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SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

MINUTES of Meeting of the SCOTTISH COUNCIL held in Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Newtown St. Boswells on Thursday, 19th February, 2015 at 10.00 am

Present:- Councillors J. Brown (Vice Convener), S. Aitchison, W. Archibald, M. Ballantyne, S. Bell, C. Bhatia, J. Campbell, K. Cockburn, M. J. Cook, A. Cranston, V. M. Davidson, G. Edgar, J. A. Fullarton, I. Gillespie, J. Greenwell, G. Logan, W. McAteer, J. G. Mitchell, D. Moffat, S. Mountford, A. J. Nicol, D. Parker, D. Paterson, F. Renton, S. Scott, R. Smith, R. Stewart, J. Torrance, G. Turnbull, T. Weatherston and B White

Apologies:- Councillors G. H. T. Garvie, B Herd and S. Marshall

In Attendance:- Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (People), Depute Chief Executive (Place), Corporate Transformation and Services Director, Director of Public Health, Service Director Strategy & Policy, Service Director Commercial Services, Service Director Capital Projects, Chief Social Work Officer, Chief Legal Officer, Chief Officer Health & Social Care Integration, Corporate Finance Manager, Clerk to the Council

1. **THE CONVENER**

Councillor Brown advised Members that Councillor Garvie was recovering well.

DECISION NOTED.

2. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meetings held on 18 December 2014 and 29 January 2015 were considered.

DECISION AGREED that the Minutes be approved and signed by the Vice Convener.

3. **COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The Minutes of the following Committees had been circulated:-

Selkirk Common Good Fund	2 December 2014
Peebles Common Good Fund	3 December 2014
Tweeddale Area Forum	3 December 2014
Planning & Building Standards	8 December 2014
Health & Social Care Integration Shadow Board	8 December 2014
Executive	9 December 2014
Pension Fund	11 December 2014
Petitions	11 December 2014
Standards	12 December 2014
Teviot & Liddesdale Area Forum	16 December 2014
Tweeddale Area Forum	18 December 2014
Galashiels Common Good Fund	19 December 2014
Planning & Building Standards	12 January 2015
Audit & Risk	19 January 2015
Executive (Education)	20 January 2015
Teviot & Liddesdale Area Forum	20 January 2015
Local Review Body	26 January 2015
Pension Fund	29 January 2015

Scrutiny
Planning & Building Standards
Executive (Economic Development)

29 January 2015
2 February 2015
3 February 2015

DECISION

APPROVED the Minutes listed above subject to paragraphs 4-6 below.

3.1 **GALASHIELS COMMON GOOD FUND SUB-COMMITTEE**

With reference to paragraphs 1-5 of the Minute of the Galashiels Common Good Fund Sub-Committee of 19 December 2014, it was recommended that Council approve the recording of identified assets as assets of the Galashiels Common Good Fund and that the Chief Financial Officer be instructed to amend the Asset Registers accordingly.

DECISION

AGREED to approve the recommendation as detailed above.

3.2 **AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE**

With reference to paragraphs 14-15 of the Audit and Risk Committee Minute of 19 January 2015, it was recommended that Council approve the revised Risk Management Policy Statement.

DECISION

AGREED to approve the recommendation as detailed above.

MEMBERS

Councillors Ballantyne and Davidson joined the meeting during consideration of the following item.

4. **OPEN QUESTIONS.**

The questions submitted by Councillors Campbell, Fullarton, Logan, Scott, Turnbull, Weatherston, Mountford and Cockburn were answered.

DECISION

NOTED the replies as detailed in Appendix I to this Minute.

5. **SCOTTISH BORDERS ADULT PROTECTION COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2013-2014**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Social Work Officer on the continuing progress in Scottish Borders in the development of an interagency approach to the support and protection of adults who were at risk of harm (as defined in the Adult Support & Protection (Scotland) Act 2007). The Vice Convener welcomed Jim Wilson, Independent Chair of the Committee, to the meeting. Mr Wilson outlined the main points within the report and commented on the increase in the number of referrals with older people and those with a learning disability being the highest category. Of these, more were female, totalling 63% of all referrals. One of the major areas of concern was scams and there was a national campaign focusing on financial abuse with assistance being provided by the Post Office, Trading Standards and Banks in this area. He also advised that his biannual report to the Scottish Government would highlight the good assessment and continuous improvement process, the significant training programme and the support from partner agencies. Mr Wilson answered Members' questions and the Vice Convener thanked him for his attendance.

DECISION

AGREED to endorse the Annual Report of the Scottish Borders Adult Protection Committee 2013/14 and that it be published on the Council's website and distributed.

6. **SCOTTISH BORDERS CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2013-2014**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Social Work Officer on the activities of the Child Protection Committee during the period 1 July 2013–31 July 2014 aimed at protecting children and young people in the Scottish Borders from abuse and neglect. The Vice Convener welcomed Duncan MacAulay, Independent Chair of the Committee, to the meeting. Mr MacAulay advised that this was his first report as Chair and commented on the good work being carried out in the Borders. He commented on the importance of information sharing and cross border links. There was a good level of staff training which now covered child trafficking and exploitation, an area of national concern. There had been a reduction in the number of children on the child protection register over the year and this was being monitored. Mr MacAulay answered Members' questions and the Vice Convener thanked him for his attendance. In response to a request it was agreed that future reports would include trends in respect of numbers on the Register and comparison with national trends.

DECISION

AGREED to endorse the Annual Report of the Scottish Borders Child Protection Committee 2013/14 and that it be published on the Council's website and distributed.

7. **BORDERS RAILWAY**

The Corporate Transformation and Services Director gave a presentation to Members from the bid which had been submitted by Scottish Borders Council, Midlothian Council and Edinburgh City Council in this year's COSLA Excellence Awards. The bid entitled "The Borders Railway - Partnership in Action" had been nominated as a finalist. The entry described the enduring strength of the Partnership over the years to secure delivery of the Borders Railway. It focused on the high level of innovation required and set out how the Council had ensured best practice from this work had been utilised in other areas of work. The presentation which had been given to the Judging Panel was shown to Members and included video clips which set out the historical context, provided the views of the three Council Leaders on the Project and interviews with pupils from Galashiels Academy. It was noted that the Award Results would be announced as part of the COSLA Conference on 12 March 2015. The Vice Convener paid tribute the work of Councillor Parker in respect of the Railway Project.

DECISION

NOTED the presentation

8. **LOCAL FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT PLANS**

With reference to paragraph 6 of the Minute of 30 October 2014, there had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Commercial Services seeking approval of the draft Local Flood Risk Management Plans for the Forth Estuary Local Plan District, the Tweed Local Plan District, and the Solway Local Plan District. This approval was required to allow the draft plans to be published for public consultation on 2 March 2015. The draft plans for each of the rivers were appended to the report. The plans would be finalised taking account of responses to the consultation and the national prioritisation of preferred actions. Approval of the final draft plans would be required prior to publication in June 2016. It was noted that the order of schemes would be determined by the national prioritisation process. The use of sediment management as a flood prevention measure was highlighted.

DECISION

AGREED to approve the draft Local Flood Risk Management Plans for consultation, as contained in the Appendices to the report, in respect of:-

- (a) the Berwickshire Coast in the Forth Estuary Local Plan District (PVA10/26);

(b) the Tweed Local Plan District (LPD 13); and

(c) the Newcastleton in the Solway Local Plan District (PVA14/03).

9. **JEDBURGH (SKIPRUNNINGBURN) FLOOD PROTECTION SCHEME**

With reference to paragraph 7 of the Minute of 30 October 2014, there had been circulated copies of a joint report by the Service Directors Capital Projects and Commercial Services seeking approval to confirm the proposed Jedburgh (Skiprunning Burn) Flood Protection Scheme 2014 and authorisation to continue the statutory approvals processes and commence the procurement and construction stages of the project. The report explained that no objections had been received in respect of the approved scheme. Following confirmation of the scheme Deemed Planning Permission would be obtained and this would enable the project team to finalise the detailed design before progressing to procurement and construction during financial year 2015/16. Members welcomed the project.

DECISION

AGREED to:-

(a) confirm the proposed Jedburgh (Skiprunning Burn) Flood Protection Scheme 2014;

(b) authorise the Service Directors of Capital Projects & Commercial Services to continue the Statutory Approvals processes identified in the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009; and,

(c) authorise the Service Directors of Capital Projects & Commercial Services to commence the procurement and construction stages of the project.

10. **INTEGRATION OF HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE - ESTABLISHING A STRATEGIC PLANNING GROUP**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Depute Chief Executive People on the arrangements for establishing a permanent Strategic Planning Group to support the arrangements for the Integration of Health and Social Care in the Borders. The report explained that there was a duty, under the Joint Working (Public Bodies) (Scotland) Act 2014 to establish a Strategic Planning Group to support the local arrangements for the integration of Health and Social Care. The report outlined the proposals for the composition of the Strategic Planning Group, the timescales for its establishments and the draft terms of reference. The role of the Strategic Planning Group was to support the Integration Joint Board in the cyclical development of the Plan and the continuing review of the progress in its delivery against the agreed national and local outcomes. The Statutory Guidance on Strategic Planning provided local flexibility on the size and composition of the Strategic Planning Group. However, the Integration Authority was required to involve a range of relevant stakeholders and must include representatives of groups prescribed by the Scottish Ministers in regulations as having an interest. In view of the need to strike a balance between an effective and manageable group and effective representation of prescribed communities of interest as well as localities it was proposed that an 18 member group be established rather than the potential 31 member group. The need to include a District Nurse representative was highlighted.

DECISION

AGREED the proposals for establishing the Strategic Planning Group in support of the local Integration of Health and Social Care arrangements.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Edgar 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.

11. **SCHEME OF ADMINISTRATION - LLP STRATEGIC GOVERNANCE GROUP**

With reference to paragraph 2 of the Private Appendix to the Minute of 29 January 2015, there had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Executive seeking approval for the remit of the LLP Strategic Governance Group, a Sub-Committee of Council, to be set up to carry out the monitoring and control functions required by the Council in connection with the SB Cares LLP. The report explained that the partnership agreement prescribed that the LLP Officers (Managing Director, Finance and Commercial Director, Head of Operations, and the Chairman of the Board) met with the Council on a quarterly basis. It was proposed that the LLP Strategic Governance Group was established as a Sub-Committee of full Council to fulfil this requirement. The remit of the LLP Strategic Governance Group was detailed in Appendix I to the report and covered the Sub-Committee's decision-making and scrutiny activity including service performance, risks, financial management, quality, customer care, contractual compliance, and compliance with statutory obligations. The items included in the remit were taken from Parts 2 and 3 of the Partnership Agreement already approved by Council. Councillor Renton, seconded by Councillor Bell, moved that an additional recommendation (d) that a paper goes to the Strategic Governance Group detailing how staff engagement in the new company will be progressed following more detailed discussions with the unions. This was unanimously approved. It was noted that further amendments to the remit could be made if required once the Group was operational, and that the word 'Shadow' be removed after April 2016 from the Health and Social Care Shadow Integration Board.

DECISION

AGREED:-

- (a) **the addition of a non-Council member of the Health and Social Care Integration [Shadow] Board as a non-voting member of the LLP Strategic Governance Group;**
- (b) **the inclusion of the LLP Strategic Governance Group as a Sub-Committee of Council in the Scheme of Administration; and**
- (c) **the remit of the LLP Strategic Governance Group as detailed in Appendix I to the report.**

12. **CULTURAL STRATEGY FOR THE SCOTTISH BORDERS**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Corporate Transformation and Services Director seeking support for a Cultural Strategy for the Scottish Borders, and agreement for the Council's role in delivering the Strategy in partnership with cultural sector stakeholders and businesses. The report explained that in September 2013, Scottish Borders Council, with financial support from Creative Scotland, commissioned a Cultural Strategy for the Scottish Borders. The commission was developed by a team of consultants under the direction of Noble Openshaw Limited. The Strategy set out four key aims supported by specific recommendations: Better Communication, Improved Connectivity, Valuing the Sector and Empowering the Creative Community. As part of "Improved Connectivity", the Strategy recommended establishing a Cultural Forum for the Scottish Borders and a Cultural Support Unit to work with the Forum. It was proposed that this Unit be provided by SBC's Creative Arts Business Network (CABN) to enable and support partnerships and collaborative working, provide a secretariat to the Forum and act as "traffic manager" to signpost individuals and organisations developing new projects and initiatives to the best sources of information, advice and training. The Strategy had been welcomed, and well received, by the cultural sector in the Scottish Borders and was used to inform funding applications from Borders-based organisations to external sources including Creative Scotland and Trusts and Foundations. Members welcomed the strategy and the need to promote culture in a proactive way. It was agreed that the second set of words "towards implementation" be removed from recommendation (b) in the report.

**DECISION
AGREED:-**

- (a) to approve the Cultural Strategy for the Scottish Borders; and**
- (b) that SBC Cultural Services takes a leadership role in implementing the Cultural Strategy towards implementation by providing the Cultural Support Unit, via the Creative Arts Business Network, as recommended in the Strategy.**

MEMBER

Councillor Moffat left the meeting during consideration of the above item.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillors Cockburn, Davidson and Gillespie declared an interest in the following item of business in terms of Section 5.18 (2)(i) of the Councillors Code of Conduct and remained in the Chamber during the discussion.

13. INTEGRATED CULTURE AND SPORT TRUST

With reference to paragraph 3 of the Private Appendix to the Minute of 20 November 2014, there had been circulated copies of a report by the Corporate Transformation and Services Director on the positive response from Borders Sport and Leisure Trust (BSLT) agreeing to dialogue on an Integrated Culture and Sport Trust and to consider the next steps. The report explained that a formal request had been made to BSLT in December 2014 to consider dialogue with SBC on an Integrated Culture and Sport Trust. BSLT convened a special meeting on 9 February 2015 to discuss this proposal and agreed to a dialogue over an Integrated Culture and Sport Trust. The report outlined the terms of reference for this joint work and recommended that a Joint Officer Working Group made up of officers from SBC and BSLT work together on the feasibility of an Integrated Culture and Sport Trust and to prepare proposals. The current Member Officer Working Group would continue in order to examine and support the work of the Joint Officer Working Group and contribute to discussions with BSLT Board members. The key outcome of this work would be agreeing whether or not to recommend the establishment of an integrated trust. Members supported this approach but emphasised the need to identify all the pros and cons of such a joint Trust to ensure the protection of cultural provision in the Borders.

DECISION

AGREED to:-

- (a) note the decision of Borders Sport and Leisure Trust (BSLT) agreeing to the Council's request for dialogue about a Joint Trust;**
- (b) approve the approach to joint working with BSLT in considering an Integrated Culture and Sport Trust including the terms of reference for this work;**
- (c) authorise the Corporate Transformation & Services Director in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Culture, Sport, Youth and Communities to agree such amendments as may be required to these terms of reference following discussion with BSLT;**
- (d) request a progress report back to Council in June 2015 and a final report by no later than 8 October 2015 on the viability or not of an integrated Trust; and**
- (e) note that any of the financial implications associated with a delay in the implementation of Cultural Services to a Trust would be addressed as part of the revenue monitoring process.**

14. **COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

It was noted that due to recent changes in the membership of the Administration of the Council that appointments required to be made in respect of the Scrutiny Committee and the Standards Committee.

- 14.1 With regard to the two Scrutiny Committee members, Councillor Bell, seconded by Councillor Archibald, moved that Councillor Cranston be appointed; and Councillor Torrance, seconded by Councillor Parker, moved that Councillor Gillespie be appointed. Both of the nominations were unanimously approved.
- 14.2 With regard to the position of Vice Chairman of Scrutiny, Councillor Cook, seconded by Councillor Smith, moved that Councillor Stewart be appointed. This appointment was unanimously approved.
- 14.3 With regard to the Standards Committee member, Councillor Parker, seconded by Councillor Edgar, moved that Councillor Aitchison be appointed. This appointment was unanimously approved.

DECISION

AGREED to approve the above appointments.

15. **WELLBEING AND SAFETY CHAMPION**

With reference to paragraph 20 of the Minute of 18 December 2014, Members were asked to consider the nomination of a Wellbeing and Safety Champion but no nomination was forthcoming.

DECISION

AGREED not to appoint a Health & Safety Champion at present.

16. **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 Appendix II to this Minute on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 6, 8 and 9 of Part I of Schedule 7A to the Act.

SUMMARY OF PRIVATE BUSINESS

Minute

17. The private sections of the Council Minutes of 18 December 2014 and 29 January 2015 were approved.

Committee Minutes

18. The private sections of the Committee Minutes as detailed in paragraph 3 of this Minute were approved.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Cranston 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.

Waste Treatment Contract

19. Members approved a report by the Corporate Transformation and Services Director.

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SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

19 FEBRUARY 2015

APPENDIX I

OPEN QUESTIONS FOR SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL 19 FEBRUARY 2015

Question from Councillor Campbell

To the Executive Member for Education

The Borders is an area rich in Scottish culture and history. The Scottish Studies Working Group recommended Scottish culture should be at the heart of the school curriculum giving our children the same opportunity as those in other countries of studying their national literature, history, art and music etc. Can the Executive Member advise if Scottish Borders are taking forward the recommendations of the EIS and if so, can a report be brought forward on the progress of implementation?

Reply from Councillor Aitchison

The Scottish Studies Working Group, (*not EIS*) chaired by Dr Allan, MSP, produced a set of recommendations that Education Scotland have responded to with an action plan. This brings together existing resources, guidance and approaches within Curriculum for Excellence and identifies particular challenges in realising the aspiration that Learning about Scotland should be a 'natural and normal part of the learning experience from early years to senior phase. In Borders this approach has been taken and all schools are expected to build a curriculum giving strong attention to the history and culture of the Scottish Borders. National organisations have embedded this in strategies and this is supported through professional development and, significantly, GTC Scotland have merged this into Teacher standards applicable to every teacher in Borders (and across Scotland).

Questions from Councillor Fullarton

To the Executive Member for Roads and Infrastructure

Could the Executive Member confirm that the recent SCOTs figures for the Scottish Borders A, B and C class roads position us in the bottom quartile?

Reply from Councillor Edgar

The national road condition indicator generally reflects the level of investment into the Scottish roads network. I can confirm that Scottish Borders Council is in the bottom quartile in terms of the national road condition indicator with 43.5% of its road network in need of substantial repair. This compares with a national average of 37.1% of Scotland's road network in need of substantial repair and an average of 39.7% for rural Scottish authorities. Of the rural authorities Dumfries & Galloway at 49.3% and Argyll & Bute at 57.7% fare worse than Scottish Borders Council and Perth & Kinross at 35.4% and Highland at 35.6% fare better.

In setting its budget, the Council has to strike a balance between investment into the roads network and other critical services it delivers. To significantly improve Scottish Borders Council's road condition indicator would require substantial additional funding, which would mean having to reduce other services.

A table showing the position of each local authority is available on request.

To the Executive Member for Education

Does the recent Government position on preventing any reduction in teacher numbers limit this Council in addressing the issue of under-performing teachers?

Reply from Councillor Aitchison

It does not. The primary purpose in undertaking performance management processes is to assist the employee to reach an appropriate level of performance. It is only in the most serious cases

that, after periods of support and monitoring, disciplinary action is taken which may include dismissal.

Even if a teacher were dismissed, that does not in itself mean a drop in teacher numbers, as the post would still be in the establishment and a replacement would be recruited.

Questions from Councillor Logan

To the Leader

1. All Councillor Expenses are published annually. Can you tell us why your expenses are not itemised on the Council website?

Reply from Councillor Parker

I have been advised that it is debateable whether I require to answer this question, as it may not be competent under the Standing Orders. However, in the spirit of openness and transparency I am happy to do so.

Councillors' expenses claim forms are published on the Council website. In fact I make no claims directly so have no expenses claim forms to publish.

As you may have noticed I am visually impaired. Because of my disability particular arrangements require to be made to allow me to undertake my duties. These, of course, constitute reasonable adjustments in terms of the Equality Act.

Therefore staff are made available to drive me to meetings and I use taxis when appropriate. Neither of these require me to submit a claim form.

These costs are properly accounted for and are included in the annual report to Council on Members' expenses.

2. Could you tell us when we can expect to hear the result of the promised review into the Licensing Board and the Civic Government Licensing Committee?

Reply from Councillor Parker

The Clerk to the Council has been researching how other Councils deal with both liquor licensing and other licensing matters. It is anticipated that during March, meetings will be held with the individual members of Scottish Borders Licensing Board and Civic Government Licensing Committee to establish their views, with a report to Council on 2 April 2015.

3. Can you tell us why the grant to the Border Book Festival was not first debated by the Executive or by full Council and what budget provided the funds?

Reply from Councillor Parker

The core funding of £25K for the Borders Book Festival was approved by Council on 6th February 2014. A Business Support Grant of £7k was also allocated and a further one off contribution of £15K was made to fund an additional school programme. These additional awards were made in accordance with the appropriate policies and processes. They were made from the appropriate budgets and authorised by Officers who were responsible for these specific budgets.

While Members set and approve budgets in February; there are many general funding lines and "block" type allocations which Officers are expected to spend as is appropriate.

Budgets are managed by staff at varying levels within the Council and these types of budget decisions are made routinely without any Member involvement as they are deemed to be operational decisions.

Question from Councillor Scott

To Executive Member for Social Work

Can you tell us how many elderly people are unable to return to their homes in the Borders because a care package cannot be put in place because of a lack of staff?

Reply from Councillor Renton

Whilst over the past few months' social work have experienced some delays in providing care packages in some areas I am pleased to advise that currently there is no one awaiting a care package which is preventing a return to their own home.

The establishment of a recent second rapid reaction team to assist with hospital discharges has helped to provide greater capacity to support people home in a timely manner and we also work closely with the third sector to provide short term support when needed.

I am however aware of one person in a very rural setting who has recently moved to the area to live with family who is receiving a partial care package and we are working with providers in the area to provide the full package of care.

Questions from Councillor Turnbull

To Executive Member for Education

1. Do you anticipate any rural primary school closures under the new Education Strategic Plan?

Reply from Councillor Aitchison

There are no such specific proposals to close rural primary schools. The School Estate Strategy will create a vision for developing schools that are suitable to meet modern education demands. Decisions arising from this strategy will be based on educational benefits for pupils. This long term approach will ensure all key school estate recommendations are comprehensive and holistic.

2. Can Council be advised of the level of School vandalism and what costs have accrued and what actions are in place to reduce the expenditure?

Reply from Councillor Aitchison

The Council does not keep specific records on the level of vandalism in schools.

However, anecdotally, whilst vandalism is recognised as a problem it is not considered to be a major issue. The level of vandalism in schools across the Borders seems relatively low compared to other local authority areas, particularly in large urban areas.

CCTV has been in place for some years to cover some of the more vulnerable school premises and has been successful in both catching out and deterring vandals.

We also work closely with our Locality Integration Officers who prioritise attendance and high visibility in particular schools when required which is effective.

Pupils are continually supported in becoming responsible citizens and within this schools use every opportunity to reinforce pupils understanding of their role and responsibility within their community.

3. Can Council be advised of about the level of incidents involving weapons within our schools and what policies are in place?

Reply from Councillor Aitchison

Overall we do not have high numbers of incidents involving weapons in our school. Within our reporting framework we have had one incident in Secondary School (since December 2013) and six incidents in Primary School (since December 2013).

We do not have policies in place specifically to address weapons but within the curriculum pupil safety is of high importance and we also offer opportunities for pupils to participate in events where safety is the central focus e.g. Safe T in the Park.

To the Executive Member for Roads and Infrastructure

How much compensation has this Council paid out to motorists due to vehicle damage caused by the state of the roads within Scottish Borders?

Reply from Councillor Edgar

The compensation figures paid out are as follows:-

2007/08	£2,700.02
2008/09	£3,606.92
2009/10	£11,637.55
2010/11	£11,065.47
2011/12	£4,055.13
2012/13	£12,514.30
2013/14	£2,354.22
2014/17 Feb 2015	£835.27

The higher figures for 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13 reflect damage caused to road surfaces because of harder winters.

Question from Councillor Weatherston

To the Depute Leader Finance

At the Eildon Area Forum held in Stow last year you advised that this Council was considering the provision of free railway passes for the elderly and disabled – can you please update us?

Reply from Councillor Mitchell

Officers undertook to report back to Councillors on the potential for a Council concessionary fare scheme.

Councillors will be aware that First Group cease to hold the ScotRail passenger franchise on March 31st 2015. Although ScotRail currently operates concessionary schemes with some Scottish councils, they have indicated that they cannot enter discussions about potential future schemes effective after their current franchise. This position will change once Abellio have taken over the ScotRail franchise on April 1st 2015. In the meantime, officers have had an initial discussion with Abellio's mobilisation team for the ScotRail franchise and gathered information about other council schemes.

Officers will discuss with ScotRail the options for a scheme after Abellio have taken over the franchise in April 2015 and report to Councillors on the potential costs and benefits.

Questions from Councillor Mountford

To the Executive Member for Environmental Services

Given the assurances that were made when Community Wardens were withdrawn, can you tell the Council what action is proposed to alleviate the epidemic of dog fouling that is blighting the Borders?

Reply from Councillor Paterson

The Council agreed that the warden service would cease as of the 31st March 2014 as it is a non-statutory service.

It is the responsibility of the dog owner to clean up after their dog.

If fouling exists within a public space it is the Councils responsibility to clean this up. This will be done as part of our ongoing cleansing regime.

We will work very closely with the local community police officers who have a key role in addressing antisocial behaviour related matters, including littering, fly-tipping, and have the same powers as local authority wardens to combat dog fouling.

Staff within Neighbourhood Operations are committed to working with local communities to educate dog owners regarding their responsibilities. Trained staff can target problem areas for dog fouling, including the issuing of fixed penalties, as part of a range of highly visible front line services for the public across the whole of the Borders.

To the Leader

In view of your statement last year that Scottish Borders Council would get free IT advice from Gartner as a result of your visit to the IT Conference in Barcelona in October 13, can you please give an update on the outcomes from this relationship?

Reply from Councillor Parker

Officers have been working with Partners, including Gartner, on a range of projects including the development of a new ICT Strategy. Officers plan to bring a proposal regarding this to Council on 2nd April.

Question from Councillor Cockburn

To the Executive Member for Environmental Services

Why did your Department not assess the needs of local businesses and the use of CRCs for trade waste as part of the original Integrated Waste Strategy and offer a service that was fit for purpose?

Reply from Councillor Edgar

The aim of the Integrated Waste Management Strategy is to deliver a waste service in the future that is 'fit for purpose' and financially sustainable in the long term. This is to be delivered through the implementation of the actions outlined within the Strategy, which includes the development of a trade waste access policy at our Community Recycling Centres.

At the time of developing the Strategy a number of key priorities had been identified including the review of the garden waste collection service and the introduction of food waste collections

The development and approval of a Community Recycling Centre trade waste access policy in addition to these key priorities would have significantly delayed the development and approval of the Strategy.

Officers met with 24 Councillors recently as part of the consultation process and valued the feedback received. Work on a number of actions that came out of these meetings is currently being progressed, including a detailed consultation exercise with local businesses.

Further updates will be provided to members over the coming months.

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