

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MINUTE of Meeting of the EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, TD6 0SA on Tuesday, 15 August, 2017 at 10.00 am

Present:- Councillors S. Haslam (Chairman), S. Aitchison (Vice-Chairman), G. Edgar, C. Hamilton, W. McAteer, T. Miers, S. Mountford, G. Turnbull and T. Weatherston

Apologies:- Councillors E. Jardine and M. Rowley

Also Present:- Councillors S. Bell, J. Fullarton, D. Paterson and H. Scott.

In Attendance:- Chief Executive, Executive Director (R. Dickson), Service Director Assets & Infrastructure, Chief Financial Officer, Clerk to the Council, Democratic Services Officer (F. Walling).

1. **MINUTE**

The Minute of meeting of the Executive Committee of 20 June 2017 had been circulated.

DECISION

APPROVED for signature by the Chairman.

2. **ROAD SAFETY - ANNUAL POSITION STATEMENT**

2.1 There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Officer Roads giving an update on reported road casualties in 2016 and on progress towards meeting the Scottish Government casualty reduction targets. The report explained that in June 2009 the Scottish Government set revised targets for accident reduction across a number of key headings. The base taken for this was the 2004 – 08 annual average and the target reduction was by the year 2020 with interim targets set for 2015. The five areas identified as national reduction targets were:- the number of people killed in road accidents; the number of people seriously injured in road accidents; the number of children under 16 killed in road accidents; the number of children seriously injured in road accidents; and the slight injury accident rate. The national position was generally positive based on the official 2015 figures, with reductions continuing to be shown across all the accident reduction areas identified and all but the second category outlined currently exceeding the interim 2015 reduction targets. Provisional 2016 figures, however, indicated some worrying increases in key categories. At a local Scottish Borders level, 2016 was a disappointing year with a rise on previous years in the overall number of fatal and serious injuries as well as in the number of serious injuries to children. Consolidation of the figures for the last few years however suggests that the long-term trend of road-accident casualty reduction in the Scottish Borders area continues.

2.2 The Network Manager, Mr Brian Young, gave further information about progress against individual targets and answered Members' questions. With regard to causations and contributory factors he advised that the amount of information received from Police Scotland depended on the reporting level at each particular accident. It should be noted also that only injury accidents were recorded and notified by the police. The Chief Executive advised Members that she met with the Police regularly to discuss the deployment of police resources across the Scottish Borders, including planned interventions. It would be possible to get some statistics at a local level and she offered to bring a report back to the Executive Committee in the autumn on police activity,

education, campaigns and crack downs. With regard to road engineering factors, in the majority of cases accidents were not shown to be linked to road surface or conditions but the Council's Accident Investigation and Prevention (AIP) team's 'Moving Cursor' programme identified crash cluster sites and investigated any common trends and patterns. Where appropriate, proposals for remedial measures would be prepared for the team's consideration. It was recognised that the general downward trend in the number of accidents locally and nationally could be due to a host of factors. However Scottish Borders Council would continue to take forward educational and other initiatives with a view to changing road user behaviour and attitudes. With regard to ongoing work in schools, a representative from Children and Young People's Services sat on the multi-partnership Scottish Borders Road Safety Working Group, the overarching body looking at road safety and vehicle accident prevention in the area.

**DECISION
AGREED:-**

- (a) to note the position with respect to injury accidents in 2016 and the progress that was being made in relation to meeting the Scottish Government targets for road casualty reduction;**
- (b) to endorse the proposals for accident prevention going forward as follows:-**
 - (i) to continue to concentrate Accident Investigation and Prevention resources on locations identified through the moving cursor programme;**
 - (ii) to submit, as justified, proposals for more substantial schemes for inclusion in future Capital Programmes;**
 - (iii) that broader elements such as education, encouragement and communications, would continue to be addressed through the Scottish Borders Road Safety Working Group; in particular maintaining close liaison with Police Scotland in terms of appropriate enforcement as necessary; and**
- (c) to note that the Chief Executive would bring a report to the Executive Committee in the autumn on police activity in the Scottish Borders.**

3. UNION CHAIN BRIDGE - REQUEST TO INCREASE FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION

3.1 With reference to paragraph 6 of the Minute of 7 March 2017, there had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Assets and Infrastructure seeking approval to increase the funding for the Union Chain Bridge Project to £1M to support the application to Heritage Lottery Fund and match the commitment from Northumberland County Council. The Project Management Team Leader, Mr Ewan Doyle, explained that, since the update to the Executive Committee in March 2017, that stated the Heritage Lottery Fund application date of June 2017, there had been several developments on the project that had affected its progress and budget estimate, ultimately causing a delay in the application to Heritage Lottery from Northumberland County Council, as lead agents, until December 2017. There had been proactive consultation with Historic England over the past twelve months, which was required to support the Heritage Lottery Fund application. Unfortunately Historic England required a higher level of restoration to the original features than originally envisaged and there was also increased scope to the engineering works required. This had contributed to an estimated increase from the aspiration of circa £5M project to £7.8M, and ultimately creating a £900k funding gap. Northumberland County Council had approved a report to their Cabinet Committee to re-affirm their commitment to the project and increase their financial contribution over the next 3 years from £550k to £755k with an overall project contribution estimated at £1M. A matched contribution of £1M was also consequently expected from Scottish Borders Council. A

table within the report outlined Northumberland County Council's revised proposed funding structure for the project. Representatives from the Heritage Lottery Fund indicated that there was still strong support for the project but that if the bid was submitted with the request for increase in funding the project would be considered at a national, rather than local, level and have to compete with other national projects.

- 3.2 In discussing the report Members were in support of the project to restore the bridge, recognising its historical significance and importance as a crossing point and link between two communities and tourist locations. It was recognised that if the Heritage Lottery Fund application was unsuccessful the authorities would be left with a declining asset which may require an increased contribution from both authorities for its repair or replacement, or a reduction in the bridge's capacity to carry vehicular traffic. Concern was expressed at the request for additional funding for the project and the proposal to allocate this from the Roads and Bridges capital block in future years, for which there would be many other competing demands. The delay in the application to Heritage Lottery Fund had allowed a much more technical investigation on the condition of the bridge, with only 25% of the estimated increase in cost due to heritage aspects. The Chief Financial Officer noted the risks relating to large funding packages which were reliant on multiple funding partners and explained that the £450k was being vired within the 2019/20 and 2020/21 Roads and Bridges capital block, meaning the current spend on Roads and Bridges was unaffected. There would be the opportunity for Members to revisit the quantum of the Roads and Bridges allocation when future years' budgets were being developed, subject to the overall resources available to the Council. Members supported the recommendations but indicated that they would be unlikely to support any further increase in contribution from Scottish Borders Council should this be requested in the future.

DECISION

AGREED:-

- (a) **to increase the financial commitment to the Union Chain Bridge Project by £450k, in line with the current agreement with Northumberland County Council; and**
- (b) **to approve the virements of £190k in 2019/20 and £260k in 2020/21 from Roads and Bridges capital block to the Union Chain Bridge.**

4. PRIVATE BUSINESS

DECISION

AGREED under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the business detailed in the Appendix to this minute on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs of part 1 of schedule 7A to the Act.

SUMMARY OF PRIVATE BUSINESS

5. MINUTE

The private section of the Minute of 20 June 2017 was approved.

6. MINUTE OF SOCIAL WORK COMPLAINTS REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Minute of the meeting held on 10 April 2017 was approved.

The meeting concluded at 10.55 am