

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL BERWICKSHIRE LOCALITY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of Meeting of the
BERWICKSHIRE LOCALITY COMMITTEE
held in the Council Chamber, Newtown
Street, Duns on Thursday, 7 September
2017 at 6.30 pm

- Present:- Councillors J. A. Fullarton (Chairman), J. Greenwell, C Hamilton, H. Laing, D. Moffat (from Item 9) and M. Rowley.
Community Councils:- Abbey St Bathans, Bonkyl & Preston – Allister Hart; Ayton – John Slater; Coldingham – Rhona Goldie; Coldstream & District – Martin Brims; Duns – Andrew Mitchell; Edrom, Allanton & Whitsome – Trixie Collin; St Abbs – Jo Ladd; Swinton and Ladykirk – Jim Brown.
Ms K Cremin, Berwickshire Association for Voluntary Service.
- Apologies:- Cockburnspath and Cove; Reston and Auchencrow.
- In Attendance:- Inspector John Scott, Police Scotland; Station Manager M Acton, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service; Mr D Silcock - Neighbourhood Area Manager Berwickshire; Democratic Services Officer (P Bolson).

Public:- 3

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed those present and introduced Susan Swan, Depute Lord Lieutenant for Berwickshire.

2. MINUTE

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of 15 June 2017.

DECISION

NOTED the Minute for signature by the Chairman.

3. BERWICKSHIRE FLAG

With reference to paragraph 4.1 of the Minute of 15 June 2017, the Chairman explained that discussions relating to the creation of a Berwickshire Flag had taken place over a period spanning more than three years. Following recent communications, he was now pleased to welcome Susan Swan, Depute Lord Lieutenant for Berwickshire to the meeting to explain the work that she has been involved in relating to this subject. It appeared that discussions between the Berwickshire Area Forum as was and Transport Scotland had not reached any conclusion, on the basis that no approval would be given by Transport Scotland without the production of a proposed flag, which would obviously incur costs, and the undertaking of a full public consultation exercise. Mr John Marjoribanks and Mrs Swan had also been in discussions regarding the creation of a Berwickshire flag for use across the area and how this could be progressed. Two main questions were discussed, namely the possible investment to enable the creation of a flag and the use of a Coat of Arms. Following that discussion, it was suggested that Mrs Swan and Mr Marjoribanks meet again with a representative from Transport Scotland to clarify what required to be done going forward.

DECISION

(a) NOTED the discussion.

- (b) AGREED to await the outcome of the meeting between Mrs Swan, Mr Marjoribanks and Transport Scotland prior to further consideration by the Berwickshire Locality Committee.**

4. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN MAIN ISSUES REPORT

There had been circulated copies of a presentation by the Council's Lead Officer Plans and Research, Charles Johnston. Mr Johnson was in attendance to draw attention to public events and workshops being held as part of the preparation of the Local Development Plan Main Issues Report (MIR). He referred to the 5 year cycle to produce a Local Development Plan and confirmed that the Council was commencing work on a new Local Development Plan. The first component part of the new plan was the MIR and the process would begin with public engagement to discuss and identify any issues that interested parties would wish to see included in the MIR. Issues could include: housing allocation (new sites/removal of longstanding allocations); regenerating town centres; employment land provision; protection of greenspace; promotion of placemaking and design; wind farms; and changes to planning policies. Mr Johnston detailed the timeline for the whole Development Plan process, including the public events across the area. These included sessions in Eyemouth on Thursday 21 September 2017 and Duns on Thursday 5 October 2017. The MIR was due to be prepared by Spring 2018 with consultation taking place throughout the Summer 2018 and the final adopted Local Development Plan being published in Spring 2021. Discussion took place in relation to public transport issues, town boundaries and Mr Johnston confirmed that both of these were included as part of the Local Development Plan. The Chairman thanked Mr Johnston for his presentation.

DECISION

NOTED the presentation.

5. SCOTTISH BORDERS COMMUNITY PLAN

There had been circulated copies of the draft Consultation of the Scottish Borders Community Plan. Ms Shona Smith was in attendance to deliver a presentation on Locality Planning and how this would be implemented going forward. The aim was to give communities the opportunity to do more for themselves, to get them involved in local decision-making and to empower them to make a difference locally. Ms Smith explained that there were eleven parts to the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, three of which were currently in force, namely Community Planning, Participation Requests and Asset Transfer Requests. In terms of Community Planning, it was defined within the Act as "How public bodies work together and with the community in each council area to make life better for people." Partners included NHS Borders, Police Scotland, Scottish Borders Council, Scottish Enterprise and Scottish Fire and Rescue and this Partnership was required to publish a Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) which set out the local outcomes to be prioritised for improvement, as well as produce locality plans at a more local level. Tackling inequalities, that is closing the gap between the least and most disadvantaged within the communities was a specific focus of the Plan. The presentation explained the approach used in the Scottish Borders and listed the proposed outcomes, namely Our Economy and Skills; Our Health and Wellbeing; Our Children and Young People; Our Vulnerable Adults and Families; Our Ageing Population; and other cross-cutting outcomes. Ms Smith went on to explain what the next steps were in developing the Plans and answered questions/provided clarification. It was noted that comments could be submitted online via the SBC website and further guidance and advice was available from Ms Smith and her team at Council Headquarters. The Chairman thanked Ms Smith for her attendance and encouraged attendees to take this opportunity to comment on the Plan.

DECISION

NOTED.

MEMBER

Councillor Moffat joined the meeting during discussion of the following item.

6. SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

- 6.1 There had been circulated copies of a report by Scottish Fire and Rescue informing the Locality Committee of activity in the area since 15 June 2017. Station Manager Matt Acton was in attendance to highlight the main points of the report. In summary, there had been 5 occurrences of fires in houses/buildings with no casualties recorded; 4 other fire incidents with no casualties; 12 Special Service incidents resulting in 5 casualties; and 30 unwanted fire alarm signals involving commercial/industrial premises. Station Manager Acton advised that work continued with local businesses to reduce these incidents on an ongoing basis. The report went on to inform Members of continued activity which had occurred and which was currently taking place in Berwickshire and the measures being taken to address issues identified within the area. Crews were currently engaged with the Summer Thematic Action Plan which focussed on deliberate fires; summer safety; water safety; and wildfire and outdoor safety. The report also provided an update on the recruitment of firefighters and it was noted that this was progressing well across Berwickshire with posts having been filled in Duns, Eyemouth and Coldstream. Coldstream was now fully crewed with further vacancies available in Duns and Eyemouth. Discussion followed and Station Manager Acton responded to questions raised by Members. In addition, further consultations would take place over the coming months and Members were advised that, as the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service moved through the transformation stage of development, it would be necessary to explore new ways of expanding the role of firefighters within the Service.
- 6.2 With reference to paragraph 6.2 of the Minute of 15 June 2017, Station Manager Acton again invited comment on the current Local Plan and explained that feedback received would inform the 2017 - 2020 Plan scheduled for publication in 2017. The Chairman thanked Station Manager Acton for his attendance.

DECISION

NOTED the report.

7. POLICE SCOTLAND

There were circulated at the meeting copies of a report by Community Inspector John Scott updating the Locality Committee on Police Scotland performance, activities and issues across wards for the period up to 7 September 2017 and to look at events linking in with the ward priorities in the coming months. The planning for local events across Berwickshire had paid off with the summer events held across Berwickshire posing little concern. Communities had engaged with the Scottish Borders Council Safety Advisory Group (SAG) process to ensure that events ran safely and as smoothly as possible and Inspector Scott congratulated the organising committees and those involved in making this possible. The report highlighted the Ward priorities in each of the two Berwickshire Wards and the work that Police Scotland was taking forward to address these issues. In East Berwickshire the priorities were road safety, misuse of drugs, rural thefts, and antisocial behaviour; for Mid-Berwickshire, they included road safety, inconsiderate driver behaviour, and antisocial behaviour. Inspector Scott advised that the Drivewise Project had opened again and young people from schools across the Borders were attending sessions at Charterhall airfield. The Get Ready for Winter road safety campaign was also being developed and further information and advice would be publicised in due course. During the current reporting period, there had been 11 drug offences, including 6 for supplying drugs and one for producing cannabis and Inspector Scott emphasised the importance of intelligence in detecting such offences. He also noted that reporting had increased relating to suspected cannabis farms. Rural thefts continued to be of concern with some thefts being carried out at properties that were remote or under renovation. Recent hare coursing crimes had resulted in offenders receiving significant sentences and again, Inspector Scott reiterated the importance of public intelligence in detection. In response to concerns raised previously in relation to the potential risks caused by long

vehicles using the cement works junction to the A1, Inspector Scott confirmed that lorries should only move out of the junction when the road was clear in both directions. The Chairman thanked Inspector Scott for his attendance.

DECISION

NOTED the report.

8. COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

8.1 Rail Action Group East of Scotland

The Annual General Meeting of the Rail Action Group East of Scotland (RAGES) would take place in Reston Village Hall on Wednesday 20 September 2017 at 7.30pm and would provide an update on the re-opening of Reston Station.

DECISION

NOTED.

8.2 Floral Gateway Awards

The Floral Gateway Awards took place on 5 September at Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells and Berwickshire as a whole had a very successful evening. Ayton was named third equal in the Champion of Champions category; Coldstream and Chirnside received first and third respectively for the Large Village; Coldingham and Greenlaw came first and second in the Small Village category; Westruther and Burnmouth were first and third for the Wee Village; Burnmouth won the Border Biodiversity award; and Coldstream were joint winners of the Quality of Life. On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman offered congratulations to all the towns and villages that took part in this year's awards.

DECISION

NOTED.

9. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Future meetings of the Berwickshire Locality Committee were scheduled for:-

30 November 2017;

1 March 2018; and

7 June 2018.

DECISION

NOTED.

The meeting concluded at 8.20 pm.