

SCOTTISH BORDERS COMMUNITY PLANNING STRATEGIC BOARD

MEETING

Date: 19 November 2020 from 2.00 to 3:45 p.m.

Location: Via MS Teams

Attendees: Councillor Mark Rowley (SBC) [Chair], Councillor Stuart Bell (SBC), Ms Angela Cox (Borders College), Mr Nick Halfhide (South of Scotland Enterprise), Councillor Carol Hamilton (SBC), Ms Karen Hamilton (NHS Borders), Mrs Marjorie Hume (Third Sector), Mr Mike Jaffray (Fire & Rescue Service), Councillor Robin Tatler (SBC), Councillor George Turnbull (SBC).

Also in attendance: Jenni Craig, Rob Dickson, Lesley Munro, David Robertson, Janice Robertson, Shona Smith, Jenny Wilkinson (all SBC); Juliana Amaral (BAVS); Nile Istephan (Eildon Housing); Valerie Ormiston (SDS); Ralph Roberts (NHS Borders).

MINUTE AND ACTION POINTS

1. **INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES**

Apologies had been received from Ms Elaine Acaster (Borders College); Mr Stephen Gourlay (Fire & Rescue Service); Professor Russel Griggs (South of Scotland Enterprise); and Superintendent Angus MacInnes (Police Scotland).

2. **MINUTE**

The Minute of the Meeting of 10 September 2020 had been circulated.

DECISION

AGREED the Minute.

3. **COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP - KEY PRIORITIES/ACTION PLAN 2020/21**

Copies of a report presenting the CPP key priorities and action plan that would be the main focus of the Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership work for the next 12 months had been circulated prior to the meeting. The SBC Service Director Customer & Communities advised that this was a dynamic document and while some of the key priorities and actions were already in the existing Community Plan and Locality Plans, more had been added in response to Covid-19, and these would provide the main focus for the Community Planning Partnership over the next year. The SBC Communities & Partnership Manager further added that the list was not exhaustive with engagement of partners and communities needed to take these forward. The localities model was under development along with digital access. With regard to alleviate poverty, the Child Poverty Action Plan and development of the Anti-Poverty Strategy would help with this. A fast paced response was needed in the economy as things were changing rapidly. Angela Cox, Borders College Principal, advised that the Borders Learning and Skills Partnership was taking a collective approach, tracking all developments e.g. No Young Person Left

Behind. Nile Istephan, Eildon Housing Chief Executive, further advised that more funding had been levered in; community wi-fi was being rolled out to sheltered housing, with work underway with the Scottish Government 'Internet of Things' across the Borders. There was interest in the Strategic Property Group from RSLs and others. The work in Food Hubs had been really impressive, with Fareshare in Galashiels and Eildon Housing distributing food to 30 community groups. This work was sponsored by Government schemes and while funding was due to finish at the end of November, investigations were being made as to how this could continue throughout the pandemic and beyond. There were also huge opportunities for SMEs in climate and carbon reduction work. Cllr Rowley confirmed that the Council had signed up to Climate Change and had appointed a new Portfolio Holder for Sustainability. The aim was to work to the UN Sustainable Development goals. Cllr Rowley praised the work of Eildon Housing on the food distribution network across the Borders and advised he would be happy to speak with Scottish Ministers regarding funding if Nile Istephan could furnish him with the details. Nick Halfhide, Chief Executive with SoSE, confirmed the Enterprise Agency's involvement in the Community Planning Partnership, with focus on the zero carbon agenda, and the establishment of links with RSLs and the private sector. The immediate priority was to keep people in work, moving the economy of, and employment in, the South of Scotland to a new era. Ralph Roberts, Chief Executive of Borders Health Board, requested the Covid vaccine programme be added in to the Plan. With regard to the recommendations within the report, the Board requested that progress would be reported at each meeting rather than on a six monthly basis.

AGREED:

- (a) to approve the draft Key Priorities and Action Plan as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report;**
- (b) that the Plan continued to be developed as the response to the ongoing pandemic continued, and actions added as required; and**
- (c) the Plan would be progressed by the CPP Programme Board and that progress would be reported to each meeting of the CPP Strategic Board for scrutiny.**

4. TSI - REVIEW AND EXPANSION OF THE COVID-19 RESPONSE & RECOVERY PLAN IN THE BORDERS

4.1 With reference to paragraph 10 of the Minute of Meeting held on 7 March 2019, copies of a report on the South of Scotland Third Sector: A Partnership Approach to Covid-19 Response and Recovering Planning had been circulated. Juliana Amaral, Chief Executive Officer with the Berwickshire Association for Voluntary Services, gave a presentation on the report which was the result of a series of interviews with third sector organisations (TSOs) across the South of Scotland during the first 2 months of lockdown. The themes captured during interviews were translated into 7 key principles and recommendations to inform the collective approach of Scottish Government, local statutory partners and the Third Sector to the "new" normal. These were:

- Principle 1 – Nothing about us without us
- Principle 2 – Keep it local, keep it place-based
- Principle 3 – Beneficiaries are at the heart of everything we do
- Principle 4 – Financial sustainability is vital
- Principle 5 – Volunteers are the lifeblood of communities
- Principle 6 – Digital working is our default
- Principle 7 – The Third Sector is a key employer

4.2 Some TSOs in the Scottish Borders did not participate and did not know the outcome would be the report, so a wider conversation was now needed. The report did highlight fragmentations between the Borders TSI, statutory bodies and TSOs in comparison to Dumfries & Galloway, and in response to this, the Borders TSI has created a plan for

improved communication through a new strategy and strength of partnership. The response to Covid had seen an increase in small community action groups and social enterprises, with a lot of good work going on. The Borders TSI aimed to take ownership of this and had now employed a Communications Officer, and was being helped by Dumfries & Galloway TSI. A survey would be distributed to as many groups as possible which aimed to seek wider sectoral engagement. A series of focus groups would be held online for all TSOs to open up the space for discussion and how best future collaboration would work. The Borders TSI was keen to collaborate further with Dumfries & Galloway TSI. A new website, with rebranding and an updated partnership agreement, would be launched. Everyone who was part of the Borders TSI was keen to be able to demonstrate actions which were based on lessons learned. Marjorie Hume, Chair of the Board of Volunteer Centre Borders, praised the amount of work which was carried out by over 600 TSOs in the Borders and expressed concern about the lack of input from the Borders in the report. Juliana Amaral confirmed that there had been difficulty recruiting participants at the time and a lack of clarity on the outcome of the report.

Noted.

5. ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY - UPDATE (JENNI CRAIG)

The SBC Service Director Customer & Communities gave the Board an update on the development of the Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy. Following approval of a Motion by Cllr Tatler to Council at its meeting on 25 September 2020, a Working Group had been set up – working in collaboration with partners and those with lived experience of poverty - to develop an Anti-Poverty Strategy, building on current work, identifying new areas where support was needed, and campaigning for additional resources to tackle poverty. It was intended to present a draft Strategy to the Council meeting in February 2021. Cllr Tatler advised that the Council, along with others, was already tackling poverty in a whole variety of ways and it was intended that the Anti-Poverty Strategy would bring this together and identify gaps. It was really important to have the support from all CPP partners. Nile Istephan confirmed that the work was welcomed by all the RSLs and gave an example of fuel poverty in terms of heating homes; this was a deep seated and long term issue, particularly in rural areas where options were restricted. The Scottish Borders Home Energy Forum was also happy to engage with the Working Group.

Noted.

6. DRAFT CHILD POVERTY ACTION PLAN 2020/2020

With reference to paragraph 6 of the Minute of 10 September 2020, copies of the Local Child Poverty Report and Action Plan 2020/21 had been circulated. Endorsement of the Report and Action Plan was sought from the Strategic Board prior to submission to Scottish Government. The Report gave details of the national context, Covid-19 and the implications for child poverty, and the local context. The 20/21 Action Plan had been produced with input from the Council, NHS Borders and a range of partners. It was organised into categories, indicating the partners involved, the poverty driver, how the impact of the action would be assessed and the intended beneficiary and/or target group of the action. A broad range of activity was shown in the Action Plan which was designed to help alleviate child poverty in different ways through various services and organisations. The SBC Service Director Customer & Communities commented that there was a hugely challenging set of statistics, many of which were driven by the low wage economy in the Borders, but it was necessary to reflect on whether there was anything further that could be added. Juliana Amaral of BAVs advised that grass roots groups, providing very local support to children and families, often needed greater support than national groups. The Board supported the Report and Action Plan.

AGREED to endorse the Scottish Borders Local Child Poverty Report and Action Plan for 2020/21.

7. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S LEADERSHIP GROUP REVIEW - UPDATE

There had been a misunderstanding prior to the meeting and a report had not been provided to the Strategic Board with an update on the review of the Children and Young

People's Leadership Group. The Strategic Board agreed to support the review in principle and an update on the review would be provided to the next meeting of the Board.

Noted.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

8.1 Flu Vaccination Programme

Marjorie Hume referred to some issues experienced in rural areas with a lack of public transport for people to get to clinics to receive a flu vaccination. As a Community Partnership, more could possibly have been done working together on this. Ralph Roberts, Chief Executive of NHS Borders, acknowledged there had been a difficult start to the programme due to changes which had had to be made to the usual process. Any lessons learned would be taken forward into the Covid vaccination programme.

8.2 Living Wage Group

Cllr Tatler referred to the work of the Scottish Borders Living Wage Group which had agreed that all employers within the Eildon area would be encouraged to pay the living wage and thus the area would become the first living wage area in the Borders.

8.3 Fire Alarms

Marjorie Hume referred to the cost of fire alarms before installation, due to changes in regulations impacting on households. There were also issues for elderly people who could not change the batteries in them as they were too high. Nile Istephan advised that the batteries in the fire alarms being fitted lasted for 10 years. The Care and Repair Handyperson service was available to help the elderly and vulnerable. Angela Cox further advised that the College could probably help with students and apprentices on a voluntary basis.

9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

No items were raised at the meeting.

10. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS (ALL AT 2 PM)

The dates of the next meetings of the Strategic Board were confirmed as 4 March and 10 June 2021. All meetings would start at 2:00pm and would be held remotely via Microsoft Teams for the foreseeable future.