

Public Document Pack

**Berwickshire
Area Partnership**

Our Scottish Borders
Your community

MINUTES of Meeting of the
BERWICKSHIRE AREA PARTNERSHIP
held in The Assembly Hall, Eyemouth High
School, Eyemouth on Thursday, 15 March
2018 at 6.30 pm

Present:- Councillors J. Greenwell, H. Laing and M. Rowley.
Apologies:- Councillors J. A. Fullarton, C. Hamilton and D. Moffat.
In Attendance:- Partners, Community Councillors, officers and members of the public.

1. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Vice-Chairman, Councillor Laing welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Berwickshire Area Partnership and thanked the Community Councils, Partners and local organisations for their attendance. Councillor Laing explained that the first theme for discussion was Our Economy, Skills and Learning and introduced Bryan McGrath, Head of Economic Development and Environment and Kevin McCall, Senior Lead Officer Education and Lifelong Learning who would provide some background and further information about economy, skills and learning across the Scottish Borders.

2. **FEEDBACK FROM MEETING ON 1 FEBRUARY 2018**

The Minute of the first meeting of the Berwickshire Area Partnership held on 1 February 2018 had been circulated along with a summary of the discussion attached as an appendix to the Minute. The Communities and Partnership Manager, Ms Smith referred to the general concerns, issues, challenges and opportunities raised at that meeting. The theme identified as the first priority for further detailed discussion was Our Economy Skills and Learning and this would therefore be the focal point for consideration at this evening's meeting.

3. **THEME: OUR ECONOMY, SKILLS AND LEARNING**

3.1 Head of Economic Development and Environment, Bryan McGrath, provided an introduction to the theme for the evening and gave some background as to the challenges and opportunities businesses were identifying both currently and for the future. These included: ensuring that young people were equipped with the required skills for the future; digital connectivity and mobile signal provision; availability of modern business properties; non-domestic rates; and Brexit. Tourism provided many opportunities and challenges and in Berwickshire, there was also a high reliance on agriculture and fishing which would be challenging for the future. Kevin McCall, Senior Lead Officer Education and Lifelong Learning, talked about the importance of developing excellent core skills and employability in young people and suggested that aptitude and a positive attitude were an important consideration for employers. Mr McCall referred to the different ways in which people could upskill and highlighted vocational routes that young people could follow, eg modern apprenticeships, which were an alternative to academic qualifications. The main employment growth areas at the current time were in tourism, hospitality and the care sector. Other points raised were the substantial number of small businesses (and therefore the associated challenges) across the Scottish Borders and the number of people in the over 50 years age group living in the area.

3.2 Following input from Mr McGrath and Mr McCall, Elected Members, officers, partners and members of the public took forward a discussion about the key challenges and main priorities relating to “Our Economy Skills and Learning” in the Berwickshire area. An information pack was available at each table to support these conversations and the issues were logged on post-it notes. A second discussion then followed, allowing each group to focus on the main issues that had been highlighted earlier and to examine options and identify ways in which these issues could be taken forward in Berwickshire. The Appendix to this Minute contained a summary of the output of the discussions.

4. **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Berwickshire Area Partnership was scheduled for Thursday 7 June 2018. Ms Smith referred to the previous meeting when those present were invited to suggest ways in which these Partnership meetings could be made more inclusive for all members of the community and advised that feedback would be taken into account when setting the time and venue for the meeting in June. Details would therefore be confirmed in due course. The Chairman thanked those present for their attendance and wished everyone a safe journey home.

The meeting concluded at 8.30 pm

Discussion Output: Economy, Skills and Learning 15th March, 2018

Summary/Area of Discussion:

Employment & Enterprise (incl. Tourism)

Post-it Notes (incl. from 1st February meeting):

- Services closing – Post office, banks
- Where's Scottish Enterprise? Not visible at these meetings
- Opportunity for Tourism, Tracing ancestors – Windfarms have caused an issue
- Anniversary of the Battle of Carham a Tourist opportunity
- Marine Reserve at St Abbs must be a tourism opportunity
- Berwick has lost 2-3 business as well
- Need well paid jobs in the area
- Agriculture becoming more robotic, computer skills are required
- Care and Tourism are low paid sectors
- Everything has gone to Galashiels
- Business premises too expensive. Gunsgreen Farm split into smaller cheaper business units
- Encourage cruise ships
- Opportunity to work with the Harbour Trust to develop the Harbour
- Public more accessible to small business eg SBHA/SBC
- Tourism – push Walking, fishing, Golf, Biking tracks
- Re vamp the town trail
- Tourism- cliff climbing, Kayak, Fishing – Outdoor activity centre
- Construction apprenticeships – Trades!
- Low wage economy, agricultural industry. No good quality employability, lack of opportunity
- Business start-ups – lack of premises and units, lack of infrastructure and no incubation space
- Economy in Eyemouth needs investment. Fishing industry has gone what is replacing them?
- Lack of apprenticeships
- Need to take steps to encourage grocery retailers other than Co-op, only supermarket in Berwickshire
- Grow the economy
- Need to attract employers that aren't low wage
- Tourism signage throughout, not just coastal routes
- Loss of banks is a major problem for the economy and town centres
- Coastal path should be integral to economy
- Agriculture and fishing missing from Community Plan

"Priority" Post-its:

- Build on Border Heritage/Tourism
- Co-ordinator to work with businesses
- Build on Modern Apprenticeships
- Increase employment opportunities (micro businesses through to large companies)
- Resource community innovations
- Grow small businesses – spend public procurement locally, cheaper business premises, smaller flexible premises, develop MA's
- Identify new economies to replace fishing/farming for example surfing

"Solutions/Actions" Post-its:

- Eyemouth needs to build on its reputation for good food
- Get young people ready for work, flexible curriculum, lifeboat crew could mentor
- Need to find an identity for the area
- Identify industrial space for business development

Key Areas for Berwickshire

- **Tourism opportunities: marine reserve, coastline, heritage etc.**
- **Business start-ups & investment; suitable business premises**
- **Apprenticeships**

Summary/Area of Discussion:

Connectivity (incl. Digital & Transport)

Post-it Notes (incl. from 1st February meeting):

- Reliable fast broadband across the area – at the moment it will put businesses off
- Improve physical infrastructure
- Cost of public transport
- People feel isolated from the rest of the Borders. Isolating older people who are no IT/B'band literate
- No bus service to Borders College
- No transport to the BGH, Jed Sheriff Court. Two hours on a bus to Edinburgh and it is expensive
- Reston train station should be re opened
- Border Buses – a fresh approach and community focus
- Make signage on the A1 better
- Distance to college to support apprenticeships is too far – local delivery?
- Access to information
- Ultrafast digital connectivity, aim 100% and 4G 5G mobile
- Digital communities

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor rural broadband and phone signal
<p><i>“Priority” Post-its:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport • Reston Station being opened • Dual the A1 • Address isolation
<p><i>“Solutions/Actions” Post-its:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport links to the BGH and College • Berwickshire Wheels needs expanded on
<p><i>Key Areas for Berwickshire</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural isolation – economically, socially, education/learning • Reston station and wider transport links (cross-Border and North/South)

<p>Summary/Area of Discussion: Young People</p>
<p><i>Post-it Notes (incl. from 1st February meeting):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited employment opportunities for young people • 30 year decline in parenting skills • What works well? – Greenvale, bring back careers service, with a bit of support kids do really well!! • Exodus of young people – will they come back and to what? • Lack of opportunities for young people • Young Scot Card doesn’t work in England • Young people need to be taught life skills ie cooking, budgeting • Improve attainment • Schools good, children coming from Berwick to Berwickshire schools, young people moving away from the area to find work, no large employers, low wage economy
<p><i>“Priority” Post-its:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
<p><i>“Solutions/Actions” Post-its:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mens shed could bring young people in to learn skills • SFRS Cadet programme can provide opportunities
<p><i>Key Areas for Berwickshire</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating opportunities for young people – employment, socially, life skills etc.

Summary/Area of Discussion:

Learning

Post-it Notes (incl. from 1st February meeting):

- Education changing – attention paid to getting pupils through exams rather than general skills inc communication. Too much attention to league tables
- No access to education beyond school age, need to go to Galashiels but transport is an issue
- More remote learning facilities
- Teachers too busy being social workers to teach pupils
- Transport impossible for young people to attend college
- Teachers are not putting forward opportunities to pupils
- Resilient schools not working
- College campus needed in East Berwickshire
- Families may move to allow young people to access further and higher education
- Can Eyemouth High be used to access further education skills
- Need to protect sea knowledge and skills for the next generation
- Broader set of subjects in school being delivered
- Lot of focus on central Borders in terms of educational opportunities
- Spaces for people to learn not just online
- Eyemouth High School, increase learning opportunities for students
- Lack of college tuition in Berwickshire
- Lack of maths teachers
- Adult learning facility missing. Lifelong learning plan focus on young people

“Priority” Post-its:

- Education
- Schools made more community focussed and welcoming
- Digital skills; continuous training
- Broadening the learning opportunities through digital technology
- Make High School s IT hubs for use by businesses and communities
- Learning hubs
- College campus at Eyemouth
- More use of school conservation areas – rural skills
- Adult learning/evening classes for 50+
- Harbour investment and sea skills – local learning programmes

“Solutions/Actions” Post-its:

- Borders college needs a residential campus
- College campus in Eyemouth
- Post school training – care opportunities
- Hospitality/Tourism/Care courses

Key Areas for Berwickshire

- **Better access and wider subject range of learning: in Berwickshire, remotely (online), across all ages etc.**
- **Transport issues**
- **Make better use of existing learning facilities (e.g. High Schools) – create learning hubs**

Summary/Area of Discussion:

Housing (Will be part of “Our Place” themed discussion at a future Area Partnership meeting)

Post-it Notes (incl. from 1st February meeting):

- Capitalise on lower house prices – attract businesses
- House prices are rising. Housing needed for older people
- Outsiders get housing before locals – more housing needed

“Priority” Post-its:

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“Solutions/Actions” Post-its:

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Key Areas for Berwickshire

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Summary/Area of Discussion:

Care (incl. Social Care & Child Care) (Will be part of “Our Health, Care & Wellbeing” themed discussion at a future Area Partnership meeting)

Post-it Notes (incl. from 1st February meeting):

- Need to improve/enhance attitude to the care sector. Seen as low paid and unattractive career
- How do we fund care to the level that will be required in the future – tax?
- Need to think differently – Micro businesses as care providers rather than relying on large companies
- Need infrastructure to enable carers to visit clients
- Lack of political will to support care services
- Child care an issue, not enough, too expensive, full up, no places

“Priority” Post-its:

- Care provision – children and elderly

“Solutions/Actions” Post-its:

- Care Work – no incentives for young people – low wages, unsociable hours. Image of career needs improved
- Access to education to caring
- Respect for elderly
- Nursery provision from age 12months upwards
- Borders College needs to offer child care courses in the Eyemouth area

Key Areas for Berwickshire

- **Care provision for children and older people (incl. how to incentivise people to work in the sector)**

Summary/Area of Discussion:

Community Facilities & Capacity

Post-it Notes (incl. from 1st February meeting):

- Heart of Duns could buy volunteer hall for an outreach service and learning hub
- Support communities to form companies to deliver services in their area – care; community led services
- Active Communities Eyemouth – no one from SBC attends these meetings when invited
- Most projects run by volunteers who are at capacity, checks need softened to encourage people to start up sport and youth groups, lack of sports facilities
- Eyemouth missed out of a lot of opportunities – Book bug, Library shut on a Saturday, no space for Lego club. Mobile library doesn’t come at best times
- Promote Community events and BEST fish and chips in the Borders
- Excellent facility in Duns Centre, the Volunteer Hall. Borders college non existent

“Priority” Post-its:

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“Solutions/Actions” Post-its:

- Resilient community – social hubs so elderly not as isolated

Key Areas for Berwickshire

- **Community capacity and supporting enterprising communities**