SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL
BERWICKSHIRE AREA FORUM

MINUTES of Meeting of the BERWICKSHIRE AREA FORUM held in Council Chamber, Newtown Street, Duns on Thursday, 1st September, 2016 at 6.30 pm

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Present:- Councillors M. J. Cook (Chairman), J. Campbell, J. A. Fullarton, J. Greenwell and F. Renton
Community Councils:- Cockburnspath and Cove – Pauline Hood; Coldingham – Rhona Goldie; Coldstream and District – Martin Brims; Duns – Keith Hall; Edrom, Allanton & Whitsome – Trixie Collin; Foulden, Mordington and Lamberton – Howard Doherty; Gavinton, Fogo and Polwarth – Keith Dickinson; Grantshouse – Kym Bannerman; Hutton and Paxton – June McGregor; Lammermuir – Mark Rowley; Reston and Auchencrow – Logan Inglis; Swinton and Ladykirk – Bill Purvis.

Apologies:- Councillors D. Moffat.
Community Councils:- Burnmouth; Gordon & Westruther; Greenlaw & Hume.
Inspector John Scott, Police Scotland.

In Attendance:- Station Manager M Acton, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service; Democratic Services Officer (P Bolson).

Members of the Public:- 3

1. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS.**
The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting.

2. **ORDER OF BUSINESS.**
The Chairman 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.

DECISION
NOTED.

3. **MINUTE.**
There had been circulated copies of the Minute of 2 June 2016.

DECISION
APPROVED the Minute for signature by the Chairman.

4. **NOTE**
4.1 There had been circulated copies of the Note of the Special Informal Meeting of 28 June 2016.

DECISION
APPROVED the Note for signature by the Chairman.

4.2 **MATTER ARISING**
The Chairman informed Members that Scottish Borders Council had written to the Scottish Government's Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity, Fergus Ewing MSP regarding provision of Broadband services and included specific reference to the Berwickshire experience to date. The letter would be circulated to Community Councils in due course.

DECISION
NOTED.

5. **PUBLIC PAYPHONES**

5.1 The Chairman welcomed Mr Douglas Scott, Senior Policy Adviser with Scottish Borders Council, to the meeting to provide background and additional information regarding BT's proposals to remove a number of public payphones from the area. Mr Scott explained that following on from recent correspondence from BT, information had now been received which detailed the proposals for the removal of 104 public payphones in the Scottish Borders. Mr Scott went on to advise that Local Authorities have been given the responsibility by the communications Regulator OFCOM to make the case to BT for any retention of payphones and as previously indicated, BT proposed that priority would be given to those payphones located in - a suicide hotspot; an accident blackspot; an area without any mobile coverage; or within 400 metres of the coast. In addition BT had indicated that payphones will not be removed where there was a reasonable need. Assessments would be made using set criteria and payphones would be retained where all three applied, namely that – it was the only payphone within 800 metres; there had been at least 12 calls of any type made from the payphone within a 12 month period; and that the local population was not fewer than 500 households within 1 km of the phone box. Any supportive information as to why particular payphones should be retained in a community should be forwarded to Douglas Scott (dscott@scotborders.gcsx.gov.uk) by Friday 30 September 2016. In addition, the consultation gave communities the opportunity to adopt a traditional red 'heritage' phone box (with no pay phone service) to make them an asset for the local community at the cost of £1. Further information on this could be accessed at http://btbusiness.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/30225/~/how-do-i-apply-to-adopt-a-bt-kiosk%3F

5.2 Discussion followed and it was emphasised how essential public payphones had been during severe weather conditions, eg the storms in late 2015/early 2016. Due to the insufficient mobile phone coverage that currently existed within the Scottish Borders, the sole method of communication in more rural communities to report issues such as uprooted trees and road blockages was the BT landline telephone infrastructure which offered the best resilience in any emergency. Questions were raised in relation to the criteria used by BT to determine which payphones would be removed and examples were given of non-use of a payphone because it was known locally that it had been out of order for years and in a number of communities, local volunteers maintained and cleaned kiosks. It was acknowledged that this was a savings exercise by BT and that it some cases, evidence might indicate that kiosks were redundant. However, it was also noted that public payphones had been saved following previous, similar consultations and Community Councils were encouraged to make the case for retention directly to Mr Scott. The Chairman thanked Mr Scott for his attendance at the meeting at very short notice.

DECISION
NOTED.

6. **RAISING CONCERNS ABOUT ALCOHOL IN YOUR COMMUNITY**

6.1 The Chairman welcomed Mr Ian Tunnah, Licensing Standards and Enforcement Officer with SBC to the meeting to give a presentation on raising concerns about alcohol in the local community on behalf of the Scottish Borders Licensing Forum. The presentation supported publication of the Toolkit Resource for communities and explained that it had been designed to assist communities and individuals who wished to become involved in how alcohol impacted on their localities. Mr Tunnah explained how the licensing process worked in Scotland and advised that, due to the harm associated with the consumption of alcohol, it was considered a high risk product and was therefore subject to regulation in order to minimise that risk. Three types of alcohol license existed under the current system, namely: permanent (premises); temporary (occasional); and personal (for

managers and supervisors who managed the sale of alcohol. Temporary licences included those issued for events such as local festivals and weddings and there were over 1,500 granted annually in the Scottish Borders. A number of bodies/agencies were involved in the process of deciding who could sell alcohol, namely the Local Licensing Board which was made up of 10 Elected Members; the Licensing Standards Officer; Police; Health Board; Community Councils; Local Licensing Forum and individual members of the Community. Mr Tunnah summarised the licensing application process, the part that Community Councils played in that process and how concerns about alcohol in the community could be raised. Issues could be reported to the Police and/or the Licensing Standards Officer and Community Councils could input to the planning process. They could also become involved with the Local Licensing Forum and comment on alcohol licence applications. In addition, the public were advised to discuss areas of concern with their local Councillor. Advice was also available as to what information to include when making an objection and how to prepare for attendance at a Hearing.

6.2 The presentation explained that under the Scottish Borders Licensing Policy Statement 2013-16, there were a number of licensing objectives. These included preventing crime and disorder; securing public safety; preventing public nuisance; protecting children from harm; and protecting and improving public health (applicable only in Scotland). Objectors to an application were invited to attend the Licensing Board hearing where the license would be considered. The presentation also referred to the Alcohol Profile 2014/15 which presented evidence of alcohol-related harm in the Scottish Borders and was based on local information supplied by Police Scotland, NHS Borders, Scottish Borders Council and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. Mr Tunnah answered questions and provided clarification on a number of points raised. He confirmed that consideration was given to late comments/objections submitted during the application process where valid reasons were given for the delay. The Chairman thanked Mr Tunnah for attending the Forum.

DECISION
NOTED the presentation.

7. **ATTAINMENT IN SCHOOLS**

7.1 The Chairman welcomed Ms Donna Manson, SBC's Service Director Children and Young People and Ms Liz Wharton, Senior Lead Officer to the meeting. Ms Manson stated that the purpose of the presentation was to provide updated and additional information to the Forum in relation to attainment in schools across Berwickshire. The documents which Ms Manson referred to in her presentation were circulated at the meeting. Ms Manson explained that the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) was the Scottish Government’s official tool for identifying concentrations of deprivation in Scotland. SIMD16 was the Scottish Government’s fifth edition since 2004 and was based on work conducted by Oxford University in 1999. The SIMD could be used for comparing overall deprivation of small areas or neighbourhoods which were measured in statistical units known as datazones, ie neighbourhoods of at least 500 people, and usually around 700-900 people and worked well for urban areas and self-contained settlements of over 500 people. The SIMD16 was built up of 38 indicators which covered 7 domains (topic areas). Ms Manson explained how the information was measured, scored and ranked against a single Overall Multiple Deprivation rank. The 7 domains were:- income deprivation and employment deprivation which attracted the highest weightings according to the Scottish Government's criteria; deprivation due to poor health and education and skills deprivation (medium weightings); geographic access deprivation to essential services (medium-low weighting); and deprivation due to inadequate housing and deprivation due to crime in the local area (lowest weightings). Further explanation was given into how the SIMD information was interpreted, how it related to the Scottish Borders and how it provided a basis from which questions could be asked. Ms Manson also advised that there were limitations in terms of what could conclusions could be drawn from the data in the SIMD. She observed, and evidence from the schools made clear, that assumptions based upon SIMD should not constrain the ambition students nor inhibit their performance.

7.2 The presentation identified the SBC profile within SMID16, the more detailed profiles relating to Berwickshire High School (BHS) and Eyemouth High School (EYHS) and showed comparisons with other High Schools across the SBC area. Primary School comparisons within Mid- and East Berwickshire were also included. Statistics relating to the three areas of reading, writing and numeracy within the National Improvement Framework were also detailed. Ms Manson explained how SBC applied the Quality Improvement Framework (QIF). Activities/actions such as visits to schools by senior officers from the Council's Children and Young People team; reviews and inspections; adherence to all the quality indicators, including leadership within schools; adopting a culture of continuous improvement; focussing on the learner journey; and in-depth analysis from each school contributed to continuous improvement.

7.3 Specific achievements during 2015/16 were highlighted, demonstrating where schools and individuals had attained improved and outstanding success and Ms Manson congratulated the schools in Berwickshire for their commitment to improving the education experience for young people. Ms Manson and Ms Wharton concluded by answering questions and providing clarification on a number of points relating to: access to after school activities; designing, with input from student and parents, a learning journey specific to each young person; and "cross-learning" with High Schools (specific to Berwickshire). The Chairman thanked Ms Manson and Ms Wharton for their attendance and presentation.

DECISION
NOTED the presentation.

8. **POLICE SCOTLAND.**
The Chairman reported that due to unforeseen circumstances, Inspector Scott was unable to the meeting to present the Police Scotland report for Berwickshire for the period up to 1 September 2016. The report detailed the Ward Plan Priorities for East Berwickshire, namely Road Safety; Misuse of Drugs; Rural Thefts; and Antisocial Behaviour. For Mid Berwickshire the priorities were Road Safety; Inconsiderate Driver Behaviour; and Antisocial Behaviour. In terms of road safety and inconsiderate driver behaviour, there had been 3 instances of drink driving in the Berwickshire area during this reporting period. The Skills for Life programme, which had been reported to the Forum previously, continued to run and information could be accessed via the SBC website. It was also reported that there had been a fatal road traffic accident on the southbound carriageway of the A1 near Granshouse at around 3.40pm on Sunday 21 August 2016. The accident involved a Mercedes Vito van and a Scania articulated lorry and Police Scotland were appealing for any information relating to the incident. There had been 12 drugs-related offences detected in Berwickshire during the reporting, including one for cannabis cultivation. The report listed some of the signs that might indicate such activity and reiterated that all information provided to the police would be treated confidentially. Rural thefts from houses and farms continued to be of concern and the report noted that several such incidents had taken place recently in East Berwickshire. The report advised that during 2016, the public consultation by Police Scotland on identifying priorities for policing in local communities would be available online during and would be open for the whole year. The consultation could be accessed at www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/8LMB9WX

DECISION
NOTED the report.

9. **SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE.**
9.1 There had been circulated copies of a report by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) informing the Forum of SFRS activity since 2 June 2016. The report explained that there had been 4 occurrences of fires in houses/buildings which had resulted in 1 casualty; 4 open fire incidents with no casualties; 16 Special Service incidents giving rise to 19 casualties, one of which was fatal; and 20 non-deliberate unwanted fire alarm signals. Station Manager Matt Acton went on to inform Members of activity which had

occurred and which was currently taking place in Berwickshire and the measures being taken to address issues identified within the area. Other work being progressed in Berwickshire, as reported in the Minute of 2 June 2016, continued and further updates would be provided in due course. The summer Thematic Action Plan was now underway, the focus of which was wildfire; rubbish and refuse fires; and outdoor safety. Ward Plans for Berwickshire were available to the public on the SFRS website. The report also provided an update on the recruitment and retention of firefighters and it was noted that vacancies for Retained Duty Firefighters currently existed in Duns, Eyemouth and Coldstream. In response of a number of questions, Station Manager Acton confirmed that there was no cut off age for volunteers and that officers within a fire station would be able to advise on burning goods and any potential pollution resulting from such activity. It was also noted that there were By-Laws in place which SEPA could enforce.

9.2 There was concern within the local community in relation to road safety on A1 at Grantshouse, particularly following the fatal road traffic incident in August. Discussion followed in relation to the appropriateness of a 60mph speed restriction on that stretch of road and the distance between speed cameras. Comment was also made in respect of the diversions put in place following an accident and it was noted that the lack of local knowledge of the area sometimes resulted in large, heavy vehicles using narrow roads making negotiating bends etc extremely problematic. Reports had been received of timber transportation trucks using a private driveway to reverse. Ways in which the situation might be alleviated were suggested, including the implementation of average speed cameras; the use of ghost islands; and reporting any inappropriate use of private driveways to the sub-contractor. The Forum noted that it had been 12 months since Mr George Henry, Road Safety Manager at Transport Scotland gave a presentation on the A1 Junction Review and it was agreed that the Chairman would contact Mr Henry to ascertain what follow-up work was still required. It was further agreed that Inspector Scott be informed of local concerns in respect of road diversions from A1 following road traffic incidents. The Chairman thanked Station Manager Acton for his attendance.

DECISION
(a) NOTED the report.

(b) AGREED that:-

(i) following A1 Junction Review presented to the Berwickshire Area Forum in September 2015, the Chairman would contact Mr Henry to ascertain what follow-up work was still required; and

(ii) the Chairman would contact Inspector Scott to appraise him of local concerns in relation to diversions from A1 following road traffic incidents.

10. **OPEN QUESTIONS.**
There were no open questions.

DECISION
NOTED.

11. **COMMUNITY COUNCIL SPOTLIGHT.**
Berwickshire Access Panel
On behalf of the Berwickshire Access Panel, Mrs Kym Bannerman asked that local communities consider access issues such as dropped kerbs and parking spaces for disabled people and forward information/concerns to her so that she can raise these matters at Panel meetings.

DECISION
NOTED.

12. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS -**

Items for inclusion on future Agendas were discussed and it was agreed that Road Safety Issues on A1 near Grantshouse be included.

DECISION
AGREED that Road Safety Issues on A1 near Grantshouse be included.

13. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS (BERWICKSHIRE AREA FORUM).**

Future meetings of the Berwickshire Area Forum were scheduled for:-

1 December 2016;
2 March 2017;
15 June 2017.

DECISION
NOTED.

The meeting concluded at 8.45 pm