

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL
TEVIOT AND LIDDESDALE AREA FORUM

MINUTE of the MEETING of the TEVIOT
AND LIDDESDALE AREA FORUM held in the
TOWER MILL, HEART OF HAWICK on
20 November 2012 at 6.30 p.m.

Present:- Councillors G. Turnbull (Chairman), A. Cranston, Z. Elliot, S. Marshall, D.
Paterson, R. Smith.
Community Councillors C. Levell, I. Robson, M. Short.
Inspector C. Wood (Lothian and Borders Police)

Apologies:- Community Councillor R. Knight

In Attendance:- Chief Financial Officer, Clerk to the Council, SB Local Area Manager (C. Blackie),
Committee and Elections Team Leader.

Members of the Public:- 9

MINUTE

1. There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the meeting held on 16 October 2012.

DECISION

AGREED to approve the Minute for signature by the Chairman.

PROMOTING HEALTHY WEIGHT

2. The Joint Head of Health Improvement, Allyson McCollam, was in attendance and gave a presentation on Healthy Weight. She advised that current statistics showed that 67% of those aged 16 years and over were overweight and of these 26% are obese. The rate was rising for both men and women and 1 in 5 of Primary 1 children in Scottish Borders were overweight or obese. This was an issue as obesity led to ill health and resulted in these people having a poorer quality of life as well as premature mortality. This in turn meant a higher dependency on services provided by health and social care and the resultant increase on the costs of having to provide those services. There were a number of different factors which influenced weight including food production and marketing, lifestyle and income. Encouraging healthy weight could only be tackled by partnership working both locally and nationally. Ms McCollam outlined the place of the Area Forum in the Early Intervention Project being carried out on in the Borders. The aim of the project was to help people make healthier choices, to create environments that promoted health and to strengthen delivery of programmes and interventions. She also highlighted examples of the types of action which were being used to meet the aims of the project. Ms McCollam answered questions and emphasised the need to influence the eating habits of the whole family.

DECISION

NOTED the presentation.

FINANCIAL CHALLENGES 2013-2018

3. The Chief Financial Officer, David Robertson, was in attendance to give a presentation on the Financial Challenges which the Council had to face over the next 5 years. He outlined where the Council's funding came from, how it was apportioned between the various departments and highlighted that the majority was currently spent on the provision of education and social work services. There were a number of challenges facing the Council, mainly as a result of the economic situation but also the changing demographics of the area. These included the need to modernise the school estate, deal with more frequent and extreme weather events, protect the region from flooding and meet new government targets

for recycling. It was also important to continue to maintain the road infrastructure, keep pace with developments in technology and provide services for people, both young and old, all with the aim of making the Borders an attractive place to live and work. In terms of future funding a gap of £28.7m had been identified over the next 5 years and the Council were developing a 5 year finance plan and solutions to bridge this in ways which would have the least impact on services. The status quo was not an option and difficult choices would need to be made which might affect the Council's ability to deliver some services. The public were being encouraged to submit their views and the ways in which this could be done were provided. Mr Robertson answered questions and gave details of the work being done to improve the Council's debt recovery procedure.

DECISION

NOTED the presentation.

SMALL SCHEMES

4. There had been circulated copies of a report by the Director of Environment and Infrastructure seeking approval for the proposed new SB Local small schemes from the Area Forum and to up-date the Members on Roads Capital & Revenue works and previously approved SB Local Small Schemes. The following schemes had been requested for consideration:-

Up-grade Market Cross, Wilton Lodge Park	£1,000
Replace old rose bed at O'Connell St Car Park with either	
(i) Tegular Blockwork	£8,805 or
(ii) Low Maintenance Shrubs	£1,430
New Play Equipment, Springer, Miller's Knowe	£900

The SB Local Area Manager advised that prices had now been received for three further schemes:-

Metal Handrail at Silverbuthall	£350
Dropped Kerb at Wallace Court	£900
Removal of item of play equipment and renovation	£1300

Members discussed the proposed schemes and agreed that with regard to the replacement of the Old Rose bed the low maintenance shrubs option be chosen as the way forward. It was noted that if the schemes listed above were approved a total of £19k remained in the budget. Councillor Smith indicated that there were still some schemes for the Hawick and Hermitage Ward which required to be costed and Councillor Marshall proposed that, given the recent criminal activity on the High Street, any remaining monies in the budget be used to improve CCTV in the area.

DECISION

AGREED:-

- (a) to approve the 6 schemes listed above with the low maintenance shrub option being chosen for O'Connell Street;**
- (b) that costs be provided for the outstanding schemes for the Hawick and Hermitage Ward; and**
- (c) that costs be obtained for the upgrading of the CCTV system on Hawick High Street, including both initial costs and ongoing revenue costs, and a report brought to the next meeting of the Area Forum.**

HAWICK CAMPERVAN WELCOME

5. There had been circulated copies on the Monitoring and Evaluation report following year 1 of the Hawick Campervan Welcome Initiative. Mr Jack Yallop, Chairman of the Project, was present at the meeting and updated Members on the success of the project. The proposals for improvements included adverts in the Campervan magazine, setting up a website and providing updated signs. The project would start again in Easter 2013. Members complimented Mr Yallop and his group on the success of the project which brought much needed revenue to the town.

DECISION

NOTED the report.

OPEN QUESTIONS

6. (a) A member of the public raised concerns regarding the state of the High Street for disabled people and the need for more dropped kerbs. It was noted that problems had been caused by blocks being dislodged and it was also reported that costings were being sought for additional bollards to be provided to stop cars parking on the pavement and causing further damage to the pavement.

DECISION

AGREED that Councillor Paterson would speak with relevant Officers.

- (b) With regard to the damage being caused to roads by timber transport, a member of the public advised that he had discovered that coal mining communities received compensation for roads damaged by transporting the coal and asked if this also applied to timber. It was advised that unfortunately the funding only applied to mineral extraction and not timber.

DECISION

NOTED.

- (c) The Chairman read out a question received via the Council's website as follows:-

"In view of the recent report 'The Economic Value of Landscape on the Scottish Borders' will councillors accept that the scenic areas of the Borders, particularly Teviotdale and other SLAs, must be protected from large wind turbine developments? Tourism provides jobs in rural areas, in Teviotdale there are at least 164. The Borders landscapes are a tremendous asset and the jobs which depend on them are precious and irreplaceable."

DECISION

NOTED that this was currently a very contentious issue for Members and that each application had to be considered on its own merits.

- (d) A member of the public offered his congratulations on the new Area Forum format and asked if there were any new initiatives being proposed that Members might like to comment on. It was reported that the new format was still developing and involved all community planning partners. Councillor Turnbull advised that there was a forthcoming meeting to draw up an economic development plan for Hawick and the input of the Area Forum would be sought.

DECISION

NOTED.

- (e) A member of the public raised the problem of BT providing a poor internet service for Businesses in Hawick. Councillor Smith advised that this subject would be discussed at COSLA the following week and would form part of the economic development plan.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

- (f) A member of the public asked if there would be a further presentation on the impact of changes to welfare benefits, including the effect on RSLs and was advised that there would likely be a presentation to the Forum in February/March 2013.

**DECISION
NOTED that there would be a presentation on Welfare Reform at the next meeting of the Area Forum.**

COMMUNITY COUNCIL SPOTLIGHT

- 7 Mr Levell from Hobkirk Community Council reported that two contentious wind farm applications were the main issue in his area. He commented on the problems relating to Community Councils not having the expertise to negotiate with wind farm companies in respect of community benefit and asked if the Council would consider appointing a dedicated officer to provide this resource. Councillor Smith advised that it was currently Council policy not to engage in discussion on community benefit.
8. Mr Robson, from Upper Teviotdale and Borthwick Water reported that wind farm applications were also the major issue in his area and with regard to community benefit suggested that there needed to be more co-operation between community councils to reduce the burden of negotiations. With regard to the Langhope Rig scheme construction, details were still awaited in respect of the traffic plan and the closure of Martins Bridge. He also commented on closures of the A7 by Bear and the damage this caused to other routes in the area.
9. Mrs Short from Hawick Community Council reported that the Christmas Parade would be held on 1 December 2012 and new lights were being erected. The Community Council had sponsored a police bike and it would be presented tomorrow. An offer of landscaping for the works around the Bill McLaren bust had been accepted. An award to clear up fly tipping had been received from Zero Waste Scotland and this would be used to clean up an area of Burnfoot. Discussions had also been held regarding wind farm applications and they would be arranging a joint meeting with the other affected Community Councils.

**DECISION
NOTED the reports.**

REVIEW OF COMMUNITY COUNCIL SCHEME

10. With reference to paragraph 10 of the Minute of Scottish Borders Council of 25 October 2012, it was reported that a Working Group was being set up to review the current Community Council Scheme and each Area Forum had been asked to nominate an Elected Member and a Community Councillor to be members of this Working Group. Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillor Marshall, moved that Councillor Turnbull be appointed as the Elected Member representative and Councillor Turnbull, seconded by Councillor Cranston, moved that Mrs Short from Hawick Community Council be appointed as the Community Council representative and both these were unanimously accepted.

**DECISION
AGREED that Councillor Turnbull and Mrs Short be appointed to the Working Group.**

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

11. The next meeting would be held on Tuesday, 15 January 2012 in the Heart of Hawick.

The meeting concluded at 8.30 p.m.