

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MINUTES of Meeting of the EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE held in Council Chamber,
Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells,
TD6 0SA on Tuesday, 13th March, 2018 at
10.00 am

Present:- Councillors G. Turnbull (Chair), S. Aitchison, G. Edgar, E. Jardine, M. Rowley,
and T. Weatherston.
Apologies:- Councillors S. Haslam, C. Hamilton, W. McAteer and S. Mountford.
Absent:- Councillor T. Miers.
Also Present:- Councillors D Paterson and H. Scott.
In Attendance:- Chief Financial Officer, Clerk to the Council, Democratic Services Officer (P
Bolson).

1. **MINUTE**

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the meeting of the Executive Committee of 14 February 2018.

DECISION

APPROVED for signature by the Chairman.

2. **FINAL REVENUE VIREMENTS & EARMARKED BALANCES 2017/18**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Financial Officer seeking approval for the final budget virements for 2017/18 and to carry forward earmarked budgets to 2018/19 which had been identified during the General Fund Revenue Budget monitoring process in January 2018. Details of the routine virements were included in Appendix 1 and earmarked balances where budget was required to be carried forward to support expenditure in 2018/19 were shown in Appendix 2. Members discussed tourism signage and noted that changes to signage restrictions on trunk roads were expected from Transport Scotland, and that a report would be submitted to the Executive Committee in due course.

DECISION

APPROVED:-

(a) **the virements as detailed in Appendix 1; and**

(b) **the earmarked balances as detailed in Appendix 2.**

3. **SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL COMMUNITY GRANT SCHEME - YEAR END POSITION 2017/18**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Customer and Communities presenting information of the estimated year end balances in the Community Grant Scheme (CGS) for 2017/18 and recommending a carry forward into 2018/19. The current budget position of the CGS 2017/18 and estimated year end balances were detailed in the report. The CGS had awarded grants totalling £99,595 to end of January 2018. It was noted that year end balances were estimated as at end January 2018 and final carry forwards as at end March 2018 were expected to be lower. There were currently four applications across the Borders undergoing assessment at present which, if approved, would result in underspends of £3,757 in Berwickshire; £3,563 in Cheviot; and £3,785 in Eildon. Underspends of £8,442 in Teviot and Liddesdale; £656 in Tweeddale; and £11,176 for the generic area were also reported. It was noted that,

within the Cheviot area, the practice was for the budget to be divided equally between the Jedburgh & District and Kelso & District Wards.

DECISION

(a) NOTED:-

- (i) the estimated year end balance for 2017/18; and**
- (ii) that further recommendations in relation to the Community Grants Scheme and the current Grants Funding Review would be brought to the Executive Committee for consideration in due course.**

(b) APPROVED the carry forward of any year-end balance into 2018/19.

4. MANAGEMENT RULES FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THE SCOTTISH BORDERS

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Regulatory Services seeking approval for the revised Management Rules for Public Libraries in the Scottish Borders. The Chief Legal Officer, Mrs N. McKinlay, explained that, under the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 the Council was empowered to create and operate a set of Management Rules for Public Libraries which would define the way the service should be used and the conduct of the people using the service. The existing Management Rules were due to expire on 14 April 2018 therefore it was now necessary for a further set of Management Rules to be made in order to continue to secure the purposes of those rules. In addition, in order to comply with the statutory scheme, it was necessary for the Council to appoint a Live Borders employee or employees as an officer of the Council for the purposes of enforcing those Rules. The full Management Rules were detailed in the Appendix to the report and Members were asked to note that the date on which the Rules would be made had been amended to 15 May 2018. Mrs McKinlay provided clarification on a number of points and responded to questions from Members. She confirmed that the Management Rules would be subject to a public online consultation and that Live Borders would have the power to set local rules as required. The revised Rules included guidance on the use of sound-producing devices in conjunction with headphones, earphones etc and Members welcomed this updated information.

DECISION

AGREED:-

- (a) to the commencement of public consultation on the proposed Management Rules for Public Libraries throughout Scottish Borders;**
- (b) to the Service Director Regulatory Service, in consultation with Chief Legal Officer, to make the Rules on completion of the consultation period if no substantive comments are received during that consultation period; and**
- (c) that the Live Borders Libraries Staff be appointed as officers of Scottish Borders Council as regards the enforcement of the Management Rules.**

5. BLIND PERSON/CONCESSION RAIL SCHEME

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Regulatory Services seeking approval for a proposal for a scheme where the companions of registered blind travellers were offered a concession on the Borders Railway. The Service Director, Mr Frater, explained that at present, companions accompanying blind travellers on buses were able to travel for free (known as the +1 scheme) but this did not currently apply to rail services in the Scottish Borders. Under discretionary powers, Scottish Borders Council could introduce a concessionary scheme which would enable a companion accompanying a registered blind person to travel on the Borders Railway for a reduced

fare; it was for the Council to determine whether it wished to introduce such a scheme and what level of concession, if any that it wished to apply. Mr Frater advised that some Local Authorities already operated a concessionary scheme. The report suggested two options for a trial concessionary scheme in the Borders, namely:- that a 50% discount scheme be adopted, giving companions of blind travellers half-price travel on the Borders Railway; or that a nominal flat fare of 10p be introduced, providing almost free travel for companions of blind travellers. Members noted from the report that a 50% discount scheme was the preferred option recommended by officers. Mr Frater explained that it was not possible to be absolutely accurate regarding the costs for operating a concessionary scheme as the number of people taking up the offer could not be determined in advance. The scheme, if agreed, would be monitored and a further report presented to the Committee in due course. Members welcomed the +1 pilot scheme and the way in which it offered equality to blind travellers.

DECISION

AGREED to introduce a one year trial +1 scheme for companions of blind travellers to travel on Borders Railway at a 50% discount cost.

The meeting concluded at 10.25 am