

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL
TWEEDDALE AREA FORUM

MINUTE of the MEETING of the TWEEDDALE AREA FORUM held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Rosetta Road, Peebles on 8 May 2013 at 6.30 p.m.

Present:- Councillors W. Archibald, S. Bell, C. Bhatia, G. Logan.
Community Councillors C. Carleton, C. Lewin, B. McCrow, J. Macfarlane, M. McIntosh, W. Raine, J. Taylor, G. Tulloch.

Apologies:- Councillors N. Buckingham, G. Garvie.
Community Councillors S. Horsburgh, A. Stewart.

In Attendance:- Welfare Benefits Services Manager (J. Keir), Engineer (P. Gilhooly), Team Leader – Road Safety/Traffic Management (J. McQuillin), Assistant Road User Manager (R. Yates), SB Local Area Manager (Tweeddale) (J. Hedley), Asset Manager (D. Richardson), Democratic Services Officer (K. Mason).

Members of the Public:- 15.

MINUTE

1. There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the Meeting held on 6 March 2013.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

2. There had been circulated copies of the Minutes of the Parking Sub-Committee held on 14 March and 25 April 2013.
3. With reference to paragraph 4 of the Minute of 14 March 2013, Councillor Bell, Chairman of the Parking Sub-Committee, advised that the Tweeddale Area Forum required to determine whether voting rights could be given to Councillor Archibald and Mr MacDonald who had been co-opted as Members of the Parking Sub-Committee.
4. With reference to paragraph 5(d) of the Minute of 14 March 2013, the Team Leader – Road Safety/Traffic Management advised that the Car Parking Survey would cost £3,300 and it was hoped that £1,500 of this could be funded from surplus Pay Parking revenue. Councillor Bhatia considered it was inappropriate for such funding to be met from Pay Parking income. The Democratic Services Officer advised that under the Council's Scheme of Administration, Tweeddale Area Forum was authorised to "approve Small Schemes and Roads Funding Members' priorities, including the use of Pay Parking income".

DECISION

- (a) **NOTED the minutes of the Parking Sub Committee held on 14 March and 25 April 2013.**
- (b) **AGREED that**

- (i) **Councillor Archibald and Mr MacDonald be given voting rights as Co-opted Members of the Parking Sub-Committee; and**
- (ii) **it be delegated to the Team Leader – Road Safety/Traffic Management in consultation with the Chairman of the Parking- Sub-Committee to determine whether Pay Parking income could be used for funding £1,500 towards a parking survey.**

COMMUNITY COUNCIL SPOTLIGHT

5. (a) Community Councillor Taylor referred to the provision of pre-school nursery education in Eddleston and advised he had been in contact with M. Hutton from the Council's Department of Education and Lifelong Learning about his concerns on the sustainability of Eddleston Primary School. Councillor Bhatia advised matters were in hand to seek to secure education facilities in Eddleston.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

- (b) Community Councillor McCrow referred to contingency plan problems with regard to the recent landslip near the Dirt Pot Corner which resulted in the closure of the A72. He also referred to the inappropriate use of B roads for HGV vehicles and logging lorries as short cuts. Members also had concerns about the recent landslip near the Dirt Pot Corner, in particular, at the lack of signage in place instructing HGV vehicles not to use the B7062 as a diversion when problems occurred. It was noted during the discussion that Officials from Police Scotland and Scottish Borders Council had given reassurance that similar problems would not happen again. Community Councillor Lewin advised he was awaiting a response from Council Officers on road improvements at Stobo and suggested if there were other areas of concern that the Council explore the overall position to see what measures could be put in place at dangerous areas.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

- (c) Community Councillor C. Carleton expressed concern at the cumulative impact of developments on the roads infrastructure and the problems of communicating Community Council concerns through the planning process. Community Council Tulloch also expressed concerns about the addition of a further 92 houses in the West Linton area. Councillor Bhatia suggested that the Head of Planning and Building Standards might be invited to a future meeting to appraise Members of the planning process.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

OPEN QUESTIONS

6. (a) Community Councillor M McIntosh endorsed Community Councillor McCrow's concerns about the chaos which had resulted when the A72 was closed in April. She considered that as a matter of urgency a convoy system should have been put in place.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

- (b) Mr Paul Spence, Peebles resident made reference to a petition to gather support for Traffic Calming Measures at Kingsland Primary School, Neidpath Road, Peebles. He advised that he wished to give a presentation on this to the Forum. The Engineer, Environment

and Infrastructure presented background information on her work as a Roads Engineer over the past 10 years with the Council, in particular, in relation to the implementation of traffic calming measures for all schools within the Council's area. She advised that LED repairs were being undertaken to a sign at Kingsland Primary School and that a 545 diagram (two children holding hands) would be erected. She advised that drivers could not be forced to look at signs. Mrs Helen Wallace was present at the meeting and explained the circumstances when her two and a half year old son was nearly knocked down on the pedestrian crossing on Neidpath Road, when despite the light being red a car did not stop. She considered that the signs at Neidpath Road were inadequate and needed to be repositioned further away from the town. In responding the Engineer advised that the aim of signs was to slow traffic down and any measures in place needed to be proportionate, balanced, justifiable and achievable. There was more signage in place at Neidpath Road than at other schools but she would look at the position and investigate whether more signage could be erected in the area. The Chairman advised that the Mr Spence would be welcome to attend future meetings of the Forum to take part in the open questions section.

DECISION

(a) **NOTED the position.**

(b) **AGREED that a report on additional signage at Kingsland School, Neidpath Road, Peebles would be considered at a future meeting.**

POLICE REPORT

7. Inspector M Wynne advised his main areas of responsibility were in the Galashiels, Melrose and Peebles areas. He noted the concerns expressed earlier in the meeting about the closure of the A72 and these would be taken on board by Police Officers. He explained there had been a great deal of debate about the new single Police Service for Scotland and from his point of view there would be no difference. There were common major concerns raised by communities which related to road safety issues, anti-social behaviour; underage drinking, drug use, vulnerable adults and children and these would be dealt with by Police Officers. He advised that once minor adjustments had been made to radios, Police Contact vehicles were ready to be put in place. The vehicle to be used for the north area of the Borders would be based in Galashiels and this would make weekly visits (unless any major incidents occurred) to West Linton and Innerleithen. He advised that the Fire Service had offered the Fire Station in West Linton for use as a Police Station. The new non emergency telephone number "101" was now in place.

DECISION

NOTED and THANKED Inspector Wynne for his report

WELFARE BENEFITS REFORM – IMPACT FOR THE BORDERS

8. Ms Jane Keir, Welfare Benefits Service Manager, was in attendance to give a presentation on the Welfare Reform Act and how this would impact on the Scottish Borders, with particular information relating to the Berwickshire area. Ms Keir explained that the timetable for the Welfare Reform implementation had already begun, and that from April 2011, there had been a reduction in rates of Local Housing Allowance from 50th to 30th percentile for Private Tenants and increased deductions for non-dependents. Other changes included the Shared Room Rate being extended from under 25s to under 35s since January 2012 and Incapacity Benefit being replaced by Employment Support Allowance. The impact of these changes mean that 1500 cases within the Scottish Borders will fall into the reduction in rate for Local Housing Allowance resulting in over £430k per annum in benefit reduction; 203 cases would be impacted by the increased deductions for non-dependents; 49 cases would be affected by the shared room rate extension (£61k per annum in reduced benefits); and more than 1,760 people would no longer qualify for the Employment Support Allowance than previously claimed Incapacity Benefit, these people would now be required to find work. The

meeting was advised of the introduction of the Scottish Welfare Fund, how this impacted on the service Scottish Borders Council provided and the associated budget pressures. Discussion took place regarding the application of the Social Sector Size Criteria (commonly referred to as the Bedroom Tax) and how this was expected to impact on the Borders, with approximately 1,100 households affected. The presentation explained that the total additional cost to these households could be in the region of £500k per annum and that this increased pressure on household budgets could potentially cause an increase in rent arrears and demand for discretionary help. It was also highlighted that a lack of appropriately sized accommodation to meet the need of the Borders, as in all other Local Authorities in Scotland, was a cause for concern. The presentation noted that the Council Tax Reduction Scheme was being altered and highlighted the impact of these changes for Tweeddale area and for Scottish Borders Council in terms of numbers affected, financial burden and changes to the administration of the Scheme. The presentation also explained that the new system was expected in 2014/15, with current Council Tax Benefit claimants automatically transferring. The report listed further changes within Welfare Reform, including a reduction in Local Housing Allowance of between £2.41 and £5.77 per week and Discretionary Housing Payments.

9. A Benefits Cap of £500 per week for couples and £350 per week for single people would be introduced in June 2013, affecting 20 households in the Borders. Also in June, Disabled Living Allowance (DLA) would be replaced by Personal Independence Payments to people aged between 16 and 64. The presentation explained that there were 790 claimants of DLA in the Tweeddale area and that the reduction of 20 percent for the national budget was expected to result in further financial hardship for claimants, reduced income to Social Work Care and Health services and a significant increase in demand for support and advice. The presentation noted that it was anticipated that Universal Credit would be introduced in the Borders in February 2014, with a Local Support Services Framework in place from October 2013. The presentation informed the Forum that a comprehensive training programme would also be in place to enable relevant staff to understand Universal Credit and any potential risk to vulnerable people. Further changes in respect of Personal Independence Payments would require an increased level of support for both claimants and carers during the claim, review and appeals processes. The presentation also noted that all Local Authority staff would be required to operate under a new Single Fraud Investigation Service to be introduced in April 2014 and that a review of the arrangements for this were currently underway. Ms Keir reiterated that anyone looking for advice or assistance should contact SBC on 0300 100 1800.

DECISION

NOTED the presentation.

CROOK INN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

10. Mrs Christine Parker and Mr James Welch, were in attendance to give a presentation on the acquisition by the Community of the Crook Inn. The landmark steps from 2006 – 2013 were presented commencing with the closure of the Crook Inn in November 2006. The Tweeddale Community Company had been formed in October 2007 and the acquisition of the Crook Inn by Tweedsmuir Community Company was concluded in February 2013. The purchase price of the Inn amounted to £160,000 plus costs and funds had been provided by Glenkerie Wind Farm Trust, SSE Clyde Wind Farm, Scottish Borders Council and individual pledges/donations. Key funding sources to date also included the Big Lottery – Investing in Ideas, The Big Lottery Awards for All, SSE Renewables/Scottish Communities Foundation, Infinis Limited, Wind Energy Ltd/AES and private landowners in Tweedsmuir. Information was also presented on the various fundraising initiatives which had been undertaken. The aspirations and next steps of the Group were to lodge an application to The Big Lottery's Growing Community Assets and work would be carried out on an independent needs survey, a feasibility study and an outline business plan.

DECISION

NOTED and THANKED Mrs Parker and Mr Welch for their interesting and informative presentation.

SCOTTISH BORDERS WALKING FESTIVAL

11. Messrs George Brown, James Macfarlane and Colin Kerr, were in attendance to give a presentation on the 19th Scottish Borders Walking Festival which was being hosted by Innerleithen, Walkerburn and Clovenfords. The walking festival would take place during 1 – 7 September 2013 and would attract both locals and walkers from all over the UK and the world. Information was presented on the walks and events taking place. It was hoped that the walking festival would be a success for the local community. All of the information provided could be accessed from the Walking Festival's Website, www.borderswalking.com which also included information on local hotels, cafes etc.

DECISION

NOTED and THANKED Messrs Brown, Macfarlane and Kerr for their interesting and informative presentation.

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

12. Mr Jason Hedley, SB Local Area Manager (Tweeddale) was in attendance and briefed Members on the remit of Neighbourhood Services. He introduced Elaine Nicol and Dougie Mallin, Assistant Neighbourhood Area Managers for the Tweeddale area. The SB Local Area Manager (Tweeddale) would be present at the next meeting at which a report on Small Schemes would be discussed. He urged members to contact him if they had any small schemes they wished to be considered.

DECISION

NOTED.

SPEED LIMIT REVIEW 2012

13. There had been circulated copies of a report by the Director of Environment and Infrastructure proposing to amend the existing speed limit orders in Cardrona and West Linton to take account of a recent region-wide Speed Limit Review. The report explained that in 2012 a Speed Limit Review was carried out throughout the region by officers from the Council and the Police. The review was carried out in accordance with Government guidance. The resulting recommendations were to reduce speed limits on parts of the network covered by the national speed limit, or a speed limit higher than that deemed appropriate. A total of 12 lengths of road were agreed to be recommended to be subject to adjusted statutory speed limit. Two of these sites were in the Tweeddale area, at Cardrona and West Linton. All the sections of road in question were currently subject to the National Speed Limit. Mr Robbie Yates, Assistant Road User Manager was present and answered Members' questions, in particular to Community Councillor McCrow's concerns relating to the proposals at Cardrona.

DECISION

APPROVED the amendment to The Scottish Borders Council (the Borders Regional Council) (Restricted Roads Order) 1985 to allow:- (a) the extension of the 30 mph speed limit in Cardrona; and (b) the extension of the 30 mph speed limit in West Linton all as detailed in the plans attached as Appendix A to the report and the relevant extracts from the draft Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) as detailed in Appendix B to the report.

MANAGEMENT OF THE COUNCIL'S ROADS ASSET – TWEEDDALE AREA

14. There had been circulated copies of a report by the Director of Environment and Infrastructure seeking approval for the proposed allocation of additional Capital funding identified to carry out resurfacing works in the Tweeddale Area. The report explained that Council agreed on 28 March 2013 to consult with Area Forums over the allocation of an additional £1.14m of Capital funding for road surfacing works. That report indicated those schemes which officers had identified as a priority, together with those previously identified by local Members as priority areas. Officers required the Tweeddale Area Forum to make a decision on which schemes were included within the sum

allocated to the Tweeddale Area of £75,000. Where the Area Forum requested an additional scheme to be included in the programme they would have to also make a decision on which scheme could be removed from Annex A of the report. Mr D Richardson, Asset Manager was present and answered Members' questions.

DECISION

AGREED to the list as presented in Annex A to the report.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

15. The next meeting was scheduled to be held on Wednesday, 11 September 2013. Owing to requests for various presentations it was agreed that an additional meeting be held on 26 June 2013.

DECISION

AGREED that the next meetings of the Tweeddale Area Forum would be held on Wednesday 26 June 2013 in the Burgh Hall, Chambers Institution, Peebles and Wednesday 11 September 2013 – venue to be confirmed.

(Afternote: Owing to the Burgh Hall, Chambers Institution, Peebles being unavailable on 26 June, 2013 the meeting would now take place on Monday 24 June 2013 in the Burgh Hall.)

The meeting concluded at 8.40 p.m.