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Tweeddale Area Partnership



MINUTES of Meeting of the TWEEDDALE
AREA PARTNERSHIP held in McFarlane
Hall, Old Parish Church, Peebles on
Wednesday, 10 January 2018 at 7.00 pm

Present:- Councillors R. Tatler (Chairman), H. Anderson, S. Bell, K. Chapman,
S. Haslam, E. Small together with 32 Representatives of Partner
Organisations, Community Councils and Members of the Public
In Attendance:- Service Director Customer and Communities, Chief Officer Economic
Development, Kevin McCall, Shona Smith, Clerk to the Council and
Democratic Services Team Leader

1. **WELCOME**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Tweeddale Area Partnership and advised that he hoped everyone would complete evaluation forms at the end of the meeting.

2. **OPEN FORUM**

No items were raised.

3. **LOCAL PLANS**

The Chairman introduced Shona Smith, the Communities and Partnership Manager who explained the purpose of the Local Plan, which in future would feed into the Borders wide Community Plan. She further explained that each meeting of the Partnership would focus on a theme within the Community Plan to populate the Local Plan for Tweeddale.

4. **THEME: ECONOMY SKILLS AND LEARNING - PART 1**

4.1 The Chairman introduced Brian McGrath, Head of Economic Development and Environment and Kevin McCall, the Senior Lead Officer, Education and Lifelong Learning. Mr McGrath advised that this was an opportunity to look at the Tweeddale Economy and outlined the issues which had been raised with him at a recent Business Breakfast. These included digital connectivity, transport links, access to premises, tourism, Brexit and access to people with the right skills. Mr McCall outlined the areas where there were currently skill shortages, which included plumbers, joiners and technicians. He commented on a recent CBI study which highlighted the increasing value placed on employability skills such as problem solving and team working and Peebles High School were now working with 84 business partners to help pupils develop these skills.

4.2 The Chairman invited those present to discuss and agree at their respective tables the 3 key issues related to the theme of "Our Economy, Skills and Learning" and to write these down on the post-it notes provided. 20 minutes was given for this activity and the post-notes from each table were collected and displayed on the boards provided. Mr McCall summarised the main points raised and the Chairman asked each group to identify their key issue and how it might be taken forward from a Tweeddale perspective. 30 minutes was given for this activity and the post-it notes were again collected from each table. The Chairman advised that this was just part 1 of the process and asked that any further points be emailed and that there would be a further opportunity for public involvement at the Localities Bid Fund event being held in the Burgh Hall in early February. A copy of the output from the evening forms the appendix to this Minute.

5. **GRANTS AND FUNDING OVERVIEW/UPDATE ON LOCALITIES BID FUND**

Shona Smith, Communities and Partnership Manager advised that a total of £91k was available through the Localities Bid Fund for the Tweeddale Area. £30k had been allocated for Phase 1 and bids totalling £122k had been received. Those who did not meet the criteria were being directed to other funding options. With effect from Friday, 12th a list and summary of all projects would be available on the Council's website and each applicant would be encouraged to publicise their project. Voting would either be available on-line, by paper in ballot boxes located throughout the area or by post. For those who were unsuccessful alternative funding options would hopefully to be identified. Ms Smith went on to outline the other funds available in the Tweeddale Area which included Village Hall funding, the Community Grant Scheme, Small Schemes, Quality of Life and Local Festival Grants. In response to questions regarding voting and small communities being disadvantaged, Ms Smith advised that those who had carried out such schemes previously had not found this to be a particular issue. However, once the first phase had been completed the voting pattern would be assessed and changes could be made for future phases if required.

6. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

In response to a question on the timescale for the preparation of the Tweeddale Locality Plan it was noted that the aim was to have it completed by the end of 2018. This Locality Plan would inform the Community Plan, which as a dynamic document would continue to be updated.

7. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be held on Wednesday, 7 March 2018 in West Linton Primary School at 7 p.m.

The meeting concluded at 8.50 pm

Discussion Output: Our Economy, Skills & Learning Theme (10th January 2018)

Summary/Area of Discussion:

Business Premises and Opportunities

Post-it Notes:

- Building on what we have – cycling, walking etc. to generate and attract bigger business to the area
- Designate more land for business use to make sure there is no a scarcity
- Allocation and retention of land/premises for economic and employment use - both large and small scale businesses
- Need wider range of business opportunities and locations to encourage young families to work in the area, not just live and commute, higher paid types of jobs too
- Encourage new business into the area and more home working
- Distinctiveness of Peebles is diminishing – High Street needs more nice shops
- Regeneration of High Street shops – more charity shops – concern High Street is declining – sunrise businesses
- Review planning reconciliations to widen possible industrial/non rural economic development in rural areas ie garages ... towns
- Identify and create economic development sites both in Peebles and rural areas
- To support economic start-ups and growth
- Lack of business premises
- We want space for business as well as houses – we want people to live and work here
- Business rates
- Promote self-growth business ‘Enterprise Hub’

Key Areas for Tweeddale

- **Commercial and Industrial sites & premises**
- **Peebles High Street**
- **Attracting businesses (large and small)**
- **Support for start-ups and growth; ‘Enterprise Hub’**

“How” Post-its:

- Approve more applications for business/industrial industries and designate more land
- Re-purpose existing disused buildings e.g. Mills
- Retention of industrial sites for employment and economic use
- Offer incentives to businesses and investors to come to the Borders eg reduces rent/rates
- Encourage smaller businesses to co-locate in multi-purpose centres
- Need to seek input from business forums
- Reach out to business forums to extoll the virtues and promote the location of Tweeddale to encourage new businesses
- Create a premises similar to the Bush and promote heavily
- South of Scotland Enterprise Agency – should seek to set its priorities AFTER it liaises with communities, not before

- LEADER - A more co-operative response to applications for funding.
- A new bridge built over the Tweed in Peebles will create a significant economic zone, not just more housing
- What businesses can grow around the elderly
- Identify sites for start-ups and growth sectors, allocate sites, service the land, let private sectors to build units
- Audit of premises and business needs/opportunities to draw potential growth businesses in. Carried out by a series of local seminars
- Make the Borders attractive to entrepreneurs, get them interested first then build the opportunities around them
- Businesses – private rents are expensive, can rentals be capped. Large national businesses affect local businesses
- One overall group to take forward developments for continuity

“Who”

- SBC; Borders College; NFUS; Scottish Enterprise; Business Gateway; DWP; Community Groups; High Schools; Business Leaders

Summary/Area of Discussion:

Improving Tourism

Post-it Notes:

- Cycle links need to be developed faster to link up communities
- Welcome + more infrastructure
- More cycle ways
- Bike shops – mountain biking spin off tourism should be captured
- Other tourism opportunities – mountain biking, walking, cycle path development
- Run a tourism marketing campaign linking up all our other tourism sites - don't just pass through – stop and enjoy
- Environmental sustainability – Tweeddale natural beautiful area - promote area - tourism, transport sustainable
- Promote local towns

Key Areas for Tweeddale

- **Marketing & Promotion**
- **Environmental Sustainability & Infrastructure**

“How” *Post-it Notes:*

- Need a strategic plan to improve Tourism in Tweeddale
- Ambassador role for the Borders and Tweeddale
- Marketing campaign, signage, support for events and budget
- Tweed Valley Sweatshirt and jacket promotion, Tweed Valley apps to download
- Bring together all tourism initiatives, put in money to build infrastructure – a community tourism project
- Build on tourism skills and apprenticeships

“Who”

Summary/Area of Discussion:

Connectivity (Transport & Digital)

Post-it Notes:

- Transport links – commuter belt – faster transport links – good quality electric transport for future
- Buses – infrastructure poor – ok north/south but not good east/west
- Need for hotels in and near train and Tweeddale area – peak times fully booked and more needed
- Transport/Broadband links
- 4 buses uplifting at Innerleithen but no public toilets
- Right infrastructure – roads and links for business – management of those links
- Continue to improve Broadband coverage/speed across the area. Along with 3G/4G mobile coverage that's reliable

Key Areas for Tweeddale

- **Transport infrastructure (incl. facilities) and connections into Tweeddale**
- **Broadband & Mobile coverage**

“How” Post-it Notes:

- Links into improves connectivity and transport links
- Better provision for bikes on trains
- Ask local buses to include trailers for bike transport

“Who”

Summary/Area of Discussion:

Education Opportunities

Post-it Notes:

- Don't have add on college education
- Closer link with colleges, schools and businesses
- Lack of higher education opportunities
- Would like a satellite of Borders College in Tweeddale to deliver further education the venue could change from town to town, venue to venue depending on availability
- Improve links and educational (Higher) opportunities to attract young people
- Retaining one workplace in the Borders
- Education don't do enough – skilled youths but how do we retain skills here and sustain
- Employer/volunteer system – accreditation students/benefits business (rate relief)
- Younger audience targeting
- Employability should not equate to qualifications
- Engage from primary schools use Fridays

Key Areas for Tweeddale

- **Closer ties/improving links between Borders College, Tweeddale schools and businesses**
- **Retention of skills in the Tweeddale area**
- **Opportunities for Friday afternoons (asymmetric week)**

“How” Post-it Notes:

“Who”

Summary/Area of Discussion:

Skills Development

Post-it Notes:

- **Cycling** – creation of job skills could be expanded
- YP – skills training – **digital use** of technology
- **Wider cognitive skill** applying knowledge to other tasks
- Working age group now, how do we **sustain employability** now
- Focus on future and existing employees
- **Mentoring** by drawing on community resources
- More **trades and practical skills** training required

Key Areas for Tweeddale

(highlighted in bullet points above)

“How” Post-it Notes:

- Develop a community led co-operative programme for primary and early secondary children to develop knowledge and skills. Create opportunities, consider a deal for employers and businesses and corporate sponsorship
- Build skills trade

“Who”

- Community Learning Partnership; Parent Councils; Children & Young People Directorate (SBC); Business Community; Children & Young People; Community Learning Development; Third Sector; NVQ Assessors

Summary/Area of Discussion:

Research and Development

Post-it Notes:

- Peebles – commuter town – strategy to bring business here instead of going to Edinburgh
- Research and development of **new technologies** re: elderly and others

- An audit of third sector and small businesses who can deliver **training and experience**
- How do we make Borders more appealing to work
- How do we get message to live, work and bring families up here
- **Inward investment strategy** – have we got business accommodation – not enough small starter businesses. Larger properties too extensive. Rail not had any impact
- Networking
- “Eliminating the borders between Borders”

Key Areas for Tweeddale
(highlighted in bullet points above)

“How” Post-it Notes:

“Who”

Summary/Area of Discussion:

Housing (will be covered in “Our Place” theme)

Post-it Notes:

- Affordable housing - low wages not attractive – need solved to attract and sustain people

Key Areas for Tweeddale

“How” Post-it Notes:

- All infrastructure more friendly for disabled

“Who”

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