

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL BERWICKSHIRE AREA FORUM

MINUTES of Meeting of the
BERWICKSHIRE AREA FORUM held in
Council Offices, Newtown Street, Duns on
Thursday, 3 September, 2015 at 6.30 pm

- Present:- Councillors D. Moffat (Vice-Chairman), J. Campbell, J. A. Fullarton,
J. Greenwell and F. Renton.
Community Councillors:- Berwickshire Civic Society – Janice Gillie; Chirnside
– Roy Gordon; Cockburnspath – Pauline Hood; Coldingham – Rhona Goldie;
Coldstream and District – Martin Brims; Duns – Anne Affleck; Edrom, Allanton
& Whitsome – Trixie Collin; Eyemouth – James Anderson; Foulden,
Mordington and Lamberton – Howard Doherty; Gavinton, Fogo and Polwarth
– Keith Dickinson; Gordon & Westruther – Elaine Morris; Hutton and Paxton –
June McGregor; Lammermuir – Mark Rowley; Reston and Auchencrow –
Barrie Forrest.
- Apologies:- Councillor M. J. Cook.
Community Councils:- Ayton, Burnmouth, Swinton and Ladykirk.
- In Attendance:- J Alexander – Head of Ambulance Services, Scottish Ambulance Service; M
Acton, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service; Democratic Services Officer (P
Bolson).

Members of the Public:- 10

1. **WELCOME**
The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting.
2. **MINUTE.**
There had been circulated copies of the Minute of 4 June 2015.

DECISION

APPROVED the Minute for signature by the Chairman.

3. **ST ABBS LIFEBOAT - RESPONSE BY RNLI TO THE BERWICKSHIRE AREA FORUM**
With reference to paragraph 20 of the Minute of 4 June 2015, there had been circulated copies of a letter of response from Paul Boissier, Chief Executive of the RNLI. The Vice-Chairman explained that Councillor Cook, on behalf of the Berwickshire Area Forum, had written to Mr Boissier expressing the profound concerns of the Forum at the proposed closure of the St Abbs Lifeboat Station. The Vice-Chairman advised that this letter from Mr Boissier appeared to be a standard one which had been sent to various objectors of the proposed closure. The Vice-Chairman commended the efforts of all those who had actively campaigned to halt the closure and advised that a petition of over 13,000 signatures would be presented to the RNLI Headquarters office on Monday 7 September 2015.

DECISION

NOTED.

4. **FLAGS AT LAMBERTON TOLL**
The Vice-Chairman advised that Councillor Cook had been progressing this item and that further discussion would be deferred until the meeting on 3 December 2015 when Cllr Cook would be available to present an update.

DECISION

AGREED that the above item would be deferred for further discussion at the meeting of the Berwickshire Area Forum on 3 December 2015.

5. LOCAL ACCESS AND TRANSPORT STRATEGY WITH AN EMPHASIS ON BERWICKSHIRE

The Vice-Chairman welcomed Graeme Johnstone, Lead Officer Access and Transport with Scottish Borders Council who was present at the meeting to provide Members with an update on the Local Access and Transport Strategy (LATS) and how this related to Berwickshire. Mr Johnstone summarised the previous work undertaken and advised that the existing Strategy developed in 2008 was now out of date. Given that access and transport were key issues across the Scottish Borders and the Strategy was also used in the bidding process with the Scottish Government and SESTRAN, an up to date statement which provided strategic direction was very important for the area. Mr Johnstone went on to detail some of the main issues to be considered within the Strategy document, including the route to markets; public transport; walking, cycling and horse riding; road maintenance; forestry; road safety; parking; and low carbon levels. To put this into context, Mr Johnstone advised that within the Scottish Borders, there were approximately 1,900 miles of roads and 1,250 bridges requiring maintenance and that one fifth of the area was covered by trees. Road safety was of significant importance in the context of the number of young drivers and the popularity of the Scottish Borders as an area used by motorcyclists. Parking issues had taken on a higher profile since the cessation of the Traffic Warden Service provided by Police Scotland and measures in place to assist in achieving low carbon levels included electric vehicle charging points, flexible working arrangements and visual connectivity and Broadband. He also mentioned rail links between Berwick upon Tweed and Edinburgh and the ongoing work to progress establishing a new station at Reston. Members were advised that the Council was now into a twelve week consultation period which was due to end on 23 October 2015. An electronic questionnaire was available for completion and the consultation had been publicised in libraries, contact centres, Council offices and via presentations at Area Fora meetings. All responses to the consultation would be considered during the development of the updated Strategy and the draft document would be presented to Committee prior to finalisation. Responses to the online questionnaire could be submitted at www.scotborders.gov.uk/haveyoursay; by email to localplan@scotborders.gov.uk or by post to the Planning Policy and Access, Scottish Borders Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells TD6 0SA. A question was raised in relation to the availability of electric vehicle charging points at the BGH. Mr Johnstone confirmed that there was no such point at the BGH at the moment but that he would investigate how this could be progressed to enable Third Sector volunteers to recharge vehicles while taking clients on visits to the hospital. Mr Johnstone also noted that it was the view the Forum that young people were not well-served by public transport and that the views of these young people were significant to the development of an up to date Strategy. The Vice-Chairman thanked Mr Johnstone for his presentation.

DECISION

NOTED the presentation.

6. A1 JUNCTIONS IN BERWICKSHIRE - UPDATE

The Vice-Chairman welcomed George Henry, Road Safety Manager with Transport Scotland and Gordon Boyd from Amey who were present to give an update on the A1 Junctions Review. Mr Henry provided some background to the Review, listing the Scottish Road Safety Casualty Reduction Targets for 2020, the Strategic Road Safety Plan which was currently under review, the Strategic Transport Projects Review and the National Transport Strategy as the main policy documents. Mr Henry went on to explain that in terms of Road Safety Casualty figures, the targets for 2020 were to reduce the number of people killed by 40%, people seriously injured by 55%, young people over 16 years of age by 50%, children under the age of 16 by 65% and to maintain a 10% reduction in the slight casualty category. The cost of road accidents in Scotland was

estimated to cost over £1b per year. The statistics were currently at an all-time low but it was recognised that there was still work to be done to reduce the figures even further. Mr Henry went on to explain that although it was recognised that most accidents could be attributed to driver error, safer road design could also make a significant impact on reducing the accident rates and that optimum casualty reduction could best be achieved through partnership working with colleagues involved in education and enforcement. The Strategic Road Safety Plan produced by Transport Scotland informed stakeholders in terms of how road safety was delivered and set out an Action Plan for delivery which included twenty seven action points. Mr Henry advised that an A1 Action Group had been in operation for some time and comprised Elected Members from East Lothian and the Scottish Borders. He went on to confirm that full dualling of the A1 would not go ahead at the current time but that a review of the junctions on this road had been carried out in March 2015. This was then followed up by a report from Amey to the A1 Action Group on 30 June 2015 with all designs and proposals now finalised.

- 6.1 Members were advised that statistics showed a downward trend in the occurrence of road accidents during an economic recession with the figures increasing as the economy recovered and this had been demonstrated in the figures available across Europe. Of the seven junctions on to the A1 in Berwickshire, namely Ayton South, Ayton North, Chirnside, Grantshouse, Houndwood, Redhall Eyemouth and Reston, only two slight personal injury accidents had been recorded, one in 2012 at Redhall Eyemouth and the other at Ayton North in 2014. Road Safety works continued at each of the junctions as detailed in the presentation, and also along the length of the A1 in terms of white lining, road studs/cats eyes replacements, vegetation clearance, carriageway surfacing as part of planned maintenance and ongoing discussions with the Safety Camera Unit regarding enforcement strategy. Mr Henry explained that in moving forward, annual accident assessments would be carried out on the trunk road network alongside planned monitoring to ascertain the effectiveness of any measures installed and work would continue with local communities on road safety matters. A further presentation could be made available once the Strategy was finalised.

6.2 There were a number of questions and concerns raised. In response, Mr Henry explained that average speed cameras were not always useful and were not being considered for the A1 at the present time. In the case of the A9, however, these cameras had been very successful in reducing speeds on the long, sweeping bends. Further information from the A9 road users' surveys was available online. With regard to the roundabout at Cockburnspath, it was highlighted that no effective warning signs were visible on the south to north approach and Members noted that Mr Henry would investigate this matter. With reference to lighting at junctions, Mr Henry confirmed that it was necessary to have evidence of previous accidents or collisions before additional lighting would be considered and he agreed to look again at the junctions which were causing concern. He went on to confirm that work was ongoing at the Lamberton junction in terms of the erection of bollards and white lining and that signage detailing the different alcohol limits in Scotland and England was being considered for strategic Border routes. The Vice-Chairman thanked Mr Henry and Mr Boyd for their presentation and commended the work that had been carried out on the A1.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

7. HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE.

No representative from NHS Borders was present at the meeting therefore no discussion took place.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

8. SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE.

There were circulated at the meeting copies of a report by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) giving an update on activity in the Berwickshire area since the previous report on 4 June 2015. The Vice-Chairman welcomed Station Manager Matt Acton to the meeting. Station Manager Acton had recently been appointed to the post based in Duns and was present to speak to the report and answer questions. The report detailed that over this reporting period, there had been 6 house fires, 8 open fires and 7 special service calls covering a range of activity, and there had been 20 non-deliberate unwanted fire alarm signals. Ongoing activity throughout the area included working with partners to deliver the Home Fire Safety Visit (HFSV) policy in order to focus on members of local communities who were at high risk from fire. Delivery of this policy included fire raising awareness sessions for partner practitioners to encourage referrals via the SFRS CSET online system. In addition to the ongoing work undertaken by the SFRS in respect of Home Fire Safety Visits, Firesharp, Fire Safety Audits, phased intervention actions for unwanted fire signals, the Safeguarding Policy and Procedure for Protection of Children and Adults at Risk of Harm, proactive work being undertaken with migrant groups and involvement in events such as the Violence Against Women Conference in December 2014, SFRS has also delivered its Summer Thematic Action Plan. This included local crews engaging in areas such as fire-related anti-social behaviour; holiday safety; and countryside and outdoor safety. The Autumn Thematic Action Plan was now underway and included safety in a number of areas such as student (throughout September); electrical; chimney; bonfire (throughout October and into November); and older vulnerable persons (during November). Members were advised that recruitment was now in its third cycle and vacancies at Duns, Eyemouth and Coldstream were currently being addressed with staffing at Duns now at 10 personnel. It was also noted that there would be a two day training would be delivered at Coldstream on cardiac arrest and how to deal with this. Copies of the SFRS Multi Ward Operating Plan for Berwickshire for 2015-16 were also circulated at the meeting for information. The Vice-Chairman thanked Group Manager Acton for his attendance.

DECISION

NOTED the report.

9. **POLICE SCOTLAND.**

There were circulated at the meeting copies of a report by Police Scotland updating Members on performance, activities and issues across Berwickshire for the period up to 30 July 2015. The report explained that Inspector John Scott had now taken over from Inspector Dougal in the Berwickshire area but that Inspector Scott was unable to attend this meeting. It was noted that a farm crime prevention event was being held at Whitsome East Newton Farm near Duns on Monday 26 October 2015 between 6.00pm and 8.30pm and the report encouraged local farmers to attend and take the opportunity to see what could be done to help reduce crime of this type in the area. It was noted that any questions could either be forwarded to Inspector Scott directly or addressed to him at the next meeting of the Forum on 3 December 2015.

DECISION

NOTED the report.

10. **SCOTTISH AMBULANCE SERVICE**

With reference to paragraph 2(d) of the Minute of 4 June 2015, Mr Alexander, Scottish Ambulance Service was present at the meeting to answer questions on the service across Berwickshire. At the previous meeting, Mr Alexander was asked to clarify how ambulance provision was allocated as presently, it appeared to be on the basis of the post code area and telephone STD code and that this could cause problems, such as residents in the Scottish Borders who had Berwick post codes and telephone numbers being refused onward transfer to the BGH in Melrose. Mr Alexander confirmed that the ambulance utilised would be allocated on the basis of the landline STD code however, the caller could dial 999 and ask to be connected to the Scottish Ambulance Service (if they wished to be transported to the BGH) or the North East Ambulance Service (if they wished to

attend a hospital south of the Border.) The Vice-Chairman thanked Mr Alexander for attending the meeting.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

11. **SESPLAN MAIN ISSUES REPORT - UPDATE**

There had been circulated copies of a briefing note by SESplan entitled "Jobs, Homes and Investment: Where, Why and How? Main Issues Report Consultation". It was noted that this document had been circulated to all Community Council and community groups previously. The Vice-Chairman highlighted that a community event would be held at Scottish Borders Council headquarters on Tuesday 8 September between 6.30pm and 8.30pm to look at local engagement and discussion around the main issues report.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

12. **OPEN QUESTIONS.**

12.1 **Electronic Sign in the Layby on the A1 at Lamberton**

Members were advised that the utilisation of the electronic board on the A1 at Lamberton, asking people to keep the roads tidy and take litter home might help in reducing litter being thrown from cars on the A1 and surrounding area. Transport Scotland were thanked for their assistance in this matter. Members discussed the possibility of adding further text to the electronic message to detail the cost of a penalty fine for leaving litter and it was agreed that the Chairman would write to Transport Scotland on behalf of Berwickshire Area Forum to ask if the message could be amended to reflect this.

**DECISION
(a) NOTED.**

(b) **AGREED that the Chairman would write to Transport Scotland to request that the message on the electronic sign in the layby on the A1 at Lamberton be amended to include the cost of a penalty fine for leaving litter.**

13. **COMMUNITY COUNCIL SPOTLIGHT.**

13.1 **Thanks – EB Living**

The Vice-Chairman advised that a letter of thanks had been received from Pat Elliot of EB Living magazine to the Berwickshire Area Forum, following the successful application for a grant for emergency financial assistance. The letter explained that without any reserve fund, publication of future issues of the magazine had been doubtful, given earlier EB Living tax and accountancy payments but the Quality of Life funding meant that the magazine could meet any potential shortfall in advertising revenue over the next few issues. Further work supported by Business Gateway would hopefully help to resolve the sustainability issues inherent in all such local, free publications.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

13.2 **Songs of Praise**

The Vice-Chairman advised that a Songs of Praise Celebration to mark HM The Queen becoming the longest reigning British Monarch would take place on Sunday 13 September 2015 at 7.00pm in Duns Parish Church and everyone was welcome to attend.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

13.3 **Future Agenda Items**

With reference to previous requests by the Chairman, the Forum was asked to consider issues which members would like to be considered for inclusion on future Agenda. Any suggestions should be forwarded to himself and Pauline Bolson to allow for forward Agenda planning. Members were also reminded that questions for NHS Borders and the Scottish Ambulance Service should be submitted to the Chairman in advance of meetings as this would allow the respective representatives to collate information for presentation in due course.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

14. **ACCESS TO COMMITTEE PAPERS**

Members were advised that Scottish Borders Council Committee papers were now accessible on the Council's website via modern.gov, the new system being used across SBC. Elected Members now accessed Agenda, reports and Minutes electronically at meetings and it was possible for members of the public to access public papers in a similar way. There was a guidance note available which explained how to download the free software required and this guidance would be circulated to all Community Councils. Further advice could be sought from the Democratic Services Officer(s) at Council headquarters. Community Councils were asked to consider whether they wished to access papers electronically or continue to receive paper copies by post and to let Pauline Bolson know in advance of the next meeting.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

15. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The dates of future meetings of the Berwickshire Area Forum were noted as follows:-

3 December 2015;
3 March 2016; and
2 June, 2016.

It was noted that these dates would be subject to change should an additional meeting of Berwickshire Area Forum be added to the Calendar.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

The meeting concluded at 8.20 pm