

BRIDPORT LOCAL AREA PARTNERSHIP 2022-25 BUSINESS PLAN

Introduction

BLAP is the community partnership for the market town of Bridport and nearby parishes in west Dorset. Geographically BLAP covers the Town Council and 13 Parish Council areas, which between them have a resident population of around 22,000 (see list at appendix A). The partnership is cross-sectoral. Aside from Parish and Town Councils, BLAP members include over 80 local community groups and voluntary sector bodies, as well as representatives from some statutory service providers and business associations.

BLAP seeks to add value by enabling information sharing, networking and collaborative effort. Its stated objectives are:

- Enabling members to share their knowledge and experiences;
- Assisting better coordination among organisations which deliver services;
- Providing Parish Councils opportunities to work together on issues of joint interest;
- Identifying and facilitating actions which could be taken locally to meet needs; and
- Giving local communities more of a voice to influence decisions about the area.

Operation and structure

Full details can be found in the BLAP Protocol, which is the governance document and which was updated in 2022 following an organisational review.

BLAP consists of:

- **Steering Group:** a forum which all member groups or organisations can attend and which is the decision-making forum for any significant decisions affecting BLAP's governance or future direction;
- **Management Team:** a small team which progresses tasks associated with the regular or day-to-day management of BLAP, submitting decisions to the Steering Group as appropriate;
- **Working Groups:** groups established to focus on specific local issues identified by the Steering Group. Current working groups are on Parish Liaison, Homelessness and Health & Wellbeing.

BLAP is an independent entity, run for its membership, with its own management and structures. However, to minimise organisational complexity, reduce costs and avoid duplication of effort it receives its administrative support from Bridport Town Council. For the same reasons BLAP shares and applies organisational policies in place for the Town Council e.g. GDPR policy, environmental policy, equalities policy, insurance policies.

Outline work plan

The outline work plan for the three-year period 2022 to 2025 is as set out in the table below. The second and third year of this plan will be reviewed at the start of those years and hence are subject to change.

	Main activities	2022/23 outputs	2023/24 and 2024/25 outputs
1	Manage an active Steering Group providing sound governance and enabling effective networking	4 Steering Group meetings held plus an Annual Assembly	4 Steering Group meetings held plus an Annual Assembly
2	Complete implementing changes from the review of BLAP's role, funding and ways of working	Sign off on the revised BLAP Protocol	Monitor revised governance arrangements
3	Facilitate and develop the work of the Parish Liaison Group	6 Parish Liaison Group meetings held with external speaker sourced for at least 4 of them	As in 2022/23 unless agreed otherwise with the Parish Councils
4	Facilitate and develop the work of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Working Group	4 Working Group meetings held with information shared and service gaps considered	As in 2022/23 subject to ongoing monitoring of the group's role
5	Decide future activities on Health and Wellbeing agenda (including the Working Group)	Review future options, including consulting with local health and care bodies	Subject to review in 2022/23
6	Attend and contribute a BLAP perspective to other key groups or networks in the area	Attend and contribute to at least 10 other network or group meetings relevant to BLAP interests	Attend and contribute to at least 10 other network or group meetings relevant to BLAP interests
7	Disseminate information of local interest to and on behalf of BLAP members	BLAP Bulletin is issued regularly on a fortnightly basis	BLAP Bulletin is issued regularly on a fortnightly basis
8	Reply to external consultations where of clear local interest and there is a BLAP perspective	Reply to at least 4 external consultations (from either Dorset Council or other bodies)	Reply to at least 4 external consultations (from either Dorset Council or other bodies)
9	Raise awareness and promote the role of BLAP to a wider local audience	Manage a BLAP stand at the Bridport Community Charter Fair and the Melplash Show	Manage a BLAP stand at the Bridport Community Charter Fair and the Melplash Show

Outcomes

BLAP is not a direct delivery organisation, so its work does not easily lend itself to target setting. Indeed, its impact relies upon relationships and joint working with others. However, BLAP does seek to add value and make a difference, so what follows are eight outcomes or targets which BLAP aspires to achieve or bring about through its planned activities during 2022/23:

- Sustain BLAP membership at above 80 groups or organisations and attract 3 new members;
- Conclude the BLAP review, including gaining agreement to a new Protocol (being the governance document);

- Produce a new and updated BLAP leaflet about support available locally for those who find themselves homeless;
- Clarify how local health and care providers wish to engage with BLAP and clarify BLAP's relationship with the new local Patient Participation Group;
- Ensure that the Parish Liaison Group has an opportunity to meet with the area's Member of Parliament and with the Dorset Council Portfolio holder for communities;
- Engage with and monitor local developments on at least two high profile policy agendas (e.g. digital connectivity, bus services), reporting back to members at relevant meetings;
- Give support of value to at least one developing project or initiative in the BLAP area (e.g. supporting a funding bid, creating links with other organisations);
- Explore and share any early information about needs within the BLAP area based on data soon due for release from the 2021 Census.

Resources

BLAP requires modest financial resources to operate. The main component of this (89%) is to cover the salary costs of its administrative and related support plus overheads e.g. pension contributions, National Insurance. The remaining 11% is to cover bookings e.g. meeting rooms and event attendance, materials used e.g. stationary, and a few miscellaneous costs e.g. insurance liability policy. Otherwise, its activities are largely carried out by unpaid volunteers¹, without whom it could not exist.

In 2022/23 the funding for BLAP derives from:

- Bridport Town Council: which has allocated £8,545 from within its own budget; and
- Parish Councils: all 13 Parish Council members have agreed to contribute raising a further £1,235.

Volunteers, including the BLAP Chair, Vice Chair and all the VCS sector attendees at meetings or contributing to activities, are predicted to contribute around £11,600 worth of their time in 2022/23, if costed at median hourly wages in the south west region². The Business Plan assumes this sum will rise in line with wage inflation in following years. Even these sums overlook time or costs that volunteers may spend travelling to meetings.

The total BLAP budget is therefore presumed, for Business Plan purposes, to be as follows:

2022/23 = £9,780 external funding (plus £11,600 volunteer input)

2023/24 = £10,170 external funding (plus £12,000 volunteer input)

¹ Although most attendees at BLAP meetings are in unpaid roles, some who attend come from the statutory or private sectors or from paid roles in the VCS sector.

² It is common to value volunteer time for activities such as BLAPs at or near the average earnings level. Figures used are 2021/22 median hourly earnings in the south west region, uprated for wage inflation.

This is sufficient for BLAP to manage its current level of activity. Additional resources would be needed if any additional activities were taken on, such as for project delivery. If there were an unforeseen funding shortfall the Business Plan would need reviewing.

Risks and mitigation

The following are considered the most important or likely risks that BLAP needs to monitor and mitigate for, as far as possible.

Risks	Impact if they happen	Mitigations
Funding resources are no longer available at their previous level	The administrative support which BLAP relies on cannot be afforded and activity would (at best) need scaling back.	Start work in good time to create 2023/24 budget. Monitor opportunities for external grant funding.
Key personnel are unable to keep volunteering e.g. to the BLAP Management Team	The Management Team, in particular, would struggle to operate and BLAP groups/ meetings may not happen.	Identify some future potential Management Team members. Probably approach at least one during 2022/23.
Membership of BLAP declines significantly	It would be harder to perform roles such as knowledge sharing. Representational status would also likely reduce.	Monitor attendance levels at meetings. Consider new groups in the area who could be approached.
It proves hard to maintain a constructive working relationship with Dorset Council (for whatever reason)	The flow of information from/ to Dorset Council would be lessened. BLAP would have less influence and members may then feel less willing to contribute.	Maintain engagement with the lead Portfolio holder at Dorset Council. Maintain positive relations with Ward Councillor who attends BLAP meetings. Demonstrate BLAP value by actions e.g. invite DC officers to relevant meetings, respond to relevant DC consultations.
BLAP suffers reputational damage, for example from a fall out between members or with a key external partner.	Implement relevant policies in the revised BLAP Protocol, if a potentially damaging situation arises.	Review the need for a more detailed code of conduct.

This Business Plan will be monitored by the Management Team on a quarterly basis to track progress and manage any delivery issues that arise. Confirmation how the budget is being spent will be provided around mid-year and at year end to Parish Councils that have made funding contributions.

A summary of progress against last year's (2021/22) Business Plan can be found at appendix B.

BLAP Management Team

Version: 3 (10th June 2022, as agreed by the BLAP Steering Group)

Parish and Town Councils in BLAP membership

The following fourteen local councils are BLAP members:

Allington Parish Council

Bradpole Parish Council

Bothenhampton and Walditch Parish Council

Bridport Town Council

Burton Bradstock Parish Council

Char Valley Parish Council

Charmouth Parish Council

Chideock Parish Council

Litton Cheney Parish Council

Loders Parish Council

Netherbury Parish Council

Puncknowle and Swyre Parish Council

Shipton Gorge Parish Council

Symondsburry Parish Council

Appendix B

Summary of progress which was made against expected outputs last year (2021/22)

	Main activities	Outputs expected in the last Business Plan	Outputs achieved during 2021/22
1	Manage an active Steering Group to provide good governance and enable effective networking	4 Steering Group meetings to be held	4 Steering Group meetings were held, with promising attendance levels
2	Conduct and implement a review of BLAP's roles, funding, focus and ways of working	Conduct the review and update governance and business plan documents as appropriate	Surveyed BLAP members' views. Drafts of updated governance and business plan documents created. Also, membership list updated and financial contributions from Parish Councils agreed
3	Facilitate and develop the work of the Parish Liaison Group	7 Parish Liaison Group meetings to be held and external speakers sourced for at least 4 of them	6 meetings were held with an external speaker at 5 (including the local MP and Dorset Council Communities Portfolio Holder)
4	Facilitate and develop the work of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Working Group	3 meetings of the Working Group to be held with information shared and service gaps considered	6 meetings were held, sharing information across agencies, including Dorset Council about their local plans for temporary accommodation
5	Facilitate and develop the work of the Health and Wellbeing Working Group	3 meetings of the Working Group to be held with information shared and service gaps considered	3 meetings were held, with information shared about social prescribing and contact with Ammonite Health about a new Patient Participation Group
6	Attend and contribute a BLAP perspective to other key groups or networks in the area	Attend and contribute to at least 8 other group or network meetings relevant to BLAP interests	Attended 19 meetings convened by 6 other groups or networks, which addressed topics such as car park charges, bus services, Foundry Lea, town centre and local advice services.
7	Disseminate information of local interest to and on behalf of BLAP members	BLAP Bulletin is issued regularly on a fortnightly basis	BLAP Bulletin was issued 24 times, so fortnightly except for three-week gaps around holiday periods
8	Respond to external consultations where of clear BLAP interest and there is a BLAP perspective	Respond to at least 4 external consultations (including from Dorset Council and other bodies)	Responded to 6 external consultation exercises (including 4 from Dorset Council)
9	Raise awareness and promote the role of BLAP to a wider local audience	Attend the Melplash Show and Bridport Community Fair	Due to continuing Covid restrictions, neither the Melplash Show nor the Community Fair took place