

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

19 December 2016

Cabinet

19 October 2016

County Durham Partnership Update



Report of Corporate Management Team

Lorraine O'Donnell, Director of Transformation and Partnerships

Councillor Simon Henig, Leader of the Council

Councillor Brian Stephens, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Local Partnerships

Purpose of the Report

1. To update Members on issues being addressed by the County Durham Partnership (CDP) including the board, the five thematic partnerships and all area action partnerships (AAPs). The report also includes updates on other key initiatives being carried out in partnership across the county.

Summary

2. Durham's Partnership working continues to make positive impacts across all of the five priority themes and all of the networks linked to the CDP, including supporting Armed Forces Day and continuing to engage volunteers across the county.
3. The focus of the report is the support given to volunteers and the wide range of partnership and AAP focused initiatives that take place across the county that often result in significant changes to the lives of local people and their wider communities. It also includes information on some social enterprises that have been established and recognises the importance of this work moving forward.

Key Partnership Activity and Developments

4. Partnership work with the **armed forces** has featured strongly in recent months. Events took place in a number of communities across the County to mark Armed Forces Day held on 25th June. The Council flew the Armed Forces flag at County Hall which the Chairman had received at a reception for representatives of the Armed Forces. Among the guests were representatives of Veterans at Ease (VAE), a registered charity based across Durham, who have recently been honoured with the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. They are committed to helping veterans, reservists, serving military personnel and their families deal with combat stress-related issues.
5. The Council has recently finished its budget consultation events that took place in September and early October. There were presentations given at all AAP meetings as well as roadshows carried out at other venues including supermarkets, in order

to engage with as broad a range of people as possible. Online and paper based surveys were completed, the findings of which will feature in a separate report to Cabinet in December.

6. Both strategic working groups, with the **voluntary sector** and **town and parish councils**, have met recently with the budget consultation also featuring on both agendas. The VCS and town and parish council Members and clerks are all representing other groups and are therefore responsible for cascading information from the strategic groups to their relevant forums.

Supporting Volunteering and Social Enterprises

7. The voluntary sector are key partners within the CDP and are often best placed within communities to support the work of all partners to shape and deliver services as well as manage buildings and other facilities. Supporting volunteers can bring about significant change for them as individuals as well as their wider communities. As a result, they are often upskilled and offered training and support either to carry out their volunteering role or to move on into employment.
8. A focus on volunteering and building on community strengths both feature strongly in the Sustainable Community Strategy which sets the overarching vision for the county and the work of all parts of the CDP. Through our partnership working with Durham Community Action, funded through the Transformation Challenge Award funding, a Volunteer Passport has been developed that records a volunteer's journey as well as any accredited and non-accredited training they may receive. This can act as evidence to employers of an individual's skills particularly if they require additional support to enable them to enter the jobs market. To date, 13 volunteers have completed their accredited learning as part of the scheme.
9. People volunteer for a number of reasons ranging from a hobby to combatting social isolation as well as gaining experience in order to enter or re-enter employment. AAPs and employability programmes have heavily supported local people and communities in a range of ways and there are very positive outcomes evident across the county, with only a small selection featured in this report.
10. DCA have also developed and implemented the Volunteer Kitemark which is a quality standard for organisations who support volunteers. The Kitemark is awarded on a two yearly basis and shows that an organisation manages a volunteering programme where volunteers receive a high quality, positive volunteering experience.
11. In times of austerity it is more and more necessary for public services to enable and empower local communities to become resilient and to move towards self-sufficiency which will also enable them to take on services and facilities in order for them to be maintained, where there is a local need. Through working closely with groups, they have been offered the most appropriate support to be able to develop the correct governance model which will offer them sustainable and community business based models. A joint approach between the Council and VCS has been taken to support groups with asset transfer, drawing on the variety of skills and knowledge from across the sectors.

AAP supported projects

12. As this support for volunteers and development of social enterprises is a partnership one, the information in this report from the thematic partnerships and the AAPs has focused on this area of work and has some examples of broader work showcasing the support given to local communities and the VCS.

13. Much of the AAP support is for volunteers to enable local people, often older people and those with mental and physical health issues, to access vital services or to receive information that will help them. Some examples also exist in a variety of AAPs, for example:
- a. Volunteer Drivers schemes - Wheels to Meals and other schemes that operate in the **Teesdale (TAP)** and **Weardale AAP** areas are vital services particularly due to the rural nature of the county. Volunteers operate community transport mini buses that are used by lunch clubs and also include a much broader social aspect, theatre and music groups as well as sports clubs for young people. **TAP** funded the Upper Teesdale Agricultural Support Services (UTASS) to deliver a driver training programme to ensure that the correct licences were in place to allow volunteers to carry out their role. **Stanley AAP** also has a scheme that supports vulnerable people of all ages for social journeys and aims at preventing social isolation and improving people's quality of life.
 - b. Befriending services – **Great Aycliffe and Middridge Partnership (GAMP)** has supported the Pioneering Care Partnership and Cornforth Partnership, alongside Durham Dales Easington and Sedgfield Clinical Commissioning Group to deliver a Buddies befriending service to people over 50 and are isolated and lonely as a result of illness, disability age or family circumstances. To date 26 of the targeted 40 volunteer buddies have been recruited who are working with around 70 clients.
 - c. IT support – A number of AAPs are helping local people, particularly those who may be vulnerable to cybercrime and scammers, to understand how to use the internet safely and securely. Through working with Age UK and the Police, **Derwent Valley and Stanley AAPs** are providing training sessions led by supported volunteers. The project in Stanley is using community buildings to deliver this project, which is also a good way of attracting new volunteers. The Derwent Valley 'Beat the Scammers' scheme will recruit local volunteers to give presentations to older people in the community about how to handle cold callers and attendees will be given call blocker devices. The Police and Crime Commissioner also support this scheme and have provided additional funding to recruit the volunteers and roll out the project to other areas in the county. This is also an area that **Bishop Auckland and Shildon AAP (BASH)** will be focusing on in the forthcoming year.
 - d. Tourism – **Durham AAP** Pointers was established as a local response to the changes in how tourist information is offered across the county. The service runs from May to September and sees volunteers proudly act as mobile signposts and ambassadors for the city. They give out leaflets and general advice to the wide range of visitors who come into the city every day. The volunteers also receive training from Visit County Durham to enhance their knowledge on what is on offer countywide.
14. A recurring theme through the majority of AAPs is the involvement and support of volunteers in employability schemes:
- a. The Employability Pit Stop project has been supported by **GAMP** and **East Durham Rural Corridor (EDRC)** AAPs with a number of volunteers were recruited and trained to deliver the project. The aim is to engage and motivate residents in order to improve their confidence and provide employability skills of working age people who need help with CVs and

application forms. Some people initially engaged in voluntary work as a stepping stone to employment and others have continued with it. The volunteers themselves also gained valuable experience and an increase in their own confidence and knowledge.

- b. **4Together** and **Spennymoor AAPs** have worked with the County Durham Furniture Help Scheme who provides volunteers within the community the opportunity to learn key skills at the scheme from carpentry to IT. One of the charity's main aims is to provide work based learning and skills which will also benefit the local area. AAP funding from their Welfare Reform allocation allows volunteers to receive training on being able to offer advice and guidance to local people as well as basic needs assessments and advice on benefits etc.
 - c. Catchgate Learning Hive, in the **Stanley AAP** area, provides a range of learning opportunities for residents and particularly targets those who face multiple barriers to making progress and improving their lives, and works with adults who are unemployed or unwaged, in low paid or part time employment. Activities supported by volunteers include; basic ICT classes, job searching and support with JCP's Universal Jobmatch site, Healthy Cooking on a Budget sessions and planning and organising community engagement events. All Volunteers also complete an accredited volunteering programme at The Hive to help them with their learning and career progression, and improve the likelihood of them securing paid employment.
 - d. **3 Towns Partnership** has training and preparing for employment project specifically targeted at people wanting to gain experience and employment in the sports sector. It has upskilled 42 volunteers, young people and adults, with 11 different sports clubs. Over 300 children and young people have benefitted from support from the volunteers.
 - e. **Mid Durham AAP's** Employability programme working with DCC's Employability Team and Derwentside Holmes's SHED (Social Housing Enterprise Durham) has seen 19 residents start with volunteering work which has in turn seen them move onto full time employment.
 - f. **East Durham AAP's** Financial Volunteers project helps people access the Credit Union. Eight people have been recruited and received training in order to undertake their role. The Debt First Aiders project also has volunteer champions who offer debt and welfare advice in local community venues after undertaking appropriate training.
 - g. The role undertaken by volunteers has had a positive and valuable affect for communities across the **East Durham** area. People who have participated in volunteering have learned new skills and gained experience which are transferable and may support volunteers to gain employment. An example of a volunteer who has secured employment after accessing the job club is Helen Waller who has been appointed as Project Co-ordinator for the Job Clubs with East Durham Trust.
15. Support to establish social enterprises is also important when building community capacity and is becoming more important due to increasing asset transfers of public sector facilities and increasing support and recognition of the opportunities enterprise can offer:

- a. **TAP** has supported a number of projects that support local enterprise, including Teesdale Enterprise Agency and UTASS, in providing dedicated space for businesses and a structured programme of support activities by working with existing providers which has been promoted amongst local businesses in the area. Also, Middleton Enterprise Hub's small business units have been supported by TAP who funded the Upper Dales CIC to employ a worker to support business unit tenants and bring in more activity to the hub. This has proven to be very successful with a number of the businesses expanding into larger premises. They have also recently approved a number of new projects including an initiative that will help local enterprises develop their online business and another project will enable a local organisation to train their staff which will hopefully triple the usage (and income) of their services.
- b. As a social enterprise 'The Woodpile' won this year's Chairman's Medal, representing the **Durham AAP** area. Founded in August 2104 as a Community Interest Company and based in the Dragonville Estate, one of their aims is to reduce the amount of wood going to landfill and incinerators by means of recycling/upcycling. They have several volunteers with various skills to support beneficiaries in the training of painting, restoration and carpentry. They do this to support those who have barriers to work, those who are disadvantaged or disabled into and towards employment.
- c. **Mid Durham AAP** has supported local volunteers, residents and community groups by signposting them to either DCA or CDC Enterprises to enable them to develop local social enterprises which include community café's, coffee shops, parent and toddler sessions and community gardens. Residents have seen gaps in the market locally and through initial volunteering have, and are manging to, develop these projects in local villages. An example of this was when two parents from Langley Park recognised a need for parent and toddler support which could be delivered through messy play, arts and crafts and singing and in turn developed 'Clart About' which is now delivered in a number of villages across several AAP areas. Another good example of social enterprise and volunteering working 'hand in hand' is Durham Vineyard which operates numerous foodbanks across the County including the Brandon drop in. They utilise numerous volunteers and provide excellent training to enable some of these volunteers to go on to be employed through the social enterprise to deliver a variety of different advice and support sessions.

Altogether wealthier

16. The **County Durham Economic Partnership** (CDEP) has highlighted the role of social enterprises as models for maximising public good through business solutions.
17. Research through the Business & Enterprise Strategy places the Community and Voluntary sector as vital to achievement of an Altogether Wealthier County Durham. The CDEP Board has also looked to support this through strong advocacy of potential social value solutions and through potential European Funding. The most recent recognition of this is the Council being awarded a national social value award for its current procurement practice.
18. The CDEP works across the business, voluntary and community sectors through its many partners including Business Durham, County Durham Enterprise Agencies,

Social Enterprise Acumen and Durham Community Action. Below are two examples supported by CDEP partners across both social enterprise and volunteering:

- a. The Woodpile Community Interest Company based in Dragonville has been mentioned previously in the report and was set up by Karen Stubbings in August 2014. The work is carried out by volunteers or clients with disabilities in need of support into employment.
- b. Special iApps is a social enterprise in Durham which develops educational apps for children with special educational needs, including autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, hearing impairment and other learning disabilities. Beverley and Colin Dean founded Special iApps in 2011 because they couldn't find the apps they needed to teach their son, who has Down syndrome. He'd had several medical setbacks since being born in 2005, and his hearing, speech and co-ordination weren't very good. They now employ three people and have won many awards including outstanding social enterprise in the NE Charity Awards 2015 and outstanding achievement at the Dynamites Awards 2015 which are the North East of England's annual IT and Technology awards.

Altogether better for children and young people

19. The **Children and Families Partnership** supports children, young people and families to get the best possible outcomes. The vision of the Partnership is that 'all children, young people and families believe, achieve and succeed'. Offering a variety of options to support and enable young people to achieve their goals has formed the basis of the Youth Engagement Initiative programme, DurhamWorks, funded through the European Social Fund and led by Durham County Council. The project aims to increase the participation of young people aged 16-24 living in County Durham who are not in education, employment or training (NEET).
20. A team of Business Advisors is working with employers to create a menu of opportunities, including volunteering, for young people who are engaged on the programme. A matrix of provision from a broad range of delivery partners is being rolled out across County Durham as part of the DurhamWorks programme to develop volunteering and social enterprise opportunities for young people aged 16-24, examples include:
 - a. Social Enterprise Acumen providing specialist support to inspire young people who are interested in becoming social entrepreneurs by providing opportunities to undertake social enterprise projects and placements within social enterprise organisations.
 - b. Citizens Advice Bureau providing volunteering opportunities for young people to gain real work experience in a call-centre environment by training them to support delivery of the 'Advice line' national helpline.'
21. Member organisations of the Children and Families Partnership and Health and Wellbeing Board are opening their doors to children and young as part of the Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge, which is an England-wide event where organisations are encouraged to involve children and young people in decision-making.
22. The Takeover Challenge is in its ninth year and will take place on 18 November 2016 and gives children and young people the chance to work with adults and get involved in decision-making. Children benefit from having their views heard, having fun and being inspired, and the Local Authority gets a fresh, unique and creative perspective on important issues.

23. AAPs continue to support a broad range of children and young people focused activities. **East Durham AAP** has provided funding to 11 local community organisations to support a programme of fun holiday activities for children age 5 to 16 with drinks and healthy meal included. The community organisations are delivering a range of activities including: discos; sports activities; trips away; Summer Activity Camp; fun days; arts and crafts and drama. Several people have volunteered on a range of activities and have helped to ensure the successful delivery of the project.

Altogether healthier

24. The **Health and Wellbeing Board** supports people to achieve their optimum health and wellbeing. The vision of the Board is to 'improve the health and wellbeing of the population of County Durham and reduce health inequalities'.
25. The Health and Wellbeing Board works closely with the fourteen **Area Action Partnerships** (AAPs) across the county to give people a greater choice and voice in local affairs, ensuring that the services of a range of organisations and are directed to meet the needs of local communities, and receives updates on the work of the AAPs from a designated representative on a six monthly basis.
26. Well Being for Life is a service commissioned by Durham County Council to improve health and wellbeing through greater focus on integration, improving quality and efficiency, addressing the wider determinants of health and focusing on prevention and early intervention. The service has a distinct volunteering strand which helps to support overall delivery and is led and delivered through Durham County Council Culture and Sport Service (in East and South West Durham), and Leisureworks (in North Durham). Staff are deployed within integrated locality-based teams to maximise impact and ensure 'whole programme' co-ordination.
27. The wide range of volunteering roles that have been created ensure volunteering opportunities are available for individuals at all levels. The volunteering strand of the service has consistently over-achieved against contractual targets, with 209 volunteering opportunities being created for local people within the Well Being for Life programme. Individuals have engaged in activities such as community consultation, creation of community development plans, assisting health trainers with one to one visits, and supporting community events and activities
28. Building on the Health Trainer approach which demonstrates the value of 'advice from next door', a structured pathway into volunteer health trainer roles has been created, providing space for up to 32 'Community Health Champions'. 40 volunteers have engaged and those who could not be accommodated as Community Health Champions have been signposted or supported into alternative community volunteering opportunities.
29. The Community Health Champions will be offering training, support and mentoring to develop their personal skills, enabling them to work towards achieving a City & Guilds Level 3 Health Trainer qualification. The qualification will equip the Community Health Champions to go on to help members of their community to transform their own health and wellbeing.
30. Volunteer led groups delivering against the health and wellbeing objectives are well supported within AAPs. **Chester-le-Street & District AAP** has a longstanding working relationship with Aspire – Learning, Support and Wellbeing located in Chester-le-Street. Aspire is a women's development organisation who have delivered a range of AAP supported projects to engage with women to provide

health advice and support and also learning and monitoring support. Aspire have a strong team of volunteers that help underpin their delivery.

31. In June 2016 they were successful with a Big Lottery Fund grant of £499,030 which will be used to set up and run their 'Supporting Sisters' project for the next five years. Aspire were one of only 63 national awards and the only award within County Durham. The cash will help Aspire offer a range of specialist support, health and wellness services for women, as well as funding additional jobs and volunteering opportunities to support the project. It will also fund extended availability of Aspires on-site crèche.
32. The grant comes from the Big Lottery Fund's new Women and Girls Initiative, which aims to support women and girls in need, or at risk of experiencing a wide variety of complex issues. The application to the BLF was based on initial pilot work Aspire had done with an AAP grant to test out new services with local volunteers. This approach helped Aspire show their concepts worked and that the project would hit their specific target group.

Altogether safer

33. The **Safe Durham Partnership** is committed to working together to address Crime, Disorder and Anti-Social Behaviour issues and to make County Durham a better and safer place. The vision of the Partnership is 'for a county where every adult and child will be, and will feel, safe'. It utilises volunteers across the county to support a number of its initiatives.
34. County Durham Recovery Ambassadors is a group that helps people who are addicted to alcohol, drugs and gambling. They do this by offering support and guidance to people who are suffering from addiction. The group also promotes the prevention, recognition and treatment associated with use and misuse of substances. The award winning group was the first of its kind in the North East when it set up in 2013. The group members provide visible recovery within treatment services. They advise staff about mutual aid and do joint visits / appointments with staff. They visit local prisons to talk to prisoners before release about recovery services in the community and to show visible recovery; they support individuals to make steps towards abstinence and speak to community groups about recovery and how to get help. They tell their stories publicly to educate and inform and encourage others to take the path to Recovery.
35. The Safer Homes Scheme began with volunteers providing crime prevention advice to those in their communities who were vulnerable to crime. £500k of external funding was used to extend the scheme and Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service have taken the scheme from strength to strength. The scope of Safer Homes now includes Health and Wellbeing and professionals can refer vulnerable people to a wide range of support opportunities. Police run volunteers remain an important element and continue to help keep people safe in their own homes.
36. In April 2012, the Government launched the Troubled Families Programme, known locally as the Stronger Families Programme, to incentivise local authorities and their partners to turn around the lives of over 120,000 families by May 2015. The programme aimed to work with families where children are not attending school, young people are committing crime, families are involved anti-social behaviour and adults are out of work. Families have received help and support delivered with a 'Think Family' multi-agency approach coordinated by a Lead Professional and a Team around the Family utilising a single multi-agency care plan in order to reduce duplication and maximise impact.

37. The Stronger Families Volunteer Programme is part of the County Durham Youth Offending Service offer which benefits from having been awarded 'Investors in Volunteers' status. The programme provides families working with services as part of the County Durham Stronger Families Programme with access to a family volunteer that can provide added value to the support offered as part of coordinated package of whole family intervention.
38. Feedback identifies that families overwhelmingly value the added support, Volunteers are well supported and work well within the team around the family process and Lead Professionals have evidenced how valuable the volunteers are in delivering successful outcomes.
39. Volunteers are also supporting the CDYOS Parenting Support Group (PSG) to deliver an accredited parenting programme to parents/carers who have been victims of their young person's offence, providing the opportunity for peer support. This was a gap that had been highlighted by magistrates and other victim support groups. The PSG works with groups of up to ten people, contributing to Youth Justice Board, Stronger Families, Restorative Justice Council and other positive outcomes. Post event evaluations show that nearly 90% of participants have developed improved relationships, better anger management strategies and enhanced communication skills with their children.
40. The Mini Police, originally launched in the **Durham AAP** area at Ludworth Primary School by PC Craig Johnson, has since been rolled out into a number of other communities. The scheme won a Durham Constabulary POP Award in the summer and PC Johnson is working in other areas across the country, starting in Merseyside, to help implement the scheme there.
41. In July, the Mini Police initiative was introduced into the **GAMP** area and will recruit 30 volunteer Mini Police Officers in four primary schools across the GAMP area; St Francis, Sugar Hill, Woodham Burn and Stephenson Way. It offers a fun and interactive volunteering opportunity for young people aged between 9–11 years who help to support Police priorities, through participation in community engagement events, and those involved will take part in a wide range of activities. The young people wear a Mini Police Uniform to perform their duties. Over the coming months the GAMP Mini Police Officers will be engaged in a number of activities in their local community.
42. **Bishop Auckland and Shildon AAP (BASH)** have been focusing on crime and community safety and will be specifically addressing the support needs of individuals and families through a programme of crisis intervention including flexible emergency provision. They will also be supporting young people aged 18-21 through housing difficulties.

Altogether greener

43. The **Environment Partnership Board** at its September meeting appointed Liz Charles from Durham Community Action (DCA) as Chair of the Environment in Your Communities sub group. The Board thanked Ian Hoult for chairing the Environment in Your Communities Group in the interim.
44. Gill O'Neill, Interim Director of Public Health, provided the Board with a presentation on Obesity. The Board was asked to look at the importance of the environment and the use of greenspace in trying to reduce the growing number of obese cases. Board members were asked to identify links between current initiatives and identify future project areas which would assist with the overall aims of reducing obesity levels across County Durham. The Environment Partnership Board is to discuss a

draft action plan at the December meeting. In addition, Environment Partnership Board members are to attend and provide representation at the Health and Wellbeing Board - Big Tent Event scheduled for Wednesday 5th October, 2016.

45. Entries for the 2016 County Durham Environment Awards are now closed. 57 applications have been received with applications in all categories. Judging booklets have been issued and the final judging session is to be held on 12th October. The evening ceremony is taking place on 10th November at the Raddison Blu Hotel, Durham and the format will be the same as previous years with some changes to the actual winner presentation– where only category winners will be called to the stage to collect the award. £8,550 of sponsorship to date has been received from various partners including Durham University, BANKS Group Ltd, Groundwork, Durham Wildlife Trust and recycled outdoor furniture has been donated as prizes by Marmax Ltd.
46. **East Durham Rural Corridor AAP** is hoping to support Fishburn Allotment association to establish a bee keeping group. The funding will cover the purchase of three beehives as well as hive tools, protective suits, bees and membership to a local beekeeping club. By joining the local beekeeping club they will have the support they require in order to become efficient beekeepers. The number of bees both nationally and worldwide has reduced dramatically over recent times. Key environmental and wildlife groups are continuing to champion local communities to get involved in initiatives that protect and increase the bee population.
47. There is a direct link between outdoor pursuits/ physical activity and improved mental health. The group firmly believe that this project will help to improve health and wellbeing of residents/ members. A number of allotment association members as well as residents and individuals from other voluntary and community groups in the area have expressed an interest in beekeeping. After the first year of beekeeping, the sale of honey and beeswax from the hives will be re-invested into the project to ensure its sustainability. The group have mentioned an interest in becoming a social enterprise in the future which we will support them with.

Recommendations and reasons

48. It is recommended that Members note the report.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance - Area and Neighbourhood budgets are utilised and delivered through the 14 AAPs and ensure the Council (and AAPs) receive improved information on the outputs achieved through use of locality budgets.

Staffing - None

Risk - None

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty - The actions set out in this report aim to ensure equality and diversity issues are embedded within the working practice of AAPs.

Accommodation - None

Crime and Disorder - Altogether safer is the responsibility of the Safe Durham Partnership.

Human Rights - None

Consultation - The County Durham Partnership framework is a key community engagement and consultation function of the Council and its partners. The recommendations in the report are based on extensive consultation with AAP partners and the establishment of a Sound Board to progress the recommendations and will continue this consultative approach.

Procurement - None

Disability Issues - None

Legal Implications – None