

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL
TEVIOT AND LIDDESDALE AREA FORUM

MINUTE of MEETING of the TEVIOT AND
LIDDESDALE AREA FORUM held in the
TOWER MILL, HEART OF HAWICK on
16 October 2012 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillors A. Cranston, Z. Elliot, S. Marshall, G. Turnbull
Community Councillors R. Brydon, R. Knight, I. Robson.

Apologies: Councillors D. Paterson, R. Smith

In Attendance:- Clerk to the Council, Senior Consultant (Douglas Scott), Project Manager (Shona Smith),
Committee and Elections Officer (Fiona Walling); Inspector Carol Wood (Lothian and
Borders Police),

Members of the Public:- 2

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

1. This being the first meeting of Teviot and Liddesdale Area Forum, set up under the Council's new Scheme of Administration, the Committee considered the appointment of Chairman. Councillor Elliot, seconded by Councillor Marshall, moved that Councillor Turnbull be appointed as Chairman.

DECISION

AGREED that Councillor Turnbull be appointed as Chairman of Teviot and Liddesdale Area Forum.

APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

2. The Committee considered the appointment of a Vice Chairman. Councillor Turnbull, seconded by Councillor Cranston, moved that Councillor Marshall be appointed as Vice Chairman.

DECISION

AGREED that Councillor Marshall be appointed as Vice-Chairman of Teviot and Liddesdale Area Forum.

TIMBER TRANSPORT

3. The Chairman welcomed Mr James England, South of Scotland Timber Transport Officer, to the meeting. Mr England gave a presentation on Timber Transport and the role of the Timber Transport Forum which he represented. It was highlighted that the South of Scotland had the highest concentration of forestry in the UK which contributed significantly to the rural economy. Forests that were planted in the 1970's were maturing resulting in a rapid increase in timber harvesting. Due to the high concentration of Sawmills in the area timber was also transported into the region for processing. Mr England explained that the National Timber Transport Forum was divided into 11 Regional Timber Transport Groups and that the Scottish Borders Timber Transport Group was well established. A Partnering Charter set out the aims of the Forum which were to support the many benefits of forestry by ensuring that the timber industries could access and market the UK timber resource in a sustainable way. At the same time the Forum sought to minimise the impact of timber transport on the public road network, on local communities and on the environment. One of the specific processes was to maintain and promote voluntary agreed timber routes maps as a basis for finding solutions to timber transport problems. Mr England gave the four definitions used to classify roads, on a voluntary basis, on the Agreed Route Maps and displayed a Route Map of the Borders: 'Agreed Routes' could be used by timber haulage without restriction; 'Consultation Routes' were

recognised as being key to timber extraction but required consultation with the Local Authority with possible restrictions relating to timing and allowable tonnage etc; 'Severely Restricted Routes' should not normally be used in their present condition; and 'Excluded Routes' should not be used.

4. As Timber Transport Officer, one of the ways Mr England was able to help was to investigate funding streams for road repairs. He referred to the Scottish Government Strategic Timber Transport Fund (STTF) which had been set up as a source of funding. The presentation included photographs which showed a road in the region that had suffered severe and rapid damage by heavy timber lorries and which had been exacerbated by the effects of a hard frost. This particular road had benefited from a 50% grant fund from STTF which was match funded to meet the total cost of £500k for the repair. The Timber Transport Officer provided an independent point of contact between the forestry industry, local authorities and communities to improve communication, partnerships and to support conflict resolution. Some of the measures being taken by responsible hauliers were highlighted, such as limiting speeds to 52 mph, deflation of tyres to spread the load on vulnerable roads, onboard weighing systems and avoidance of driving in convoys. A Best Practice Guide and Revised Codes of Practice on timber haulage had been produced and Sawmills were being encouraged to have a policy by which they would work only with reputable hauliers who followed the approved guidelines.
5. At the conclusion of the presentation Mr England answered questions. With regard to action that could be taken in respect of less reputable hauliers he explained that the Forum attempted to inform and educate where necessary, using examples of good practice but also relying on the police for assistance. He stressed that forest management activities were tightly regulated by certification schemes. He confirmed that STTF money was also used in a proactive way, for example to improve infrastructure in preparation for timber transport and to look for alternative ways of transport where available. He agreed that the use of signage to warn and direct other vehicles was of value as much of the road damage from heavy vehicles occurred due to acceleration and braking manoeuvres which could perhaps be avoided. With regard to match funding of grant awards from the STTF he explained that some of this was private sector led which reduced the financial pressure on local authorities. The Chairman thanked Mr England for the very informative and helpful presentation.

DECISION

NOTED the presentation.

MINUTE

6. There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the Teviot and Liddesdale Area Committee of 18 September 2012.

DECISION

AGREED to note the Minute.

THE REMIT OF THE AREA FORUM

7. With reference to paragraph 13 of the Minute of the Teviot and Liddesdale Area Committee of 18 September 2012, there had been circulated copies of an extract from the Council's new Scheme of Administration, as approved on 30 August 2012. The Teviot and Liddesdale Area Committee had been replaced by an Area Forum and Jenny Wilkinson, the Clerk to the Council, was in attendance to explain the main changes with respect to the Area Forums, which would be formally launched across all areas in November 2012. Teviot and Liddesdale Area Forum would consist of the six elected Scottish Borders Councillors representing the Wards of Hawick and Denholm, and Hawick and Hermitage. In addition there would be a representative from each of the Police and NHS Borders and the Chairman or a representative from each of the Community Councils in the Teviot and Liddesdale area. It was also open to the Scottish Borders Councillors to agree to include a representative from any other local body, for any length of time considered appropriate, according to the issues being addressed. To enhance opportunity for community engagement there would be a market-style approach adopted between 4 and 6 pm, before the formal part of the meeting, to

enable members of the public to drop-in to consult, engage and obtain information from officers and elected Members. Issues for focus would depend on topical activities within the Council and the area but would also be taken from agenda items put forward by members of the public.

**DECISION
NOTED**

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND AREA FORUMS

8. Continuing on the theme of community planning, Senior Consultant, Douglas Scott, was in attendance to give a presentation on the revised arrangements and the role of Area Forums in that process. Copies of the presentation were circulated at the meeting for reference.

Mr Scott explained that there was a new emphasis on Community Planning from the Scottish Government and COSLA, the published "Statement of Ambition" having clear expectations for Community Planning Partnerships. In order to address the challenges, every local authority was exploring ways to work and Scottish Borders Council were preparing clear principles for moving forward, including emphasis on cross-cutting themes with elected Member involvement. The presentation summarised the background to the evidence based approach and set out the external context, the results of the most recent Household Survey, a strategic assessment and the findings of the Christie Commission which proposed that public service organisations should work to extend and deepen a local partnership approach. This culminated in a suggested strategic objective for the Borders which was:-

"to work in partnership with other key public, voluntary and private bodies together with communities and businesses, to maintain and improve the quality of life and meet the needs of Borders residents and their communities through the delivery of high quality public services, projects, advocacy and other actions".

The strategic objective had been divided into four themes, namely: Early Intervention and Prevention; Place and Communities; Economy and Infrastructure; and future Model of Public Service Delivery for the Scottish Borders. Within the theme of Place and Communities the priorities were Whole Town Programmes; Community Safety; Community Resilience; Engagement and Development; and Cultural Services.

9. The presentation went on to detail the demographics of the Teviot and Liddesdale Area and the particular challenges faced within the area, illustrated by comparisons with average figures from the Scottish Borders and Scotland. There followed a discussion on the priorities for future discussion and for attention at future meetings of the Teviot and Liddesdale Area Forum. One issue raised related to carers and the support needed for the growing number of carers in the area. In this respect there was agreement that it would be useful to have information about the work being carried out under the theme 'Early Intervention and Prevention', for example the proposals for the integration of health and social care services. It was stressed that the aim would be to engage with communities through the Area Forum and address areas of uncertainty before these became major issues of concern. The Chairman commented on the opportunities presented by the new arrangements in respect of the Area Forum and thanked Jenny Wilkinson and Douglas Scott for their attendance.

**DECISION
NOTED the presentation.**

OPEN QUESTIONS

10. There were no questions from members of the public.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL SPOTLIGHT

11. Mr Robson, from Upper Teviotdale and Borthwick Water, referred to concern expressed in his locality over the frequency of road closures with little apparent co-ordination. This often resulted in the diversion of heavy traffic onto minor roads. He also thought there had been insufficient notification about closures of bridges which were being carried out due to a series of bridge inspections in the Borders area and that the timing of the closures was not logical in some cases.
12. Mr Knight, from Burnfoot Community Council, advised that there had been one meeting since the summer break. He was pleased to report that the site of the old abattoir had been tidied up and fenced off. A "cold-calling" free zone had been piloted in the Burnfoot area and was being taken forward. Work had been carried out in front of the school to prevent parking on the grass and new barriers had been erected. The AGM of the Community Council was scheduled for 17 October and there were plans to discuss a winter resilience plan. Councillor Marshall added that £5k had been set aside for drainage work on Burnfoot Road.
13. Mr Brydon, representing Hawick Community Council, explained that work was being carried out on a programme to replace and upgrade the Christmas lights for the town, to improve the display and conform with new regulations. With regard to the Bill McLaren Memorial project he reported that estimates had now been received for the bust.

DECISION

NOTED the reports.

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.

SB WARDENS REPORT

14. There was circulated at the meeting a report covering the work of the SB Warden in the area over the months of August, September and October. There had been dealt with: 2 incidents of environmental damage; 21 complaints about dog fouling; 12 incidents of anti social behaviour and 9 of dumping rubbish. The wardens had witnessed a total of 170 dog walkers picking up after their dogs and issued 1 fixed penalty notice in the Hawick area.

DECISION

NOTED the SB Warden's report.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

15. The next meeting would be held on Tuesday, 20 November 2012 in the Lesser Hall, High Street, Hawick, when the Area Forum would be formally launched.

The meeting concluded at 8 pm.