

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL EILDON AREA FORUM

MINUTES of Meeting of the EILDON AREA FORUM held in Transport Interchange, Galashiels on Thursday, 9 March 2017 at 6.30 pm

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- Present:- Councillors B White (Chairman), S. Aitchison, M Ballantyne (from para 2), V. M. Davidson, G Edgar, I. Gillespie, B Herd, D. Parker, J. Torrance.
Community Council representatives:- Rick Kenney (Galashiels), T Cotter (Lilliesleaf, Ashkirk & Midlem), D & R Purvis (Tweedbank), J. Paton-Day (Earlston), J. Mackenzie (Stow), R. French (Newtown & Eildon), J McLaren, Employee Director (NHS Borders), Stephen Mitchell (Scottish Fire & Rescue Service).
- Apologies:- Councillor J. Mitchell, Inspector A. Hodges (Police Scotland).
- In Attendance:- Neighbourhood Area Manager (C Blackie), Democratic Services Officer (F Henderson), Assistant Engineer – Roads (Gary Haldane)
- 1 member of public.

1. **MINUTE**

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of 8 December 2016.

DECISION

APPROVED for signature by the Chairman.

2. **PARTNER UPDATES**

2.1 **NHS Borders**

In his update, Employee Director John McLaren firstly explained that he would not be reporting on performance as this was detailed on the website. Mr McLaren went on to explain that NHS Borders would be attending each of the Area Forums to discuss how best to engage with the Forum to allow more meaningful engagement. Mr McLaren spoke about the upcoming Staff Awards, which included 13 awards and the Chairman's Award, 8 of which were being sponsored by Local Businesses. A press release would be given with regard to the financial plan coming to the Board on 6 April 2017 and the meeting was open to all. Mr McLaren spoke of the challenging financial year in terms of pay uplifts, apprenticeship levies and the expectation to work joint Boards. In response to questions in relation to staffing levels, the possible extension to Selkirk Health Centre and Data missing from the Performance Data Website, Mr McLaren agreed to provide information at the next meeting of the Forum. In response to a question about the admissions of elderly people, being higher than the number of beds available, Mr McLaren explained that there were various ongoing projects looking at the matter and the results would be reported to a future Area Forum.

2.2 **Scottish Fire and Rescue Service**

There had been circulated copies of a report to inform the Eildon Area Forum of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service activity since the last forum on 8 December 2016. Following a summary of Response and Resilience activity the report went on to list and detail areas of partnership working and ongoing Prevention and Protection work in the Eildon area. As in all local stations SFRS staff provided home fire safety visits all year round. These focussed on identifying and reducing the risks of fire in the home. Smoke

detectors with a 10 year battery life were provided as part of this free service. Staff were delivering road safety awareness training to students from Borders College. The year on year initiative delivered during the academic year targeted young drivers and prospective drivers from across the entire Scottish Borders. SFRS staff would also be supporting the Under 17s Borders Drivewise Project, which would be delivered over 14 days from April to October at Charterhall airfield near Duns. All 9 secondary schools would be participating. As a direct result of SFRS working in partnership with TD1 and Community Learning Development delivering the pilot diversionary project a formal contract had been established with a TD1 participant to engage in direct mentoring in employability skills and vocational training, attending Galashiels every Tuesday night with the retained crew. For Primary 6 pupils, the initiative Firesharp provided face to face education within local primary schools on matters of fire risk and prevention. Moving into spring the seasonal community safety calendar and thematic action plan would focus on the following areas:- anti-social behaviour; deliberate fire setting; Muirburn Code and Wildfire. Stephen Mitchell, Station Manager, Galashiels was present at the meeting to answer questions.

DECISION

NOTED the updates.

3. SMALL SCHEMES AND QUALITY OF LIFE PROJECTS

Neighbourhood Area Manager, Craig Blackie, gave a verbal update on the progress of schemes and projects under the Small Schemes and Quality of Life budgets. He advised that there was less than £1,700 remaining from the total of £74,000 in the Small Schemes budget for the Eildon area. With regard to the Quality of Life budget there remained £950, and £319 in the Galashiels & District and the Selkirkshire wards, respectively. Councillor Parker welcomed the fact that Councillors and Community Councillors had identified worthwhile projects of community benefit on which to spend this money. It was highlighted that some schemes were weather dependent, but if approved and not completed prior to the end of the financial year, the scheme would be carried forward.

DECISION

NOTED the update.

4. THE LOAN, GATTONSIDE – LENGTH RESTRICTION ORDER

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Officer, Roads which proposed to introduce a restriction on the length of vehicles permitted to use The Loan, Gattonside. The report explained that concerns had been raised regarding the use of The Loan in Gattonside by longer vehicles which the road could not accommodate. In order to prevent this and the associated damage to property, it was proposed to introduce a restriction on the length of vehicles. The report detailed the background to the proposal, the proposal itself and the financial implications. Statutory Consultation was underway and no adverse comments had been received to date.

DECISION

APPROVED the making of the Scottish Borders Council (The Loan, Gattonside) (Length Restriction Order) 2017 and delegated authority to the Chief Officer (Roads) to implement the TRO's assuming that no objections were received during the consultation period.

5. VARIOUS STREETS, SELKIRK – TRAFFIC REGULATION

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Officer, Roads proposing to amend the Traffic Regulation Order for Selkirk. The report explained that the previous amendment had been carried out in 2016. Since that amendment, proposals had been made regarding the town centre improvement scheme and additional amendments to improve road safety and traffic management in the town. These had been collected into the proposed amendment and detailed in the Appendix to the report. Statutory consultation on the proposals was underway and no adverse comments or objections had been received to date.

DECISION

AGREED to approve the amendments to the Scottish Borders Council (The Burgh of Selkirk (Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting and One-way Traffic working) Order 1972) and delegated authority to the Chief Officer (Roads) to implement the TRO's assuming that no objections were received during the consultation period.

6. VARIOUS STREETS, GALASHIELS - TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Officer, Roads, proposing amendments to the Traffic Regulation Order for Galashiels. The previous amendment to the Galashiels Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) was carried out in 2016. Since that amendment, the existing traffic regulation order had been vetted and the amendments detailed in the report had been produced to tidy up the written orders. The report detailed the proposed amendments and the financial implications. There was considerable discussion with regard to the proposal to add No Waiting 10 p.m. – 4 a.m. Thursday – Saturday except Taxis to the Park Street end of Channel Street as detailed in the appendix to the report and there was a division of opinion.

VOTE

Councillor Aitchison, seconded by Councillor Ballantyne moved that the recommendation be approved, although amended to be implemented for a trial period of 6 months, reviewed and reported back to a future meeting.

Councillor Herd, seconded by Councillor Edgar moved as an amendment that the recommendation be refused.

On a show of hands Members voted as follows:-

Motion - 7 votes

Amendment - 2 votes

The motion was accordingly approved.

DECISION

AGREED:-

(a) to approve the proposed amendments to the Scottish Borders Council (The Borders Regional Council (Various Street, Galashiels) (Regulation of Traffic) Order 1990) and delegated authority to the Chief Officer (Roads) to implement the amendments assuming that no objections were received during the consultation period apart from for the proposal referred to in (b) below.

(b) that in respect of the proposed No Waiting restriction to the Park Street end of Channel Street, this be implemented for a period of 6 months after which it be reviewed and reported back to the Area Forum.

7. PENSION WISE

Mr Ian Heard, Pension Wise Guidance Specialist, Citizens Advice Bureau, was present at the meeting to give a presentation on the Pension Wise project which began in 2015 to provide guidance to clients who had Defined Contribution Pension Schemes. The aim was to help people become more aware and knowledgeable about their pension options. The initial funding was for the Scottish Borders area but as the initial take up was lower than expected at the end of the first year he was asked to cover Dumfries and Annan to retain the full time position. Whilst the current position was still to be confirmed it looked likely that the funding would be reduced from 1 June 2017 resulting in a reduction of hours, although the project was planned to continue. Since the beginning of the project the job had grown considerably to cover not only Pension Wise appointments but also promotion, training of Bureau volunteers, attending PACE events, meeting Councillors, MP's, MSP's and various other roles. Appointment numbers had grown steadily over the

two years because of continued national advertising and also the considerable work being done locally to promote the service. There was a 40% increase in total appointments from this time last year. Initially the project was set up to be a one appointment only service. However, owing to the complexities of pensions and also the fact that clients wanted to re-check facts before making such an important decision meant that Pension Wise were now able to see people more than once. The major issues covered were six options open to clients, also providing information on the potential impact on tax and state benefits which could help prevent major issues in terms of losing benefit or having a large tax bill. Mr Heard went on to give details relating to promotional and other activities. Statistics provided by Ipsos/Mori had shown 92% of clients surveyed had been satisfied with the service provided. Online guidance was available from www.pensionwise.gov.uk; telephone appointments on 0300 330 1001 or at the local Citizens Advice Bureau.

DECISION

NOTED and thanked Mr Heard for his informative presentation.

8.0 SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE ON RENEWABLE ENERGY

8.1 The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Mr Charles Johnston, Principal Officer Plans and Research, to give a presentation on the Supplementary Guidance on Renewable Energy. Mr Johnston gave the background to the preparation of the Supplementary Guidance. One of the recommendations of the Local Development Plan, adopted on 12 May 2016, was to prepare, within one year, a Supplementary Guidance on Renewable Energy. Mr Johnston confirmed that a draft had been approved by Scottish Borders Council on 22 December 2016 and that there followed a 12 week public consultation period which would end on 17 April 2017. He explained how responses to the Supplementary Guidance could be made. In line with national support for the promotion of sustainable development and renewable energy the Council would continue to be supportive of renewable energy within appropriate locations. Shown within the presentation were maps of the Scottish Borders indicating all wind development applications of over 5 MW and under 5 MW, colour coded to show the status of each and the height to blade tip. Looking at the policy context of the guidance, Scottish Planning Policy reaffirmed support for renewable energy and the need to attain national energy targets. This was to achieve 100% of electricity from renewable energy by 2020. However a balance must be sought; emphasising the right development in the right place and not to allow development at any cost. The planning system should facilitate positive change while maintaining and enhancing distinctive landscape character. There was general support of renewable energy within the Local Development Plan. However if there were judged to be unacceptable significant adverse impacts, or effects which could not be satisfactorily mitigated, consent would only be granted if it was considered that the wider economic, environmental and other benefits outweighed any potential damage. The Guidance confirmed that the Council was also positive in its support of other renewable energy types; those referenced included micro renewables, field scale solar photovoltaics, biomass, energy from waste, anaerobic digestion, hydropower and ground source heat pumps.

8.2 Mr Johnston referred to the Wind Energy Spatial Framework within the draft Guidance and maps of the Scottish Borders were shown indicating: national scenic areas where wind farms would not be acceptable; areas of significant protection where wind farms may be appropriate in some circumstances; and areas with potential for wind farm development. Scottish Planning Policy also made reference to the need to consider Landscape Capacity and Cumulative Impact studies. As a strategic study and starting point, an updated Landscape Capacity and Cumulative Impact Study had been produced by consultants. Extracts from the study were shown in the presentation, including maps showing landscape capacity in areas of the Borders for turbines of different height ranges. A summary map of opportunities and constraints was also shown. Mr Johnston concluded the presentation by listing the development management considerations within the Supplementary Guidance, including those not previously mentioned such as impacts on communities, built heritage and archaeology, tourism and recreation, natural heritage, opportunities for energy storage and contribution towards renewable energy targets. He

advised that, following the consultation period an update of findings and conclusions would be referred back to elected Members in summer 2017. The Supplementary Guidance would ultimately be referred to Scottish Ministers to become part of the Development Plan. In the ensuing discussion the Chairman believed that the planning team deserved huge credit for their approach to the preparation of the Supplementary Guidance on Renewable Energy. He thanked Mr Johnston and encouraged members of the Area Forum to look at the guidance and to respond as part of the consultation.

DECISION

NOTED the presentation.

9.0 PREPARATION OF THE NEW LOCAL PLAN.

Mr Johnston's second presentation related to the preparation of a new Local Development Plan (LDP). He confirmed that, as part of a 5 year cycle, work on a new Plan was just commencing. He summarised the timeline for the production of the Plan and highlighted that the first stage, the Main Issues Report (MIR), would be prepared by December 2017. The MIR was a front runner to the LDP which in essence sought to identify a range of issues which the LDP should address. The MIR, which would be sent out for public consultation, identified preferred sites for houses as well as alternatives. It also proposed where planning policies could be updated, removed or merged. The MIR sought public opinion on a range of matters such as the main aims of the LDP, proposals for allocation of employment sites, housing policy, retail policy, regeneration issues, green space protection and climate change issues. Community engagement would be carried out through a series of exhibitions and workshops with community groups throughout the summer of 2017. Mr Johnston was thanked for his attendance.

DECISION

NOTED.

10. OPEN QUESTIONS

There were no open questions.

DECISION

NOTED.

11. COMMUNITY COUNCIL SPOTLIGHT

Nothing to report.

DECISION

NOTED.

12. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

No items were brought forward.

DECISION

NOTED.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on Thursday 8 June 2017 at 6.30 pm at the Transport Interchange, Galashiels.

The meeting concluded at 8.10 pm