
Meeting

Date: Thursday, 22 November 2018
Time: 6.00 pm – 8.30 pm
Location: Victoria Hall, Selkirk

AGENDA

Doors open 6.00 pm for tea and coffee - meeting starts at 6.30 pm

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| 1. | Welcome and Introductions |
| 2. | Feedback from meeting on 20 September 2018 (Pages 3 - 12) Copy of Minute attached. |
| 3. | Theme: Council budget - Engagement with Communities 2019/20 Presentation followed by a facilitated discussion. |
| 4. | Localities Bid Fund Assessment Panel Consider the following decision by Council:- “that membership of the assessment panel be proposed by each Area Partnership, up to a maximum of 2 members per locality, with a view to improving gender balance.” |
| 5. | Localities Bid Fund - Update on Current Funding Round |
| 6. | Any Other Business |
| 7. | Next meeting 24 January 2019 - venue to be confirmed |

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Public Document Pack Agenda Item 2

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL EILDON AREA PARTNERSHIP

MINUTE of Meeting of the EILDON AREA PARTNERSHIP held in the Transport Interchange, Galashiels on Thursday, 20 September 2018 at 6.00 pm

Present:- Councillors G. Edgar (Chairman), S. Aitchison, E. Jardine and E. Thornton-Nicol

Apologies:- Councillors A. Anderson, D. Parker and H. Scott

In Attendance:- 25 partners, Community Councillors, officers and members of the public.

1. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chairman, Councillor Edgar, welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Eildon Area Partnership and thanked Community Councils, partners and local organisations for their attendance. Councillor Edgar explained that the theme for this evening's discussion was 'Our Place' and there would be a series of short presentations to facilitate discussion.

2. **FEEDBACK FROM MEETING ON 10 MAY 2018**

The Minute of the meeting of the Eildon Area Partnership held on 10 May 2018 had been circulated along with a summary of the discussion attached as an appendix to the Minute. The theme for the meeting had been 'Our Quality of Life' and concerns, issues, challenges and opportunities raised at that meeting were referred to during the discussion.

3. **THEME: OUR PLACE**

3.1 The Chairman provided an introduction to the theme for the meeting – Our Place - and introduced Mr Ian Aikman, Chief Planning Officer, SBC. Mr Aikman provided information about the Main Issues Report (MIR) explaining that that MIR was the forerunner to the Local Development Plan. The MIR focused on the main issues and asked for comments on proposed sites and suggestions for other sites that could be designated for housing. A 12 week consultation on the MIR was underway and involved officers holding a series of drop in sessions and workshops across the Scottish Borders as well as a formal consultation process. Mr Aikman encouraged everyone to put forward their views either at one of the sessions, or via the website or by phone. Feedback would then be reported back to the Council and fed into the process for preparation of the Local Development Plan. In response to questions, Mr Aikman advised that the MIR was not just about land allocation but included regeneration of town centres, suggested housing/affordable housing sites, the types of housing required, flooding issues affecting some towns, location of land for industrial purposes and policy changes, for example, to allow development of single dwellings in isolated areas.

3.2 Mr Andy Tharme, Ecology Officer, SBC, then made reference to the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) which was currently out for consultation. Feedback from the consultation would be included in the Local Development Plan. The LBAP was based on an ecosystem approach to deliver targeted, collaborative action to maintain and enhance the sustainable use of local natural resources. Mr Tharme explained that the LBAP addressed the impact of climate change, pollution and land use. The document was available on the Council's website and people were asked to participate in the consultation by providing comments. The consultation was open until 30 November 2018 and could be accessed through the Citizen Space online system.

- 3.3 Ms Donna Bogdanovic, SBC's Senior Housing Strategy Officer discussed the Local Housing Strategy. Ms Bogdanovic explained that the Council did not hold any housing stock, having transferred all its housing stock to be managed by local housing associations. However, the Council was the strategic housing authority and was required to produce a Local Housing Strategy every five years. The Strategy was developed with a wide range of partners, including Eildon Housing Association, and covered a wide range of issues and solutions to increase the housing supply within the Scottish Borders. The Strategy also covered energy efficiency, condition of properties in the rental sector, homelessness and empty properties. The Strategy detailed the requirement to build 348 homes every year, 128 of which must be affordable. Ms Bogdanovic explained that trying to meet the needs of everyone was a big challenge and the Strategy focused on the delivery of housing and related services to meet the needs of local communities. One of the main issues affecting the Scottish Borders was the disrepair and energy efficiency of many older properties which would require significant investment. Homelessness was another issue with approximately 700 people a year approaching SBC for assistance. The Council worked in partnership with a wide range of services, organisations and individuals to prevent homelessness.
- 3.4 The Chairman then introduced Mr Nile Istephan, Eildon Housing Association Chief Executive. Mr Istephan provided information about Eildon Housing Association (EHA) which was one of four housing associations in the Scottish Borders and managed 1,500 homes. Mr Istephan discussed the process for building new homes in the Scottish Borders advising that EHA had to decide on the type of homes required, identify suitable sites, deliverability, social impact on the community and that people wanted to live there. He went on to explain that once a suitable site was identified EHA had to secure funding – Scottish Government gave 40% to 50% of the cost, the remainder being covered by bank loans and private finance. EHA then had to apply for planning approval, consider infrastructure and the appointment of contractors. He then discussed the letting process, explaining that this was based on the choice letting process where people were able to bid for advertised properties. For new build properties EHA could receive in excess of 100 bids which showed the great demand for homes in the Scottish Borders.
- 3.5 Responses were given to a number of general questions. In response to a question on housing allocation, Mr Istephan explained that this was based on housing needs e.g. homelessness, health requirements. EHA's allocation team offered advice to people on how they could maximise their chance of getting a home, perhaps by broadening their search area. With regard to tenancies, he explained that tenancies were for life. However, there was an incentive scheme which offered support for people considering freeing up larger properties to downsize. Regarding the impact of new builds on local services, he advised that a whole range of services including educational and medical provision were considered. With regard to Brexit he advised that it might have an impact on how EHA borrowed monies and could potentially affect imports of building materials from Europe and retention of labour. Mr Aikman added that the private sector was in a fragile position as they could only recover what they could sell the property for. However, if they were in partnership with one of the housing associations they could plan new builds with confidence.
- 3.6 Following the introductory talks, officers joined elected Members, partners and members of the public at their tables for a discussion on the main issues relating to "Our Place". A pack of information had been provided at each table to aid the discussion as were feedback sheets to record emerging points which would be taken forward in the Eildon area. A summary of the output of the discussions is provided as an appendix to this minute.
4. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**
Ms Gillian Jardine, SBC Locality Development Co-ordinator, reminded everyone that the Locality Bid Fund was now open for application until the end of September 2018. Anyone

requiring advice and guidance on submitting an application was asked to contact the Communities and Partnership team.

5. **NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Eildon Area Partnership was provisionally Thursday, 15 November 2018. However, the Chairman asked that Community Councils be consulted on their availability to attend on the proposed date. The theme and the venue for the meeting would be confirmed in due course. The Chairman encouraged Community Councils to complete their response to the Area Partnership Review survey and wished everyone a safe journey home.

The meeting concluded at 8.00 pm

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| Eildon Area Partnership - 20th September 2018 | | |
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| Issues/ Challenges | Solution / Commentary | Priority Rating |
| Town Centre Regeneration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning dept. removing need for properties to be shops- more room for diversity. • CPO for derelict empty properties • Create more community hub/space • Reduced rates, private landlords flexibility of planning • Voluntary • Green spaces and tourism shop • Need to get range of uses in town centre that attract people - role of town centres is changing and cannot rely on retail brining people in - perhaps need to focus on entertainment/ uses that create activity. • Convert vacant town centre properties to housing to attract young people • Take advantage of the potential created by the Tapestry – need for business to see and take opportunities it provides - spin off developments • Need to create a different dynamic in the town - appears run down - investment in local environment/ sort out parking and roads – signage poor and difficult to navigate around if you are a visitor. • Need to highlight attractions that are in the town – historic buildings, churches, places to visit - they are somewhat hidden at the moment. • Parking / Visitor/ Coach parking. Dumfries example. • Next pushed to out of town • Visual identity – require cohesion • Shopping experience – need cafes / restaurants • Business rates • Planning – tattoo parlour • Vacancy rates • Units are too large – Chanel Street subdivide • Independent retailers – what people want • Town centres in the evening - all closed up – try late night shopping • Big names out of town centre • Impact of railway | 7 |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somewhere for youth/ students to go • Need innovation to start businesses • Flats above shops – bring life to our centres • Free wi-fi in town should be available – encourage inclusion • Improve visual approach into town • Communal bins • Farmers market in Selkirk brought life to the town. Money from stalls to local charities | |
| Housing/Affordable Housing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More and more difficult to attract big buildings to borders. Private sector must impose as nothing available. • Land available adequate of the neglect. Brown field sites • Need to provide flats for young people not just 3 to 4 bedroom family homes. • A range a choice of housing for people that is affordable. • Housing adapted for the elderly near facilities is a priority. • What is affordable housing? • Gala uni students have a need – Year 1 is provided for. Population with needs. Creates strain on affordable housing due to student rental market • Houses occupied by individuals when family homes are required • Having right houses for right people in the right place • Beech Avenue – regenerating existing sites. • How do we manage rural communities – tend to become dormitory. Sites are further away from services – Selkirk. Private rented accommodation – poor standards – difficult to enforce • | 4 |
| Building/Industrial land | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small units spread into smaller communities • Need to promote more hotel accommodation for tourists nothing available at the moment - in town centre. More B&B's. • Need to encourage other tourist development on the back of the Tapestry • Need facilities and wider support for new and small scale businesses – linked to railway and tech industries. • Like to see investment from Council/SEA help provide land and new business accommodation - provision on incubator units for small business start-ups. • Need to ensure that Borderlands/SEA invest in Galashiels - Tweedbank - get a fair share of investment. | 7 |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilise existing land – costs associated. • Fuel poverty • How do we attract businesses? • Back of job centre – brown field sites • Barbour site – Tweedbank • Employment opportunities in care • Brownfield site should be cleared by Council’s possibly to encourage development • Business rates should be dependent on turnover • Liverpool example - year rent for £1 • Need to take a broader view of locations and how they are serviced • Space for creative people – infrastructure. Rent a desk – hot desking | |
| Infrastructure/services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure investment needed- more young people to consider starting business- must address digital connection. • Need to maintain and improve bus services - - need to avoid rural isolation – links to jobs and opportunities. • Support the railway linking to Carlisle - increasing connectivity | |
| Housing in the Countryside | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make more land available for young people to buy. • Eco house • No organic growth in small numbers • If more isolated housing is approved it will increase costs of providing services particularly with an ageing population – better to locate in towns and villages where services are available and can be provided at a lower cost. • Need more Bothys! No youth hostel • Against landscape being blighted • People who want to live in the countryside – need to strike a balance • Rural housing – require affordable housing • Need more eco-friendly units – need to encourage - link with climate change • National parks • Dark skies • Rural exceptions policy for affordable housing but must fit in to the place | 8 |
| Climate Change | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free waste shelter • E bikes | 4 |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the youth • Economic charging points <p>Flooding an issue - need to adaption of houses/businesses – additional costs Issues of fuel poverty - ability in a low wage economy of people to heat homes and reasonable costs.-</p> | |
| Vacant land /Derelict sites | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better more attractive commercial premises to attract businesses people won't want to stay with no job. • Ladhope derelict • Linked to comments on Town Centre Regeneration above • Potential for re-use of church sites – potentially redevelopment or demolition and re-building – society is changing and there is a surplus of such buildings. • Vacant industrial sites need to be re-developed for housing and other business uses – issues with contamination and flooding • Linked to comments on Town Centre Regeneration above • Potential for re-use of church sites – potentially redevelopment or demolition and re-building – society is changing and there is a surplus of such buildings. • Vacant industrial sites need to be re-developed for housing and other business uses – issues with contamination and flooding • Bristow Mill • Border Telegraph on High St • Botany Mills • Abbotsford Arms • Focus Centre was Market Garden near swimming pool | 5 |
| Not enough to do for families | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to attract/draw in families to live/ work here | 4 |
| Town centres unattractive/ un kept | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attractive town centres, increase footfall | 2 |
| Galashiels outdated | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shops need to be assessed and high street needs uplifted | |
| Public transport non-existent or regular. People living In housing estates. Less access to other routes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dial a route – community taxi service (free) | |
| Heriot Watt + Borders college, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to integrate them more, housing amongst communities. | 3 |

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| students don't integrate with rest of town or contribute to footfall | | |
| Tourism and history non recognised enough | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Must market tourism more + advertise | |

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