

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MINUTES of Meeting of the EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE held remotely via Microsoft
Teams on Tuesday, 19th January, 2021 at
10.00 am

Present:- Councillors S. Haslam (Chairman), S. Aitchison (Vice-Chairman), G. Edgar, C. Hamilton, S. Hamilton, E. Jardine, S. Mountford, M. Rowley, R. Tatler, G. Turnbull and T. Weatherston.

Also Present:- Councillor A. Anderson

In Attendance:- Executive Director Corporate Improvement & Economy, Executive Director Finance & Regulatory, Service Director Assets & Infrastructure, Service Director Young People Engagement & Inclusion, Democratic Services Team Leader, Democratic Services Officer (F. Henderson).

EDUCATION BUSINESS

Present:- Mr I. Topping, Mr G Wilkinson, (Parent Representative), Harry Scott (Pupil Representative), Lindsay Craig.

Apologies:- Mr T. Davidson, Katie Brookes.

CHAIRMAN

Councillor Hamilton chaired the meeting for consideration of the Education business and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

- 1. APPROVAL OF FINAL DRAFT OF NURTURING APPROACHES GUIDELINES.**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Young People Engagement & Inclusion which proposed the approval of the whole school nurturing approach and targeted nurture intervention groups as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report which reflected and aligned with previous SBC Inclusion guidance and legislation to provide a clear strategic direction on Nurturing practice for all schools and Early Years settings in Scottish Borders Council. The report explained that the Nurturing Approaches Guidelines formed part of a suite of Inclusion documents described and presented to the Executive Committee in January 2020. These were in line with National Legislation and Guidance listed in the previous Committee Report in June 2018. Recent documents had been published by Scottish Government (Education Scotland) to provide further guidance to Local Authorities and their policy making and outline Scotland's vision and underlying principles of inclusion. Caroline Didcock presented a summary of the Guidelines and answered Members questions and highlighting the work being undertaken to ensure there were proper connections between schools and parents.

DECISION

AGREED:-

- (a) to approve the draft of Scottish Borders Council's Nurturing Approaches Guidelines - A practical guide for schools and settings to develop a whole school nurturing approach and targeted nurture intervention groups (Appendix 1).**
- (b) that the documents could be circulated to all learning establishments in Scottish Borders.**

2. **APPROVAL OF FINAL DRAFT OF LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK.**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director, Young People Engagement and Inclusion which sought approval of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Framework contained in the report which reflected and aligned with the National guidance and legislation to provide strategic direction for Learning, Teaching and Assessment in all schools and Early Years settings within Scottish Borders Council. The report explained that the development of this Learning, Teaching and Assessment Framework was a key priority for this year's Education Service Plan. Analysis of data and self-evaluation highlighted a need to provide consistent guidance for all schools and settings. Adherence to the guidance and focused attention on key areas would ensure the highest possible standards of learning and teaching for all children and young people across Scottish Borders Schools and Settings. The consistency provided by the Framework would support quality assurance activity and the identification of any improvement needs for schools and professional learning needs for all staff. Catriona McKinnon and Catherine Thomson presented the report and answered Members questions. Members thanked officers for the presentation and asked if they could receive a copy of the slides.

DECISION

AGREED:-

- (a) **to approve the Draft of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Framework contained in Appendix 1 of the report;**
- (b) **that the document could be circulated to all learning establishments in the Scottish Borders; and**
- (c) **copies of the presentation be circulated to the Committee.**

OTHER BUSINESS

CHAIRMAN

Councillor Haslam chaired the meeting for the remainder of the meeting with the exception of paragraph 6.

3. **MINUTE**

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the meeting of 1 December 2020.

DECISION

APPROVED for signature by the Chairman.

4. **OUR PLAN AND YOUR PART IN IT: SBC CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT REPORT QUARTER 1 AND QUARTER 2 2020/21**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Executive Director, Corporate Improvement and Economy which presented a high level summary of Scottish Borders Council's Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 2020/21 performance information with more detail contained within Appendices 1, 2a and 3. The report included reporting on the progress of change and improvement projects across Scottish Borders Council (SBC), under the Fit for 2024 programme. The report explained that SBC approved a revised Corporate Plan ([Our Plan and Your Part in it 2018-2023](#)) in February 2018, with four corporate themes. In order to monitor progress against the four themes, performance and context information would be presented quarterly to Executive Committee, with an annual summary in June each year. During Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 2020/21, SBC had continued to press ahead with a range of important initiatives and innovation, including:

- (a) The opening of the new Jedburgh Grammar Campus to pupils;
- (b) The use of Inspire Learning by pupils and teachers during the Covid-19 lockdown

- period; and
- (c) Beginning work on the Borders Innovation park

The information contained within this report and appendices was also made available on the Council website and could be accessed at www.scotborders.gov.uk/performance. The quarter 1 element of the report would ordinarily have been produced for the August 2020 Executive Committee but had been delayed due to the impact of the COVID -19 pandemic, and combined with Quarter 2. Quarter 3 would be presented in March with the full outturn in June. Mr Dickson highlighted the areas which had been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Members commented that despite the pandemic standards had mostly been maintained and noted improvements in areas such as recycling and payment of invoices. Mr Dickson answered Members questions and undertook to provide further information on Looked After Children and an update on the gender pay gap.

DECISION

- (a) **NOTED:-**
 - (i) **the progress update relating to Change and Improvement Projects, referenced in Section 5 and detailed further in Appendix 1; and**
 - (ii) **the changes to performance indicators outlined in Section 6 of this report;**
- (b) **ACKNOWLEDGED and noted the performance summarised in Sections 7 and 8, and detailed within Appendices 1, 2a and 3 and the action that has been taken within services to improve or maintain performance.**

5. GREAT TAPESTRY OF SCOTLAND VISITOR CENTRE, GALASHIELS - UPDATE REPORT

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Assets & Infrastructure which provided an update. The report explained that the site works commenced on 10 June 2019 under a contract awarded to Ogilvie Construction and had progressed well on site until the outbreak of COVID -19 pandemic early in 2020 and the country wide lockdown. Following a resumption of construction in July 2020, significant progress had been made with the project and the works on site within the final 18 weeks and remained on schedule for a 2021 opening. Finalised costs for the exhibition/display cases fit out had been presented to the Council and these were in excess of the allowance within the current budget. In order to resolve this, additional funding of £316k from the Emergency & Unplanned Scheme fund for 2021 was being sought. The report detailed the background, the need for specialist exhibition display cases and the financial implications. In response to questions, Mr Curry advised that the cases also incorporated a number of technological features including lighting which would enhance the display of the Tapestry and improve the visitor experience. Members considered that the budget increase was unfortunate at this stage but that this was a crucial project for the future of tourism in the Borders.

DECISION

- (a) **NOTED the contents of the report**
- (b) **AGREED £316k be allocated from the 2020/21 Emergency & Unplanned Schemes funds to allow completion of the building fit out**

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Haslam declared an interest in the following item of business in terms of Section 5 of the Councillors Code of Conduct and left the meeting during the discussion. In the absence of Councillor Haslam, Councillor Mountford chaired the meeting.

6. **BORDERS DISCRETIONARY SUPPORT FUND FOR BUSINESS**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Executive Director, Finance & Regulatory which set out a proposal to establish a cash limited discretionary business support fund. The fund was intended to complement other arrangements put in place by Scottish Government to assist businesses and organisations to survive the current emergency situation. The report explained that the Council had been provided with a grant of £672,021 to administer a COVID-19 Local Authority Discretionary Fund. The funding represented 2.7% of a £25m national discretionary fund agreed by COSLA Leaders. The aim of the fund was to mitigate the short term financial challenges being experienced by businesses since October 2020. The fund was intended to enable local authorities to direct additional financial support based on the distinct characteristics of local economies. Financial support could be provided to Limited Companies, Charities, Social Enterprise, Sole Traders and Trusts. The report detailed the purpose of the funding, Eligibility for funding, funding priorities, the application process, scope, Grant criteria and financial implications. Following discussion, it was agreed that the wording 'per eligible business' be removed from recommendation (b).

DECISION

AGREED:-

- (a) the establishment of a discretionary fund for business as set out in the report based on the criteria in section 4.1 of the report;**
- (b) that the final amount of support to individual business be determined by the number of eligible applications received;**
- (c) to delegate authority to the Executive Director, Finance and Regulatory Services, to determine grant applications in accordance with the provisions agreed in the report;**
- (d) to delegate authority to the Executive Director, Finance and Regulatory Services - in consultation with the Executive Member for Economic Development and Finance - any further changes required to the approved criteria of the scheme to enable the grant scheme to function effectively; and,**
- (e) that the Executive Director, Finance and Regulatory Services, submit a report to Council by the end of May 2021 setting out the numbers and types of business assisted by the discretionary scheme.**

The meeting concluded at 11.55 am