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SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL EILDON LOCALITY COMMITTEE

MINUTE of Meeting of the EILDON LOCALITY COMMITTEE held in the Council Chamber, Council HQ, Newtown St Boswells on Thursday, 9 November 2017 at 6.30 pm

- Present:- Councillors G. Edgar (Chairman), A. Anderson, K. Drum, E. Jardine, T. Miers, H. Scott, E. Thornton-Nicol.
Community Council representatives:- G. Easton (Selkirk), R French (Newtown and Eildon), S. Gibb (Earlston), R. Kenney (Galashiels), J Mackenzie (Stow).
- Apologies:- Councillors S. Aitchison, D. Parker. Community Councillor C. Whittingham (Ettrick & Yarrow).
- In Attendance:- S. Mitchell, Station Manager (Scottish Fire & Rescue Service), Inspector J. Scott (Police Scotland) (from para 7), Neighbourhood Area Manager (C. Blackie), Strategic Community Engagement Officer (C. Malster), Democratic Services Officer (F. Walling).

1. ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chairman varied the order of business as shown on the agenda and the Minute reflects the order in which the items were considered at the meeting.

2. MINUTE

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of 14 September 2017.

DECISION

APPROVED the Minute for signing by the Chairman.

3. PARTNER UPDATES

PARTNER UPDATE

- 3.1 Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) Station Manager, Stephen Mitchell, was in attendance to give a presentation about the future of the service ahead of formal consultation on its proposed transformation. Firstly, he highlighted the main points of his report, which had been circulated, on SFRS activity in the Eildon area since the last meeting. This referred to partnership working and ongoing prevention and protection work. One of the points of interest was that an Emergency Services Open Day had been hosted by Galashiels Community Fire Station on 15 October which was also attended by partners including Police Scotland, Scottish Ambulance Service, Tweed Valley Mountain Rescue and Borders Search and Rescue. The event was a great success and attended by approximately 700 members of the community. The report advised that operational staff were currently undertaking activities related to the seasonal thematic action plan, including bonfire/firework safety messages; preventing deliberate fire setting; and discouraging outdoor fires, in particular rubbish and refuse fires.
- 3.2 Mr Mitchell referred to the presentation and explained the reasons behind the proposed transformation of SFRS. Fires in Scotland continued to decline, thanks in part to preventative work, while other real risks were emerging. Terrorism and severe weather occurred without warning and the SFRS needed to be prepared to deliver a safe and sustainable response. Also, with the population living longer and staying in their homes, the service could play a greater preventative and responsive role to ensure safety and wellbeing. Transformation would let the service deliver its current role more efficiently and

effectively. This would involve a re-balance of workforce and development of skills to enable alignment of response to current risks and demand. As a national service there was need for a model where resources could be more easily moved to where the need was greatest. A stronger Retained Duty System (RDS) model would improve safety in rural communities and improve the employment experience for the dedicated RDS firefighters. Mr Mitchell also made reference to the challenging financial environment, the fact that the current model was unsustainable beyond 2017/2018 and that transformation would release efficiencies to deliver more. He advised that there would be full public consultation on the proposed transformation in the coming months and views, ideas and insight would help shape delivery of the service in the future. Mr Mitchell concluded his presentation and answered questions on the proposals.

DECISION

NOTED the presentation.

4. SMALL SCHEMES AND QUALITY OF LIFE

The Neighbourhood Area Manager, Craig Blackie, gave a verbal update on the Small Schemes and Quality of Life Programmes for the Eildon area. He circulated a list of schemes which had been approved to date. The balance remaining in the Small Schemes budget for the Eildon area was £31,920. The balances in the Quality of Life budget for each Ward were:- Galashiels and District - £4,266; Leaderdale and Melrose - £3,077; and Selkirkshire - £6,166. Mr Blackie encouraged Community Councillors to put forward suggestions for schemes appropriate for funding under these budgets. The proposals could then be circulated to Elected Members for approval under delegated powers.

DECISION

NOTED:-

- (a) the schemes approved to date, under the Neighbourhood Services Small Schemes and Quality of Life budgets, as listed in the appendix to this Minute;**
- (b) the balances remaining in each budget; and**
- (c) that proposals for further schemes should be directed to the Neighbourhood Area Manager.**

5. RATIFY NOTE OF INFORMAL MEETING HELD ON 19 OCTOBER 2017

With reference to paragraph 5 of the Scottish Borders Council Minute of 28 September 2017, there had been circulated copies of a note of an informal meeting of Eildon area Elected Members held on 19 October 2017. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and propose arrangements for the management of the Localities Bid Fund for the Eildon area.

DECISION

AGREED that:-

- (a) the Localities Bid Fund in the Eildon Area be organised into 2 funding rounds as suggested in the model within the report to Council, the first tranche being from the launch of the fund on 15 October 2017 to the close of applications on 1 December 2017;**
- (b) the funding allocation be split between the two approximately 40%:60% translating as £60k for the first tranche;**
- (c) the allocation be aligned to all themes of the Community Plan with the addition of 'Community Transport' as a local priority;**

- (d) **no additional marketing of the Fund was required for the Eildon Area over and above that provided on a Borders-wide level by the Council; and**
- (e) **a decision be made as to whether it would be appropriate to hold a 'voting event' as part of the public voting process once the bids were in.**

6. **DISCUSS ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE LOCALITY BID FUND IN THE EILDON AREA.** Strategic Community Engagement Officer, Clare Malster, was in attendance to give an overview of the Locality Bid Fund initiative and answer questions. She explained that, as part of a wider response to the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 and the requirement for participatory budgeting, Scottish Borders Council had agreed that a fund of £500k be split across the five Council areas to be used to support projects submitted by communities; allocated per head of population £153k in total was available for the Eildon area; £60k being available in phase 1. Bids would be invited from local communities and be pre-assessed by a panel before going to a public vote. Projects would be assessed against agreed criteria including: whether they met outcomes of the Community Plan and would benefit the local community; how the community would be involved in their delivery; their sustainability; and what would change in the community as a result of the projects. It was emphasised that all projects that met the assessment criteria would go forward for a public vote. In response to a question as to whether individuals could apply, Miss Malster advised that individuals and non-constituted groups could submit bids but that a funding cap of £5k would apply in these cases. With regard to timescales, the closing date for applications within the current phase was 1 December. However any bids that were too late to be submitted for phase 1 could be put forward for phase 2 within the proposed application period 1 April 2018 to 30 June 2018. In response to a point raised about possible unfairness in the voting system for projects due to differences in population density between urban and rural areas, Miss Malster advised that this had been recognised as a possibility and that, if thought necessary, it would be possible to ring-fence the fund for rural or town areas. In conclusion Miss Malster drew attention to leaflets, guidance notes and application forms that were available to take away from the meeting and advised that the information was also available on the Council's website.

DECISION NOTED

7. **AREA PARTNERSHIP PROPOSALS** There had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Customer and Communities which had been approved by Scottish Borders Council on 1 November 2017. The report brought forward proposals on the functions, initial core membership and future operation of Area Partnerships. To reflect the new statutory duties under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, it was proposed that the Locality Committees changed their constitution, remit and focus to one of community engagement and involvement; at the same time it was proposed that they changed their name to that of Area Partnerships to reflect this. With the greater emphasis on community empowerment, participative budgeting, and locality planning – not just for the Council, but for other public authorities/services - their main aim would be to form a community engagement platform to develop priorities and outcomes for the area. They would act as a community consultation body, not just for the Council but other service providers in the area, becoming a strong voice for their own area. Meetings of Area Partnerships would be structured around the Locality Plan, with an open forum section, a themed section (from the Locality Plan), a progress update on the Locality Plan, and the final section on any decisions required by Councillors on Small Schemes, Quality of Life, or Pay Parking funding. It was proposed that Area Partnerships meet 5 times per year. In terms of membership it was agreed to have the relevant SBC Ward Members and 4 Community Council representatives as core members, with invitations to wider representatives – including Community Planning partners and representatives from communities of interest – to attend and consider matters on a meeting by meeting basis. It was also suggested

that locality Community Council networks be set up in each of the 5 areas. Amongst other benefits this would bring, the locality networks would be able to agree Community Council representatives for each Area Partnership meeting according to the main theme of the meeting. In the ensuing discussion questions from Community Council representatives were answered by the Chairman and Strategic Community Engagement Officer.

**DECISION
NOTED**

8. **PARTNER UPDATE**

Police Scotland

Inspector John Scott gave an overview of preventative work being carried out by Police Scotland as part of a Festive Safety initiative. This included safety advice provided on a face to face basis in supermarkets and through social media. The public were encouraged to sign up to the free messaging service SB Alert to receive regular updates on crime, scams, weather warnings, road closures and other emergencies. Inspector Scott referred in particular to a local campaign being carried out with the Council's Safer Communities Team in relation to parental purchase of alcohol for teenagers, which could involve significant fines. With regard to drink driving a reminder was given that police could be notified anonymously through Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

**DECISION
NOTED the update.**

9. **OPEN QUESTIONS**

There were no open questions.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

COMMUNITY COUNCIL SPOTLIGHT

No issues were raised.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

10. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was suggested that, to facilitate the launch of the Eildon Area Partnership, a meeting be arranged to take place towards the end of January. Those present agreed the provisional date of Thursday 25 January 2018 and that the meeting would be held in Galashiels. Arrangements would be confirmed as soon as possible.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

The meeting concluded at 7.50 pm

Agreed Eildon Expenditure for "Quality of Life"

Scheme	Estimate (£)	Final Cost	Current Up-date	Estimated Completion
Galashiels & District				
Contribution to Gala Christmas Lights	2,000			
Up-grade footpath, Forest Hill to Balmoral, Gala (CJT)	400			
Leaderdale & Melrose				
Interpretation Board, Leaderfoot (Melrose & Earlston split)	2,036			
Footpath improvement, nr Bowling Club, Melrose (CJT project)	220			
Contribution to new shelter for Play Field, Oxton	1,333			
Selkirkshire				
Contribution to Christmas Party, Newtown St. Boswells	500			