	Complete
for example engagement with young people, options for	Complete skills audit for AAP boards	Shealagh Pearce	Complete
	All AAPs to develop project case studies to ensure sharing of best practice across all 14 AAPs.		Complete (at 2012 conference)
the Council's Equalities and Diversity Team run a seminar with all 14 AAPs to develop an action plan to ensure that equality considerations are embedded in	Equality and Diversity training seminar delivered to all 14 AAP co-ordinators at PACE away day.	Shealagh Pearce	Complete
practice that already exists.	questions has been presented to co-ordinators for future use.		Complete
an initial response to these recommendations is brought back to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board within six months; and that Cabinet agree to a review of the AAPs in another 2 years.	A systematic review of the recommendations was presented to OSMB on 26 <sup>th</sup> July 2012 as part of the County Durham Partnership Update report.		
·	It was also agreed that due to the Peer Challenge carried out in July 2012 which contained positive feedback re AAPs, it was not necessary to carry out a further review, recommendation (xiv), however a final systematic review of recommendations would be presented to CIOSC on 19 <sup>th</sup>		
	<ul> <li>indicators.</li> <li>the learning and evidence of good practice detailed within this review report be shared by AAP co-ordinators and their respective Chairs across all 14 AAPs and that bespoke improvement plans for each AAP be produced for example engagement with young people, options for broadening representation.</li> <li>the Council's Equalities and Diversity Team run a seminar with all 14 AAPs to develop an action plan to ensure that equality considerations are embedded in AAP practice and procedures evidencing the good practice that already exists.</li> <li>an initial response to these recommendations is brought back to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board within six months; and that Cabinet agree to a review of</li> </ul>	indicators.Also linked to recommendations (ix) and (x) abovethe learning and evidence of good practice detailed within this review report be shared by AAP co-ordinators and their respective Chairs across all 14 AAPs and that bespoke improvement plans for each AAP be produced for example engagement with young people, options for broadening representation.Learning of good practice identified through the report of the scrutiny working group disseminated through presentations at all 14 AAPsthe Council's Equalities and Diversity Team run a seminar with all 14 AAPs to develop an action plan to ensure that equality considerations are embedded in AAP practice and procedures evidencing the good practice that already exists.Equality and Diversity training seminar delivered to all 14 AAP co-ordinators at PACE away day.an initial response to these recommendations is brought back to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board within six months; and that Cabinet agree to a review of the AAPs in another 2 years.Equality and Diversity Update report.It was also agreed that due to the Peer Challenge carried out in July 2012 which contained positive feedback re AAPs, it was not necessary to carry out a further review, recommendation (xiv), however a final systematic review	indicators.Also linked to recommendations (ix) and (x) abovethe learning and evidence of good practice detailed within this review report be shared by AAP co-ordinators and their respective Chairs across all 14 AAPs and that bespoke improvement plans for each AAP be produced for example engagement with young people, options for broadening representation.Learning of good practice identified through the report of the scrutiny working group disseminated through presentations at all 14 AAPsLee Copeland Andrew Megginson Shealagh Pearcethe Council's Equalities and Diversity Team run a seminar with all 14 AAPs to develop an action plan to ensure that equality considerations are embedded in AAP practice and procedures evidencing the good practice that already exists.Equality and Diversity training seminar delivered to all 14 AAP co-ordinators at PACE away day.Shealagh Pearcean initial response to these recommendations is brought 