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**Please find attached the Public Minutes in respect of  
Item 6 on the agenda for the above meeting**

6.	<p><b>Committee Minutes</b> (Pages 3 - 64)</p> <p>Consider Minutes of the following Committees:-</p> <table data-bbox="255 739 1181 1052"><tr><td>(a)</td><td>External Services/Providers</td><td>7 March 2023</td></tr><tr><td>(b)</td><td>Community Planning Strategic Board</td><td>9 March 2023</td></tr><tr><td>(c)</td><td>Audit</td><td>13 March 2023</td></tr><tr><td>(d)</td><td>Police, Fire &amp; Rescue and Safer Communities</td><td>16 March 2023</td></tr><tr><td>(e)</td><td>Hawick Common Good Fund</td><td>21 March 2023</td></tr><tr><td>(f)</td><td>Tweeddale Area Partnership</td><td>28 March 2023</td></tr><tr><td>(g)</td><td>Cheviot Area Partnership</td><td>29 March 2023</td></tr><tr><td>(h)</td><td>Executive</td><td>18 April 2023</td></tr><tr><td>(i)</td><td>Scrutiny &amp; Petitions</td><td>20 April 2023</td></tr></table> <p>(Copies attached.)</p>	(a)	External Services/Providers	7 March 2023	(b)	Community Planning Strategic Board	9 March 2023	(c)	Audit	13 March 2023	(d)	Police, Fire & Rescue and Safer Communities	16 March 2023	(e)	Hawick Common Good Fund	21 March 2023	(f)	Tweeddale Area Partnership	28 March 2023	(g)	Cheviot Area Partnership	29 March 2023	(h)	Executive	18 April 2023	(i)	Scrutiny & Petitions	20 April 2023	5 mins
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# SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL EXTERNAL SERVICES/PROVIDERS MONITORING GROUP

MINUTES of Meeting of the EXTERNAL  
SERVICES/PROVIDERS MONITORING  
GROUP held via Microsoft Teams on  
Tuesday, 7 March 2023 at 2.00 pm

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- Present:- Councillors M. Rowley (Chair), P. Brown, M. Douglas(until 4pm),  
J. Greenwell, S. Hamilton, E. Jardine and E. Thornton-Nicol
- Apologies:- Councillor T. Weatherston
- In Attendance:- Director Strategic Commissioning and Partnerships, Director Resilient  
Communities, Director Infrastructure and Environment, Chief Officer Audit and  
Risk, Chief Officer Roads, Portfolio Manager (J. Lamb), Contracts Manager  
(P. McNulty), Estimator (M. Douglas), IT Client Manager (N. Byers), E.  
Jackson (Live Borders), J. Wordsworth-Goodram (CGI), and Trainee  
Democratic Services Officer.

## 1. ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chair varied the order of business as shown on the agenda and the Minute reflects the order in which the items were considered at the meeting.

## 2. MINUTE

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the Meeting held on 29 November 2022.

### DECISION

**AGREED to approve the Minute for signature by the Chair.**

## 3. CGI CONTRACT PERFORMANCE

- 3.1 There had been circulated a report by Jen Holland, Director Strategic Commissioning & Partnerships. This report presented key information with respect to the CGI contract for the full year 2022 and key updates on performance to date. It provides Elected Members with key information on the governance of the contract, updated information on the transformation programme being delivered with CGI including the recently approved Social Work Pathfinder transformation programme, key performance information with respect to the service delivery of the contract and a note of key issues associated with contract management, including change requests signed in the quarter and Impact Assessment status. This report was designed to be read in conjunction with the appended slide presentation, which provided further detailed information on each of the aforementioned areas. Meetings of the various groups that oversee the contract including this quarterly meeting of the ESPMG were highlighted. These were all "green" during Q1 Q2 Q3 and Q4 to end December 2022.
- 3.2 Mr John Wordsworth-Goodram presented the slides which highlighted key information from the report. With reference to the paragraph 3.3 of the Minute of 29 November 2022, a Transformation Status update on the Social Work Pathfinder Programme was summarised. Project Teams were in place across the workforce and full progress updates were to be provided to this committee. The Digital Transformation Board met fortnightly to monitor progress. The plan was in the delivery phase and was due to be completed by August 2023, with a complete timeline of the Pathfinder programme

- provided in the slide deck. An overview of the Transformation Roadmap was provided and work had been carried out by the Council Management Team to prioritise all current proposals for transformation works based on a detailed list of principles and outcomes. All future digital proposals were to be considered through this process to ensure strategic alignment and allocation of resources.
- 3.3 A summary of key projects concerned with 'Applications' and 'Infrastructure' and their current status was provided. Each of the projects has been RAG assessed and commentary had been provided against each status. With regards Applications, two projects had been completed since the last report. Two projects were on hold - Tech Forge Cloud and Legal EDMS - with two projects currently Amber both delayed, one due to connectivity issues with CGI currently working to progress and one due to HLD delays. In relation to Infrastructure, of the eleven projects detailed, three had completed since the last report, two were RAG assessed as green, four projects were amber and two projects were RED. The two red projects were projects impacted by third party supplier pressures with Paton Street near completion with works prioritised between SBC and CGI. Of the four projects with an amber status the Mac Book deployment was delayed due to the firewall works and was now progressing, of the Primary WAN 36 of the 43 sites were now surveyed by BT with the remaining seven sites pending, the Lync decommissioning had four of eight changes implemented with the next changes scheduled 9th March 2023 and Family WIFI rewrite was concluded in all but one site and a potential solution was being reviewed.
- 3.4 A summary of Key Performance Information was given with key successes as follows: a reviewed change management process was being trialled; work was being undertaken to streamline further along with a service desk improvement plan; and the Pulsant firewall issue had now been identified and the third party provider were working on a fix. Challenges had included the service desk which had seen significant amounts of incidents and work orders over August and September where the resultant backlog had led to two severe incidents, one serious and two minor SLA failures. The backlog had been cleared by the end of 2022 and a rectification plan was submitted to SBC. User Satisfaction had scored low throughout the reporting period and the percentage of Users' responses had increased significantly. A Get To Green plan had been proposed based on User feedback and necessary action was being taken. A visit to the Cardiff based Service Desk had been scheduled for next week, with Jen Holland and Nick Byers in attendance, to ascertain how the service could be further improved. Information was provided with respect to the key deliverables of the contract across 71 performance measures. There was one red KPI target over Quarter 4 which related directly to failure to rectify incidents within the agreed timeline. There were four red KPI key performance failures and eight amber KPI failures from October to December. Service delivery was reported as being below the 99.9% target at 98.99% for both P1 and P2 application availability during January 2023, with Northgate Revenue and Benefits system and the Scottish Welfare Fund access system being affected. A summary of Change requests with outstanding Complex Impact Assessments was provided and additional resource and skill sets had been allocated to ensure their timely progression; lessons were being taken forward and all IAs were now imminent. A timeline was to be provided to members.
- 3.5 Community benefits were highlighted and included sponsorship across Borders Key events, CGI river clean and the CGI Cyber escape experience which had returned to the Borders in February and was attended by local businesses and education institutions. The CGI South team had raised £1000 for Prostate Cancer Scotland and £320 had been raised for Mission Christmas. A number of teams and clubs had also been sponsored and CGI were seeking to increase this with a further 5 nominations received.
- 3.6 On the matter of recruitment, it was reported that the Tweedbank office was now fully operational with a recently appointed recruitment manager who resided locally. CGI currently employed 69 members in the Borders region and had 103 members working on Borders activity. There had been an additional six roles recruited since the last update in Commercial, Contracts, Project Management and Training. Planned recruitment involving Codeclan (who were focused on retraining) included 2 software developers, 3 graduate apprentices, 4 project delivery roles, 23 service desk members and 10 test automation engineers with the two latter roles to be based in Tweedbank.

- 3.7 With regards to ticket backlogs around the Christmas period it was confirmed that future forecasting had been completed to ensure that adequate resource was in place. In response to a question on how tickets were prioritised, Mr Wordsworth-Goodram agreed to share the procedure with members. Mr Wordsworth-Goodram also undertook to circulate the Service Catalogue to members to provide information on what was available to purchase. In response to a question about lower user satisfaction, it was agreed that a detailed update on planned improvement was to be brought to the next meeting. Additionally it was agreed that the number of user satisfactions surveys sent out and those completed be provided ahead of the next meeting. Work around creating more omni channel support was to be considered, specifically 'Amelia', a chat bot function to help with the simpler enquiries such as password reset which would allow more complex issues to be dealt with by the service desk.

**DECISION**

**NOTED:**

- (a) the report and the associated slide deck; and,
- (b) the information provided within the report and the associated slide deck detailing the performance of the CGI over the full year 2022.

The meeting was adjourned at 14:40pm.

4. **PRIVATE BUSINESS**

**DECISION**

**AGREED** under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the business detailed in the Appendix to this Minute on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 8 of Part I of Schedule 7A to the Act.

5. **CGI CONTRACT PERFORMANCE**

Members considered the report by Director Strategic Commissioning and Partnerships.

6. **SBC CONTRACTS SUMMARY TO 31 DECEMBER 2022**

Members considered the report by Director Infrastructure and Environment.

7. **MINUTE**

Members considered the Private Section of the Minute of the Meeting held on 20 September 2022.

**DECISION:**

**AGREED** the minute.

The meeting resumed at 14:50pm.

8. **LIVE BORDERS PROVISION AGREEMENT PERFORMANCE**

- 8.1 There had been circulated a presentation by Ewan Jackson, Chief Executive Live Borders the purpose of which was to inform members of the charity's vision, mission, purpose and values. An overview of the services offered and associated location map of their 60+ venues was provided and comprised gyms/fitness centres, swimming pools, sports pitches/halls, libraries, museums, visitor attractions, town halls and community centres across the region. The six strategic goals for 2018-2023 were outlined: expand participation levels; grow earned income; develop new funding streams; great customer

- service; ensure the charity is sustainable; and nurture employees and instil pride in their role. Delivery of these strategic goals had been adversely affected by the pandemic, the cost of living crisis and a significant increase in energy costs. The 2022/23 operating context was one of continued recovery from the impact of Covid-19 with a focus on revenue generation and programming for the future. Performance was monitored via a number of Key Strategic Indicators (KSI) which aligned to the Strategic Goals. These were detailed in the Service Provision Arrangement (SPA) between Live Borders and Scottish Borders Council and were reported on a quarterly basis together with the Financial KSIs. As agreed with SBC, KSIs 7 and 17 were no longer reported.
- 8.2 Live Borders had a number of key external partners with whom services were developed to serve the communities; sportscotland; Creative Scotland; SOSE; Scottish Borders College among others. A number of these partners not only provided funding but also supported the delivery and improvement of existing services and the development of new ones.
- 8.3 Governance of Live Borders was provided by the combination of the Board of Trustees/Directors and by the Service Provision Agreement (SPA) held with SBC which consisted of meetings attended by both parties, and additional SBC sub-committee meetings at which Live Borders were attendees. An interim structure had been put in place at the end of September 2022 following the departures of Director of Business Services, Director of Operations and Director of Commercial Services. A permanent structure was to be in place from April 1 2023 and comprised of Chief Executive Officer with responsibility for the three Sports, Culture and Communities clusters, Chief Operating Officer and Strategic Programmes Manager.
- 8.4 A summary of each service was provided with an overview of each one and their key achievements, deliverables and statistics: leisure centres and swimming pools; sports development; sports events and festivals; museums, galleries and archives; Jim Clark Motorsport Museum; libraries; Active Schools; Health Development; Creative Communities; Town Halls; Community Centres; Heart of Hawick; and the Great Tapestry of Scotland (GTOS).
- 8.5 Mr Jackson proposed to bring a Briefing Note back to the Monitoring Group which outlined the operational performances across libraries, cultural locations and swimming pools in detail at the end of the financial year, and thus provided a full year of information to be considered.
- 8.6 There had been circulated copies of Performance Indicators & Trends for Quarter 3 FY2022/23. The financial year 2022/23 was the first year of delivery of all services and activities following the lifting of the pandemic restrictions. Current industry analysis suggested that it would be around 5 years for participation levels to return to pre-Covid levels. Participation had indeed not returned to pre-Covid levels and measures were to be introduced to address this – a review of opening hours and the promotion of a ‘Freedom Pass’ as an alternative to a Direct Debit scheme. Work was ongoing to reopen the eight closed museums and galleries after their winter closure. In the face of rising inflation, energy costs and the cost of living crisis, measures were being taken to reduce energy consumption though there were limits to the mitigating actions. During FY2021/22 performance was gauged by Directors ‘best estimate’ and performance reporting for FY2022/23 was reset against targets agreed at February 2022 Live Borders Board meeting. Appendix 1 provided a RAG status for the quarter 3 performance up to 31 December 2022, with 12 Key Strategic Indicators (KSIs) rated green, 3 KSIs rated amber and 2 KSIs rated red (membership/participation and net promoter score/customer satisfaction). The annual forecast reported KSI RAG status as follows: 10 green, 4 amber and 3 red. In terms of amber status, Sport Active membership levels were reported to have increased post-Covid, however the challenges from competition on cost and ongoing cost of living pressures experienced by the public were contributory factors to the risk of not meeting the KSI target by the end of 2022/23 financial year. The closure of Peebles Swimming Pool for refurbishment following the fire had negatively impacted turnover resulting in Learn 2 Swim membership not meeting its expected annual target. In terms of red status, net promoter score/customer satisfaction was the lowest ever recorded, however quarter 4 data pointed to a slight improvement. Membership levels were growing but targets would not be met by the end of 2022/23 financial year. Appendix 2 provided a



detailed summary of visitors across the cultural facilities and activities during quarter 3, 2022/23. The majority of venue/activity visitors had exceeded targets set. The number of library visitors was particularly high at 64,032 against a target of 37,500. The Great Tapestry of Scotland (GTOS) number of 4,268 had not achieved the 7,384 target that had been set before the Cost of Living crisis. Appendix 3 outlined operational performance during quarter 3 2022/23 across the services, apart from the GTOS which had been covered in a separate report. Successes were realised across the services: in the Learn2Swim program saw a return to 94.9% of pre-Covid membership levels; new 'Emerging' and 'Aspiring' squads had been added to the hockey development programme with a weekly participation level of 175 players; Pressreader awareness and popularity continued to grow with new magazines in the Top 10 that potentially pointed to a new user demographic; museums had a high NPS score of 43 as a result of staff training in customer service excellence. Appendix 4 detailed a number of case studies which included Active Schools and Eyemouth Gateway to Health.

- 8.7 The work of the Sports Development Team was highlighted; the small team had a wide reach and had been involved much of the region's events, classes, coaching and referee and umpire training opportunities. An update on a number of the Strategic Goals was requested: programmes for older people; a +£10k sponsorship package; 15% reduction in energy and carbon emissions; office consolidation; and volunteer policy development. Further comparative information was requested for pre-Covid library visitor numbers along with their opening times in 2019. A review of the opening times of swimming pools was requested with a view to maximising opportunities for increased income. Mr Jackson agreed to bring an update of the Strategic Goals to the next meeting on completion of the financial year. It was reported that library membership had increased despite a reduction in opening hours (230 hours pre-Covid against 130 hours currently). BorrowBox and Pressreader digital platforms and Connect & Collect had allowed the public to use the library service without the need for travel to the premises. A comparison of library data pre and post Covid was to be included in the end of year report. Library use had been promoted via the Registrars with an invitation to join the library offered on registration of a birth. Swimming pool opening hours had been affected by staff shortages. Data showed that family attendance at the weekends at both wet and dry venues was affected by competition from other commitments such as sports clubs and the organisation continued to develop services to create demand. In response to a question about underperformance of outreach, it was reported that much of the outreach work had been supported by Education and continued to grow. Seasonality had been a factor in museums and galleries and GTOS outreach performance. Mr Jackson undertook to provide a more detailed response to Members via email to be noted at the next meeting.

**DECISION:**

**NOTED the update.**

9. **ITEMS LIKELY TO BE TAKEN IN PRIVATE**

**DECISION**

**AGREED under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the business detailed in the Appendix to this Minute on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 8 of Part I of Schedule 7A to the Act.**

10. **LIVE BORDERS PROVISION AGREEMENT PERFORMANCE**

Members considered copies of the report Great Tapestry of Scotland (GTOS) Quarterly Update, the purpose of which was to provide an update on press coverage during the previous quarter and GTOS development activity for the next quarter.

**DECISION:**

**NOTED the update.**

11. **ADDITIONAL MEETINGS**

The additional meetings were scheduled as follows:

- SB Contracts, Tuesday 23 May, 10am
- CGI, Tuesday 30 May, 2pm
- Live Borders, Tuesday 6 June, 2pm

**DECISION:**

**NOTED the dates of the additional meetings.**

*The meeting concluded at 4.10 pm*

<b>Date:</b>	9 March 2023, 2.00 pm.
<b>Location:</b>	Via Microsoft Teams
<b>Attendees:</b>	Cllr C. Cochrane (Chair), Superintendent A. Carson (Police Scotland), Prof. R. Griggs (SOSE), Cllr S. Hamilton, Cllr E. Jardine, Ms K. Hamilton (NHS Borders), Mr R. Hill (RSLs), Mr K. Langley (Scottish Fire & Rescue), Mr C. McGrath (SBCCN), Cllr E. Thornton-Nicol.
<b>Apologies:</b>	Councillor J. Greenwell. Mr R. McCowan (Borders College).
<b>Also in attendance:</b>	Chief Executive, Director Resilient Communities, Participation Officer, Communities and Partnership Manager, Community Co-ordinator, Localities Development Coordinator, Clerk to the Council, Trainee Democratic Services Officer (all SBC); Chief Inspector V. Fisher (Police Scotland); Ms K. Jackson (SOSE); Mr. C. Easton (Eyemouth & District Community Trust); Mr. C. Myers, Ms. F. Doig, Ms. S. McKenzie (NHS Borders); Mr. D. Dunlop (Borders TSI); Ms. J. Amaral (BAVS); Ms. M. Meldrum (Berwickshire Housing), Ms. A. Hall (SDS).

## **MINUTE AND ACTION POINTS**

### **1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that Item 6(c) (iii) on the agenda, the 'Young People's Wellbeing Survey results' had been deferred and would now be considered at the next meeting of the Board on 8 June 2023. Apologies had been received from Cllr Greenwell (SBC) and Mr R. McCowan (Borders College).

### **2. MINUTE**

2.1 Copies of the Minute of the Meeting held on 17 November 2022 had been circulated.

### **DECISION**

**AGREED to approve the Minute for signature by the Chair.**

2.2 Copies of an updated Action Tracker had also been circulated. Ms Malster provided an update to the tracker. With reference to paragraph 12.1 of the Minute of 17 November 2022, Mr McGrath gave an update on his proposal for each Community Council to set up a Citizen's Panel. Having contacted the Core Group of the Scottish Borders Community Councils Network and met with SBC Director Resilient Communities and SBC Participation Officer, Mr McGrath had discovered there were

over 1,000 groups or organisations already operating across the Borders, with some 205 groups in Hawick alone. In this respect Mr McGrath had written a note to all Community Councils and asked that this note be circulated to the Strategic Board.

## **DECISION**

**(a) NOTED the update and the completed actions.**

**(b) AGREED that Mr McGrath send a copy of his note to the SBC Chief Executive for approval, prior to its circulation to the Board.**

*Note: Councillor Jardine joined the meeting.*

### **3. REIMAGING THE TSI**

3.1 With reference to paragraph 4 of the Minute of 16 June 2022, Mr Duncan Dunlop (TSI) and Ms Juliana Amaral (BAVS) gave a presentation on the role, function and recent developments within the Borders Third Sector Interface (TSI). Case studies were shared with members to illustrate the recent work of the TSI, focussed around the Warm Spaces initiative and subsequent signposting to further support. The valuable work of local volunteers was highlighted whereby they brought local knowledge of and enthusiasm to support their community. The TSI was able to connect these volunteers with those in need and supported them to maintain momentum so activities happened quickly and safely. The TSI role centred on a collaborative approach to community capacity building which brought statutory, housing and third sector stakeholders together. The work that had been done in the village of Ayton, Berwickshire was highlighted; a Warm Space provision that now supported 90 people on a weekly basis. At present there were 17 projects underway across the Scottish Borders, all based on a similar model of funding and disbursement. National Lottery Match Funding had been made available to communities, along with statutory funding. The learning from the projects was shared across the Borders in order to avoid duplication of effort. The work of the TSI aligned closely with Place Making, social prescribing, community wealth building, financial inclusion and climate emergency action and made improvements towards reducing both health inequalities and reliance on Health and Social Care services. Borders TSI continued to work closely with Dumfries and Galloway TSI to bring back Mental Health & Wellbeing funding to the Borders for 2023/24. Other partners included SOSE, SOSREP and Borderlands.

3.2 Future developments within the TSI were to result in a volunteering hub for all ages, skills and interests, an initial 14 staff members available to all communities with social enterprise development at the heart of economic development, and a name change of the organisation to 'Borders Community Action (BCA)' as of 1 April 2023. The legacy partners Volunteer Centre Borders and The Bridge were to be wound up with all staff retained and incorporated into BCA. BAVS was to continue their community development work and refocus attention on their three charity shops to become zero waste hubs, with this work complementing the work of BCA rather than competing. The Scottish Borders Social Enterprise Chamber was under review as part of an independent evaluation of social enterprise delivery across Scotland. Work was ongoing by The Bridge and BAVS to unite the Community Transport service as per the outcome of the 2021 consultation. It was highlighted that the annual funding award of £309k had been the same over the past 11 years; there was a need to increase this funding to a target of £500k to maximise impact. Borders TSI administration headquarters was to be relocated, with the possibility of an office at Council headquarters in Newtown St Boswells. Consideration was to be given to how a community presence was to be maintained going forward.

**DECISION**  
**NOTED the update.**

**4. CPP TASK GROUP IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

4.1 With reference to paragraph 4 of the Minute of 17 November 2022, Ms Jenni Craig, SBC Director Resilient Communities, gave a presentation updating members on progress by the Task Group on the CPP Improvement plan. The plan comprised three actions: 1) Prioritise - to refresh the Local Outcome Improvement Plan/Community Plan (LOIP) as a result of the pandemic; 2) Governance - to review current Community Planning partnership structures and processes in relation to effective decision making; and 3) Performance - to ensure the Partnership's long term outcomes were supported by a short and medium term performance framework. In terms of actions for Priorities 1 and 3, the proposed 12 month timeline for development of the refreshed Community Plan was shared, with the final draft 'Community Plan and Actions' to be completed by August/September 2023. Currently the Task Group was engaged in data gathering in order to assemble and agree a list of top priorities for the Plan. April and May were to see the development of a draft Plan for review at the Programme Board in May 2023, the creation of a performance management framework for measuring actions and development of both an engagement plan and an IIA. Consultation on the draft CPP Plan with locality groups, third sector partners and key stakeholders was scheduled for June and July, with the final draft of the CPP plan and the IIA to be completed by the end of July 2023. August and September was to see the handover to partnership organisations to deliver the plan and actions, following approval at Council. In terms of Priority 2, mapping of governance arrangements already in existence in other areas was ongoing and was being supported by the Improvement Service.

4.2 Ms Craig also highlighted the statutory reporting requirements of the previous 2018 Community Plan whereby Scottish Government was to be informed of improvements to priority outcomes, the extent to which CPP had participated with community bodies in carrying out its functions, and the extent to which participation had been effective in enabling community bodies to contribute to community planning. A project team had been identified to develop the progress report, the content of which was to be accessible to the public with little or no knowledge of Community Planning. Partners were asked to provide information for the progress report on their theme area as required. Work continued and there were no concerns or exceptions to report at this time. In response to question around the future role of CPPs it was confirmed that evidence was being collated currently by Scottish Government, and Scottish Borders Council would keep a watching brief on this as it evolved and ensure that any significant changes were reported back to the CPP.

**DECISION**  
**NOTED the update.**

**5. PROPOSAL FOR THEMED MEETINGS**

There had been circulated copies of a report by Ms Jenni Craig, SBC Director Resilient Communities, which proposed that the quarterly Community Planning Partnership meetings (Joint Programme Board and Strategic Board) were to be structured around the themes of the Community Plan. The four themes were as follows: 1) Enough money to live on; 2) Access to work, learning and training; 3) Enjoying good health and wellbeing; and 4) A good place to grow up, live and enjoy life. The alignment of the meetings to the themes was to enable time for detailed discussion one theme at each meeting, along with progress reports on the

achievement of outcomes identified in the 2022/23 CPP Work Plan. While this would allow a particular focus on each theme, other items would also be considered as part of each agenda.

## **DECISION**

**AGREED** that meetings were to take a themed approach from Summer 2023 as follows:

- **Summer 2023 - Theme 3 Enjoying good health and wellbeing;**
- **Autumn 2023 – Theme 2 Access to work, learning and training;**
- **Winter 2023 – Theme 1 Enough money to live on; and**
- **Spring 2024 – Theme 4 A good place to grow up, live and enjoy a full life.**

## **6. WORK PLAN PROGRESS REPORTS**

### **THEME 1 – ENOUGH MONEY TO LIVE ON**

6.1 With reference to paragraph 5 of the Minute of 17 November 2022, copies of a progress report on Theme 1 – Enough money to live on, had been circulated. Ms Jenni Craig, SBC Director Resilient Communities, highlighted that work by both the Strategic Group and Operational Group continued apace to address the challenges faced by communities, funded by the £1.2m Cost of Living Fund. A total of £33,576 had been awarded to 12 community organisations to date which focussed on the provision of warm spaces through individual grants of up to £2k. The allocation of funding was to continue to support local organisations in providing advice and financial assistance to communities and the communications plan had been shared with the multi-agency group to further raise awareness of current support on offer. Most of the fund had been spent and decisions were being taken now with regards to using the remaining balance or for it to be carried forward to 2023/34. A full report on the partnership response to the cost of living crisis was to be brought to the meeting in Winter 2023.

6.2 In terms of the development of a plan that was to support parents into employment, an audit was underway of what support was currently in place or in the pipeline in order that gaps were identified. SBC had implemented a change in HR policy which ensured that Modern Apprentices were to receive the living Wage from 1 April 2023. In terms of community wealth building, in partnership with SOSE and Dumfries & Galloway Council, horizon scanning was underway to consider the establishment of flexible working hubs. Scottish Government was consulting on the legislation that was to put the advancement of community wealth building on a statutory footing and could be accessed via <https://www.gov.scot/publications/building-community-wealth-scotland-consultation-paper/> until the end of April. This was a key consultation for SBC and its partners to respond to collectively. The partnership was to focus on the collaboration of the public sector with private, third and community sectors to ensure that more of the wealth generated by communities was retained therein. The response was to be developed and circulated via email to obtain agreement from the CPP given the tight timescale.

## **DECISION**

- (a) **NOTED** the update; and
- (b) **AGREED** to consider the response to the Scottish Government Community Wealth Building consultation via email.

7. **THEME 2 – ACCESS TO WORK, LEARNING AND TRAINING**

7.1 With reference to paragraph 8 of the Minute of 17 November 2022, copies of a report providing an update on Theme 2: Access to work, learning and training, had been circulated. Ms Andrea Hall, Skills Development Scotland, reported that in the time since the report had been written, the School Leaver Destination Return (SLDR) had been published on 28 February. This gave details of the percentage of school leavers who had left education between September 2021 and September 2022 and entered into a positive destination. The Scottish Borders had 1252 leavers (0.9% above the National average) which was an increase on previous trends of around 1100, of which 1210 (96.6%) went on to a positive destination (further/higher education, employment, voluntary work). 60% of leavers were S6, 30% were S5 and 10% were S4 which mirrored the National picture. There had been a higher than previous number of S4 and 5 leavers, partly attributed to the buoyant labour market. 20 individuals were currently unemployed and seeking work, while 13 were unemployed and not seeking work. 36.8% of school leavers progressed into higher education (4.4% below the National average). 31.4% of school leavers entered into employment (6.3% above the National average). A follow up SLDR survey was to be conducted on 3 April 2023 to ascertain whether these positions had been sustained.

7.2 A refresh of the Local Employability Partnership (LEP) was underway from now until July 2023 to develop its vision and priorities going forward. The focus of the partnership was on: transitions; an all-age employability support; and targeted interventions of specific groups (geographic or characteristic based) which utilised data on the local labour market and the voice of service users. The recruitment of an Employability Manager was expected to provide leadership of this work stream and facilitate the two way flow of information between the LEP and the CPP. Support groups already existed in the Borders which provided a challenge in the establishment of reporting mechanisms into the CPP. It was noted that a report by James Withers, on his independent review of the skills delivery landscape to ensure the public body landscape for skills remained fit to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future, was due to be published hopefully before the next meeting of the CPP. It was suggested that a discussion on the report's outcomes be held at the most appropriate Strategic Board meeting thereafter.

**DECISION**

**NOTED the update.**

8. **THEME 3 – ENJOYING GOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

8.1 The Partnership Manager, Ms Clare Malster, reported that there was a vacancy for the lead officer of Theme 3, and it was anticipated a new lead officer would be appointed shortly. With reference to paragraph 7 of the Minute of 17 November 2022, copies of a report providing an update on Theme 3: Enjoying good health and wellbeing had been circulated. Fiona Doig and Steph Mackenzie (NHS Borders) then provided members with an overview of the new Mental Health Improvement & Suicide Prevention Plan, called 'Creating Hope in the Scottish Borders' which was to be discussed in greater depth at the next meeting. Survey templates in all policies for anchor organisations and FSD had been developed and circulated to members of the Joint Programme Board. The vision for the Creating Hope action plan was to increase the number of people in good mental health at every age and stage of life and to reduce the number of suicide deaths in the Scottish Borders, whilst working together with partners and communities to tackle the inequalities that contributed to poor mental health and suicide. A key principle was partnership engagement in the creation and delivery of the plan. The Area Partnerships were included in the engagement process for development of the plan in 2022. Further proactive

engagement with localities was to be undertaken in 2023 around the areas of 'Mentally Healthy Communities' and 'Suicide Safer Communities'. Wider community planning aims and actions were to consider mental health impacts in order to reduce deaths by suicide and support people and communities affected by suicide. Many actions that were effective in reducing suicide and promoting better mental health lay out-with the health sector, within local planning partnerships and other agencies. The integration of mental health and wellbeing into Impact Assessments, along with guidance for promotion of mental health and wellbeing were to be produced in line with the action plan.

- 8.2 Copies of a report and the final draft of the Scottish Borders Health & Social Care Strategic Framework 2023-26, which would inform the Community Planning Partnership and seek its approval to adopt the Framework as the approach of the 'Enjoying good health and wellbeing' theme, had been circulated. It was a statutory duty of the Integration Joint Board to produce a 3 year strategic plan in collaboration with Public Health Scotland, Scottish Borders Council, the Health Board and wider partners. The Strategic Framework had been developed to improve the health and wellbeing outcomes of Borders communities, based on the needs of those communities and to prioritise areas which were considered to have the greatest impact on the health and wellbeing outcomes. Public consultation exercises had been undertaken with particular attention paid to engaging the sectors of society that were usually harder to reach. Findings from consultation and data gathering had been compared against the National Health and Wellbeing Outcomes, with all currently below benchmark percentage targets. A risk based approach was undertaken to identify strategic issues that required proactive management. The resulting framework outlined six strategic issues with objectives to improve outcomes: improving access to services; rising to the workforce challenge; focusing on prevention and early intervention; supporting unpaid carers by getting services for the cared for right; improving effectiveness and efficiency; and reducing poverty and inequalities. It was proposed that the collective focus of the CPP Health and Wellbeing group was best placed to efficiently aid the necessary improvements.

#### **DECISION**

- (a) **NOTED the update.**  
(b) **AGREED to adopt the Health and Social Care Framework as the approach of the 'Enjoying good health and wellbeing' theme.**

#### **9. THEME 4 – A GOOD PLACE TO GROW UP, LIVE IN AND ENJOY A FULL LIFE**

- 9.1 With reference to paragraph 9 of the Minute of 17 November 2022, copies of an update on Theme 4: A good place to grow up, live and enjoy a full life, had been circulated. The report proposed that the CPP be invited to endorse the Scottish Borders Climate Change Route Map (CCRM). The CCRM provided a strategic framework for collective action on a just transition to Net Zero and related adaptation action across the Scottish Borders. Chief Inspector Fisher renewed his request to partners to identify an appropriate officer to participate in a partnership Practitioner/Advisory Group which was to provide technical and practical support to the Board on this urgent priority. A workshop supported by Edinburgh Climate Change Institute was to take place on 20 March with a focus on greenhouse gas emissions. Its purpose was to initiate work on establishing an approach to area-wide baseline emissions data, to be used to plan, manage and monitor progress against key emissions sources. Partners were requested to ensure they were represented appropriately at the workshop.



- 9.2 In relation to the cleaner, greener travel outcome, a baseline review of data provided by the 42 bus and community transport routes and journeys had been undertaken. This was to be overlaid on employee postcode data from NHS Borders and Borders College to establish if there were any new travel opportunities. There had been an online public consultation exercise, the results of which were to feed into the local transport network review. The PINGO Demand Responsive Transport pilot was on target to exceed 12000 passengers by the end of March 2023. With further enhancements it was hoped that the trial was to be extended. In relation to Place Making, potential dates were to be identified for the Programme and Strategic Boards to come together for a workshop to be facilitated by Scottish Futures Trust and Scottish Government Place Team. The purpose of the workshop was to reflect on the Borderlands workshops held with communities and the wider engagements in other communities. The workshop should also highlight the role of the new TSI in Place Making. A date in the weeks commencing 17 and 24 April was to be considered. In relation to domestic violence, the DAAS Service Manager was currently preparing a draft infographic to be targeted to the wider community which highlighted the various ways they could 'reach in' and seek support/report.

**DECISION**

**NOTED the update.**

10. **INTEGRATED CHILDREN& YOUNG PEOPLE'S PROGRESS REPORT 2021-22**  
Copies of the Integrated Children and Young People's Report 2021-22 had been circulated for noting.

11. **FORWARD PLANNER FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**  
Copies of a Forward Planner for meetings and items for agendas had been circulated.

**DECISION**

**NOTED.**

12. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 12.1 Ms Karen Hamilton (NHS Borders) reported that NHS Borders Board was to hold a public meeting in Jedburgh Town Hall on 30 March. This was the first of a series of meetings across the Borders in 2023 to be widely publicised.
- 12.2 Mr Colin McGrath (SBCCN) suggested another theme which could be added "A Good Place to have your say and influence decisions." The Director Resilient Communities advised that the opportunity to make amendments/suggest new themes was part of the refresh of the Community Plan discussions.

**DECISION**

**NOTED.**

13. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Strategic Board was confirmed as 8 June 2023, taking place online via Microsoft Teams starting at 2:00pm.

*Meeting concluded at 3:50 pm*

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# Public Document Pack

## SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL AUDIT COMMITTEE

MINUTES of Meeting of the AUDIT  
COMMITTEE held in via Microsoft Teams on  
Monday, 13 March 2023 at 10.00 am

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Present:- Councillors E. Thornton-Nicol (Chair), N. Richards (Vice-Chair), J. Anderson, J. Cox, M. Douglas, J. PatonDay, E. Robson, S. Scott, F. Sinclair, Mr S. Whalley and Mr P. Whitfield

Apologies:- Councillors P. Brown

In Attendance:- Chief Executive, Director Infrastructure and Environment, Acting Chief Financial Officer, Chief Officer Audit and Risk, Corporate Risk Officer, Principal Internal Auditor, Senior Manager Business Strategy (J. McDonald), Function Manager - Performance & Improvement (M. Cripps), Ms S. Harold and Ms J. Law (Audit Scotland) and Democratic Services Officer (W. Mohieddeen).

### 1. **MINUTE**

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the Meeting held on 13 February 2023.

### **DECISION**

**AGREED to approve the Minute for signature by the Chair.**

### 2. **AUDIT COMMITTEE ACTION TRACKER**

2.1 There had been circulated copies of the Audit Committee Action Tracker which was presented by the Chief Officer Audit and Risk.

2.2 With reference to paragraph 7 of the Minute of the Meeting of Audit and Scrutiny Committee held on 22 November 2021, progress on Internal Audit Actions relating to the Business Continuity Framework were discussed at Audit Committee meeting on 13 February 2023. This item would remain on Audit Committee Action Tracker pending completion by Management of the two remaining Internal Audit actions.

2.3 With reference to paragraph 13 of the Minute of the Meeting of Audit and Scrutiny Committee held on 27 June 2022, two development sessions had taken place on 2 March and 6 March 2023 to carry out the annual Audit Committee self-assessment. One of the items had been deferred until Audit Committee had the opportunity to consider the Internal Audit and External Audit Plans. This concluded the Development Sessions 2022-23. The Chair's Report would then come to Audit Committee on 10 May 2023 along with 2 self-evaluations appended to the document. Members' self-evaluation would inform the next round of development sessions.

2.4 With reference to paragraph 3 of the Minute of the Meeting held on 12 September 2022, an update on progress on the Internal Audit action related to budgetary control on Learning Disability Service (LDS), an update has not been submitted to Council Management Team due to annual leave and this item had been deferred to Audit Committee on 10 May 2023.

2.5 With reference to paragraph 4.4 of the Minute of the Meeting held on 23 November 2022, an update on Best Value Action Plan formed part of the agenda for the meeting and was due to be marked as complete by the Committee.

- 2.6 With reference to paragraph 2 of the Minute of the Meeting held on 13 February 2023, a schedule of further Audit Committee Development Sessions for 2023-24 was in progress to be presented for approval at the 10 May 2023 meeting of Audit Committee.
- 2.7 In discussion of the Audit Committee Action Tracker, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk advised that action on SB Contracts was an action arising from an External Audit report and it was the responsibility of directors to follow-up on action. The Director Infrastructure and Environment advised that work was taking place with finance officers and an update would be submitted to the Committee in due course.

## **DECISION**

**NOTED progress on the action tracker.**

### **3. DIRECTOR RISK MANAGEMENT PRESENTATION**

- 3.1 The Chair introduced Director Infrastructure and Environment to give a presentation on corporate risks in the Infrastructure and Environment Service. A slide pack had been circulated from the Director Infrastructure and Environment which included a breakdown of risks across the service. The Director Infrastructure and Environment answered questions from Members based on the content of the presentation. With regards to the risk that revenue budgets not being included in the revenue costs of projects once they had been completed, this had been identified as a key risk where there was ongoing work. External resource was sought to establish a Programme Management Office (PMO) to focus on the way projects were established. The PMO was due to be established by the end of March 2023. Work was also undertaken which would focus on the development of project business cases. With regards to revenue implications of projects, the Director Infrastructure and Environment advised the risk was in a better position where a finance working group was established to liaise with projects to review financial implications. Dashboard reporting was due to be established to support the production of reports on projects and their financing. Revenue implications had always been part of project initiation; however work was being undertaken to improve the position of the project finance risk.
- 3.2 It was explained that a Chief Officer Estates had not been advertised yet. The position would capture work on property management, property and estates maintenance, architects and facilities management. With regards to the progress of sales of land and property, the Director Infrastructure and Environment advised that consideration should be given to priorities with regards to the disposal of assets depending on the asset due to be sold. Focus was given to assets that were higher risk to the organisation, particularly in consideration of the capacity of officers. The Chief Executive advised that sales of parcels of land usually took place under delegated authority; however progress on sales normally took time where assets were of higher profile and required investment to be brought into productive use. Place Making also formed part of considerations in the selling of assets to ensure there was a positive impact on a particular settlement. After references to the United Kingdom's exit of the European Union was highlighted by Members, the Director Infrastructure and Environment assured the Committee that the risk register was reviewed along with the Corporate Risk Officer and that the description of the relevant risk would be updated. The Chief Officer Audit and Risk informed Members that second line monitoring would take place to address mitigation actions with assigned owners to assure Members that risk mitigation took place that underpinned the slide deck presented to the Committee. Members responded that while the verbal update was welcome, written confirmation of actions having taken place would assure the Committee. The Director Infrastructure and Environment advised that he would be happy to bring back an update to the Committee on changes to the Environment and Infrastructure risks following the work on the establishment of the PMO, recruitment on the Chief Officer Estates and detailed insight into service risks. The Chair further requested that updates are brought forward with an evaluation on SBC work on climate change including on uptake of mandatory training. It was explained that climate change

mandatory training had not been established for long and that monitoring would be undertaken.

## **DECISION**

**(a) NOTED the update;**

**(b) AGREED that the Director Infrastructure and Environment would bring back an update on service risks following the establishment of the Programme Management Office (PMO).**

## **4. BEST VALUE AUDIT ACTIONS UPDATE**

4.1 With reference to paragraph 4.4 of the Minute of the Meeting held on 23 November 2022, the Chair invited Mr Jason McDonald, Senior Manager Business Strategy and Resources and Ms Maggie Cripps, Function Manager - Performance & Improvement to deliver a presentation on External Audit Best Value recommendations. To address the 7 improvement recommendations made, a 40-point action plan had been made. It was advised that the work on Best Value audit recommendations was ready to be closed off while ongoing oversight of performance could be made. Mr McDonald gave an overview of the key audit recommendations and provided examples of work that had been undertaken for each area. Mr McDonald explained that the Covid-19 pandemic affected how partnership working could take place; however an example was provided of the creation of a Future Strategy Group to provide direction and oversee strategic developments. The pandemic also provided an opportunity for how staff consultation and engagement took place, and a comprehensive employee survey had been undertaken. With regards to continual professional development of Elected Members, Mr McDonald advised that a training suite for Elected Members had been established on SBLearn. With regards to Progress on Identified Outstanding Actions, 39 of 40 actions had now been completed and a questionnaire for Elected Members to highlight gaps in knowledge for training was deferred as it was felt that this would be more appropriate to take place after about a year for Members to understand what gaps in knowledge and training they wished to address. It was intended for the survey to take place in June 2023. Mr McDonald advised that with the completion of the final action that focus can shift to developing improvement in the future. Ms Cripps summarised next steps for embedding performance management across SBC. It was summarised that to achieve best possible outcomes for the public, Audit Scotland could expect work to assure good governance, effective resource management and a focus on improvement.

4.2 In discussion of the presentation Members enquired about the membership of the Future Strategy Group and the nature of its meetings. The Chief Executive advised that the Corporate Policy Advisor was leading work on the development of the Future Strategy policy and that the Future Strategy Group contained a number of officers from Scottish Borders Council and NHS Borders, including the Chief Officer Scottish Borders Health and Social Care Partnership. It was clarified the Group was an officers group which supported the strategy development work of the Integration Joint Board. Mr McDonald advised he would circulate the membership of the Future Strategy Group for Committee Members. The Chair thanked officers that worked on the Best Value audit recommendations work through the Covid-19 pandemic.

## **DECISION**

**(a) NOTED the update;**

**(b) AGREED:**

**(i) To remove the Best Value audit actions from the Audit Committee Action Tracker; and,**

- (ii) **That membership of the Future Strategy Group would be circulated to Committee Members.**

5. **FOLLOW-UP REVIEW 2022-23 OF COMPLETED AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS**

With reference to paragraph 7 of the Minute of the Meeting held on 12 December 2022, there had been circulated copies of a report by Chief Officer Audit and Risk that provided an update to the Audit Committee on the results of the Follow-Up Review which included a sample check on the adequacy of new internal controls for Internal Audit Recommendations marked as completed by Management in the period January to December 2022. Internal Audit was an independent appraisal function established for the review of the internal control system as a service to Scottish Borders Council which objectively examined, evaluated and reported on the adequacy of internal control as a contribution to the proper, economic, efficient and effective use of resources and the management of risk. The Internal Audit activity added value to the organisation (and its stakeholders) when it considered strategies, objectives, and risks; strived to offer ways to enhance governance, risk management and control processes (by way of making audit recommendations); and objectively provided relevant assurance. The Remit of the Audit Committee included the Audit function to consider “all matters relating to the implementation of recommendations contained within internal audit reports”, as part of its high level oversight of the framework of internal control, risk management and governance within the Council. The Chief Officer Audit and Risk presented the report and advised that from the 7 recommendations tested, all were found to have been completed satisfactorily. The evidence that was provided by Management indicated that the Audit recommendations had been implemented satisfactorily and the action taken had the desired outcome of improving internal control and governance, and reducing risk which provided assurance of evidence-based continuous improvement. A further update on progress with the implementation of Internal Audit recommendations would be included within the Internal Audit Annual Assurance Report 2022-23 for Scottish Borders Council, which was scheduled for presentation to the Audit Committee in May 2023.

**DECISION  
NOTED:**

- (a) **the results of the spot check on Internal Audit recommendations that had been marked as completed by Management in the period January to December 2022 to improve internal controls and governance, and mitigate risks;**
- (b) **satisfaction with the outcomes; and,**
- (c) **that Internal Audit would continue to monitor the completion of recommendations and would provide update reports to this Committee.**

6. **SBC LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

With reference to paragraph 9 of the Minute of the Meeting of Audit and Scrutiny Committee held on 27 June 2022, there had been circulated copies of a report by Chief Executive that proposed that the Audit Committee considered the revisions to the Council’s Local Code of Corporate Governance and recommend it for approval by full Council. The report provided the Audit Committee with the opportunity to scrutinise the updated Local Code of Corporate Governance for Scottish Borders Council and recommend it for Council approval, to assist with the 2022-23 annual assurance process. Scottish Borders Council (SBC) was responsible for ensuring that its business was conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money was safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The SBC Local Code of Corporate Governance, which was consistent with the principles and recommendations of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework ‘Delivering Good Governance in Local Government’ and the supporting guidance notes for Scottish authorities (2016), was previously revised and approved by Council on 28 June 2018.

The SBC Local Code of Corporate Governance had been updated by the officer Governance Self-Assessment Working Group, on behalf of the Council Management Team (CMT). The updated SBC Local Code of Corporate Governance (Appendix 1) would require approval by Council to ensure this key document continued to be relevant and complete to reflect the appropriate framework for effective governance of the Council's affairs and facilitate the exercise of its functions to deliver best value. The Chief Officer Audit and Risk advised that the document was underpinned by detail that supported performance management and that a balance needed to be made in including detail that didn't make the document too large. It was further advised that the document wouldn't normally be used specifically as part of the induction process for new staff along with normal induction items including training materials, corporate policies and IT sign-ins, and that there would be a number of sub-elements of pertinent policies would feature as part of staff induction which included the employee code of conduct.

## **DECISION**

### **(a) NOTED**

**(i) the changes outlined in the report;**

**(ii) the updated Local Code will be used for the 2022/23 annual assurance process; and,**

### **(b) AGREED to RECOMMEND to Council for approval of the updated Local Code of Corporate Governance (Appendix 1).**

## **7. EXTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL PLAN 2022-23 FOR SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL**

7.1 There had been circulated copies of the Annual External Audit Plan 2022-23 prepared by Audit Scotland. The Annual Audit Plan summarised the work plan for the 2022-23 external audit of Scottish Borders Council. Ms Stephanie Harold, Audit Scotland summarised the report in place of Mr John Boyd who was not able to attend the meeting. The main elements of the work included:

- evaluation of the key controls within the main accounting systems;
- an audit of Scottish Borders Council, and provision of an Independent Auditor's Report covering Scottish Borders Council and its group;
- an audit opinion on regularity and other statutory information published within the annual accounts including the Management Commentary, the Governance Statement and the Remuneration and Staff Report;
- consideration of arrangements in relation to wider scope areas: financial management; financial sustainability; vision, leadership and governance; and use of resources to improve outcomes;
- consideration of Best Value arrangements;
- providing assurance on the Housing Benefit Subsidy Claim, Non-Domestic Rates Return and the Whole of Government Accounts (WGA) return; and,
- review Scottish Borders Council's arrangements for preparing and publishing statutory performance information.

7.2 Members discussed the report and enquired about the audit fee structure. Ms Harold confirmed that the audit fee for 2021-22 was £293,310. With regards to Contributions to Performance and Best Value, Ms Harold advised this covered Best Value Work, work on climate change, thematic review and also the annual review reviewed by the Accounts Commission. The audit fee was broken down into components and in previous years there had always been contributions to Best Value Work that hadn't previously been highlighted as part of the fee. The Chair expressed concern that an increase of 12.5% on the audit fee was significant and enquired what had brought about the increase. Ms Harold advised that she would send to the Chair detail on what Contributions to Audit Scotland Costs covered. It was explained that the Sectoral Cap ensured that the percentage increases in fees that all Councils received were equitable. Ms Harold further

advised that more information on the Sectoral Cap could also be shared with the Committee. The Chair stressed it was important for the Committee to understand what was delivered for the fee charged. Ms Harold agreed to provide information on the fees and advised that Audit Scotland had tried to mitigate the increase of fees charged.

## **DECISION**

- (a) NOTED the report; and,**
- (b) AGREED that Audit Scotland would provide an update to the committee concerning the breakdown of the audit fee particularly in respect of;**
  - (i) Background to Contribution to Audit Scotland costs;**
  - (ii) Background to Contribution to Performance and Best Value; and,**
  - (iii) Background to Sectoral Cap Adjustment.**

## **8. EXTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL PLAN 2022-23 FOR THE SBC PENSION FUND**

8.1 There had been circulated copies of the Scottish Borders Council Pension Fund Annual Audit Plan 2022-23 prepared by Audit Scotland. The Annual Audit Plan for the SBC Pension Fund summarised the work plan for the external audit of Scottish Borders Council Pension Fund. Ms Stephanie Harold summarised the report and advised the Plan would be presented to the Pension Fund Committee. The main elements of the work included:

- evaluation of the key controls within the main accounting systems;
- an audit of the annual accounts and the provision of an Independent Auditor's Report;
- an opinion on statutory information published in the annual accounts, comprising the Management Commentary, the Annual Governance Statement and the Governance Compliance Statement; and,
- consideration of arrangements in relation to wider scope areas: financial management; financial sustainability; vision, leadership and governance; and use of resources to improve outcomes.

8.2 The Chair enquired for information on the Contribution to Audit Scotland costs. Ms Harold advised that the reduction in the Sectoral Gap Adjustment assured that the increase in the audit fee did not go above 12.5%.

## **DECISION**

- (a) NOTED the report,**
- (b) AGREED that Audit Scotland would provide an update to the committee concerning the breakdown of the audit fee particularly in respect of;**
  - (i) Background to Contribution to Audit Scotland costs; and,**
  - (ii) Background to Sectoral Cap Adjustment.**

## **9. INTERNAL AUDIT CHARTER**

9.1 There had been circulated copies of a report by Chief Officer Audit and Risk that provided the Audit Committee with the updated Internal Audit Charter for approval that defined the terms of reference for the Internal Audit function to carry out its role to enable the Chief Audit Executive to prepare the annual Internal Audit opinions on the adequacy of each organisation's overall control environment. The definition of Internal Auditing within the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) was "Internal auditing is an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organisation's operations. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a



systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes.” In accordance with the PSIAS, the purpose, authority and responsibility of the Internal Audit activity had to be formally defined in an Internal Audit Charter, consistent with the Definition of Internal Auditing, the Code of Ethics and the Standards. The Chief Audit Executive had to periodically review the Internal Audit Charter and present it to senior management (Council Management Team) and the board (Audit Committee) for approval. The Internal Audit Charter had been updated by the Chief Audit Executive (SBC’s Chief Officer Audit & Risk) and the Principal Internal Auditor in conformance with the PSIAS. The Internal Audit Charter was shown in Appendix 1 of the report for approval by the Audit Committee to ensure that Internal Audit was tasked to carry out its role in accordance with best Corporate Governance practice.

9.2 The summary of the changes reflected the following:

- Amendments to the Scheme of Administration approved by Council in August 2022 to establish a separate Audit Committee with audit and risk functions;
- The renaming of the Council Management Team, the interim changes in Chief Officers in place of the Director Finance and Corporate Governance, and the associated change in the CAE’s line management arrangements;
- Specific references to the provision of Internal Audit services to the Pension Fund and the Health and Social Care Integration Joint Board, in addition to Scottish Borders Council;
- Specific details on the composition of the Internal Audit staff resources within the ‘Audit Resources and Work Prioritisation’ section to ensure clarity and transparency within the Internal Audit Charter; and,
- Explicit reference within the ‘Non-Audit Activities’ section relating to Management’s responsibilities in systematically identifying and managing risks and in tackling fraud (supported by the Chief Officer Audit & Risk), to ensure consistency with that stated in the Council’s Risk Management Policy and Counter Fraud Policy respectively.

## **DECISION**

**(a) NOTED:**

- (i) the changes to the Internal Audit Charter outlined in section 4 of the report in conformance with PSIAS;**
- (ii) that the Internal Audit Charter will be reviewed annually; and**

**(b) AGREED to approve the updated Internal Audit Charter, as shown in Appendix 1 to the report.**

## **10. INTERNAL AUDIT STRATEGY AND ANNUAL PLAN 2023-24**

10.1 There had been circulated copies of a report by Chief Officer Audit and Risk that sought to gain approval to the proposed Internal Audit Strategy and Internal Audit Annual Plan 2023-24 to enable the Chief Audit Executive to prepare annual opinions on the adequacy of the overall control environment for Scottish Borders Council, Scottish Borders Pension Fund, and Scottish Borders Health and Social Care Integration Joint Board. A fundamental role of the Council’s Internal Audit function was to provide senior management and members with independent and objective assurance which is designed to add value and improve the organisation’s operations. In addition, the Chief Audit Executive (CAE) was also required to prepare an Internal Audit annual opinion on the adequacy of the organisation’s overall control environment. The Internal Audit Strategy at Appendix 1 of the report outlined the strategic direction for how Internal Audit would achieve its objectives, which were set out in the Internal Audit Charter, in conformance with PSIAS. It guided the Internal Audit function in delivering high quality Internal Audit services to Scottish Borders Council (SBC), Scottish Borders Council Pension Fund

(SBCPF), and Scottish Borders Health and Social Care Integration Joint Board (SBIJB). The Internal Audit Annual Plan 2023-24 at Appendix 2 of the report had been developed by the Chief Officer Audit & Risk (CAE) and the Principal Internal Auditor. It set out the range and breadth of audit activity and sufficient work within the audit programme of work to enable the CAE to prepare an Internal Audit annual opinions for SBC, SBCPF, and SBIJB. Separate Internal Audit Annual Plans 2023-24 for the SBCPF and SBIJB would be presented to their respective board/audit committee for approval. Key components of the audit planning process included a clear understanding of each organisation's functions, associated risks, and assurance framework.

- 10.2 The Chief Officer Audit and Risk summarised the report and answered Members questions. With regards to risk appetite and tolerance, Internal Audit had an obligation to provide an opinion on how well SBC risk management arrangements were defined and operated as part of the annual assurance opinion. The rollout of the Risk Appetite Toolkit was still being progressed. Comment wouldn't normally be made by Internal Audit on what the risk appetite would be; however good practice elements would be assessed. The Chief Executive explained that risk appetite varied across 137 high-level Council services, and that the Risk Appetite Toolkit provided additional guidance to Management by defining acceptable levels of risk in relation to different risk categories of a local authority. With regards to cyber security, the Chief Executive advised that CGI was responsible for 24/7 cyber threat monitoring and for setting in place appropriate arrangements and that SBC were accredited by the UK Government in terms of security of data transfer and retention. Furthermore, CGI had been asked to assess further steps that could be taken in terms of IT security and internal process such as password security and staff activity.

**DECISION**  
**AGREED to:**

- (a) Endorse the Internal Audit staff resources needed to deliver the Internal Audit Strategy and Annual Plans;**
- (b) Approve the Internal Audit Strategy detailed in Appendix 1 of the report; and,**
- (c) Approve the Internal Audit Annual Plan 2023-24 detailed in Appendix 2 of the report.**

*The meeting concluded at 12.30 pm.*

**SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL  
POLICE, FIRE & RESCUE AND SAFER COMMUNITIES BOARD**

MINUTES of Meeting of the POLICE, FIRE &  
RESCUE AND SAFER COMMUNITIES  
BOARD held in COUNCIL CHAMBER,  
COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS, NEWTOWN  
ST BOSWELLS and Via Microsoft Teams on  
Thursday, 16 March 2023 at 9.30 am

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Present:- Councillors J. Pirone (Chairman), J. Anderson, A. Orr, N. Richards, E. Small,  
H. Steel, Mr James Ayling - NHS Borders and Ms M Simpson -  
Voluntary Sector.

In Attendance:- Chief Inspector Vincent Fisher, Area Commander Hilary Sangster, Local  
Senior Officer (LSO) Midlothian, East Lothian and Scottish Borders (MELSB),  
Group Commander Keith Langley, Station Commander Wes Robertson  
(Prevention & Protection), Group Manager – Safer Communities and  
Homelessness , Participation Officer (C. Malster), Democratic Services  
Officer (D. Hall).

**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

The Chair varied the order of business as shown on the agenda and the Minute reflects the order in which the items were considered at the meeting.

**1. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the Meeting held on 14 December 2022. The Chairman expressed thanks to Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service for their exemplary work during the recent case of a child who had gone missing. The public had provided laudable assistance to the emergency services, and their efforts had helped, not hindered matters.

**DECISION**

**APPROVED the Minute**

**2. PROGRESS REPORTS/UPDATES ON SERVICE MATTERS - POLICE SCOTLAND**

1.1 There had been circulated copies of reports by Police Scotland as a supplement to the agenda. Chief Inspector Vinnie Fisher explained that crime had fallen by 2.61% across the board. However, a few aspects of crime had increased, notably crimes of violence, hate crime and cyber enabled crimes. Forty-nine recruits had started at the Scottish Police College in November, fourteen of whom joined the Lothians & Scottish Borders Division on 1 March, the highest such intake for a number of years. The Core Operating System (COS) had been launched, and would provide a single crime reporting and case management platform for Police Scotland. The new system had replaced the legacy systems that had been in place since the inception of Police Scotland, and was expected to increase the speed of data analysis, and provide improved confidence in the accuracy of figures and data.

1.2 Chief Inspector Fisher presented the Quarter 3 Police Scotland report and highlighted that as a result of the missing person coordinator being on a leave of absence there was a lack of validated missing person incidents during Q2. The staff member had returned to work, and it was hoped that would allow the inclusion of the relevant, up to date, missing person figures in the Quarter 4 report. There had been 896 incidents of domestic abuse reported, an increase of 2.26% compared to the five year average. A 16% increase had

been seen nationally. The detection rate in the Borders was 68.73%, compared to 64% nationally. Chief Inspector Fisher stressed that the increased number of incidents did not mean that the level of criminality had increased, but that zero tolerance measures and work to increase the confidence of victims to report crime had led to a higher degree of crimes being reported. The majority of reported hate crimes did not include an element of physical violence. 14% of hate crime incidents involved the police as victims. As with all crime, it remained challenging to secure the necessary corroborating evidence to secure hate crime convictions. Whilst the overall rate of sexual crimes had remained almost static at 0.21% compared to the five year average, rape and attempted rape had increased by 11.94%. Chief Inspector Fisher explained that a proactive approach to investigating historical crimes, and work to instil confidence in victims to report crimes, had led to the increases. The Oakleaf forensic medical suite at the Borders General Hospital had opened, which would provide support to rape victims, and allow appropriate forensic evidence to be gathered and stored until such time as the victim was confident to report the crime to police. Crimes of drug supply, production and cultivation had increased by 2.36% compared to the five year average. Laboratory testing was required to confirm that a crime had taken place where drugs in instances where drugs were seized. Where the test was negative for drugs then no crime had occurred and would be reflected as such in the statistics. Crimes of violence had increased by 47.54% on the five year average, which equated to an increase of 40.6 crimes. Chief Inspector Fisher highlighted that a number of offences under the Domestic Abuse Scotland Act and crimes such as sextortion, which were relatively new offences, had contributed to the increase. Sextortion offences posed a unique challenges to Police Scotland due to their cross border and digital nature. There had been a 60% increase in robbery, an increase of 6 compared to the five year average. There was no pattern to the robberies in terms of time, date or location, however they did appear to be opportunistic and potentially drug related. 75% of the robberies were committed by a people known to the complainer. Common assaults had increased by 22.5% compared to the five year average, 42% of which occurred in private spaces. Domestic assaults accounted for 29% of all common assaults, of which 17% were non-recent. In response to a question regarding whether the increase in the number of robberies were related to drug or cost of living factors, Chief Inspector Fisher explained that both of those elements could have contributed. The amount of crack cocaine, which had a shorter duration of effect, being detected in the region had increased also increased. That higher turnaround meant that a higher quantity of drugs could be being used, further driving acquisitive crime. Work to tackle drug offences, including the use and supply of crack cocaine, was ongoing and involved a suite of tactical options.

- 1.3 The number of anti-social behaviour incidents had decreased by 20.94% compared to the five year average, a decrease of 693.8 incidents. Fire-raising was an exception, which had increased by 51.72%. Chief Inspector Fisher attributed the rise to 3 main protagonists whom had been charged with multiple instances of fire-raising. Acquisitive crimes of dishonesty had decreased by 2.85% compared to the five year average. Frauds had increased by 46% compared to the five year average. Similar increases had also been seen nationally. All housebreaking crimes had decreased by 17.83% compared to the five year average. Offences of housebreakings ranged from crude, low-value incidents to higher value, sophisticated crimes. The number of fatal road casualties had increased by 83% compared to the five year average. Long term Scottish Government Figures continued to show a steady decline in road casualties over the past decade. Regarding serious and organised crime, Operation Jabiru had been launched in October 2022 targeting criminals operating within the region. Firearms, over £18k in cash, and luxury goods in excess of £50k had been seized. Chief Inspector Fisher explained that he could not provide further context to the number of complaints received, as the procedure had been centralised. Attendees welcomed the report and thanked Chief Inspector Fisher for providing additional context to the statistical information.

## **DECISION**

**AGREED to note the Report.**

3. **THE LOTHIAN AND SCOTTISH BORDERS POLICING PLAN**

There had been circulated copies of the 2023-2026 Local Police Plan for the Lothians & Scottish Borders Policing Division as an additional item for consideration. The Plan explained that Police Scotland's goal was to improve the safety and wellbeing of people, places and communities in Scotland. Under the Police and Fire Reform Act (Scotland) 2012, the Divisional Commander was required to put in place a Local Police Plan to stipulate how resources would be allocated and used to fulfil that purpose. Members highlighted that the Plan built on positive relationships between key stakeholders across the region and pulled together key information into one document for the public. Chief Inspector Fisher explained that the Plan provided the framework and means by which Police Scotland could measure its performance, and that specific local details would be reported on at a local level. In response to a question regarding proposed emphasis on joint work with the NHS to capture underreported violence, and how much of an issue that was, Chief Inspector Fisher explained that the NHS had the potential to play a key role in capturing extra data on hate crime, violence and sextortion.

**DECISION**

**AGREED to endorse the 2023-2026 Local Policing Plan for the Lothians & Scottish Borders Policing Division.**

4. **PROGRESS REPORTS/UPDATES ON SERVICE MATTERS - SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

- 4.1 There had been circulated copies of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service performance report 1 April 2022 to 31 December 2022. Area Commander Hilary Sangster was in attendance at the meeting and provided an update on national matters. A national pay deal had been reached which would avoid potential strike action. The Scottish Borders was served by thirteen on call stations and two whole time stations. The on call firefighters which served in the region did an exemplary job of balancing primary employment, family life and their on call firefighter duties. Recruitment of on call volunteers continued across the region, and was serving the purpose of increasing appliance availability and allowing staff to work where they were most needed. The use of the Bank Hours initiative had allowed SFRS to access appliances for over 3800 hours.
- 4.2 Group Commander Keith Langley presented the performance report and explained that Scottish Fire and Rescue Service had responded to 1391 incidents in the Scottish Borders, an increase of 132 incidents compared to the same period of the previous year. That included 55 accidental dwelling fires, 198 accidental fires, 301 special service incidents and 59 road traffic collisions. False alarms accounted for 56% of the emergency calls. The change to the unwanted fire alarm response, planned for 2023, was expected to derive down the number of false alarms that crews attended. That would allow more training and community safety initiatives to be undertaken. SFRS measured how well its priorities were met using 7 key indicators: all accidental dwelling fires, all accidental dwelling fire casualties, all deliberate fires, non domestic fires, special service – road traffic collision casualties, special service- non RTC casualties and false alarms. The report indicated that all deliberate fires and non-domestic fires were rated as red on the Red, Amber, Green rating scale. All other performance indicators were green. Operational staff continued to undertake routine and risk specific skill acquisition and maintenance training. Group Commander Langley highlighted that as part of the Local Plan it was important for staff to focus on individual specialisms once a month. The training team had undertaken excellent work and the aforementioned focus had been working well.
- 4.3 SFRS had set a national target of a 10% reduction in accidental dwelling fires over a three year rolling period. There had been 54 dwelling fires recovered compared to 58 over the same period in the previous year. The decrease was a positive sign that efforts to reduce dwelling fires was having an impact. There were 3 deliberate dwelling fires reported. Cooking appliances accounted for 21 dwelling fires, with 3 due to negligent use of

equipment and 2 due to faulty fuel supplies. Analysis highlighted that 22 of the incidents involved adults 18 to 64 years old, and 21 were 65+. Following all domestic fires, the Post Domestic Incident Response would be carried out, and work was ongoing with partners to identify persons at risk. The report highlighted that fire SFRS aimed to reduce fire casualties in the Scottish Borders year on year by 5% over a three year rolling period. There had been 10 casualties in the reporting period, a reduction from 11 in the previous year's equivalent period. There had been one fatality at an incident, which was subject to confirmation that it was a fire death. Of the 4 incidents, 4 members of the public attended hospital with slight injuries, 6 received treatment on scene and SFRS provided oxygen on 7 occasions to injured persons. SFRS continued to carry out seasonal action plans to educate the public regarding dangers, risk and safety measures. Where trends were identified work would take place with partners to mitigate risks. There had been 108 incidents of all deliberate fires in the reporting period. A large increase from the previous year, but below the high of 122 in 2019/2020. There had been 3 deliberate dwelling fires compared to 3 for the same reporting period of the previous year. 2 were by the property owner. Secondary fires involving refuse, grass or derelict buildings accounted for 64 of the recorded fires. Car fires accounted for 5 of the fires, and 3 were dwelling fires. There had been 37 incidents of non-domestic fires in the reporting period, a small increase from the previous year and slightly above average compared to previous years. Non domestic fires typically involved agricultural, industrial or educational buildings. 25 of the 37 incidents were accidental, with 12 caused by adults. Nine incidents were caused by equipment overheating, four were due to faulty fuel supplies, two were negligent use of equipment and seven was deliberate. SFRS had attended 59 RTC's in the reporting period. Operational action was undertaken on 20 occasions to rescue casualties. 25 people were injured, and seven lost their lives. Whilst Police Scotland were responsible for determining the cause of RTC's, SFRS had a significant role to play in preventing RTC's. There had been 62 special service non RTC casualties during the reporting period. 15 injuries appeared to be serious and required hospital treatment. SFRS had attended 69 effecting entry incidents in the Scottish Borders in the reporting period.

- 3.1 There had been 784 fire calls that were classed as unwanted fire alarm signals (UFAS) during the reporting period. On average SFRS sent 9 firefighters and 2 fire appliances to every UFAS call out. 64,000 productive hours were lost every year to UFAS, an equivalent cost of £3.5million. 186 calls were due to false alarms with good intent, 61 were malicious calls, and 17 were caused by human behaviour. 104 calls were due to faulty equipment, 103 due to cooking and 59 were accidental. 38 calls were due to staff testing their equipment, and could have been prevented by appropriate procedures and following correct practice.
- 3.2 The Chair thanked SFRS for their full and detailed report. In response to a question regarding high numbers of UFAs and malicious calls, Station Commander Wes Robertson explained that calls were challenged by operations control when they were received, and that training was provided to ensure that staff challenged whether calls were genuine where appropriate. Work was ongoing to ensure that those likely to make malicious calls were targeted, with outreach events being delivered at schools and other such facilities. In response to a question regarding grass fires and wildfires, Group Commander Langley explained that whilst the numbers of incidents had increased overall land management by land owners and farmers was good. Risk assessments were undertaken and education for the general public was ongoing. SFRS hoped to emulate the partnership work which had been undertaken in Northumberland, where a successful user group had been set up which shared information amongst key stakeholders. Members highlighted that Community Councils had the potential to act as a key resource for the dissemination of information and education opportunities. The positive work of SFRS staff undertaking free fire checks in the community was highlighted, in particular follow up call-backs.

## **DECISION**

**AGREED to note the Report.**

## 5. SAFER COMMUNITIES UPDATE AND KEY ACTIVITIES

3.3 There had been circulated copies of the Quarterly Performance Report by the Group Manager- Safer Communities and Homelessness which covered the period 1 April 2022 to 31 December 2022. The Group Manager – Safer Communities and Homeless, Mr Graham Jones, presented the report and provided an update on Safer Communities activity, highlighting that a feasibility study into a new CCTV system across the major towns of the region had been discussed within SBC. The Safer Communities team would be involved in the process. Whilst Homelessness Services had been brought into the Safer Communities Team, work was ongoing to ensure that an end-to-end system was in place to fully support individuals. System migration was ongoing to ensure that the necessary anti-social behaviour management information system was part of the corporate IT systems, which would provide staff with better information and promote connections with other services. Regarding Domestic Abuse services, final accreditation from Leading Lights was expected, with submissions made, and with answers provided to follow up questions. Translations of leaflets and other information into Ukrainian and Russian had been produced to help provide support to Ukrainian refugees who may experience domestic abuse. Where required interpreters could be engaged to help refugee's access support and services. Members thanked Mr Jones for the update and highlighted that excellent work had been taking place across his team to tackle domestic abuse issues and ensure that Ukrainian refugees were welcomed and provided safe living conditions. Mr Jones explained that weekly assessments of the DAAS service were undertaken, and regular conversations were held with Police Scotland to ensure that victims of domestic abuse were supported, provided safety and given the confidence to report crimes. In response to a question regarding support for victims of crime throughout the court process, Mr Jones agreed that no victim should be withdrawing from the process due to a lack of support, explained that the Scottish Government had provided funding for court advocacy arrangements, and highlighted that within the Safer Communities Team there were now 4 accredited advocates able to provide support to victims of domestic abuse. Mr Jones undertook to discuss further publicity of the full range of support available to people going through the court process with the DAAS Service Manager.

3.4 The number of domestic abuse incidents reported to Police Scotland in 2022/23 to date was 896. That represented a 7.2% decrease compared to the same period of the previous year. The number of referrals to Domestic Abuse Advocacy Support (DAAS) service in 2022/23 was 277, 86 referrals lower than the previous year. Repeat referrals to the DAAS service stood at 28.6%, an improvement compared to the rate of 30% in the corresponding reporting period of the previous year. The number of clients contacted within the agreed timescale was 96.3%, considerably higher than the 80% baseline. There had been a decrease of 16.9% in the number of anti-social behaviour incidents, a decrease of 704 fewer incidents recorded. The number of Group 1-5 recorded crimes and offences had decreased by 7.1%, a reduction of 200 fewer victims. The number of new cases accepted at the Anti-Social Behaviour Core Group by partners in 2022/23 was 1110, 32 cases lower than the equivalent period in the previous year. 64 fewer monitoring cases were closed in 2022/23 compared to the corresponding period in 2021/22, a decrease of 38%. The anti-social behaviour unit has been reviewing the interventions format to further improve case closure, and re-wording formal letters to emphasise the consequences for non-engagement. The number of early interventions made by ASB partners had decreased by 7.8%. Efforts were being made to increase capacity to mediate in cases, a key component of early interventions. 285 fewer people were being monitored for anti-social behaviour compared to the same period in 2021/22, a decrease of 22.9%. The number of referrals to the mediation service for 2022/23 was 16. 90% of referrals were unable to be progressed in 2022/23. The reason why a referral cannot be progressed was recorded, which would allow analysis of the reasons behind referrals not progressing. Mr Jones explained that in terms of mediation, if one party did not participate then no mediation meeting would be possible.

### **DECISION**

**AGREED to note the update.**

6. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Members agreed to amend the meeting schedule of the Board to take into account the work of the Police CAT and data lag inherent to the reporting periods. The Quarter 4, June 2023 meeting would take place as planned, followed by a biannual meeting schedule which consisted of meetings in December and June.

**DECISION**

**AGREED to amend the meeting schedule to meet biannually, with meetings taking place mid-year and end of year.**

*The meeting concluded at 11.15 am*



# SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL HAWICK COMMON GOOD FUND SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES of Meeting of the HAWICK  
COMMON GOOD FUND SUB-COMMITTEE  
held in via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday, 21  
March 2023 at 5.00 pm

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- Present:- Councillors C. Ramage (Chair), W. McAteer, N. Richards, A. Smart;  
Mr J. Campbell (Hawick CC) and Ms W. Potts (Burnfoot CC)
- Apologies:- Councillors J. Cox and S. Marshall
- In Attendance:- Chief Legal Officer, Acting Chief Financial Officer, Estates Strategy Manager  
(N. Curtis), Property Officer (S. Drummond), Graduate Trainee Surveyor (A.  
Watson); Mr B. Bouglas, Ms F. Drane, Mr D. Tait, Mr D. Taylor and Mr C.  
Telfer (Future Hawick); Mr J. Hogg (Hawick Common Riding Committee), and  
Democratic Services Officer (W. Mohieddeen).

## **CHAIR'S REMARKS**

The Chair welcomed Members, officers and the public to the meeting and noted that to prioritise her role as a councillor and to participate in debates as a Member she had taken the decision to resign as a member of Hawick Common Riding Committee.

### 1. **MINUTE**

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the Meeting held on 22 November 2021.

## **DECISION**

**AGREED to approve the Minute for signature by the Chair.**

### 2. **MONITORING REPORT FOR 9 MONTHS TO 31 DECEMBER 2022 AND PROPOSED BUDGET FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2023-24**

There had been circulated copies of a report by Acting Chief Financial Officer that provided details of the income and expenditure for the Hawick Common Good Fund for nine months to 31 December 2022, a full year projected out-turn for 2022-23, projected balance sheet values as at 31 March 2023 and proposed budget for 2023-24. Appendix 1 of the report provided the projected income and expenditure position for 2022-23 which showed a projected surplus of £42,260 for the year, which was less than the previously reported surplus on 22 November 2022, as a result of an increase to the Central Support Charge and an increase in the property repairs budget. Appendix 2 of the report provided a projected balance sheet value as at 31 March 2023 which showed a projected decrease in reserves of £22,081. Appendix 3a of the report provided a breakdown of the property portfolio which showed projected rental income and projected net return for 2022-23 and actual property income to 31 December 2022. Appendix 3b of the report provided a breakdown of the property portfolio which showed projected property expenditure for 2022-23 and actual property expenditure to 31 December 2022. Appendix 4 of the report provided a breakdown of the property portfolio which showed projected property valuations at 31 March 2023. Appendix 5 of the report showed the value of the Aegon Asset Management Investment Fund to 31 December 2022. The Acting Chief Financial Officer summarised the report and answered Members questions. It was clarified that unallocated funds would be carried forward into the next year, and that the allocation of funds for grant expenditure was a guide for budgeting of the fund, however the Sub-Committee may choose to alter this.

## **DECISION**

### **(a) AGREED:**

- (i) the projected income and expenditure for 2022-23 in Appendix 1 as the revised budget for 2022-23;**
- (ii) the proposed budget for 2023-24 as shown in Appendix 1;**

### **(b) NOTED**

- (i) the projected balance sheet value as at 31 March 2023 in Appendix 2;**
- (ii) the summary of the property portfolio in Appendices 3 and 4; and,**
- (iii) the current position of the Aegon Asset Management Investment Fund in Appendix 5.**

## **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Councillor McAteer declared an interest in the following item of business in terms of Section 5 of the Councillors Code of Conduct and left the Chamber during the discussion.

### **3. APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE - HAWICK COMMON RIDING COMMITTEE**

There had been circulated copies of an application for financial assistance from Hawick Common Riding Committee for £1,848.00 to cover the cost of 22 additional toilets on the Hawick Moor for the Hawick Common Riding weekend. The Chair invited John Hogg, Chair of Hawick Common Riding Committee to present the application. Members expressed support for the application.

## **DECISION**

**AGREED to award Hawick Common Riding Committee a grant of £1,848.**

## **MEMBER**

Councillor McAteer rejoined the Meeting.

### **4. APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE - FUTURE HAWICK**

There had been circulated copies of an application for financial assistance from Future Hawick for £450 for a reception to recognise those that had been involved Hawick Welcome over the 26 years of its operation. The Chair invited Derick Tait, Treasurer of Future Hawick, to present the application. Members expressed support for the application.

## **DECISION**

**AGREED to award Future Hawick a grant of £450.**

### **5. ST LEONARD'S PARK PROJECT**

With reference to paragraph 4 of the Minute of the Meeting held on 29 March 2022, the Chair invited Brian Bouglas, Duncan Taylor, Fiona Drane and Colin Telfer of Future Hawick to the meeting to present an update on the St Leonard's Park Project. Mr Bouglas advised that a survey conducted by Future Hawick on St Leonard's Park had returned positive views from members of the public with regard to the project proposals which should advance to the next stage. Future Hawick felt that the next step of the project would be to form a community board to oversee future phases of the project which included landscaping and modernisation of the Hawick Moor race track as a priority for those that participated in the survey, followed by works to the race track buildings. Access to the site also required improvements. Members expressed that before any further commitment on project progress could be made by the Common Good Fund,

further detail would be required on next steps. Mr Taylor advised that further external funding could only be made after receiving a commitment from the Common Good Fund Sub-Committee to the project and this was being sought by the Future Hawick. Officers advised that before the Sub-Committee makes a commitment to the next steps of the project, a report may need to be received by the Sub-Committee to set out what phase 1 of the project would be and a summary of the due diligence considered. The Chief Legal Officer advised that more substance of the next steps of the project should be presented before an agreement-in-principal is made and that the project managers should return to the Sub-Committee with a greater level of clarity of what was to be proposed so that the Hawick Common Good Fund Sub-Committee could make clear what they would be supporting. It was further advised that the Sub-Committee could be supportive of development of the site but should not go as far as approving anything in principal without details of further phases presented to a meeting.

#### **DECISION**

**NOTED the update.**

#### **CHAIR'S REMARKS**

The Chair noted that the Estates Strategy Manager, Mr Norrie Curtis, was leaving the Council and expressed thanks for his work and support of the Hawick Common Good Fund Sub-Committee.

#### **6. PRIVATE BUSINESS**

##### **DECISION**

**AGREED under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the business detailed in the Appendix to this Minute on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 9 of Part I of Schedule 7A to the Act.**

#### **7. MINUTE**

Members considered the Private Section of the Minute of the Meeting held on 22 November 2022.

#### **8. HAWICK MOOR RACECOURSE AND BUILDINGS**

Members considered the report by Property Officer.

#### **9. COMMON GOOD LEASES**

Members considered the report by Estates Strategy Manager.

#### **10. VOLUNTEER PARK STAND**

Members considered the report by Estates Strategy Manager.

#### **11. PROPERTY UPDATE**

Members considered the report by Property Officer.

*The meeting concluded at 6.15 pm.*

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# SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL TWEEDDALE AREA PARTNERSHIP

MINUTES of Meeting of the TWEEDDALE  
AREA PARTNERSHIP held via Microsoft  
Teams on Tuesday, 28 March 2023 at 7.00  
pm

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- Present:- Councillors M. Douglas (Chairman), D. Begg, J. Pirone, E. Small and R. Tatler
- Apologies:- Councillors V. Thomson
- In Attendance:- Community Engagement Officer (H. Lacon), Democratic Services Team Leader, Trainee Democratic Services Officer.
- Also present:- Peter Maudsley (Peebles Community Council), Chris Lewin (Upper Tweed Community Council), Esther Daborn (Tweeddale Assessment Panel), Lorna McCullough (The Bridge), Crick Carleton (Chair of the Tweeddale Area Partnership Place Making Working Group), George Thornton, Lisa Denham, Lynne Marshall, Gordie Campbell (Climate Action Network) Iain Gibson (Peebles Youth Voice).

## 1. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair varied the order of business as shown on the agenda and the Minute reflects the order in which the items were considered at the meeting.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Tweeddale Area Partnership being held via Microsoft Teams and outlined how the meeting would be conducted and how those both in the meeting and watching via the Live Stream could take part.

## 2. **FEEDBACK FROM MEETING ON 7 FEBRUARY 2023**

There had been circulated copies of the Menti feedback and the Minute of the Meeting held on 7 February 2023. Hannah Lacon reported that feedback was generally positive. Following the presentation from Harry Whitmore at SOSCH, some links in Tweeddale had been established. There were enquiries into whether or not some meetings of the Partnership might be in-person in future or remain online. The matter was to be discussed in the meeting today.

## **DECISION NOTED**

## 3. **ACTION FOR PEEBLES YOUNG PEOPLE**

Iain Gibson from Action for Peebles Young People was due to present however IT issues prevented his prompt appearance. Ms Lacon and Councillor Pirone provided an update. There had been a change to the name of the group – Peebles Youth Voice. The group had come into being by way of Peebles Community Council and other stakeholders to facilitate a stronger provision for young people in response to anti-social behaviour around Tweeddale. There was a drive to change the language around the behaviour, and through consultation with young people via Peebles Youth Action, information was gathered around what was missing for young people and what they would like to see in their area. This provided a valuable insight into this demographic for the ongoing Place

Making Plans. There had been a request for provision that was specific to young people and already Costa in Peebles High Street had facilitated 'Teen Evenings' for S1-S3 pupils and the Eastgate Theatre had expressed an interest in providing a teens' film/music night. Councillor Pirone had been involved with discussions about the provision of an outdoor shelter in the area around the skate park. There was to be further consultation on this with a meeting mid-April. There was the hope that this early engagement would lead to further youth involvement in local democracy. A local street pastor initiative was also under consideration. Iain Gibson joined the meeting and provided further information. Peebles Youth Voice had been set up four months ago and involved TYA, Oor Space, Church of Scotland Leckie youth worker, Peebles Youth Trust with support from Hannah Lacon, Social Work and Police Scotland. There was also youth representation in the group. The group had recently considered how to improve vocational training opportunities and discussed issues around alcohol abuse reported by youth workers. Progress had been rapid with a positive response from young people. Funding posed a major challenge, particularly with the end of the Covid Recovery Fund.

#### **DECISION**

**NOTED the update**

#### **4. CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK**

Gordie Campbell, Network Co-ordinator, gave an overview of the work of Scottish Borders Climate Action Network. The main goal was to support and build capacity in climate action that included community groups, charities, social enterprises and other civil organisations throughout the Scottish Borders. With funding from the Scottish Government and support from Scottish Communities Climate Action Network (SCCAN) and members of the Scottish Communities Alliance, a network of regional hubs was to be set up to support communities in realising their climate action goals. There were currently thirteen Network Coordinators and two hubs. Mr Campbell's role was twofold: to support the creation of network that supported a self-governed group; and to provide a hub that resourced what was needed for organisations or groups to fulfil their aims. Mr Campbell had already staged a series of five visioning events so far across the region, and in Peebles on 6 February 2023. Membership of the Network Hub delivered an extensive range of support: the mapping of existing climate action activity; to support in the design and delivery of mitigation and adaptation projects; to seed and develop new community climate action; to foster peer to peer learning; to facilitate coordination and collaboration and learning across community groups; to signpost to organisations/agencies; and to identify funding opportunities. Ultimately a strategy and action plan with strategic priority areas was to be created, and then communicated to the local communities, with support given before, during and after public consultation exercises. Work on establishing the Scottish Borders Hub was to begin imminently, with a funding application to be presented to the Scottish Government and recruitment to follow. A stakeholders' group was to be set up and comprised between five and ten people to support the governance of the Network Hub and identify a regional approach. Initial contact was to be made with local organisations in late April to offer membership of the Network. A further meeting was to be expected for the Tweeddale area in late May which Hannah Lacon undertook to attend. Ms Lacon confirmed the intention for the SBC Community Engagement team to collaborate closely with Place Making through Crick Carleton and the Scottish Borders Climate Action Network.

#### **DECISION**

**NOTED the presentation**

#### **5. PLACE MAKING UPDATE**

Crick Carleton, Chair of Place Making Working Group provided an update of progress to date. The positive momentum continued across the area, though the smaller communities were still to begin the initial stages and required more focussed support which had been offered by the Community Engagement Team. Community groups were liaising with one

another both within Tweeddale and further afield. A total of five communities across Tweeddale had already or were to undertake the scoping and survey exercise, including West Linton, Skirling and Walkerburn. This process was to collate baseline data from which priorities were to be identified for the Place Making Plan. Funding was available to communities through SBC Place Making Programme and the Consultancy Framework which was now operational. Meetings were to be convened for the Place Making working groups to facilitate the sharing of experience and guidance on how to assess the data gathered so far and how to begin the process for those who had not yet started. Communities were to continue to make contact with Hannah Lacon and Kenny Harrow as the first point of contact on any community based project. Work had continued with SBC and CGI to produce a web based sharing platform for groups to use. The mechanism needed to be accessible to communities across the South of Scotland to allow for cohesion. Local youth groups had taken part in Peebles Place Making working group discussions; Peebles Youth Voice was to be invited to join the group. This Saturday 1 April from 10-4, there was to be an open forum on Future Peebles in Macfarlane Hall for the public to express their views on local priorities. It had been highlighted that a Shared Prosperity Fund paper that was due to come to Council on 30 March detailed a substantial amount of money that was to be targeted to support Place Making to be accessed once a Place Making Plan was in place. A new working group had been set up within SBC which consisted of the project managers within the Borderlands programme with specific input to and from Tweeddale and it was anticipated that there would be opportunities to draw down funding in a similar way to the five Borderlands towns.

**DECISION**

**NOTED the update**

**6. FUNDING TABLE OVERVIEW**

There had been circulated copies of the Tweeddale Funding Table which showed available funds in the Tweeddale area. The Neighbourhood Support Fund had £93,357 available at the start of the year less £57,719.97 awarded thus far. If all applications totalling £46,769.26 were successful, an overspend of £9,132.23 would remain. Councillor Tatler reported that the Small Schemes budget had now been spent.

**DECISION**

**NOTED the update**

**7. NEIGHBOURHOOD SUPPORT FUND**

Peebles Orchestra planned to perform a concert of Mendelssohn's oratorio "Elijah", which combines the orchestra with a choir, and four solo singers. The application was for the fees of the four professional soloists. There was a question of the wider community benefit as it was a paid event.

**DECISION:**

**AGREED not to fund.**

**7.2 Cardrona Village Association £2300**

The Cardrona Village Hall suffered from high levels of noise and echo owing to the hard surfaces, vast space and high ceiling. In conjunction with a sound engineer the group had identified a short-term project to cover the windows and doors, as well as some of the walls with theatrical curtain to improve sound dampening. The Association were advised to apply to the Peeblesshire Village Hall Association for funding and a list of specialist companies was to be compiled.

**DECISION:**

**AGREED not to fund.**

- 7.3 **St Ronans Silver Band £1800**  
The ClassBrass project was designed to give up to twenty children the opportunity to learn to play a brass instrument in a supportive, progressive and highly motivational environment.  
**DECISION:**  
**AGREED to fund.**
- 7.5 **St Ronans Wells Garden Volunteers £3771**  
The application was to fund the refurbishment of 150 square metres of paths at St Ronans Wells Garden. The eroded paths were in a poor state of repair having deteriorated over many years and were potentially unsafe. The group had been looking to undertake this work for a while and it would encourage more people to use garden.  
**DECISION:**  
**AGREED to fund.**
- 7.6 **Peebles Bowling Club £7500**  
The application was to fund an extension of the Clubhouse facilities of the Bowling Club i.e. Locker Room changing facilities; new toilets incorporating disabled access; new lounge for social interaction of teams and members; new kitchen facilities to provide refreshment for visiting teams and social events for members. An application had been made to Sport Scotland for the bulk of the costs.  
**DECISION:**  
**AGREED not to fund.**
- 7.7 **Food Hugs £1520**  
Food HUGS 12 month pilot project requested funds for equipment and room hire (£650) plus £1040 for additional weekly food items so that the Food HUGS team could prepare and cook from scratch 20 portions of healthy meals suitable for reheating. These meals were to be distributed every Wednesday via the Sharing Shed (accessed by anyone in need, free of charge). This was a cost of living application and as such the group was to be linked in with the existing food network to access other more appropriate funding sources.  
**DECISION:**  
**AGREED not to fund.**
- 7.8 **Upper Tweed Community Enterprise Ltd £6577.06**  
Planning permission had been secured to extend Broughton Village Store. While works were to be carried out to the shop it was to trade from the Village Hall Cottage (summer 2023 to spring/summer 2024). The application was for funds towards the costs of preparing the Cottage for use as a shop (flooring and shelving). The group were to be encouraged to liaise with local Men's Sheds and to claim back VAT where possible.  
**DECISION:**  
**AGREED to fund.**
- 7.9 **Walkerburn and District CC £4960**  
Funding was sought for room hire and cleaning costs to assist the Walkerburn Public Hall Trust and the Cyrenians in the establishment of a Community Pantry in April leading on to the start-up of a Community cookery and friendship group linked to the Pantry. The Panel recommended borrowing high pressure cleaning equipment from Newlands rather than fund the £800 cleaning cost.  
**DECISION:**  
**AGREED to fund £4160.**
- 7.10 **Nomad Beat £3841.20**



Councillor Tatler declared an interest and did not take part in further discussion. Mind the Music! was a free-to-attend group that employed the therapeutic benefits of social music-making to enhance the lives of adults (18+) in the local community with mental health issues. It comprised of weekly 1-hour group music making sessions which were followed by a 15 to 20 minute mindfulness and relaxation session and an informal period of socialising (refreshments and snacks were provided free-of-charge by Nomad Beat).

**DECISION:**

**AGREED to fund.**

**7.11 Sustainable West Linton and District £2702**

Councillor Begg declared an interest and did not take part in further discussion.

The application was for funds to create seating areas at Roamers Wood, a newly planted community woodland of 5.3 ha and the installation of information posts that illustrated a tree alphabet and identification of trees and plants associated with herbal medicines, witchcraft, and traditional medicines. Further development of the project was required before funding could be considered.

**DECISION:**

**AGREED not to fund.**

**7.12 Clubsport Tweeddale £1000**

Councillor Tatler declared an interest. The group had secured funding elsewhere meanwhile and an award was no longer being sought.

**7.13 Carlops Community Garden Group £1048**

'Cultivate and Create' Phase 2 requested funds to provide a secure storage shed and hand tools, wheelbarrows, watering cans, buckets and protective netting for those who used the community garden and did not have their own resources. Phase 1 feedback and photographs had been provided to Hannah Lacon.

**DECISION:**

**AGREED to fund**

**7.14 Linton Hotspur Community Football Club £7500**

The application was to help fund the acquisition, transport, site preparation and enabling works for two modular units being acquired by Linton Hotspur FC to facilitate expansion of existing changing and welfare facilities. Planning permission was still outstanding.

**DECISION:**

**AGREED to fund subject to planning permission**

**8. OPEN FORUM**

Feedback from meetings held in the Tweeddale area in relation to Place Making Plans reported some interest in forming development trusts. Ms Lacon agreed to facilitate an exploratory session for the Tweeddale locality. Councillor Tatler informed members of a public consultation exercise on Clubsport at the Gytes Leisure Centre on a Saturday afternoon in the near future.

**DECISION:**

**NOTED**

**9. PEEBLES PARKING WORKING GROUP**

The Chair proposed the appointment of Councillor Thomson to the Peebles Parking Working Group. This was agreed.

**DECISION**

**AGREED to appoint Councillor Thomson to the Peebles Parking Working Group.**

10. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Tweeddale Area Partnership was scheduled for 13 June 2023. The meeting was to be held in person and Hannah Lacon undertook to find a suitable venue.

11. **MEETING EVALUATION VIA MENTI**

Ms Lacon encouraged attendees to complete meeting evaluation forms via the link in the chat and to submit any items for a future agenda.

***The meeting concluded at 8:40pm.***

MINUTES of Meeting of the  
CHEVIOT AREA PARTNERSHIP  
held on Wednesday, 29 March 2023  
at 6.30 pm. Via Microsoft Teams.

Present:- Councillors P. Brown, (Chairman), S. Hamilton, S. Mountford, E. Robson, S. Scott, T. Weatherston, together with Representatives of the following Community Councils and Partner Organisations:-

Graeme Hayward and John Taylor - Jedburgh Community Council  
Gavin Horsburgh and Colin McGrath – Kelso Community Council  
Carol Spalton, Crailing Nisbet and Eckford Community Council  
Brian Burton - Sprouston Community Council  
Fiona Benton – The Bridge  
Hazel Woodsell – Kelso Heritage  
Louise Rawlins – CLDS Worker  
Dean Weatherston - Chair of Cheviot Assessment Panel  
Alison Grainger – Police Scotland

Apologies:- Ian Rendall-Reid – Cheviot Youth  
Susan Oliver – Headteacher, Jedburgh Campus  
Jill Lothian – Headteacher Kelso High School

In attendance: - Community Co-ordinator – Gillian Jardine, Community Engagement Officer – Emma Husband, Democratic Services Officer (F. Henderson).

1. **WELCOME**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the in person meeting, which included Elected Members, Community Council representatives, Community Organisations and guests attending within the meeting. She outlined how the meeting would be conducted.

2.0 **FEEDBACK FROM THE MEETING ON 1 FEBRUARY 2023**

2.1 The minute of the meeting of the Cheviot Area Partnership held on 1 February 2023 had been circulated with the Agenda. A response to questions raised on the Scottish Borders 2018 Community Plan and National Planning Framework 4 had been provided through the additional information document which was circulated with the papers.

2.2 Following a request that all those in attendance be recorded in the Minute, it was agreed that those present and apologies received would be recorded individually.

2.3 With regards to the comments raised on climate change: SBC was working in partnership with the Edinburgh Climate Change Institute (ECCI) to establish a carbon emissions baseline for the Council as an organisation. This would inform where to focus efforts for carbon reduction and allow the setting of targets and monitoring of progress for key carbon emissions sources (in line with requirements for reporting under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009). Like most other Scottish local authorities the two key areas identified were those relating to the decarbonisation of buildings and transport related emissions.

2.4 Work had also just commenced on the setting of a carbon baseline for the Scottish Borders geographical area. As an organisation SBC's footprint was a small percentage of the total footprint of the wider area but the Council had a key role to play in developing policy and strategy, supporting a Place-based approach and communicating key climate change messaging etc.

- 2.6 The link below to the Community Carbon Calculator [Tool](#) which had been created by the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) and supports communities to consider change in their area and activities that would make the biggest difference.

Would the Area Partnership be interested in having a discussion or workshop on climate change at a future meeting?

- 2.7 During discussion a request was made to receive information on the impact on the Scottish Borders specifically rather than for Scotland as a whole.

### **SECTION 1: SERVICE & PARTNER UPDATE AND CONSULTATIONS**

- 3.0 Draft Health and Social Care Strategic Framework discussion - Carol Hayden, National Team for Development and Inclusion (NDTI)
- 3.1 The Chairman welcome Carol Hayden to the meeting who was in attendance to provide an update on the development of a Health and Social Care Strategic Framework for Scottish Borders. Carol represented the National Team for Development and Inclusion who were gathering feedback and comments on the framework. It was explained that the aim of the public engagement and involvement was to update on work undertaken to date in the development of the strategic framework; to outline the framework in the planning, design and monitoring of the framework which had been informed by engaging and listening to communities to understand their expressed needs – published in the ‘We have listened report’, understanding the public health needs of the population – published in the ‘Needs of Our Communities report’; reviewing performance against the National Health and Wellbeing Outcome and considering current and future challenges.

The key challenges were highlighted as :-

- Working with the impacts of Covid-19
  - A population with increasing levels of health and wellbeing needs
  - The need to support transitions from children’s to adult’s services
  - Significant workforce pressures
  - National and International economic pressures impacting on Communities i.e. cost of living, fuel poverty
  - Significant financial pressures for the Health and Social Care Partnership
  - Access to affordable housing in our rural context and the associated impact on health and wellbeing
  - Unpaid carers need more support
  - Pressures in our Communities and in our Hospitals
  - Climate Change
  - More People living alone
  - National Care Service
- 3.2 During discussion, matters raised included local transport links, postcode lottery regarding the level of service received, locality working groups and their re-introduction although there was no timescale. Also discussed was the concept around Community and Locality and getting local voices heard and acted upon and Ms Hayden explained that discussion at Area Partnerships and Locality Working Groups would feed into to SBC and into the Health and Social Care Strategic Framework for Scottish Borders. The ageing demographic in the Borders and specifically within Cheviot was highlighted and it was explained that although there was not a specific plan this fed into other plans and it must be recognised that some targets were challenging.

**DECISION  
NOTED.**

**POLICE REPORT**

- 4.0 The Chairman welcomed Sergeant Alison Grainger to the meeting to give an update on policing in the Cheviot Area. There were currently Police Officers in Jedburgh and Kelso and one Community Liaison Officer for both secondary schools within Cheviot. There were issues with resources, however Police would attend the Area Partnerships whenever possible. In terms of rural crime, there had been an increase in sheep worrying and SBC would be reminding the public via social media about keeping dogs on leads. Work with partners was ongoing in terms of cross border crimes and the event season was approaching with 180 events in the Calendar. There had been 136 events resourced by Police Scotland last year. Police Scotland happy to advise and work with Organisers of Community Events with regard to them providing Marshalls with support from the Police. Mr Horsburgh thanked Police Scotland for everything they did to support local events.

**DECISION  
NOTED.**

5.0 **SECTION 2: COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND COMMUNITY FUNDING**  
**Cheviot Funding Tables 2022/23**

There had been circulated copies of the Cheviot Funding for 2022/2023 which detailed the funding available together with information on the allocation of the Neighbourhood Support Fund in 2022/23. The opening balance at 1 April 2022 was £80,268.39 plus underspend from the Community Fund in 2021/22 of £28,640.65, underspend in the Local Festival Grant in 2021/22 of £2,953.00 and underspend in the Community Fund 2019/20 of £2,175, which resulted in an overall budget of £114,037.04. Other sources of funding included Local Festival Grant Budget totalling £16,675.00, Annual Support Grant to Community Councils totalling £10,470.00, Common Goods, SBC Enhancement Grant, SBC Welfare Grant and SBC Small Schemes totalled £202,419.69. Neighbourhood Support Fund applications awarded since April 2022 totalled £39,880.84 and applications assessed and awaiting decision totalled £71,690.79.

**DECISION  
NOTED.**

**Neighbourhood Support Fund**

- 6.0 There had been 20 applications received for the Cheviot Neighbourhood Support Fund which was a significant increase on previous rounds and very encouraging that more community organisations were coming forward. There had been circulated copies of a report which detailed the recommendations of the Cheviot Community Fund Assessment Panel. The report provided a brief description of each application received and a recommendation on the sum to be awarded to each project. As previously reported, projects with a mean score of 80+ in terms of their ability to deliver, clear evidence of need, potential impact, use of public money, innovation and sustainability and therefore would be recommended for approval and those were detailed below :-
- 6.1 **Interest Links**  
An application had been received from Interest Links requesting £4,805 to offer 25 members with learning disabilities, aged 8-80 with age-based befriending. The aim was to nurture friendships, provide new opportunities and improve wellbeing, confidence & social skills. The Panel were supportive of the project and recommended that £4,805 be awarded.
- 6.2 **One Step Borders**  
An application had been received from One Step Borders in the sum of £3,150 to carry out volunteer recruitment and training throughout the Cheviot locality to improve the mental health and emotional wellbeing of 35 young people. The Panel were supportive of the project and recommended that £3,150 be awarded.
- 6.3 **2<sup>nd</sup> Kelso Guides**

An application had been received from 2<sup>nd</sup> Kelso Guides in the sum of £1,440.00 for the purchase of four tents to allow the group to attend a UK-wide Girlguiding camp. The Panel were supportive of the project and recommended that £1,440 be awarded.

**6.4 Kelso Orchard Tennis Club**

An application was submitted by Kelso Orchard Tennis Club in the sum of £4,005.00 to provide activities for those 65+, in partnership with local care homes and sheltered housing. These activities would improve participants mental and physical wellbeing and the Panel were supportive of the project and recommended that £4,005 be awarded.

**6.5 Jed Lunch Club**

Jed Lunch Club had submitted an Application in the sum of £360.00 to reopen its' doors post-covid. This monthly club was held within Jed Thistle Club Rooms for older adults, offering a hot meal at an affordable cost, socialisation and reduced isolation. The Panel were supportive of the project and recommended that £360 be awarded.

**6.6 Borders Union Agricultural Society**

An application was submitted for £3,688.00 for the provision of educational tote bags for each child present at their Countryside Day. These bags offered a memento, as well as education on exhibitors and UN Sustainability goals, and a biodegradable water bottle. The Panel were supportive of the project and recommended that £3,688 be awarded.

**6.7 Kelso Wheelers Cycling Club**

An application had been received from Kelso Wheelers Cycling Club in the sum of £5,000.00 to make improvements on the bike trails in Angraflat, Kelso. These improvements would allow the trails to reopen for the public. The Panel were supportive of the project and recommended that £5,000 be awarded.

**6.8 Jedburgh Tourism Alliance**

There had been submitted an application from Jedburgh Tourism Alliance in the sum of £5,000.00 to commission a feasibility study by Land Use Consultants to explore what streetscape developments would enhance the appeal of the town. The Panel were supportive of the project and recommended that £5,000 be awarded.

Further Applications received had been discussed by the Assessment Panel and therefore recommendations were as follows:-

**6.9 St Boswells Village Hall**

An application for £3,335.36 was submitted by St Boswells Village Hall for the replacement of their water boiler and dishwasher, which would allow the Hall to continue supporting vulnerable people within their community. Though funding remained available for Village Halls, the panel agreed that support from the Neighbourhood Support Fund would allow the group to improve their current services, encouraging future financial sustainability. The panel agreed they produced an adequate case in terms of their ability to deliver, clear evidence of need, potential impact, use of public money, innovation and sustainability and therefore the Panel were supportive of the project and recommended that £3,335.36 be awarded.

**6.10 Kelso Cricket Club**

An application for £3,393.84 was submitted by Kelso Cricket Club for the refurbishment of their kitchen facilities. This work would support the club to host events for the local community. The panel agreed that support from the Neighbourhood Support Fund would allow this group to improve their current services, encouraging future financial sustainability. The panel further agreed they had produced an adequate case in terms of their ability to deliver, clear evidence of need, potential impact, use of public money, innovation and sustainability and therefore the Panel were supportive of the project and recommended £3,393.84.

#### **6.11 Kelso Cricket Club**

An application for £1,916.46 was submitted by Kelso Cricket Club for the purchase of table and chairs for their marquee. These facilities would be available for use by the community. The panel agreed that the project would not provide as great a community benefit as application ref.CFA000117, and alongside a high-volume of applications from this particular group, they would not recommend this project for funding. The panel wished to encourage Kelso Cricket Club to look at ways of becoming more financially sustainable, e.g. fundraising endeavours.

#### **6.12 Green St Boswells**

An application for £3,000.88 was submitted by Green St Boswells to establish a community food-growing and community wildlife gardens. The gardens aimed to improve community cohesion for all ages, as well as education. The panel agreed that food-growing projects such as this were assets to the communities they worked within and had produced an adequate case in terms of their ability to deliver, clear evidence of need, potential impact, use of public money, innovation and sustainability. The Panel were supportive, however as the project stood without permissions SBC Estates & Planning, the project was ineligible for funding. However, on the condition that the project was approved by SBC Estates & Planning, the panel recommended a grant of £3,000.88.

#### **6.13 Jedforest Instrumental Band**

An application for £5,000.00 was submitted by Jedforest Instrumental Band to support the implementation of an improved, energy-efficient, heating and lighting system to support the bands who practice within the hall as well as the community use. The panel praised the group for their provision of free music tuition within the community and agreed they produced an adequate case in terms of their ability to deliver, clear evidence of need, potential impact, use of public money, innovation and sustainability and therefore recommended a grant of £5,000.00.

#### **6.14 St Boswells OAP Social Club**

An application for £1,662.75 was submitted by St Boswells OAP Social Club for their Community Activity Day which would offer a trip to a location agreed amongst the group, socialisation and refreshments. The group was open to any members of the community. The panel agreed that this project did not provide enough wide-spread benefit to the Cheviot Community, and were not persuaded the proposed project produced an adequate case for funding. The panel, however, understood the benefit which the club provided to older people in the area. As a result, the panel's recommendation was not fund the proposed project, but to award the sum of £500.00 towards ongoing costs.

#### **6.15 Borders Media CIC**

An application for £4,475.50 was submitted by Borders Media CIC to establish, 'Explore the Borders', a bi-monthly magazine promoting tourism in the Scottish Borders. The magazine would be supported through membership packages and advertising and available online and in print. The panel were not persuaded that the proposed project produced an adequate case for funding on the basis that there were multiple bodies, already in existence, who had the responsibility of promoting tourism throughout The Borders. The panel encouraged the group to work with those existing bodies in the development of their project, with the understanding that this group wished to tackle a more local approach to tourism throughout The Borders. The panel encouraged SBC Councillors to encourage these existing bodies to develop their local approach. Should approaching these bodies in partnership be unsuccessful, the panel would welcome a more carefully considered application at a later date.

#### **6.16 Borders Group Of Riding For The Disabled Association**

An application for £4,158.00 was submitted by Borders Group of RDA for the purchase of a replacement quad bike to support the maintenance and safety of their riding arena. The purchase would benefit both children, adults and horses using their centre. The panel agreed they produced an adequate case in terms of their ability to deliver, clear evidence

of need, potential impact, use of public money, innovation and sustainability and therefore is recommended a grant of £4,158.00.

#### **6.17 Borders Group Of Riding For The Disabled Association**

An application for £4,050.00 was submitted by Borders Group of RDA for the establishment of a 'sensory garden' for disabled children and young adults. The panel were not persuaded the proposed project produced an adequate case for funding, as the group were unable to provide all supporting documentation required. The panel would welcome a more carefully considered application at a later date.

#### **6.18 Kelso Football Club**

An application for £10,050.00 was submitted by Kelso Football Club for the refurbishment of the club rooms. The panel were not persuaded the proposed project produced an adequate case for funding. The group exceeded the maximum ask of the fund and were unable to provide the supporting documentation required. As the application did not meet the criteria of the Neighbourhood Support Fund, the panel were unable to support but would welcome a more carefully considered application at a later date.

#### **6.19 Tweed Valley Railway Campaign**

An application for £3,750.00 was submitted by Tweed Valley Railway Campaign, a group who aimed to restore rail services between the East Coast Mainline and Borders Railway via Kelso. The group wished to create promotional materials for stakeholder engagement both in person and online. The panel agreed that support from the Neighbourhood Support Fund would allow this group to educate and drive an important campaign forward and agreed they produced an adequate case in terms of their ability to deliver, clear evidence of need, potential impact, use of public money, innovation and sustainable therefore recommended a grant of £3,750.00.

#### **6.20 Jedburgh Legacy Group**

An application for £4,500.00 was submitted by the Jedburgh Legacy Group to support the heating costs of the public library. The group were in the process of taking over management to reopen the space for reading, warm and safe spaces. The panel agreed that support from the Neighbourhood Support Fund would allow the group to establish an important asset within the Jedburgh community. The panel agreed they produced an adequate case in terms of their ability to deliver, clear evidence of need, potential impact, use of public money, innovation and sustainability. As the group were in discussions with SBC with regard to an appropriate lease and management agreement with SBC, the panel recommended a grant of £4,500.00 on the condition of the group reaching agreement with SBC.

6.21 Mr D Weatherston further advised that The Cheviot Neighbourhood Support Fund base budget for 2023/24 was £46,352 and it was likely there would be an underspend from 2022/23 and grants which had not been drawn down from other Cheviot funds to add to the NSF total for 2023/24. The Cheviot Neighbourhood Support Fund Assessment Panel had considered this and made the following recommendations for the 2023/24 NSF:

- An application limit of £5,000 be kept in place
- A limit of one application per year per community group be applied
- A limit of one application per Community Council and one application for each of the Community Council's subgroups be applied.

Within the scoring matrix, the assessment panel made the following recommendations:

- Remove the Innovation category
- Add two questions to the sustainability category:
  - Is the project piloting new ways of working?
  - If successful, how could these innovations be more widely adopted?



- Increase the scoring of 'Ability to Deliver' and 'Sustainability' to 20 points each, which would create a scoring matrix with 5 categories in total, all worth 20 points.

Finally, Mr Weatherston raised the matter of recruitment to the following positions were available within the Cheviot Assessment Panel :-

- Member of the Public (Jedburgh & District)
- Community Councillor (Jedburgh & District)
- SBC Councillor (Kelso & District)
- SBC Councillor (Jedburgh & District)

**DECISION  
AGREED:-**

**(a) that the following sums be awarded to each of those listed:-**

- Interest Link Borders - £4,805
- One Step Borders - £3,150
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Kelso Guides - £1,440
- Kelso Orchard Tennis Club - £4,005
- Jed Lunch Club - £360
- Borders Union Agricultural Society £3,688
- Kelso Wheelers Cycling Club - £5,000
- Jedburgh Tourism Alliance - £5,000
- St Boswells Village Hall - £3,335.36
- Kelso Cricket Club (CFA000117) - £3,393.84
- Jedforest Instrumental Band - £5,000
- St Boswells OAP Social Club - £500
- Borders Group of Riding for the Disabled Association
- Tweed Valley Railway Campaign

**(b) that the following sums be awarded with conditions:-**

- Green St Boswells - £3,000.88
- Jedburgh Legacy Group - £4,50

**(c) that no award be made to the following:-**

- Kelso Cricket Club (CFA000118)
- Borders Media CIC
- Borders Group of RDA (CFA000126)
- Kelso Football Club

**(d) that the following recommendations by the Cheviot Assessment Panel be accepted :-**

- the application limit of £5,000 remain;
- a limit of one application per year per community group be applied;
- a limit of one application per Community Council and one application for each of the Community Council's subgroups be applied.

**(e) that in terms of the scoring, the recommendation by the Cheviot Assessment Panel be accepted:-**

- that the Innovation category be removed;
- two questions be added to the sustainability category:
  - Is the project piloting new ways of working?
  - If successful, how could these innovations be more widely adopted?
- The scoring of 'Ability to Deliver' and 'Sustainability' be increased to 20 points each, creating a scoring matrix with 5 categories in total, all worth 20 points.

(f) that the Assessment Panel work with SBC Officers to recruit into the vacant positions.

7.0 **SECTION 3: PLACE MAKING**

7.1 It was reported that the Cheviot Place Making Working Group had recently met with Sarah McDonald, Selkirk BIDS to hear about the two community engagement events which had been delivered in Selkirk. This was in anticipation of Cheviot communities planning their community engagement activities. It had been agreed that Alison Grainger, Police Scotland be invited to attend the Jedburgh Place Making workshop scheduled for March 2023.

7.2 Community Council Updates:-

- Jedburgh CC -
- Town Library Up and running again
  - Hydro Pool being fitted in Swimming Pool
  - Working Group established to look at Hydro Power from the Cauld
  - Progress on Grammar School Site
  - Good Meeting held about establishing a Town Team
  - Traffic Flow

Kelso CC - Update

- Time Capsule underneath the Bull Ring in Kelso Square to be lifted on 28 April in conjunction with the Coronation
- Trinity Church

**DECISION NOTED.**

8.0 **SECTION 4: Other**

8.1 **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION DOCUMENT**

The Chairman advised that additional information was included in the agenda pack which contained information on current consultations and links to useful information.

**DECISION NOTED.**

8.2 **DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Future Meetings of the Cheviot Area Partnership would be held on the following dates:

Wednesday, 20 September 2023

Wednesday, 22 November 2023

Wednesday, 31 January 2024

Wednesday, 27 March 2024

The next meeting would be held on **Wednesday, 31 May 2023** via Microsoft Teams.

### 8.3 **MEETING EVALUATION**

Ms Jardine reminded those present about the meeting evaluation form which could be accessed via the link <https://forms.office.com/r/HHH1dEcmz3>. She added that feedback about the Area Partnership meetings was really helpful and always appreciated.

*The meeting concluded at 8.00 pm*

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# SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Blended Meeting of the EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE held in Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells and via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday, 18th April, 2023 at 10.00 am

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Present:- Councillors E. Jardine (Chair), L. Douglas, M. Douglas, J. Greenwell, C. Hamilton, S. Hamilton, J. Linehan, S. Mountford, D. Parker, J. Pirone, E. Robson, M. Rowley, F. Sinclair, R. Tatler, E. Thornton-Nicol and T. Weatherston.

Also Present:- Councillors W. McAteer

Absent:- Councillor C. Cochrane

In Attendance:- Chief Executive, Director- Infrastructure and Environment, Director - Resilient Communities, Acting Chief Financial Officer, Chief Officer - Economic Development, Chief Planning Officer, Democratic Services Team Leader, Democratic Services Officer (D. Hall), Ms S Harkins (South of Scotland Enterprise)

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS**

Present: Mr G Clark (Federation of Small Businesses), Ms S Petrie (Chamber of Commerce), Mr Trevor Jackson.

### **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Councillors Robson and Rowley declared an interest in the following item of business in terms of Section 5 of the Councillors Code of Conduct and left the meeting during the discussion.

### **1. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

- 1.1 There had been circulated copies of a report by the Director of Resilient Communities which provided elected members with an update on key areas of economic development delivery affecting the Scottish Borders. The report identified the major policies and strategies that were driving regional economic development and detailed key pieces of work. The Local Employability Partnership (LEP) was established in September 2021 to drive the employability agenda and to foster a strong collaborative approach to delivery. The importance of the LEP had been recognised by the Scottish Government to ensure that there was further integration and alignment of employability and skills provision at local level. Over the last year the LEP had gained a stronger understanding of the local employability needs in the Scottish Borders supported by partners such as Skills Development Scotland (SDS), Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE), employability services, third sector, educational organisations and the NHS, and was working to deliver a more coordinated approach to service delivery. Scottish Borders Council (SBC) and SOSE agreed to form a strategic partnership in relation to the delivery of the Business Gateway Service in November 2020, with the transfer of services completed in April 2021. The report provided a regular update on delivery and confirms a general increase in Business Gateway activity over recent months. The refreshed Scottish Borders Strategic Events Plan was approved in August 2022 for a five year period to 2027. The new plan was ambitious and targeted support towards strategic events which had regional economic impact, were sustainable and worked towards the delivery of net zero. As a host venue Glentress and the Scottish Borders would have a major role during the Cycling World Championships which would

see around 1,000 riders representing national teams, international cycling media, and an anticipated 20,000 spectators come to the Tweed Valley from 6 to 13 August later in the year. There was an expected TV audience (across the entire World Championships) of one billion people, and the Tweed Valley would host five of the championship events. The South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership (REP) held its first in-person meeting on 24 March 2023. Partnership members agreed that the key areas of focus for the REP over the next two years would be housing, skills and transport as the 'grand challenges' that were central to realising the ambitions detailed in the Regional Economic Strategy. The Chief Officer – Economic Development, Ms Sam Smith presented the report and responded to Members questions. Regarding the potential for cross-ticketing of appropriate attractions and events, Ms Smith confirmed that discussions had begun to ensure cohesion between the different Borderlands investments. In response to a question regarding the total financial support available through the Community Festivals and Small Grant Scheme, and the Council Community Cycling Scheme Grant Fund, the Principal Officer – Economic Development, confirmed that £125k was available for the former, and £70k for the latter. Ms Smith confirmed that the criteria for the Community Festivals Fund was published on the SBC website, and undertook to share the link with Members. In response to a question regarding creating links with the South of Scotland Destination, Ms Smith undertook to organise a members briefing at a future date.

- 1.2 The Chair welcomed Ms Susan Harkins of SOSE to the meeting. Ms Harkins delivered a presentation on Driving Entrepreneurs in the South of Scotland. An overview of the SOSE Entrepreneurial lifecycle was presented, which outlined how support was provided to supporting people and enterprise explained. The focus was on individuals, with no set rules on where to find or define entrepreneurs. There were 4 pillars of activity, aimed at inspiring individuals to start a business and provide a cycle of support throughout that process. Ms Harkins explained that a gap had been identified in the region regarding inspiring people to start businesses. Whilst Business Gateway could assist individuals who had already decided to start a business, there was little impetus on inspiring new entrepreneurs. It was hoped that by offering a full suite of support potential entrepreneurs would be inspired to start a business. An inclusive approach had been developed, and work was expected to take place in communities, and within educational facilities. Ms Harkins highlighted that a Game Freak event in Galashiels had been well received by attendees. Connection and networking events had been held in Eyemouth, Hawick, Peebles, Kelso and Galashiels, at which 20-20 people had been in attendance. Members thanked Ms Harkins for her insightful presentation and highlighted that working in partnership was key to success in the area. It was agreed that copies of the slide presentation would be shared.

## **DECISION**

### **AGREED to:-**

- (a) note the information that was provided regarding the current economic development landscape affecting the Scottish Borders; and**
- (b) note where future delivery updates will be reported back to Executive.**

## **2. COMMUNITY LED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FUND**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Director, Resilient Communities which provided an update on the delivery of the Scottish Government's Community Led Local Development (CLLD) Fund 2022/23. The CLLD Fund was a specific fund for rural areas of Scotland provided by the Scottish Government since 2020. The report explained that the term CLLD was used to indicate that the decisions on funding allocations should be made locally rather than nationally. The fund was distributed to Local Action Groups (LAGs) across rural Scotland and could overlap with Local Authority areas such as Dumfries and Galloway, whereas other LAGs could cover parts of a number of Local Authorities such as in the case of the Cairngorms. The Scottish Borders had its own LAG that was made up of Public, Private and Third Sector organisations. Membership was open to anyone

resident or working within the Scottish Borders region. Scottish Borders Council acted as Lead Partner for the Local Action Group and distributed the funding based on the recommendations of the LAG. The Scottish Government announced in December 2021 that additional funding of £11.6 million would be made available for a new Community CLLD Fund in financial year 2022/23. The Place and Enterprise Manager – Economic Development, Mr Graeme Johnstone, presented the report, highlighted that since the publication of the report it had been announced that SBC would be allocated £391k of funding for the current financial year, and responded to Members questions. Regarding evaluations of successful projects, Mr Johnstone confirmed that they would occur, and that they were expected to be presented to the Committee at a future date. Work to ensure that interested parties were aware of the latest round of funding would be undertaken as soon as was practicable. Mr Johnstone confirmed that applicants could utilise other sources of funding, such as applications to Area Partnerships. Members thanked Mr Johnstone for the report, and welcomed the positive impact that the funding had made on communities across the region.

## **DECISION**

### **AGREED:-**

- (a) to note the progress made regarding the allocation of Community Led Local Development funding during the financial year 2022/23;**
- (b) that Scottish Borders Council continued to administer the Community Led Local Development Funding on behalf of the Local Action Group during financial year 2023/24; and**
- (c) that regular progress reports on the funding allocation were brought back to the Executive Committee.**

### **3. UK COMMUNITY RENEWAL FUND (CRF)**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Director, Resilient Communities which provided an update on the delivery of the UK Community Renewal Fund (CRF) for Scottish Borders and noted the outcome of the 2021/2022 Fund. The UK Government announced the Build Back Better Community Renewal Fund in the UK Budget in March 2021. The Community Renewal Fund (CRF) was a competitive one-off revenue fund with spending required to be undertaken by successful projects initially by the end of March 2022 but this was later extended by UK Government to 31st December 2022. The aim of the Fund was to pilot projects across the UK and prepare the way for the UK Prosperity Fund from 2022/23 onwards. Projects were required to align with at least one of the following investment priorities:

- Investment in skills;
- Investment for local business;
- Investment in communities and place; and
- Supporting people into employment.

A call was put out for project bids in April 2021 which attracted 29 applications totalling £9million (Local Authorities could bid for up to £3million of UK CRF monies). Those were assessed by an Independent Panel and a shortlist of projects devised for Council approval in June 2021. Eighteen project bids totalling £2,999,040 were submitted to UK Government for consideration. The UK Government announced in November 2021 that eight projects were successful, totalling £1,296,814. All eight projects were successfully delivered by the deadline of 31st December 2022 with final grant funds of £1,251,018 drawn down from UK Government. In response to a question regarding feedback on the projects which had not been successful, the External Funding programme Co-ordinator, Ms Linda Cornwall, explained that only basic feedback had been received from the UK Government. Regarding the underspend detailed within the report, Ms Cornwall explained that some of the projects had been able to source materials at a cheaper rate, and that one planned workshop had been unable to go ahead as planned due to the workshop lead being unavailable. In response to a question poor attendance and malaise

at Area Partnerships, Ms Smith outlined that it was hoped that a shift to funding more sustainable projects would take place, and that placemaking and shared prosperity could help improve attendance levels and improve engagement. The Director – Resilient Communities confirmed that work would be undertaken to provide clarity on the different sources of funding available across the various sources. Regarding the funding for Borders Employment Advice and Mentoring (BEAM) being separate from existing services, Ms Smith explained that due to the timing of the project and funding source it had not been possible to link the service to other services. It was not expected that a different funding source would be a barrier to partnership working. In response to a question regarding four employment coaches at Berwickshire Housing Association as part of the BEAM project, Ms Cornwall confirmed that the coaches had been contracted for the lifespan of the project, and that Berwickshire Housing Association were exploring deploying the coaches in a similar role in the future.

## **DECISION**

**AGREED to note the outcome of the UK Community Renewal Fund in relation to project delivery.**

### **4. PLACE MAKING UPDATE**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Director – Resilient Communities which provided an update on progress made with Place Making since Council agreed to take a collaborative approach with Area Partnerships to roll-out Place Making across Borders Communities. In August 2021, Council agreed an approach, working with Area Partnerships, to develop and enable place making activity across Borders communities. The approach was intended to complement the related Place Programme under the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal which focused on the four target towns of Eyemouth, Galashiels, Hawick and Jedburgh. In practice, all place making activity, whether it's Borderlands or the wider Area Partnership-led approach, shared the same core characteristic – it was about communities leading on the development and delivery of an action plan for their place which identified local needs and ambitions, and which then prioritised actions and projects to address them. By taking an inclusive approach open to all communities, the five Area Partnerships had between them, identified over 40 communities that were interested in developing community-led action plans. Those communities were set out in in the report. The report highlighted the progress in supporting the development in the overall approach and the practical progress that was being made in communities including the four Borderlands target towns of Eyemouth, Galashiels, Hawick, and Jedburgh. The report outlined the support for place making from SBC and CPP partner staff and further support which was being put in place in terms of additional capacity and funds that could support communities in the development and delivery of their plans. Place making represented a significant opportunity for communities across the Borders and was increasingly the key to unlocking external funding opportunities by evidencing the need and will of the community through demonstrable inclusive engagement. That also facilitated a community led approach to shaping and informing the planning and delivery of critical public services. The approach was increasingly built into legislation (e.g. the Page 23 Planning (Scotland), Joint Working (Scotland) and Community Empowerment Acts) and would impact on – and needed to transform – the way both the Council and its Community Planning Partners worked together with communities to understand, support and respond to local needs and ambitions. Over the coming year, the main focus of place making activity would be around three main areas of work: a) Continuing to support all participating communities to progress their plans and ambitions; b) Ensuring that funds, such as the Shared Prosperity Fund, and the Place Based Investment Fund were used to best effect in supporting communities deliver credible investment proposals, built on a body of community led evidence; and c) Ensuring that place making was seen as “the way things get done” – informing service and community planning, the way that projects were identified and developed and the key to accessing external funding – all built on community needs, aspirations and priorities. It was explained that whilst Selkirk had been highlighted in the report as part of the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, it was not part of that Deal.



Selkirk had been pro-active and had followed the same timeline as the Borderlands towns. In response to a question regarding capacity within the Communities and Partnerships team, the Director – Resilient Communities explained that a collaborative approach had been developed to ensure that there was capacity across the Council to assist with placemaking, including officers in planning and the economic development team. It was highlighted that communities were responsible for leading the placemaking process. Members highlighted that the various funding streams, rules and where to apply could be complex for communities. The Director – Resilient Communities undertook to update out-of-date infographics which outlined the various sources of funding available to communities and other interested parties in a simplified manner. In response to a question regarding reporting of what progress each community was making, in order to allow comparisons, the Director confirmed that regular reports would be made to allow communities a sense of timelines and to provide local competition. Regarding Energise Galashiels, the Director confirmed that it was important not to side-line already established local groups, and that each community would have to incorporate such groups on an individual case-by-case basis.

#### **DECISION**

##### **AGREED:-**

- (a) to note the progress that had been made in relation to place making activity across the Borders; and**
- (b) that regular progress reports be brought back to the Executive Committee.**

#### **5. UPDATE ON THE BORDERLANDS INCLUSIVE GROWTH DEAL AND THE EDINBURGH SOUTH-EAST SCOTLAND CITY REGION DEAL**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Director – Resilient Communities which provided an update on progress with the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal and the Edinburgh and South-East Scotland City Region Deal, particularly the programmes and projects that directly affected the Scottish Borders. The Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, was signed in March 2021 by the Borderlands Partnership, the UK and Scottish Governments, and the five local authorities within the Borderlands area: Carlisle City Council, Cumbria County Council, Dumfries and Galloway Council, Northumberland Council, and Scottish Borders Council. The Deal would provide a total funding package of £452m over 10 years for the Borderlands area, with £150m available for the South of Scotland, comprising £65m from the UK Government and £85m from the Scottish Government. The report described the progress being made with the programmes and projects affecting the Scottish Borders. The Edinburgh and South-East Scotland City Region Deal was signed in August 2018 and involved East Lothian, Midlothian, West Lothian, Fife, City of Edinburgh and Scottish Borders Councils along with universities and colleges, the private sector, the third sector and relevant public sector agencies. The 15-year Deal was worth £1.3bn, which included £600m of Government funding and £700m of funding from other partners. This report gave an update on those City Region Deal projects that directly affected the Scottish Borders. Members highlighted that the revised business cases referred to in the report did not represent failures, but that the Council had recognised that it needed to invest in the right projects for the right reasons. The Director confirmed that discussions were regularly held with officers and partners regarding the skills programme and the regional prosperity framework.

#### **DECISION**

##### **AGREED:-**

- (a) to note the progress that had been made on the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal and the Edinburgh and South-East Scotland City Region Deal;**

- (b) to note that a number of business cases related to the Borderlands and City Deal programmes would be brought back to Scottish Borders Council for approval in 2023 as detailed in the report; and
- (c) that regular progress reports on both growth deals were brought back to the Executive Committee.

### OTHER BUSINESS

#### 6. **MINUTE**

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the meeting held on 14 March 2023.

#### **DECISION**

**APPROVED for signature by the Chairman.**

#### 7. **CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023/24 - BLOCK ALLOCATIONS**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Acting Chief Financial Officer which sought approval for the proposed individual projects and programmes within the various block allocations in the 2023/24 Capital Financial Plan. Appendices A-R to the report contained proposals for various projects to be allocated from the block allocations. Those overall block allocations were approved in the 2023/24 Capital Financial Plan at the meeting of Scottish Borders Council on 23 February 2023. Not all projects had been fully identified at the point of production of the report and as and when this information was available this would be brought to the Committee for consideration as part of the quarterly monitoring reports. In response to a question regarding electric vehicle charging points, the Acting Chief Financial Officer, Mrs Suzy Douglas, undertook to contact the appropriate service to discuss the proposed locations of points and update members. In response to a question regarding the proposed spend on Council HQ, the Director – Infrastructure and Environment explained that the proposed works included refurbishment, upgrading the Council Chamber, EV charger installations, and further blended meeting room provision amongst other improvements. Regarding the merits of undertaking £136k of proposed works to Lowood lodge, the Director and the Chief Executive provided assurance that the works were required to bring the building in to a habitable state as a consequence of damp problems, and were essential to preserve the value of the building. With regards to play parks, more projects than outlined in the report would be undertaken due to agreements made at a national level. In response to a question regarding the level of detail provided on the proposed Roads & Bridges allocation, the Director – Infrastructure and Environment outlined that works which were planned 3 years into the future had been shared with Members, and that the full details of the planned works had been held back to allow for the plans to be presented in a more professional form, including using correct road names in place of colloquial or local names. In response to a question regarding the inconsistent Wi-Fi connections in schools, the Chief Executive provided assurance that there should be no issue with students being connected to the Wi-Fi in any building of the school estate, and that all of the school buildings had been surveyed and no issues had been detected. Regarding Appendix G to the report, the Director confirmed that the works related to the expansion of facilities to allow the provision of free school meals to a greater number of students. The Director undertook to investigate whether the works to upgrade windows at Chirnside Primary School involved all of the windows. Members agreed to defer the decision on approving the works to Peebles swimming pool as it would be discussed in detail later in the meeting. Follow extensive discussion regarding the proposed works to upgrade Council Headquarters, it was agreed that a report would be produced which outlined all of the works to be undertaken, and the benefits which would be realised from the planned spend.

#### **DECISION**

**AGREED to approve:-**

- (a) **the block allocation breakdowns as contained in Appendices A-R to the report, with exception of:**
  - (i) **the £480k Council HQ Building Upgrade Works, which was deferred to allow the production of a strategy report outlining the details and benefits of the proposed spend; and**
  - (ii) **the £500k Peebles Swimming Pool Roofing Upgrade, which was deferred for consideration later in the meeting.**
- (b) **the re-allocation of available budget in the Health and Safety Works Block to the Building Upgrades Block of £63k; and**
- (c) **a timing movement of £440k from 2023/24 to 2024/25 in the Play Areas and Outdoor Community Spaces Block.**

**8. SCOTTISH BORDERS CONSULTATIVE DRAFT LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2023-2028**

With reference to paragraph 6 of the Minute of the meeting held on 17 November 2020 there had been circulated copies of a report by the Director – Infrastructure and Environment which provided an update on the consultative draft Local Housing Strategy 2023 to 2028 and information on further planned consultation. The report explained that the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 placed a statutory requirement on local authorities to develop a Local Housing Strategy (LHS), supported by an assessment of housing need and demand. The LHS provided direction for tackling housing issues and informs future investment in housing and related services. The current Scottish Borders Local Housing Strategy (LHS) covered the period 2017-2022 and was approved by the Executive Committee in June 2017. In November 2020 the Executive Committee agreed to the deferral of the next LHS to 2023. The new, proposed, consultative draft LHS had been prepared in accordance with Scottish Government Guidance which set out the statutory requirements, essential links and outcomes that should be considered within the strategy. The Lead Officer, Housing Strategy and Development, Ms Donna Bogdanovic presented the report and responded to Members questions. In response to a question regarding Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report and full Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) the Chief Planning Officer, Mr Ian Aikman, explained that SEA was a statutory process, and that they formed part of a cumulative process which were taken into account as part of the Local Development Plan. The Local Housing Strategy formed a key part of the LDP. Regarding feedback, in particular from landlords and Registered Social Landlords (RSL), Ms Bogdanovic explained that RSLs had been a key partner as part of the formal consultation and had done excellent work in helping tenants share their opinions and needs through tenant groups and meetings. In response to a question regarding the pattern of non full-time occupation of homes across the Borders, Ms Bogdanovic undertook to highlight the area as requiring work in the LHS action plan. Members thanked Ms Bogdanovic for her report, and highlighted the importance of the LHS to the region.

**DECISION  
AGREED:-**

- (a) **to approve plans for formal consultation and engagement;**
- (b) **to approve submission of the Draft Local Housing Strategy 2023 to 2028 to the Scottish Government More Homes Division for Peer Review; and**
- (c) **to note plans for finalising the strategy.**

**9. COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT SMALL SCHEMES**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Director – Infrastructure and Environment which provided draft guidance to Elected Members on the arrangements for undertaking Community Enhancement Small Scheme Projects. The Director presented the report and responded to Members questions. Following discussions regarding the procedure for instances where there was no clear majority for or against a proposal, it was agreed to amend paragraph 5.1 (f) to substitute “the matter can be referred to Council for a decision” with “the Chairman of the relevant Area Partnership shall have the casting vote”. In response to a question regarding the process for requesting works to private property, the Director explained that it was up to Members to reach a consensus on whether there was demonstrable public benefit, or legitimate reason for the public to undertake the work, and to decide whether or not to proceed. Regarding the evaluation of the impact of works once they had been completed, the Chief Executive explained that the capacity of officers to undertake such assessments was unclear. In response to a question regarding whether funding could be further divided to Ward level, the Chief Executive confirmed that it was for all of the respective Area Partnership Members to decide.

#### **DECISION**

**AGREED to approve the operational arrangements associated with the Community Enhancement Small Schemes Budget as amended.**

#### **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Councillor Weatherston declared an interest in the following item of business in terms of Section 5 of the Councillors Code of Conduct and left the Chamber during the discussion.

#### **10. PEBBLES SWIMMING POOL**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Director – Infrastructure and Environment which provided an update on the repair works to Peebles Swimming Pool and sought approval for further repair works to be carried out. Reinstatement works began in January 2023 focused on repairs to the damaged roof, plant room, and the internal fabric of the main pool hall. Works were due to be completed to enable reopening of the swimming pool for operation by Live Borders by the end of April 2023. During works, a number of other issues had been identified which the Council intended to address whilst progressing with the reinstatement works, however this was expected to delay completion of the works until July 2023. In response to a question regarding what activities had been undertaken at the site between June 2022 and January 2023, the Director – Infrastructure and Environment explained that various groups had accessed the building and undertaken a range of activity. Specialist decontamination teams had checked the building for the presence of asbestos. Engineers had undertaken assessments of structural problems and damage to the plant equipment. The entire process had been complicated due to the building being occupied by LiveBorders, a third party. That arrangement had led to two teams of insurers and two teams of loss adjustors working at the site. Following that process, SBContracts had accessed in the site in January 2023 and uncovered damage to the electrical systems, fire alarms, security system, and roof which had not been detected to that point. The Director confirmed that a full breakdown of all of the costs involved was being worked on, and conversations were ongoing regarding settlement of the insurance claim. The Director agreed to undertake the production of a lessons learned report which would outline where problems had arisen and how they could be avoided on future projects. The Chief Executive confirmed that the insurance claim, which would only cover works to reinstate the pool to its previous condition, and not the additional works under discussion, represented a net payment of £450k to SBC. Following an extensive debate on whether to fund the additional works from financial reserves or the capital budget, Members agreed not to use financial reserves to fund the additional works, and agreed that a report should be produced which would explore alternative methods of financing the works.

#### **DECISION**

**AGREED:-**

- (a) to note the continued reinstatement works at Peebles Swimming Pool;
- (b) to approve the work required to the remaining roof as identified in the report as part of the Capital Programme 2023/24 Block Allocation;
- (c) to approve the additional works identified in the report which were estimated to cost in the region of £200k;
- (d) that an additional report would be brought back to the Executive Committee in the event that additional costs were incurred or works required;
- (e) that a lessons learned report evaluating the project be prepared; and
- (f) that a report exploring alternative methods of funding the additional works agreed at B and C be brought back to the Executive Committee.

**MEMBER**

Councillor Weatherston re-joined the meeting.

11. **PRIVATE BUSINESS**

**AGREED** under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the business detailed in Appendix 1 to this Minute on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part I of Schedule 7A to the Act.

**SUMMARY OF PRIVATE BUSINESS**

12. **AMENDMENT TO HOUSING BENEFIT & COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION VERIFICATION POLICY**

A report by the Director – Resilient Communities was considered and the recommendations approved.

*The meeting concluded at 13.35 pm*

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# SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL SCRUTINY & PETITIONS COMMITTEE

MINUTES of Meeting of the SCRUTINY &  
PETITIONS COMMITTEE held via Microsoft  
Teams on Thursday, 20 April 2023 at 10.00  
am

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Present:- Councillors E. Thornton-Nicol (Chair), N. Richards (Vice-Chair), J. Anderson, P. Brown, J. Cox, M. Douglas, J. PatonDay, E. Robson, S. Scott and F. Sinclair

In Attendance:- Acting Chief Officer Corporate Governance, Clerk to the Council, and Democratic Services Officer (L. Cuerden)

## 1. **MINUTE AND SCRUTINY ACTION SHEET**

- 1.1 Copies of the Minute of Meeting held on 12 January 2023 had been circulated.
- 1.2 Copies of the Action Tracker for Scrutiny decisions had been circulated. The following items were to be considered at the meeting scheduled for 1 June 2023: use of school premises by community groups; incorporation of rural proofing into checklists; and public transport and communities evaluation.

## **DECISION**

- (a) **APPROVED the Minute for signature by the Chair.**
- (b) **NOTED the dates where outstanding actions would be considered.**

## 2. **FUTURE SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAM**

With reference to paragraph 4 of the Minute of 12 January 2023, there had been circulated copies of a report by the Clerk to the Council, the purpose of which was to provide details of those subjects submitted for consideration for review by the Scrutiny and Petitions Committee and to seek approval for their inclusion in the Scrutiny Review Work Programme. Members were reminded of their strategic role whereby it was appropriate for reviews to scrutinise delivery against a plan, or benefit realisation against a target. In the first instance, Members were to be cognisant of the two threshold criteria: the proposed review was within the scope of the Council and its objectives; and the scope of the review was clear and concise. Further criteria were outlined in the report with due consideration to be given to the number of reviews directed to any particular Service at one time to ensure that their resources were not stretched too thinly. Officers from various Services of the Council would provide advice and support where appropriate. Eleven subjects had been submitted for possible inclusion in the Scrutiny Work Programme, detailed in the Appendix to the report. This list was to be added to, subject to Council approval, over the coming years as further subject reviews arose. There followed a discussion on each review proposal. It was agreed to combine proposals with commonality which resulted in nine proposed reviews as detailed in the Appendix to the Minute. A further verbal proposal from Councillor Cox was considered and deemed to be under the remit of the Audit Committee. The Council Management Team were to provide further details and outcomes for the proposed reviews. The final list of subjects for review was to be considered for agreement at the meeting of 1 June 2023, and then presented to the Council for approval on 29 June 2023. Reviews would be scheduled to begin in August 2023.

**DECISION**

**AGREED:**

- (a) the list of subjects it wished to take forward for inclusion in the Scrutiny Review Work Programme as detailed in the Appendix to this Minute; and
- (b) that the Council's Management Team would be asked to provide further details, including outcomes for such reviews, for consideration by the Scrutiny & Petitions Committee prior to it recommending its Review Work Programme for approval by Scottish Borders Council.

*The meeting concluded at 10.25 am*