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## Eildon Area Partnership



MINUTE of Meeting of the EILDON AREA PARTNERSHIP held in the Transport Interchange, Galashiels on Thursday, 25 January 2018 at 6.30 pm

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Present:- Councillors G. Edgar (Chairman), S. Aitchison, E. Jardine, H. Scott and E. Thornton-Nicol

Apologies:- Councillors A. Anderson, K. Drum, T. Miers and D. Parker  
Also present:- Councillor S. Bell  
33 partners, Community Councillors, officers and members of the public

1. **WELCOME**

Councillor Edgar, Chairman, welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Eildon Area Partnership and referred to the Community Councils, Partners and local organisations who were represented.

2. **INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW AREA PARTNERSHIP**

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Locality Services, Councillor Aitchison, set the scene for how the new Area Partnership would develop. He explained that Area Partnerships would bring together key organisations, groups, businesses and individuals from across the public, private and third sectors and from within the local communities to collectively work together. The first meeting of the Eildon Area Partnership, would be used to introduce the new format of meeting, provide some context to both community planning and locality planning, as well as an overview of grants and funding. Future Area Partnership meetings would be themed to help discuss and debate issues in a more manageable way.

3. **SCOTTISH BORDERS COMMUNITY PLAN AND EILDON LOCALITY PLAN**

Jenni Craig, Service Director for Customer and Communities, explained that the introduction of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 had seen the Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership publish a Community Plan to address Borders-wide challenges and opportunities. Copies of the Community Plan were provided in the information packs on all the tables at the meeting. At a local level Area Partnerships would take forward the development of Locality Plans; so the meeting was an opportunity to participate in an informal discussion about the challenges and issues affecting the Eildon area. There were four main themes of the Community Plan, namely: our Economy, Skills & Learning; our Health and Wellbeing; our Quality of Life; and our Place. An additional theme of Transport had been suggested by the local Members as a priority issue for the Eildon area.

4. **OPEN FORUM**

The Chairman invited those present to discuss at their tables the emerging issues in Eildon across the themes of the Community Plan and to write these down on the post-it notes provided. 30 minutes was given for this activity. The Chairman also asked those

present to complete meeting evaluation forms which had been provided. From the feedback it was clear that the debate had included issues, challenges and opportunities across all five themes, with 'Economy Skills and Learning' emerging as the priority theme for discussion at the next meeting of the Eildon Area Partnership. The feedback was summarised as shown in the appendix to this Minute.

5. **GRANTS AND FUNDING OVERVIEW**

Shona Smith, Communities and Partnership Manager, summarised the grants and funding streams available to local communities and introduced the Scottish Borders Council team of officers who could provide information and assistance. She also gave an update on the Localities Bid Fund in the Eildon Area where there were 17 projects being put forward to a public vote between 1 and 28 February. In response to questions, Ms Smith explained how multiple voting by members of the public should be flagged up by the voting system being used and that future adjustments in terms of funding allocation may be made if it was found that projects from communities with a low population were at a significant disadvantage in the voting process.

6. **NEXT SCHEDULED MEETINGS**

There was a general discussion about where Area Partnership meetings would be held and about the start time which would be the most convenient for those attending. There was also a question about this on the evaluation forms. It was agreed that the next meeting would again be held at Galashiels, starting at 6.30, but that arrangements for future meetings may be changed depending on feedback on the evaluation forms.

It was noted that the next meetings were scheduled for:-

Thursday 8 March 2018 at 6.30 pm in Galashiels (exact venue to be confirmed)

Thursday 10 May 2018 (time and venue to be confirmed)

*The meeting concluded at 8.30 pm*

## Discussion Output: General Concerns, Issues, Challenges or Opportunities (25<sup>th</sup> January 2018)

Summary/Area of Discussion:

### Economy, Skills and Learning

- New community education hub
- Town centre regeneration to make the centre appealing, start-ups, attract people, hotel is needed, increase footfall in Borders towns?
- Increase trades by promoting in schools and promote college courses to potential students
- Increase attainment and reduce the gap
- Farming/Estate – low wages, more technical and need to make young people aware of this
- Sustain rural communities and villages – better transport, schools and facilities
- Need to decide what Galashiels is going to be
- Raise aspirations, motivation to do this – business or sporting ambassadors
- Young people – what is there to keep us in the Borders post school/education? Lack of access to businesses/organisations. Employment or skills fayres needed
- Older people – digital skills gap – need an intergenerational project?
- Borders Railway – people going to Edinburgh but less visiting Borders, Textile Heritage not apparent when getting off the train. Extending route needed
- Mountain biking development needed as area not cycle friendly
- Heriot Watt – What can they do to keep students in the area?
- Lack of teachers in certain subjects means young people miss out on doing what they want to do in life
- Utilise Rugby Heritage
- Tourism Industry is key – develop young workforce in Tourism
- Survival of local business needed, loss of local banks, shops and post offices
- Rebrand the Scottish Borders
- Empty properties with absent landlords
- Idea of a small business centre
- Re-invigorate old building to be used
- Young people leave to study and don't come back, what can we do to make them stay?
- More apprenticeships
- Promote Borders and smaller towns for businesses, no allocated space in smaller towns and villages
- Rail and transport needs to access smaller towns where there are business premises?
- More opportunities for young people that don't want to go to University?

Summary/Area of Discussion:

**Health, Care & Wellbeing**

- Issues with GP's and securing appointments
- Mental Health in young people and in school setting an increasing issue and less resources to tackle
- More third sector and volunteer groups to help with mental health issues
- Mental health in young people leads to isolation. Need connectivity and transport (across Borders)
- Older people work with young people and teachers better educated to deal with behavioural issues
- Better co-ordination of mental health facilities for young people
- Healthy living and assisting people to live independently to look after themselves
- Formal and informal activities
- Transport to health facilities an issue, Scottish Ambulance Service changed criteria in 2012 reducing the service
- Prescription delivery, drivewise for older people, postal service befriending?
- 'Boris' bike scheme, tourism offer for occasional uses, students need transport such as bikes?
- Volunteering – Befriending scheme will build capacity within communities

Summary/Area of Discussion:

**Quality of Life**

- Leisure facilities for 14-17 year olds, High Schools open in the evening?
- Pre pub age group, very little to do. Where are the social centres for 14-17 year olds?
- Later opening hours, places to go, what is in the Borders to encourage longer stays?
- Walk around town? Signage but no guides
- Young people want a cultural festival for the Year of the Young People, 2018 to help with equality and diversity
- Possible Cherry Blossom festival to try to encourage visitors in Spring.
- More benches, each one having a Facebook page
- Great opportunities need communicated
- Tourism, need to sell it, identify different aspects in each town and village to promote
- Don't know what the quality of life is like for young people as not at the meeting
- Crime is mixed, concern with housebreakings and acquisitive crime
- Red tape around Community Empowerment Act and grant funding, puts people off and assets can become detrimental to a community group
- Rural villages need lunch clubs, community to provide lunches? Resources kept to a minimum will reduce overheads
- Communications platform to promote and raise awareness of events, clubs and facilities especially for those socially excluded. There is a lot going on and people don't know about it!

Summary/Area of Discussion:

**Our Place**

- Radical thinking and can do attitude for all 5 themes
- Cycle Network to be completed
- Galashiels not attractive when you get off the train, no central focal point, tapestry?
- Private gym with pool for adults at Tweedbank would entice employees coming in to work in Scottish Borders or those living here going on the train to work in Edinburgh
- Rateable value prohibiting and restricting pop up shops, community involvement needed, art shows and events? Visual impact of empty shops and smashed windows look unattractive
- Consistency in signage and street furniture in town centre? Needs to be better to join things up
- Young people – no spaces or places for them to go, no shops for them so they head up to Edinburgh
- Good quality affordable housing and regeneration of housing both social and private is needed
- Earlston has plans for affordable housing
- Borders has an issue with fuel poverty
- Rise in foodbanks, have to be referred by GP, Social Work, CAB, Police etc. Nowhere in Galashiels for starving people to go. Perhaps a non-referral food bank is needed?

Summary/Area of Discussion:

**Transport**

- Better use of transport already operating i.e. opening up college buses to others
- Ensure bus and train times are staggered so both don't arrive and leave at same times
- White lining and pot holes need addressed
- Cycle route Earlston to Leaderfoot created
- Promote car share to help with rural transport
- Free travel for under 16's
- Transport discounts not being offered or honoured
- Transport needed for young people to get to youth clubs/work
- Poor connections across the region – Eyemouth to Gala buses
- Border Buses could be a good business

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