

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 19
February 2013 at 6.30 pm

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

Apologies:- Inspector C. Wood (Lothian and Borders Police).

In Attendance:- Chief Financial Officer, Environmental Strategy Co-ordinator, SB Local Area Manager (C.
Blackie), Democratic Services Officer (F. Walling).

Members of the Public:- 9

MINUTE

1. There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the meeting held on 20 November 2012.

DECISION

AGREED to approve the Minute for signature by the Chairman.

2. With regard to paragraph 4 (c) of the Minute of 20 November 2012 the SB Local Area Manager advised that a review of CCTV provision in the whole of the Borders area was currently being carried out by the Environment and Infrastructure Department.

DECISION

NOTED.

3. With regard to paragraph 6 (a) of the Minute of 20 November 2012 Councillor Paterson had met the Council's Divisional Manager Mr Finnie who agreed to provide an update with regard to dropped kerbs in the High Street.

DECISION

NOTED.

4. With regard to paragraph 6 (f) of the Minute of 20 November 2012 the Democratic Services Officer advised that a presentation on Welfare Reform and its impact would be given at the April meeting of the Area Forum.

DECISION

NOTED.

SCOTTISH BORDERS RAPE CRISIS CENTRE

5. Service Co-ordinator, Dawn Osborne, was in attendance to give a presentation on the Scottish Borders Rape Crisis Centre (SBRCC) which was based in Galashiels. Ms Osborne explained that the Rape Crisis Centre identified the Scottish Borders as a priority area for development of a new

rape crisis service and secured the funds in 2011 to start and sustain this process. In July 2010 SBRCC opened its Helpline, and shortly after began to offer face-to-face support for female survivors at the new centre in Galashiels. The SBRCC service was delivered by the Service Co-ordinator, a part-time administrator and eight volunteer support workers from across the area. The service provided emotional and practical support through face to face meetings and by telephone and email. This was directed towards survivors of rape, sexual assault, childhood sexual abuse and other forms of sexual violence. Delivery of support was centre-based with a limited outreach approach. Support and information was also provided for male survivors, family, friends and partners. There were 43 referrals during 2011/12 in the Scottish Borders and in the present year since April 2012 there were 67 people accessing the service. By far the highest number of referrals relate to survivors of childhood sexual abuse. The presentation went on to give further details relating to the 43 referrals in the previous year, which included the source of referrals, employment status, the age of first abuse, where the clients lived and the type of support given. The challenges for the future centred around funding and resourcing the development of the service and sustaining volunteers for support work and as trustees. This was at a time when demand for the service was increasing. In response to a question about current funding Ms Osborne explained that the Scottish Government allocated £50k to each area subject to a satisfactory application that had to meet certain criteria and Rape Crisis Service Centre Standards. As an example of the use of funding, the cost of training seven volunteers was £5k plus the cost of induction time. Ms Osborne also commented on the fact that in Scotland only 7% of reported rapes culminated in convictions. She felt it was particularly unsatisfactory that adults subjected to sexual abuse in the Borders had to travel to Edinburgh for forensic examination. The Chairman thanked Ms Osborne for her attendance.

DECISION

NOTED the presentation.

BUDGET 2013/18

6. The Chief Financial Officer, David Robertson, was in attendance to give a presentation on the Scottish Borders Council Budget 2013/18. Handouts were circulated and Mr Robertson outlined the main headlines of the financial strategy which formed the 5 year revenue and 10 year capital plan. The Council would continue to invest in business transformation, service reviews and efficiency projects to deliver long term financial and service benefits. There would be investment in infrastructure with a £191m capital programme. The Council would maximise income while keeping fees and charges to service users at an affordable level and Council tax would be frozen at 2007/08 levels for the sixth successive year. Unallocated reserves of £5.6m for 2013/14 would be maintained in line with the assessed risk register. The presentation went on to look at the Council's funding, the highest proportion of which was Revenue Support Grant from the government. However the number of households at January 2013 had increase by over 300 giving an increase in the income from Council Tax. With regard to the Revenue Budget proposals Mr Robertson outlined the budget pressures and how it was proposed these would be funded, further details being given about the Council's transformation projects, business efficiencies and rationalisations. The presentation then moved on to look at the Capital Budget Proposals 2013/23. Of the £191m that made up the capital programme for the next 10 years only £8.783m would be derived from the General Capital grant from Scottish Government. The Council relied on other funding sources to fill the gap. Mr Robertson summarised the proposed capital projects, details of which were included in the document circulated and answered questions on proposals relating to the Devolved School Management budget and the funding of Hawick's Flood Prevention scheme.

DECISION

NOTED the presentation.

A LOW CARBON ECONOMIC STRATEGY FOR THE SCOTTISH BORDERS

7. The Economic Strategy Co-ordinator, Louise Cox, was in attendance to give a presentation on the development of a Low Carbon Economic Strategy for the Scottish Borders. The reason for the

presentation being brought to the Area Forum was that the draft strategy had been issued for a 12 week public consultation period which would end on 26 April 2013. Ms Cox explained that there was a need for development of a Low Carbon Economic Strategy due to the introduction of emissions reduction legislation, the economic/job opportunities presented, rising fuel prices and also the generally accepted view that the climate was changing and there would be a higher incidence of extreme weather events. The objectives of the strategy would address individuals, businesses, renewable energy projects, buildings, transport and Infrastructure, skills and education and adaptation and resilience. Ms Cox went on to give some examples of actions put forward through the strategy. It would become important to draw down maximum Scottish Government funding to support home energy advice and to pursue the establishment of the Scottish Borders Woodfuel Forum. Options should be investigated for public transport shuttles between major employers and key towns. It was proposed that there should be support for the delivery of a programme of low carbon training opportunities with Borders College. Also of huge importance would be to support the development of community resilience action plans, to cover transportation, essential supplies, medical needs etc. The draft strategy had been considered by Scottish Borders Council on 31 January 2013 before the launch of the consultation on 1 February. The consultation process would involve the Area Fora, Community Councils, Community Planning Boards and other key partners, as well as individuals. It was hoped that, following any revision brought about through consultation, the document would be presented to Council for approval in June 2013, with ongoing development of the action plan and a full review of the strategy after 3 years. Among the key questions that should be addressed in the strategy were whether the low carbon objectives were appropriate, whether the actions and timescales were feasible, what opportunities for local businesses may be presented and consequently what the implications were for education and training needs in the Borders. Ms Cox advised that the full consultation document was available to view on the Scottish Borders Council website. In the ensuing discussion Members recognised the potential opportunities for local businesses in relation to woodfuel. The possibility was noted of forming a Borders Woodfuel group in conjunction with the Borders Machinery Ring who were already carrying out work in this area. Reference was also made to the potential for further development of hydropower in the Borders.

DECISION

NOTED the presentation.

SMALL SCHEMES

8. 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 SB Local Area Manager advised that there was a total of £18,842 remaining in the Small Schemes 2012/13 budget for the area. The following schemes had been requested for consideration:-

Replace the old rose beds at Lothian Street with low maintenance shrubs	£1900
Install new play equipment, the Moat Park	£12000
Install metal bollards, High Street, Hawick	£ 9850

9. Members discussed the proposed schemes. As there was insufficient budget remaining to cover all three schemes it was agreed that the first two small schemes should be implemented. It was further agreed that the balance of money remaining in the Hawick Pay and Display budget be used for the installation of metal bollards on the High Street. The SB Local Area Manager updated Members on the progress of work carried out in relation to other approved small schemes listed in Appendix A to the report. The programme of Revenue and Capital Works for the Teviot and Liddesdale Area was shown in Appendix B to the report. After further discussion about the Small Schemes budget Councillor Marshall, seconded by Councillor Paterson, moved that in future years the Small Schemes budget for Teviot and Liddesdale should be divided equally between the two Wards for the

purposes of funding small schemes within each. There was unanimous agreement with this motion.

DECISION

AGREED:-

(a) to approve the following small schemes:-

- | | | |
|------|---|--------|
| (i) | Replace the old rose beds at Lothian Street with low maintenance shrubs | £1900 |
| (ii) | Install new play equipment, the Moat Park | £12000 |
- (b) that the balance remaining in the Hawick Pay and Display budget be used for the installation of metal bollards in the High Street; and
- (c) that in future years the Small Schemes budget be divided equally between the Wards of Hawick and Denholm and Hawick and Hermitage for the purpose of funding small schemes within those areas.

OPEN QUESTIONS

10. (a) A member of the public asked for Members' opinion as to whether meetings of the Area Forum were an opportunity to hear from elected officials about what each had done for the area. He was particularly concerned about the need for regeneration of the area in terms of economic activity and jobs. The Chairman replied that he did not think the Area Forum was the right medium for this and that it should not be used as a Members' platform. However, he allowed the individual Members to speak and there followed a lengthy discussion about current activities and issues. It was emphasised that the six Councillors met regularly as a group and each had been delegated with specific missions to take forward. The most important aspect was that the six Councillors were committed to work together in the interests of Hawick and surrounding area. In response to a supplementary question, in relation to economic development, it was explained that the Hawick Development Group no longer existed within the Council's new Scheme of Administration. Councillor Smith advised that the local Members had taken ownership of economic development and rejuvenation objectives and would be working to create a vision for the community.

DECISION NOTED.

- (b) A member of the public raised the issue of savings identified by the Council as a result of reviews and asked if the reviews had yet been carried out. He was advised that some had been completed and others were work in progress.

DECISION NOTED.

- (c) The condition of the road surface at the bottom of Weensland Road was raised. It was pointed out that although Councillors Paterson and Smith had helped with regard to addressing the problem of water run-off on Heronhill there was considerable water damage in the form of potholes in the vicinity of the Lodge. Councillor Paterson offered to pursue this.

DECISION NOTED.

- (d) A member of the public asked if there was any funding to extend the shop front scheme in Hawick, which was proving to be a useful initiative to improve the appearance of the town centre. Councillors agreed to look into this. Attention was drawn to the possibility of local artists being involved, interest having been expressed by two.

**DECISION
NOTED**

COMMUNITY COUNCIL SPOTLIGHT

11. Mr Levell from Hobkirk Community Council reported that he had met with Councillor Marshall, Craig Blackie and Frank Scott regarding upgrade work to be carried out on the war memorial at Bonchester Bridge. This work would be carried forward into the next year and would involve input of work from the Criminal Justice Team. Mr Levell also reported on a meeting held with Banks Renewables regarding the proposed wind farm at Birney Knowe. There was concern expressed on the effect on local businesses and consequent loss to the local economy should the wind farm proposals be approved. With regard to Community Benefits from the proposed development it was agreed that it was important for Community Councils to liaise in their dealings with Banks Renewables
12. Mr Robson, from Upper Teviotdale and Borthwick Water referred to ineffective maintenance work that had been carried out to water damaged roads in the Borthwick Valley. There had also been concern at the time taken for a fire engine to reach a fire at Craik. This had come from Jedburgh with another arriving later from Langholm, as both fire engines from Hawick were being used elsewhere.
13. Mrs Short from Hawick Community Council said that the Community Council would express an interest in holding the Borders Walking Festival 2014. However, as this had been held in Hawick in 2011 she was not hopeful that the venue would be chosen again so soon. This would be discussed at a meeting of the Hawick Walking Group on Monday 25 February. The value of the Walking Festival was recognised in terms of the business brought in to the area. Mrs Short referred to the successful unveiling that day of the Bill McLaren bust in Wilton Lodge Park and thanked all six local Members for their attendance. Councillor Smith expressed appreciation for the work of Hawick Community Council, Marion Short and Rob Brydon for all their work that culminated in a very fitting memorial.

**DECISION
NOTED the reports.**

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

14. The next meeting would be held on Tuesday, 19 March 2013.

The meeting concluded at 9.05 p.m.