

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL TEVIOT AND LIDDESDALE AREA FORUM

MINUTES of Meeting of the TEVIOT AND LIDDESDALE AREA FORUM held in Lesser Hall, Town Hall, Hawick on Tuesday, 21 March 2017 at 6.30 pm

Present:- Councillors: G. Turnbull (Chairman), W. McAteer, D. Paterson, R. Smith.
Community Councillors: Mr C Griffiths (Hobkirk), Mr P Kerr (Southdean), Mr W Roberts (Denholm), Mr I Robson (Upper Teviotdale & Borthwick Water), Mrs M Short (Hawick).

Apologies Councillors A Cranston and S Marshall.

In Attendance:- Neighbourhood Area Manager (Mr F Dunlop), Inspector Carol Wood (Police Scotland), Mr Russell Bell (Scottish Fire & Rescue Service) Democratic Services Officer (J Turnbull).

Members of the Public 7

1. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chairman, Councillor Turnbull, welcomed Members, officers, community councillor representative and the public to the Forum. He thanked them for attending and for their support over the past five years.

2. **MINUTE**

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the meeting held on 21 February 2017. Denholm Community Councillor, Mr W Roberts, asked for two additional sentences to be included under paragraph 11.2 – ‘Community Council Spotlight’. Members agreed that the Minute of 21 February be amended to include the additional wording and be republished.

DECISION

AGREED to approve the Minute, as amended.

3. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTE**

With reference to paragraph 6 of the Minute of 21 February, the Chairman advised that there would be a presentation from the Chief Officer for Health and Social Care Integration at the June Forum. NHS representatives would also attend that meeting to update on Hawick Community Hospital and NHS Borders’ performance monitoring and comparison with national targets.

DECISION

NOTED.

4. **GOLDEN EAGLE PROJECT**

4.1 The Chairman welcomed Dr Cat Barlow, Project Officer, South of Scotland Golden Eagle Project who was present at the meeting to give a presentation on the South of Scotland Golden Eagle Project. Dr Barlow began by advising that the aim of the Project was to reinforce the population of Golden Eagles in the South of Scotland, she emphasised that this was a reinforcement to boost the existing population of Golden Eagles. There were a number of stakeholders involved in the Project including: Scottish Land and Estates, Scottish National Heritage, Forestry Commission, Visit Scotland, National Farmers’ Union and private landowners. Dr Barlow explained the background to the Project. In 2008, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) set out

to discover why the Golden Eagle population in the South of Scotland was low and to determine if the population could be reinforced. Fielding and Harding published a report in 2014 (*Golden eagles in the south of Scotland – an overview*) which detailed the active breeding habitat of the Golden Eagle and highlighted factors to consider such as food availability, current placements, active range and which areas could support 14 - 16 pairs of Golden Eagles. The South of Scotland was identified as a suitable location for reintroduction, as there was little movement of the birds across the central belt. Dr Barlow advised that the Project followed the Scottish Code for Conservation Translocation and worked with experts who had a wealth of experience in translocation. The Project had also learnt from other similar projects such as the translocation of Ospreys and Red Kites and followed their best practice.

- 4.2 Dr Barlow went on to explain the process for translocation. One chick would be taken from a nest of twins in core areas of the Golden Eagle ranges in Scotland; the donor nest would not be affected by the removal of the chick. It was proposed to transfer five to ten chicks each year for a five year period. The chicks would be kept in aviaries and fed until they were ready to fledge. All the birds would have a satellite tracker to monitor their progress on release into the Moffat hills. When released, as they were learning to hunt, food would be made available to them.
- 4.3 Dr Barlow further advised that community engagement had been an important part of the Project. There had been a public consultation including meetings across the release area, stakeholder engagement and an online questionnaire. In general the project had been received positively. Last August, the first phase of the Project had been launched when the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) had awarded a development grant. The Project was awaiting a decision on further HL funding and seeking other match funding. Once funding was in place, recruitment of staff would begin, six new jobs would be created in the Langholm area, and building of the aviaries would commence. Dr Barlow concluded her presentation by informing that further information on the Project was available at www.goldeneaglessouthofscotland.co.uk
- 4.4 In response to questions, Dr Barlow advised that they did not envisage Golden Eagles removing lambs. However, they would keep conversations with farmers open in case problems arose. The shooting fraternity had welcomed the project. There was no history of any deaths from Golden Eagles colliding with wind turbines. It was hoped that the Golden Eagles would remain in the South of Scotland but they could potentially move from the area. Presently there were no breeding Golden Eagles in Cumbria or North Northumberland. In response to a question regarding a possible detrimental effect on Hen Harriers, Dr Barlow advised that Hen Harriers tended to move away from Golden Eagle territories. The Project had also liaised with the Osprey Project who had considered that there would be no impact on the Osprey population. The only predator of Golden Eagles was humans, whether by accidental strikes or persecution. The project was in contact with Police Scotland regarding the area of release. The Chairman thanked Dr Barlow for attending the meeting and for the interesting presentation.

DECISION

NOTED the presentation.

5. HAWICK FLOOD PROTECTION SCHEME

- 5.1 Ewan Doyle, Project Manager, Hawick Flood Protection Scheme was present at the Forum to update on the Hawick Flood Protection Scheme. Mr Doyle advised that in 2013 the Project Team had obtained Council approval to develop the Scheme through the Outline Design stage. He highlighted that the objectives of the Scheme included: protection of Hawick against flooding from the River Teviot; protection against flooding from the Slitrig Water between Drumlanrig Bridge and where it joined the Teviot; provision of a uniform level of protection of 1 in 75 year flood event; provision of new flood gates and embankments. Mr Doyle explained that the Scheme would protect 930 residential and commercial properties against the risk of flooding. The Project Team

were also considering opportunities to maximise cultural, heritage, educational, and tourism opportunities. For example by the provision of glass panels in walls to retain a visual connection with the Teviot. Mr Doyle added that the Scheme had also received £10k funding from Sustrans to investigate the feasibility of cycleways through the town.

- 5.2 Consultation on the Scheme had taken place with stakeholders and the community over the past two years, to alleviate concerns and to take action on any issues raised. Mr Doyle explained that 2017 was a critical year for the Project; in April the Final Outline Design would be published, there would be a 28 day consultation period for the public to comment on the Scheme. To facilitate the consultation, the Project Team were currently in the process of land referencing which involved 4,000 letters being sent to owners and occupiers throughout the town. If at this stage, there were any objections to the Scheme, this could result in an Inquiry situation which could add months to the Project and even jeopardise the Scheme. However, if there were no objections, a final report to Council would be presented in September. This would allow Scottish Government to release the funding for the Scheme. Mr Doyle concluded his presentation by advising that if anyone had any comments or concerns regarding the Scheme, they should speak to the Project Team. The Chairman thanked Mr Doyle for the informative update.
- 5.3 In response to a question regarding the disruption to the town and traffic management issues, Mr Doyle stated that the recent works at Commercial Road showed the types of disruption that might occur; parts of the road could be closed from time to time with up to six months work required in this area. The contractor would be required to maintain access at all times to properties and businesses with appropriate signage and diversion routes. He further advised that the structure would be of thick steel which would be installed in the river bedrock and not be affected by tree roots. It was noted that the Liddesdale Road concerns, although not included in the Scheme, would be addressed elsewhere. Finally, Mr Doyle reassured that the flood works would not negatively affect villages upstream or downstream from Hawick.

DECISION

NOTED the presentation.

6. STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT 2016

- 6.1 The final presentation of the evening was by Erin Murray, Research and Policy Officer, Scottish Borders Council (SBC). Ms Murray began her presentation by showing the 2015 Population Statistics for all Wards in the Scottish Borders. The statistics identified that in the Scottish Borders there were more women than men and slightly more pensioners than within Scotland as a whole, which raised questions for sustainability in the future and growth of the economy. Within the Teviot and Liddesdale area, Ms Murray advised that there were less children than in the rest of the Scottish Borders, and also differences within the area; for example, Denholm's population had 32% pensioners and 13.6% children, whereas in Burnfoot North the percentage was 7.4% and 32.2% respectively.
- 6.2 Ms Murray explained the five themes identified within the Strategic Assessment as being Economy and Income; Education and Learning; Public Services; Community and Environment; and Health and Wellbeing. There were 16 National Outcome Descriptions relating to these themes which identified that people in the Scottish Borders tended to live longer, healthier lives, safer from crime disorder and danger. They also had strong, resilient communities and valued their natural environment.
- 6.3 Ms Murray referred to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). This Index used 28 indicators across seven domains – Employment, Income, Education, Health, Access, Crime and Housing. Of the 143 areas in the Scottish Borders, that were used to measure the SIMD, 1.4% were in the most deprived 10% of Scotland. Within the Teviot and Liddesdale area Burnfoot Central was within the 10% most deprived of Scotland and Burnfoot North, Burnfoot South, Burnfoot West and Wellogate were areas within the 20% most deprived of all Scotland. Showing that the Teviot and Liddesdale area had a greater

concentration of people living in areas experiencing multiple deprivation. It was noted that the SIMD was a tool to help understand areas but did not show aspects of community cohesion or identity.

- 6.4 Ms Murray went on to summarise other findings from the Assessment: Between 2010 and 2015 economic turnover had increased by £313m, a 10.9% increase above the 1.3% increase for Scotland. Scottish Borders had also more small to medium sized enterprises and those contributed to turnover relative to Scotland. The average weekly footfall in Hawick was the lowest in the Scottish Borders. However, since 2016 this had increased. With regard to workplace based wages, these were consistently lower than residence based wages. Regarding Curriculum for Excellence, in 2015/16 the Scottish Borders had higher levels of achievement in reading, writing, listening, talking and numeracy. Ms Murray also advised that the proportion of school leavers going to an initial positive destination (higher education) had increased, from 88% in 2005/06 to 95.3% in 2014/15; this trend reflected the changes nationally. With regard to health and wellbeing, life expectancy in the Scottish Borders was higher than the rest of Scotland. The findings also identified that Type 2 Diabetes was more prevalent in the Scottish Borders. Ms Murray further advised that the Scottish Borders consistently had a higher proportion of people rating their neighbourhood as a Very Good or Fairly Good place to live. With regard to community safety, the Scottish Borders was a safe place to live with low levels of crime and anti-social behaviour and a low number of fire casualties compared to Scotland. However, more people were killed or seriously injured resulting from road traffic accidents compared to the Scottish average.
- 6.5 Ms Murray concluded by advising that her presentation had included a small extract from the Strategic Assessment, the full Strategic Assessment was available on the Council's website at www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/download/211/strategic_assessment The presentation would also be published with the Minute of the meeting on SBC's website. The Chairman thanked Ms Murray for the comprehensive presentation.

DECISION

NOTED the presentation.

7. NEIGHBOURHOOD SMALL SCHEMES AND QUALITY OF LIFE

With reference to paragraph 7 of the Minute of 21 February 2017, there had been circulated a report by Service Director Neighbourhood Services seeking approval of a contribution of £2,000 towards road repairs at Wellogate Cemetery, Hawick from Neighbourhood Small Schemes. Mr Dunlop clarified that the total cost of the Scheme would be £31,604. Hawick Pay Parking budget had contributed £3,000 towards the repairs, with the remainder financed from the Neighbourhood Services and Property Maintenance budgets. Mr Dunlop confirmed that the works would be completed by the end of March.

DECISION

- (a) **AGREED contribution towards road repair work at Wellogate Cemetery, Hawick** **£2,000**
- (b) **NOTED:-**
- (i) **the updates on previously approved Neighbourhood Small Schemes as detailed in Appendix A to the report;**
- (ii) **the updates on previously approved Quality of Life Schemes as detailed in Appendix B to the report; and**

8. POLICE SCOTLAND

- 8.1 There had been circulated a report from Inspector Carol Wood, Police Scotland, updating the Teviot and Liddesdale Area Forum on performance activities and issues in the area.

The Ward Plan priorities for Teviot and Liddesdale were highlighted as Drug Dealing and Misuse, Road Safety, Violent Crime and Antisocial Behaviour. In summary, with regard to the Drug Dealing and Misuse priority, Inspector Wood advised that officers had searched a house in Galalaw Road and recovered class A drugs. The householder had subsequently been charged with possession and being concerned in the supply of drugs. He has also been charged with contravention of the new air weapon legislation after officers found a gas powered air weapon during the search. A male had also been charged with obstruction within Hawick Police Station after being arrested for separate offences. Class A drugs were recovered from his possession and he was charged with this.

- 8.2 In terms of the Road Safety priority, Community Officers continued to give attention to areas where they had received complaints of speeding and inconsiderate driving. Officers patrolled in identified locations to carry out periodic checks to positively influence driving behaviour. In certain circumstances, motor vehicles could be seized by Police where there was evidence that the vehicle was being driven carelessly or off road. It was essential that complaints about driving behaviour were notified to the police via 101 at the time. Vehicles continued to receive parking tickets and drivers were warned for parking longer than they should or breaching yellow line restrictions throughout the town. A male had been arrested and charged with various driving offences including taking a vehicle without the owner's consent and being unfit to drive whilst under the influence of drink or drugs. Inspector Wood further advised that motorists had contacted the Policy regarding the action of a dangerous driver. Officers traced the vehicle and the driver was charged with driving under the influence of drink or drugs and with dangerous driving. Another driver had been stopped when officers were carrying out road checks in Commercial Road, Hawick. The driver was found to be without an appropriate driving licence or insurance. Officers on patrol had also followed a vehicle into Guthrie Drive; the vehicle failed to stop and was later found abandoned, the driver had not been traced. However, a positive line of enquiry was being progressed. During the period a number of road checks were carried out resulting in two fixed penalty tickets being issued for speeding and a number of warnings administered for the anti-social use of a vehicle.
- 8.3 In respect of the Violent Crime priority, there was one serious assault reported in Hawick during February. This was as the result of an argument between a number of males within the Station Bar. One male required medical attention to a wound on his forehead, enquiries were ongoing into this incident.
- 8.4 With regard to the Antisocial Behaviour priority, there were five recorded police warnings and one fixed penalty ticket given for antisocial behaviour. Community Officers had also issued two dog fouling tickets in the town. A multi-agency meeting was planned the following day to target those who persistently behaved in an antisocial manner.
- 8.5 With regard to other issues within the period, Inspector Wood advised that with regard to Rural Crime, red diesel was stolen from an old tractor parked at a farm near to Newcastleton. This appeared an isolated incident. She also reported that a number of cars had been entered in Hawick and property stolen from them. Following enquiries a male had been charged with five offences.
- 8.6 Inspector Wood went on to advise that on 27 March 2017, Police Scotland would launch Hate Crime Awareness Week. The aim of the campaign was to communicate the impact of hate crime on peoples' lives and encourage reporting from both victims and bystanders; information was available on Police Scotland's website. Police Scotland were also consulting on the Police Scotland 2026 Project. The 2026 strategy was available on the Police Scotland website, where there was a consultation page. Inspector Wood encouraged the public to take part in the consultation and also to contribute to the Your View Counts consultation.

- 8.7 To conclude the report, Inspector Wood referred to the recent antisocial behaviour at the new Wilton Lodge Park, inquiries were ongoing into the incidents; Police would continue to patrol the area. The Forum asked if CCTV could be installed at the Park, Inspector Wood responded that Police Scotland would be consulting with Safer Communities to consider the options available.

DECISION

NOTED the report.

9. **SCOTTISH FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**

- 9.1 There had been circulated a report from Station Manager Russell Bell, Hawick Fire Station, presenting service delivery activity in the Teviot and Liddesdale Area for the month of February 2017. In summary, the report detailed that during the period of the report there had been one accidental house fire; three other fires (two vehicles and one refuse), two special service occurrences (one suicide, one animal rescue) and nine unwanted fire alarms signals. Mr Bell advised that Hawick Wholetime crews had completed their water based, swift water rescue training and all staff were trained to enter the water, a proportional number were also trained as boat operators. Hawick Station now had 'live status' which meant the crew could be mobilised to any part of the country, or over the Border if requested. The high volume pump was still located at Hawick, as training had not yet been completed at Dundee, its final destination. The extended trial period for the 'out of hour's cardiac arrest service' had now been completed. A report had been passed to the Strategic Leadership Team recommending that trial stations continued to offer the service and that it was rolled out to all stations in Scotland via a three year delivery plan.

- 9.2 Mr Bell further advised that in April 2017, a 5 watch duty system would be introduced at Hawick Fire Station, staff numbers would reduce from a total of 28 to 25 with 5 watches of 5, replacing 4 watches of 7. The new system would provide a more flexible and effective use of staff and would not affect the number of staff who day to day attended operational incidents on the fire engine or as part of a water rescue team. In response to a question regarding retention of staff at Hawick Fire Station, Mr Bell advised that one staff member would be relocated. With regard to unwanted fire signals, Mr Bell stated that the Fire Service would always attend an alarm. However, guidance could be given and adjustments made to the alarm.

DECISION

NOTED.

10. **OPEN QUESTIONS**

Community Councillor Mrs Short advised that at the new Wilton Lodge Park the public were allowing their dogs into the children's play area. Mrs Short asked if the griddling could be reinstated which would prevent dogs from accessing the area. Provision should also be made for dogs to be secured outside the children's area. Councillor Turnbull advised that he would raise at the Stakeholder meeting the next evening. Mr Dunlop advised that officers were investigating retrieving the griddling from the old site and reinstating. 'No dogs allowed' posters would also be displayed in the area.

DECISION

NOTED.

11. **COMMUNITY COUNCIL SPOTLIGHT**

- 11.1 Mr I Robson, Upper Teviotdale and Borthwick Water, advised that a Police Officer had attended their last Community Council meeting and was pleased to advise that there had only been one incident of theft in the community council area during the period. The Police Officer had also reported on the Forest Watch scheme set up to protect farm machinery overnight. Mr Robson further advised that many of the road maintenance schemes had been completed. Unfortunately, damage was still occurring and it was

hoped that the funding from the Scottish Government could be used to maintain the roads in both Hawick Wards. The Chairman advised that the Timber Transport Group had been informed of suitable schemes.

- 11.2 Mr Griffiths, Hobkirk Community Council, advised that wagons were travelling up to 16 hours a day to and from the quarry works. The vehicles were causing consistent damage to the roads and walls and there appeared to be a lack of control. Members advised that the issue has also been raised at the meeting of Upper Liddesdale and Hermitage Community Council. The matter had been referred to SBC's roads and planning departments, and the Chairman would advise the Community Council when a response had been received. Mr Griffiths, further advised that another issue was the cost of burial plots at Hobkirk Churchyard. The charge for the plots had been increased without notification; there was also a question of who owned the land. The Chairman advised that the increase in charges for all burial plots was in line with Council policy. The increase was also for the cost of ground maintenance. With regard to windfarm applications, the Community Council were coordinating their response relating to the Pine Burns' wind farm application.
- 11.3 Mr Roberts, Denholm Community Council advised that the Community Council had been actively involved in the Borders Broadband Community Project and signs were positive for the future provision of high speed broadband in the area. Mr Roberts further advised that the Community Council had been consulted on a planning application to build five new homes at Craigard, Canongate in Denholm. A site visit had taken place that day and a number of concerns had been raised including the impact on the surroundings the development would have and the inadequate access from the Canongate. The Community Council had also been consulted on a new phone mast proposal; they were arranging a site visit with the developer to discuss. Mr Roberts also referred to the increase in fly tipping - a considerable amount of waste had been dumped along the A698 and it was also noted that builders' rubble had been dumped into the recycling skip. Mr Roberts went on to discuss a briefing the community council had received on Community Empowerment. They had been disappointed in the proposals and considered transference of responsibilities a retrograde step without the provision of adequate funding. Finally, Mr Roberts thanked Councillors Marshall, McAteer and Cranston for their support during their term of office.
- 11.4 Community Councillor Philip Kerr advised that sadly Ruben Baker had passed away. Mr Baker had been the ex-chairman of Southdean Community Council. Mr Kerr further advised that the speeding issue at the crossroads at Chester's needed addressed as well as the ongoing problem with timber transport. With regard to wind farms; they were awaiting decisions on Barrel Law, Pines Burn and Highlee. The National Park proposers would be attending their next meeting and giving a presentation. Finally, they were participating in the consultation regarding the former Hobkirk Primary School building.
- 11.5 Mrs Short, Hawick Community Council advised that with regard to dog fouling, the Community Council, with the assistance of outside agencies were promoting the provision of free bags. Council officers had also been contacted regarding the installation of mental dispensers for the bags. Mr Dunlop advised that the Council would be providing warning posters and displaying in the hot spot areas of the town. Mrs Short further advised that their proposal for their windfarm allocation had been submitted and was acceptable. Hawick Community Council had also received a presentation on community empowerment and shared the concerns of Denholm Community Council. The community council members were volunteers and did not want devolved powers. Mrs Short concluded by advising that Morrisons Supermarket had made a donation of £1500 towards the Christmas Lights appeal.

12. **DATE OF NEXT TEVIOT AND LIDDESDALE AREA FORUM MEETING**
The next meeting of the Teviot and Liddesdale Area Forum was scheduled for Tuesday, 20 June 2017 at 6.30 pm in the Lesser Hall.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

The meeting concluded at 8.35 pm.