

SCOTTISH BORDERS COMMUNITY PLANNING STRATEGIC BOARD

MEETING

- Date:** 4 March 2021 from 2.00 to 4:15 p.m.
- Location:** Via MS Teams
- Attendees:** Councillor Mark Rowley (SBC) [Chair], Councillor Stuart Bell (SBC), Ms Angela Cox (Borders College), Professor Russel Griggs (SOSE), Councillor Carol Hamilton (SBC), Ms Karen Hamilton (NHS Borders), Mrs Marjorie Hume (Third Sector), Mr Stephen Gourlay (Fire & Rescue Service), Ms Michelle Meldrum (Berwickshire Housing Association).
- Also present:** Councillor E. Thornton-Nicol.
- Also in attendance:** Jenni Craig, John Curry, Rob Dickson, Jenny Wilkinson (all SBC); Nicky Berry (NHS Borders); Nile Istephan (Eildon Housing); Rob McCulloch-Graham (H&SC IJB); Jamie McDougall (Scottish Government); Julia Mulloy (SBHA); Tim Patterson (NHS Borders/SBC – Public Health).

MINUTE AND ACTION POINTS

1. **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies had been received from Ms Elaine Acaster (Borders College), Mr Robin Hill (SBHA), Superintendent Angus McInnes (Police Scotland), Cllr Robin Tatler (SBC), Cllr George Turnbull (SBC).
2. **ORDER OF BUSINESS**

The Chairman varied the order of business from that shown on the agenda and this Minute reflects the order in which the items were considered at the meeting.
3. **MINUTE**
 - 3.1 The Minute of the Meeting of 19 November 2020 had been circulated.
- DECISION**

AGREED the Minute.

 - 3.2 The Decision Action Tracker had been circulated.

Noted.
4. **COVID-19**

Ms Nicky Berry, Executive Nurse Director, NHS Borders, joined the meeting and gave a presentation updating the Strategic Board on NHS Borders position and remobilisation activities over the following 12 months. The first Covid case in the Borders was on 16 March 2020, with a total of 2,819 positive cases by the end of February 2021. Hospital admissions were a more accurate indication of infection rate, with 2 significant peaks in hospital beds – 8 April 2020 and 21 January 2021 – with over 20% of all BGH beds occupied by Covid patients. Teviot and Berwickshire had had the highest proportion of

positive cases by population, with Cheviot and Tweeddale having the lowest. Workplace settings had seen the highest number of outbreaks, with Health & Social Care staff making up 46% of all staff cases and 20% of all outbreak cases. Director of Public Health, Tim Patterson, confirmed that Hawick had been hit hard with the new variant just before Christmas, with all evidence suggesting that this was about 50% more transmissible and a higher hospitalisation rate, which led to an increased spread in the community. The Berwickshire outbreaks were related to large food producers and had been identified through screening as not all cases were symptomatic. Data was given on potential bed demand with local scenario planning. There had been a 50% fall in emergency department attendance and a 40% fall in emergency medical admissions after the March 2020 lockdown, and a further fall after Phase 2 lockdown in December, but levels were now beginning to rise again. The Covid vaccination programme was continuing apace. There would be an ongoing Covid response over the next 12 months, covering test and protect and vaccination services; local Covid patient transport service; care home leadership and support; enhanced infection control measures; and staff being given the opportunity to rest, recovery and reflect. Details were given of the response programme for acute, mental health and primary & community services over the next 3, 6 and 12 months. It was anticipated that the emergency phase would continue until summer 2021, a stabilisation phase for the remainder of 2021/22, and the recovery phase from 2022/23 onwards. Nicky Berry advised that all this had been a whole system approach with input from GPs, SBC and others.

Noted.

5. **DRAFT ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY**

With reference to paragraph 5 of the Minute of 19 November 2020, copies of the Draft Anti-Poverty Strategy report and 3 appendices had been circulated. Jenni Craig, SBC Service Director Customer & Communities gave an overview of the report which had been developed through a Working Group and approved by the Council the previous week for consultation. Mrs Craig gave details of some of the issues in the Borders in particular. Cllr Thornton-Nicol had joined the meeting as a member of the Working Group and gave apologies from the Chairman, Cllr Tatler, who had been unable to be presented at the meeting. Cllr Thornton-Nicol had been honoured to be part of the Working Group and thanked the other members and officers, as well as the partners and other organisations which had contributed to the development of the Draft Strategy. Everyone knew that poverty existed and impacted on lives and the pandemic had exacerbated this. The Draft Strategy would act as a baseline and was not the final answer but the beginning of the answer. It would be going out to public consultation shortly to develop the way forward ensuring that all information had been captured to help produce an action plan to move people out of poverty. It was important to hear every voice and opinion, especially from those with lived experience of poverty. Work to reduce poverty was ongoing across the Borders and it was vital to bring all actions together to drive poverty out and prevent duplication. Cllr Thornton-Nicol hoped everyone would support the Strategy and participate in the consultation and the development of the action plan. Cllr Rowley praised the Working Group for their achievements in developing the draft Strategy in just a few months, which reflected the seriousness of the issue. Angela Cox, Principal of Borders College, commented that the draft Strategy gave a good understanding of the scale of the challenge, and would benefit from the inclusion of the work of the Learning & Skills Partnership and the creation of the Digital Skills Hub (South of Scotland).

Noted.

6. **COMMUNITY JUSTICE OUTCOMES IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2020/25**

Copies of a report on the Scottish Borders Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan 2020 – 2025 and the Plan itself had been circulated. The Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 required community justice partners to collaborate and produce a local outcomes improvement plan. This was the second such plan for the Borders. Graham Jones, Safer Communities & Community Justice Manager, joined the meeting and presented highlights from the Plan, giving details of the outcomes and performance

improvement framework. In response to a question, Mr Jones confirmed that consultation had been extended across the prison estate and within the Plan one of the key objectives was to approach those with lived experience, including those serving terms in the community, youth justice, etc. The action plan was refreshed each year and while youth justice and young people would come in to this over time, at the moment it was primarily adults.

DECISION

AGREED to approve the Community Justice Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2020/25 for publication.

7. ECONOMY - REGIONAL ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

With reference to paragraph 3 of the Minute of 10 September 2020, SBC Executive Director Rob Dickson gave a presentation updating the Strategic Board on the work of the Regional Economic Partnership, which had met 5 times since September 2020. Its agreed purpose was to secure and enable sustainable, inclusive economic growth across the South of Scotland and the key focus to date had been the development of the new Regional Economic Strategy (RES). At the heart of developing the RESE was the absolute need for meaningful, inclusive and wide-reaching engagement, which included interviews, a business survey, general survey, themed workshops and online community consultation events. This engagement campaign had now been extended to 19 March. It was hoped that a final Strategy, action plan and measurement framework, including endorsement of a communication/launch plan would be presented in June 2021. Information on the RES could be found at <https://sosrep.dumgal.gov.uk> Professor Griggs further advised that a reference group was also in place as a very important part of the work. Julia Mulloy referred to the Housing workshop which had been held that morning which had been really helpful bringing a range of partners together and this would also help build relationships for the future.

Noted.

8. BUILT ESTATE AND COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

Mr John Curry, Service Director Assets & Infrastructure, and Mr James Lamb, Portfolio Manager, gave a presentation to the Board on Place Making. Reference was made to SBC's Fit for 2024 programme, with themes germane to community planning: enhanced community engagement, participation and empowerment; service reviews; investment in digital services; and making better use of our assets – reducing the overall estate. Rather than engagement about the built estate, the shift in focus was on service redesign through place making. This was a more joined up, collaborative, and participative approach to services, land and buildings, across all sectors within a place, which enabled better outcomes for everyone and increased opportunities for people and communities to shape their own lives. This also related to Cosla's place making principle; national place standard tool; national planning framework; and programme for government. Local engagement was already underway through Borderlands, review of Area Partnerships, learning estates strategy and also through Covid learning with Community Assistance Hubs and Resilience teams. Phase 1 was the preparation and planning stage (Feb to July); phase 2 was the production of initial high level Locality Place Briefs (Aug to October); phase 3 would be the development and agreement of Locality Place programmes (Sept to Nov); and phase 4 would be delivery (November 2021 onwards). At the end of each phase there would be a gateway review. A co-production approach was intended and support was sought from the Community Planning partners. Angela Cox commented that this was a really exciting project with challenging timescales, and asked that in particular engagement was carried out with young people, as the future of communities. In order to reduce the outward migration of young people from the Borders, young people needed to be at the heart of this engagement. The partners considered how best they could be involved in the project.

DECISION

AGREED that any of the Community Planning partners liaise with the Service Director Assets & Infrastructure on the best way they could become involved in the Place Making programme.

9. CPP KEY PRIORITIES & ACTION PLAN

With reference to paragraph 3 of the Minute of 19 November 2020, copies of updated Key Priorities and an Action Plan for 2020/21 had been circulated. Ms Shona Smith, Communities & Partnership Manager, advised that the draft Action Plan had now been updated with progress, although there were still some gaps. There were 3 presentations later on the agenda which were intended to show how the Community Planning Partnership was making a difference. The Chairman suggested that having a RAG status or a graphic to show progress would perhaps focus attention on those areas which needed further scrutiny by the Board in future.

Noted.

10. CPP - MAKING A DIFFERENCE

10.1 Connecting Scotland

Frances Eniede, SBC Programme Manager, and Clare Malster, SBC Strategic Community Engagement Officer, gave a presentation on the Connecting Scotland programme. Details were given on the background to the programme including devices for those digitally excluded and on low income, and connectivity and support.

Organisations had been invited to apply for devices on behalf of individuals they supported, and individuals could apply directly, and organisations then took on the role of digital champion to provide assistance to individuals. In the Borders so far, 765 devices had been obtained in phases for vulnerable people. The programme had been very popular, and over-subscribed with a shortfall of 641 devices from applications. A wide range of organisations in the Borders had participated and they needed to ensure they had enough organisational capacity to provide champion support. Clare Malster gave an insight into being a digital champion. Ms Eneide explained that there had been some delays in getting devices delivered and a global issue relating to the supply especially of chrome books. Each phase of the programme that had been rolled out had only had a certain allocation for the Borders which had all be taken up. Jenni Craig confirmed that this had been a really excellent example of partnership working in trying to understand collectively what needed to be done and then tapping in to the funding. As everyone was looking at services coming out of Covid, it was likely these would focus more on digital. The officer group would look for further funding to see if any gaps could be closed.

Noted.

10.2 Community Wifi/Internet of Things

Nile Istephan, Eildon Housing, gave a presentation on the digital future currently being worked on at Eildon, including community wi-fi provision; the "internet of things", deployment of devices, and intelligent use of data; and digital transformation of services. In terms of community wi-fi, this was now considered an essential utility. Eildon had engaged with Social Telecoms and had been piloting community wi-fi within supported housing services (sheltered housing and independent living places). There had been excellent feedback so far and this would be rolled out further in 2021/22. The main focus was it was cheaper than the market, a reliable service, with the additional benefit of it being a stable, high quality wi-fi, which was able to be used operationally as well. The main challenge was that all customers were charged whether they wanted the wi-fi or not so care needed to be taken in implementation to give tenants advice notice regarding their existing bundles/packages. In future, this would be looked at in terms of general needs homes, new builds or the wider community. In terms of the Internet of Things (IOT), Eildon involvement was two-fold: to support the creation of IOT in the Scottish Borders so there was good coverage to facilitate practical use of this technology; and deploy IOT devices and support to care for customers, as well as caring for property assets. This was an exciting and fast-moving area with many other applications for Community Planning partners. The demography and rurality of the Borders meant that this was probably more important and more of an opportunity in the Borders than elsewhere in

Scotland. It was a Scottish Government backed alternative network to broadband and the cellular network with improving coverage. Eildon was assisting by allowing its assets to host 'gateway' devices. Security was built in as reassurance for users. A range of commercial devices already existed and was growing e.g. Alexa, Siri, IOT enabled white goods. While there was a lot of opportunity, the challenge was how to intelligently use these devices and combine them to meet the specific needs of the end users/households/organisations. The IOT programme was being supported through the Civ Tech programme and Eildon had submitted the problem to this programme of how best to enhance infection control for vulnerable people in residential based services. Eildon was working with Wallscope to develop a product called CLARE, which used commercially available existing sensors, linking them to data already held by Eildon and providing a user friendly, intuitive interface. Details were shown of where sensors were located within a property and how this interacted with the needs of the tenant in terms of health and care plans. Once this had been further tested and refined, it could be rolled out further. Eildon was also looking at a new build green pilot using IOT devices to help evaluate different green technologies, using building management solutions for environment management, health and safety, and component performance. This experience could then be shared with partners across the Borders and beyond, including further developing the care support options.

Noted.

Note: Ms Hamilton, Prof. Griggs and Ms Mulloy left the meeting.

10.3 **BAVS/BHA PROJECT**

Michelle Meldrum, Berwickshire Housing Association, presented details of a project "Let's Get Digital Berwickshire" which had been funded through the Scottish Communities Fund. The aim was to support digital inclusion during the pandemic and a pilot digital lending library had been established. A number of partners had been involved in this – Border Care Voice, BAVS, Chirnside Village Hall, Splash, Coldstream Community Centre, and SBC Local Area Co-ordination team. Fifty devices with unlimited SIM connections had been purchased and distributed and all had had an offer of support from Digital Champions. Early results had been promising with a steady uptake from the community, with devices primarily used to keep social contact, but also looking for employment opportunities, applying for jobs and for educational purposes. The next steps included reflecting on how the world had changed, with digital inclusion now a key priority for communities. Work was underway exploring options for longer term sustainability and also to join up with other similar projects.

Noted.

11. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

With reference to paragraph 4 of the Minute of 19 November 2020, Mrs Hume gave an update on the Third Sector Interface (TSI) survey results. The TSI had agreed to carry out a more formal engagement to take action forward and the first session on Mental Health and Wellbeing had taken place the previous Thursday, with over 60 participants. The TSI was now working closely with the chief officers of the Health & Social Care Partnership. A newsletter and a new website were also being planned.

Noted.

12. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

It was suggested that an update on "Safer Places, Safer Streets" could be given to a future meeting of the Strategic Board.

Noted.

13. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The Board noted the dates for future meetings which would be held via MS Teams until further notice –

- Thursday 10 June 2021
- Thursday 9 September 2021

- Thursday 18 November 2021
- Thursday 3 March 2022
- Thursday 16 June 2022