

EXTRACT FROM MINUTE OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTE OF 18 AUGUST 2016

3. GREAT TAPESTRY OF SCOTLAND: A REVIEW OF THE PROCESS IN RESPECT OF DECISION-MAKING

- 3.1 The Chairman explained that the request for this review had been submitted by Ettrick and Yarrow Community Council and was pleased to welcome its Chairman, Mr Gordon Harrison, to the meeting. There had been circulated copies of the report by the Scrutiny Working Group on The Great Tapestry of Scotland: A Review of the Process in respect of decision making. Councillor Mountford chaired the Working Group and was in attendance to deliver the report. He began by explaining that the purpose of the Working Group was not to review the decisions about the Tapestry but to examine the decision-making process in respect of the Great Tapestry of Scotland Project and to ascertain if there were any lessons to be learned for future projects.
- 3.2 Councillor Mountford reported that the Working Group, having reviewed all the information requested, concluded that the details provided to Members in reports – based on the information that was available at the time - was sufficient to allow Members to make their decisions on the Great Tapestry of Scotland. Areas which could have enhanced the information in these reports were included in the Working Group's recommendations as detailed in Appendix 2 to the Minute. The Working Group had found it extremely useful to have been able to review both the timeline for the Great Tapestry of Scotland Project in retrospect alongside the work carried out by Officers and Consultants and bring this together into one document. In terms of lessons learned from this Project, the Working Group made six recommendations included in their report which it was hoped would serve to enhance transparency and communications in future.
- 3.3 Members then discussed the report in detail. Recommendation 1 noted that it would be helpful if, before a concept/idea proceeded to the project stage, that all material conversations between Members and Officers were summarised and noted whilst also acknowledging that some information might not be in the public domain. Members also considered that the Council should look at ways to engage with and improve public consultation, providing more information which it was hoped would help to avoid misinformation and misunderstandings in the early stages of future projects. Further discussion followed in relation to the Tapestry location being linked to the Borders Railway line.
- 3.4 The Chairman then invited Mr Harrison to speak. Mr Harrison explained that the Community Council had raised this matter on behalf of the people in the Ettrick and Yarrow area and represented their views and concerns about the process and subsequent decisions in relation to the Great Tapestry of Scotland. He then circulated a note which listed the sections of the Working Group's report where the Community Council were requesting further clarification. With regard to when a detailed Business Case had been requested by Council, the Transformation and Services Director explained that an outline business case had been presented to Council on 29 May 2014 and Council had then given authority for a more detailed business case to be prepared to allow Members to make a decision regarding a location for the Tapestry. Mr Harrison then referred to the appropriateness of SBC entering into a legal agreement with the Great Tapestry of Scotland Trust to house the Tapestry at Tweedbank prior to confirmed Scottish Government funding being in place. Mr Dickson explained that only the authority to enter into a legal agreement was given at that time and advised that no legal agreement was yet in place. It was also explained that, in order to secure third party funding, it was necessary to ascertain the definitive view of Scottish Borders Council in advance of such funding being awarded. In response to a question about the capital funding for the Project, Mr Dickson advised that it was quite typical for budget to be committed for this type of capital project but not spent immediately. This would then allow application for Government funding to be sought. Mr Harrison requested clarity in relation to the lack of information sought from Jura Consultants on Gross Value Added figures for sites other than Tweedbank and was advised that these had not been produced as the Council had already decided on the Tweedbank site by then, but a

range of data, including the economic development rationale, had been provided for Members' consideration. Councillor Mountford reiterated that an appeal had been made by SBC to the public and other external parties for suggestions for alternative sites but no potential locations other than those identified in the work of Jura consultants and Council officers had come forward.

3.5 Mr Harrison suggested that Recommendation 2 of the Working Group's report implied that the decision to concentrate on Tweedbank as the location for the Tapestry was made without sufficient and appropriate information being available to Members. In response, Councillor Mountford advised that this recommendation referred to lessons learned for future projects. Following a question from Mr Harrison in respect of the decision made by Council to site the Tapestry at Tweedbank, the Clerk to the Council reiterated the role of Scrutiny and the Terms of Reference of the Working Group.

3.6 A number of amendments to the report of the Working Group had been agreed and these would be included in the final version which would be presented to the Executive Committee on 30 August 2016.

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| Paragraph 5.3 | – add "by Council at its meeting on 29 May 2014." at the end of the text. |
| Paragraph 4.4 line 14 | – change "ancillary" to "additional". |
| Paragraph 5.5 line 13 | – amend text to read " range of external interested parties". |
| Recommendation 2 line 2 | – remove "sufficient" and replace with "all". |
| Recommendation 6 | – add at the end of the text "and an explanation given to Members." |

3.7 The Chairman expressed the Committee's appreciation to the Working Group for their time and comprehensive report and also thanked Mr Harrison for his attendance and contribution. Councillor Mountford extended his thanks to the members of the Working Group and the information and support provided by Officers to the Working Group.

DECISION

AGREED that the amended report by the Great Tapestry of Scotland Working Group, including its 6 recommendations - as appended at Appendix 2 to this Minute - be presented to the Executive Committee at its next meeting on 6 September 2016.