

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MINUTE of Meeting of the EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells on Tuesday 17 January 2017 at 10.00 a.m.

Present:- Councillors S. Aitchison (Chairman – Education Business), C. Bhatia, J. Brown, M. Cook, G. Edgar, J. G. Mitchell, D. Moffat, D. Parker (Chairman), D. Paterson, F. Renton, R. Smith.

Also Present:- Councillors I. Gillespie, J. Fullarton.

Apologies:- Councillors S. Bell, V. Davidson; Mr G. Jarvie, Mr D. Moore, Mrs J. Aitchison.

In Attendance:- Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (People), Service Director Children and Young People, Chief Financial Services Officer, Corporate Transformation and Services Director, Clerk to the Council, Democratic Services Officer (F. Henderson).

EDUCATION BUSINESS

Present:- Ms A. Ferahi, Mr G. Donald, Miss E. Page.

CHAIRMAN

Councillor Aitchison chaired the meeting for that part which considered Education business.

1. SCOTTISH BORDERS EQUESTRIAN SUCCESS

There were present at the meeting 6 of the 12 riders representing Selkirk High School, Kelso High School, Jedburgh Grammar School, Peebles High School, and Morebattle and Sprouston Primary Schools, who had been selected for the NSEA Championships at the Addington Manor Equestrian Centre, Buckingham. The girls explained that they had a 700 mile round trip with 18 ponies over 4 days, which had been carefully planned. The total cost of the trip had been £20,000 (£800 per horse) which had been funded through fund raising and support from Local Businesses. Although not winning any first prizes, all the riders had all achieved fantastic results - especially on the first day when the "Linton Team" won 2 championships and were also part of a winning Scottish Nations Cup team. There were 980 ponies and about 40 teams or individuals in each competition, with many more teams who would have liked to have attended but did not qualify, so qualifying was a massive achievement in itself. The girls highlighted the benefits gained from competing in such a competition and thanked their respective schools, Local Businesses and their families for supporting them. Mrs Gillian McFadyen, Team Manager, further explained that as a result of the riders doing well they would be entered for a higher age group class in 2017 and would compete against under 19 yr olds. Mrs McFadyen highlighted that it was funding at grass roots level which was required along with work towards hosting a National Qualifier Event within the Borders. Councillor Bhatia made a request that Equestrianism be included as a sport along with rugby, football and hockey when allocating funding, as the Borders had a strong history of riding and had two Olympic Medal Winners. In response, the Service Director Children and Young People explained that there was an ambition to hold a National Qualifier event within the Borders and investigations were underway to identify funding for such an event. The Chairman thanked the girls for their excellent presentation and wished them well for the future.

DECISION NOTED.

2. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK – EDUCATION

- 2.1 There had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Children and Young People which presented the Quality Improvement Framework (QIF) for Education, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, setting out a quality improvement infrastructure which embedded national policy and guidance developments into practice in all education provisions; an approach to quality improvement focused on raising standards in all education provisions; and the collaboration taking place with regard to quality improvement at all levels within education provisions in the Scottish Borders and with a range of partners locally and nationally. The report highlighted the impact of the QIF to date. Scottish Borders Council was ambitious to have an Education Service that was excellent, with an unrelenting focus on quality improvement as the key driver in achieving this ambition. THE QIF had been devised to focus all staff at all levels in raising standards. The 3 strands within the QIF were: interpretation, analysis and cascading of national and international policy and guidance into daily practice in education settings; improving performance across the range of quality practice standards and indicators through a range of self-evaluation activities and processes; identifying and sharing of best practice through local and national collaborative professional learning activities within and across education provisions and local authorities.
- 2.2 The implementation of the QIF set out in Appendix 1 to the report had resulted in the following progress being achieved: significant improvement in performance of the quality indicators in all Early Learning and Childcare settings in the Scottish Borders; early intervention and targeted support in a range of schools raising the performance of quality indicators to satisfactory level and above; good practice in schools and early years settings being identified and shared with local and national practitioners; a focus on 'closing the gap' and raising attainment for key groups of learners; a strong and robust focus on quality improvement across all education settings; a key commitment to 'looking inwards', 'looking outwards' and 'looking forwards' in all education provisions; a significant number of schools participating in national improvement activities; greater collaboration locally and nationally by lead officers and Headteachers; improvement in the quality of moderation and attainment levels in the National Improvement Framework; and improved quality of leadership across all education provisions. The Service Director Children and Young People gave further explanation of some aspects of the QIF document and invited feedback. Members of the Committee discussed the Framework, specifically referring to the resources needed; scope within the Framework for innovation along with associated risks; achievement vs. attainment; the provision of examples of successful closing of the attainment gap and greater equity; and the holistic approach to 'children's services' within the Children and Young People Service incorporating education and social work support.

DECISION

AGREED to acknowledge the place of the Quality Improvement Framework in securing continuous improvement in Scottish Borders Council Education provisions.

3. NAMING OF ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS PROVISION IN EARLSTON

With reference to paragraph 1 of the Minute of the Meeting held on 16 August 2016, there had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Children and Young People which requested approval to formally name the new Additional Support Needs Building in Earlston, following the statutory consultation undertaken in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 on the proposals and the non-statutory consultation undertaken on the naming of the School. The report detailed the background, the consultation undertaken and suggested names for the New Additional Support Needs Provision. The Service Director Children and Young People advised that there would be a

Headteacher appointed to the new facility who would have responsibility for all Special Needs Children across the Scottish Borders. It was also reported that to acknowledge that children attending the facility would be from all over the Borders the rooms within the new facility would be named after previous facilities – Caddon, Tweed, Eildon, Minto and Teviot. The formal opening of the school was likely to take place in March 2017, and Members would receive an email inviting them to visit the school on 25 January 2017.

DECISION

- (a) **AGREED that the new Additional Support Needs Building in Earlston be formally named as ‘Leader Valley School’.**

- (b) **NOTED that a Member visit to the Leader Valley School would be held on Wednesday, 25 January 2017.**

URGENT BUSINESS

Under Section 50B(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the Chairman was of the opinion that the item dealt with in the following paragraph should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency, in view of the need to keep Members informed.

4. MEMBERSHIP

The Chairman advised that Mr Jo Walsh, the Catholic Church Representative, had recently resigned from the Executive Committee. The Chairman acknowledged the contribution Mr Walsh had made to Education in the Borders firstly as a Teacher, then Adviser and latterly as the Religious representative on the Education Executive, Education Committee and the Executive Committee.

DECISION

AGREED to acknowledge Mr Walsh’s contribution to Education in the Borders.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11 a.m. and reconvened at 11.15 a.m.

MEMBER

Councillor Edgar left the meeting at the conclusion of the Education Business.

OTHER BUSINESS

CHAIRMAN

When the meeting reconvened, Councillor Parker took the Chair for the remaining business.

1. MINUTE

The Minute of meeting of the Executive Committee of 29 November 2016 had been circulated.

DECISION

APPROVED for signature by the Chairman.

1. EARMARKING OF REVENUE BUDGET FROM 2016/17 INTO 2017/18

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Financial Officer which sought approval from the Executive to earmark £1.215m available budget from 2016/17 into 2017/18 to support the 2017/18 – 2021/22 Financial Plans as detailed in Appendix I to the report. The report explained that the Council was preparing proposals to present the Financial Plan for 2017/18 – 2021/22 and an opportunity had arisen within 2016/17 to assist

bridging the funding gap within the Financial Plan by identifying surplus budget in 2016/17. This would allow appropriate adjustments to be made to the Financial Plan being presented to Council on 9th February 2017.

DECISION

APPROVED the earmarking of budget from 2016/17 into 2017/18 to support the 2017/18 – 2021/22 Financial Plan as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

2. BORDERS RAILWAY – SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL CONTRIBUTION

There had been circulated copies of an update report by the Chief Financial Officer on the current position of the Borders Railway contribution and to consider a revised approach to the payment profile of the remaining balance. The report explained that the development of the Borders Railway resulted in an undertaking between Scottish Borders Council and Transport Scotland for the Council to contribute a share of £30m towards the costs. The total Scottish Borders Council share was agreed at £15.3m at 2012 prices. The agreement also allowed £6.8m of costs previously incurred being offset against the £15.3m, leaving a balance of £8.4m to be paid over 30 years from the day the first train ran. The remaining balance was subject to RPI inflation and had an agreed payment profile which could be flexed if required. Due to the low interest rates and the risk from inflation it was proposed the outstanding balance of £7.7m was fully paid now, utilising the Council's borrowing powers and that the funds subsequently be recouped from developer contributions as they were received in future years. For cashflow purposes this would require borrowing to be undertaken, which would be within approved limits and prudential indicators. A range of sensitivity options had been modelled against future inflation projections. Payment of the outstanding balance of funds as at 31/3/2016 would mitigate future inflation risk and was estimated to save £4.3m based on assumption of future RPI increasing at 2.5% per annum.

DECISION

(a) APPROVED the payment of the remaining liability in a single instalment.

(b) NOTED the required borrowing for cashflow purposes.

(c) AGREED to authorise the Chief Financial Officer to repay the contributions due to Transport Scotland under the terms of the Borders Railway funding agreement under delegated authority in consultation with the Council Leader and Depute Leader (Finance).

4. SCOTTISH LANDFILL COMMUNITIES FUND

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Neighbourhood Services which provided an overview of the performance of the Scottish Landfill Communities Fund (SLCF) in 2016/17 and sought agreement for the Council's involvement in the Scheme in 2017/18. The report explained that the SLCF was a tax credit scheme, linked to Scottish Landfill Tax, which encouraged Landfill Operators to voluntarily participate in providing funding to facilitate community and environmental projects in areas affected by landfill activity. SEPA was the Regulator of the Scottish Scheme and responsible to Revenue Scotland. BCCF Environmental was the Approved Body registered to receive funding generated by the scheme. The report went on to explain that 90% of the SLCF budget would be funded from the Council's Scottish Landfill Tax liability with the additional 10% funded by the Waste Services budget as had been the case previously. The Council would continue to bear the 10% cost provisionally for 2017/18 and would forego the need for projects to identify a Contributing Third Party payment. During 2016/17, a total of 9 projects were funded - totalling £195,601 - which supported overall total project costs of £1,241,000. The Communities and Partnership Manager together with the newly appointed Funding Officer, Claire Penny, were present to answer Members' questions.

**DECISION
AGREED to:-**

- (a) continue to participate in the SLCF through its Landfill Tax Liability credits for 2017/18 (90% of fund);**
- (b) continue to provide the additional 10% of the fund from its Waste Services budget for 2017/18; and**
- (c) note the progress of SLCF in 2016/17.**

The meeting concluded at 11.25 a.m.