

Public Document Pack

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

MINUTE of Meeting of the SCOTTISH COUNCIL held in Via Microsoft Teams on Thursday, 17th December, 2020 at 10.00 am

Present:- Councillors D. Parker (Convener), S. Aitchison, A. Anderson, H. Anderson, J. Brown, S. Bell, K. Chapman, G. Edgar, J. A. Fullarton, J. Greenwell, C. Hamilton, S. Hamilton, S. Haslam, E. Jardine, H. Laing, S. Marshall, W. McAteer, T. Miers, D. Moffat, S. Mountford, D. Paterson, C. Cochrane, C. Ramage, N. Richards, E. Robson, M. Rowley, H. Scott, S. Scott, E. Small, R. Tatler, E. Thornton-Nicol, G. Turnbull and T. Weatherston

In Attendance:- Executive Director (Corporate Improvement & Economy), Executive Director (Finance & Regulatory), Service Director Assets & Infrastructure, Service Director Customer & Communities, Service Director HR & Communications, Service Director Young People, Engagement & Inclusion, Chief Operating Officer Health & Social Care Integration, Chief Legal Officer, Clerk to the Council

1. **CONVENER'S REMARKS.**

The Convener congratulated the following:-

- (a) Netta Meadows from South Somerset District Council on her appointment as the new Chief Executive;
- (b) The Jedburgh Grammar Campus project that had been recognised at the Partnership Awards 2020 when it took home a silver Award in the Best Education category. The award winning new £32m Jedburgh Grammar Campus, completed in March 2020, was a partnership project between Hub South East and Scottish Borders Council, with BAM Construction the main contractor and Stallan Brand, the architects behind the design; and
- (c) the winner of the Council Christmas Card competition who was Harvey Sanderson of Yetholm Primary.

DECISION

AGREED that congratulations be passed to those concerned.

2. **MINUTE**

The Minute of the Meeting held on 26 November 2020 was considered.

DECISION

AGREED that the Minute be approved and signed by the Convener.

3. **COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The Minutes of the following Committees had been circulated:-

- (a) Tweeddale Area Partnership 3 November 2020
- (b) Kelso Common Good Fund 10 November 2020
- (c) Local Review Body 16 November 2020
- (d) Executive 17 November 2020
- (e) Chambers Institution Trust 18 November 2020
- (f) Peebles Common Good Fund 18 November 2020

(g) Audit & Scrutiny	23 November 2020
(h) Jedburgh Common Good Fund	23 November 2020
(i) Peebles Common Good Fund	26 November 2020
(j) Executive	1 December 2020
(k) Galashiels Common Good Fund	3 December 2020

DECISION

APPROVED the Minutes listed above.

4. SCOTTISH BORDERS PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Social Work & Public Protection Officer containing the Scottish Borders Public Protection Committee Annual Report 2019-20. The report explained that in January 2020 Scottish Borders moved from a separate Adult Protection Committee and Child Protection Committee to a Public Protection Committee (PPC). In order to bring the Annual Report together the timescales for both previous Committees had been brought into line; as a result, this report informed Members of the activities of Child Protection covering 12 months from August 2019 – July 2020 and Adult Protection covering 16 months from April 2019 – July 2020. Justice Services and Violence Against Women and Girls timescales were August 2019-July 2020. The Annual Report, contained in Appendix 1 to the covering report detailed the main activities of the multi-agency Public Protection Committee (CPC) and its Delivery Groups. The Report highlighted the continuing work being undertaken in the Scottish Borders to meet the Council's statutory duties to protect children and adults at risk of harm. This included information on the work of the Child Protection Committee, the Adult Protection Committee, the Violence Against Women Partnership, Justice Services and Prevent, the statistical information collated and the significant training and development that had been provided in this area. Mr Michael Batty, Independent Chair of the Committee, was present at the meeting highlighted the main aspects of the report and answered Members' questions. Members welcomed the report and the Convener congratulated Mr Batty on his work with the Committee.

DECISION

NOTED the content of the Public Protection Committee Annual Report.

5. BUDGET PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS 2021-2022

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Executive Director Finance and Regulatory containing an initial high level assessment of the broad planning assumptions being used in developing the Council's revenue and capital plans for 2021/22 and future years. The report explained that a range of assumptions were made as part of the 2020/21 five year revenue plan approved by Council on 26 February 2020. These assumptions had now been reassessed and updated based on the most up to date information available. Key assumptions regarding the budget fell into the following categories:

- Local Government Finance Settlement - Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and Non-Domestic Rates (NDR);
- Council Tax;
- Pay inflation (agreed nationally) and pension contributions;
- Non-pay inflation (e.g. PPP contract, care home contracts, utility costs);
- H&SC funding;
- Ongoing COVID-19 impacts;
- Assumptions on pension contributions;
- Review of the capital plan.

Each of the categories above had been reassessed in line with the latest information available, with any resultant financial implications being included in the first draft of the 2021/22 budget papers. Members noted the challenges ahead and that further reports

would be brought forward to Council as part of the budget development process for 2021/22.

DECISION

- (a) NOTED the planning assumptions being made; and**
- (b) AGREED these as the basis of the revenue and capital budget planning process for 2021/22.**

6. MID-TERM TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT 2020/21

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Executive Director Finance and Regulatory on the mid-year position of treasury management activities for 2020/21, in line with the requirements of the CIPFA Code of Practice, including Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators. The report had already been considered by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee prior to consideration by Council and they had made no comment. The report was required as part of the Council's treasury management control regime. It provided a mid-year report on the Council's treasury activity during the six month period to 30 September 2020 and demonstrated that Treasury activity in the first six months of 2020/21 had been undertaken in full compliance with the approved Treasury Strategy and Policy for the year. Appendix 1 to the report contained an analysis of the performance against the targets set in relation to Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators, and proposed revised estimates of these indicators in light of the 2019/20 out-turn and experience in 2020/21 to date for Council approval.

DECISION

- (a) NOTED:-**

- (i) that treasury management activity in the six months to 30 September 2020 was carried out in compliance with the approved Treasury Management Strategy and Policy;**

- (ii) that the Audit & Scrutiny Committee had scrutinised this report on 23 November 2020.**

- (b) AGREED the revised Prudential and Treasury Management indicators as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.**

7. REVISION TO PROCUREMENT & CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS

With reference to paragraph 11 of the Minute of 27 June 2017, there had been circulated copies of a report by the Executive Director Finance and Regulatory on the proposed revision of the Procurement and Contract Standing Orders. The report explained that the existing Standing Orders relating to Procurement and Contract activities had last been updated in June 2017 and now required to be reviewed and updated to take account of a number of strategic and operational requirements. The proposed changes included the need to amend the existing procurement thresholds considering appropriateness and opportunity, to include positive direction in connection with the Council's Living Wage Accreditation, to deliver Internal Audit recommendations relating to Contracting & Procurement, to reflect the revised public procurement legislation following the Brexit transition period; and to enhance officer obligations relating to Contract & Supplier Management. A copy of the amended Standing Orders was appended to the report. Members welcomed the report and that tendering for local firms would be easier, with the importance of regular audit checks highlighted.

DECISION

AGREED to approve the proposed changes to Procurement & Contract Standing Orders be implemented from 1st January 2021, as contained in the appendix to the report.

8. REVIEW OF NON-RESIDENTIAL CHARGING POLICY

8.1 There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Operating Officer Adult Social Work and Social Care reviewing the Non-Residential Charging Policy for 2021/2022. The report provided an analysis of responses to the consultation on the review of the Non-Residential Charging Policy 2021/22 (Charging Policy) and sought approval for changes to the charges for social care support at home. The Charging Policy Review was an annual activity of Scottish Local Authorities with guidance of The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA). However, this year the publication of COSLA guidance had been delayed until May 2020 due to the impact of COVID 19. The report acknowledged the review and consultation took place in midst of the COVID 19 Global pandemic and that the pandemic was having a major impact on how public services were delivered and on how individuals, families and communities were living in uncertain social and economic circumstances that was seeing unemployment and benefits dependency increase. The Consultation on specific charging matters had been undertaken between February and August 2020 and sought to balance the increasing demand on services, mitigating against hardship and providing good quality services within budget. Five proposals were consulted upon:

1. The implementation of an equivalency model for care and support;
2. Charging for extended short-stays in residential care settings (longer than 4 weeks);
3. Clients with capital above an upper capital threshold of £16,000 would be deemed to be self-funding and asked to pay the full cost of their services (excluding free personal care);
4. Replacing the flat rate charge with financially assessed charge in Extra Care Housing and Housing with care chargeable services; and
5. The increase of the Taper Rate from 65% to 100%.

8.2 Appendices A to E to the report provided sample case scenarios illustrative of the impact of the charging policy recommendations in individual circumstances. These examples were believed to be representative of the impact but, due to every individual's circumstances being different, it was not possible to show every scenario. Appendix F provided a sample of comparison Taper rate and Capital thresholds in other Local Authorities from the Local Government Benchmark Framework and Appendix L illustrated the impact of applying different upper capital thresholds of £16,000, £28,500 and £32,000. Members discussed the report in detail and sought clarification regarding some of the proposed amendments. Some concerns were raised regarding the consultation process and assurances were given that every effort would be made to include all stakeholders in the next consultation which was due to commence in February 2021.

DECISION

AGREED to:-

- (a) note the feedback and analysis from the charging policy consultation;**
- (b) approve reference to the equivalency model in the Charging Policy being applied to care & support resources;**
- (c) approve the following changes to the charges for social care support for people at home, to take effect from 1st April 2021:**
 - (i) the level of the Upper Capital threshold to be £28,500 and to be reviewed annually, bringing this into line with the Upper Capital threshold also used for Residential Care charging assessment. COSLA guidance uses £16,000 upper capital threshold;**
 - (ii) implement a charge for extended short stays in a residential care setting (in line with national Charging for Residential Accommodation Guidance) where the length of stay is longer than 4 weeks;**

(iii) replace the flat rate charge in Extra Care Housing with a financially assessed charge within Extra Care Housing and Housing with Care; and

(iv) increase the Taper rate from 65% to 70%.

ADJOURNMENT

Prior to consideration of the above item, there was a 15 minute adjournment of the meeting to discuss a proposed amendment by Councillor H. Anderson regarding a deferral of the decision which was ruled by the Convener as not competent.

MEMBERS

Councillor Jardine joined and Councillor Marshall left the meeting during consideration of the above item.

9. FIT FOR 2024: OUTLINE PROPOSALS FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OVER FUTURE SERVICE DELIVERY

9.1 There had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director HR & Communications on the need to reshape the model of public service delivery in the Borders to improve the quality of life for its citizens, stimulate economic growth and minimise environmental impact. The Council was investing heavily in new facilities and new ways of working which would have an impact on the Council's existing extensive property footprint over the next few years. The opportunities provided by new technology, the experience of service delivery during Covid-19 and the need to ensure the Council's extensive estate was sustainable, provided a compelling justification of the need to modernise public service delivery and ensure the Council's property estate was fit for purpose.

The report outlined:

- The continuing significant investment that the Council was making in the modernisation of its services and its estate;
- The need for engagement with communities to look at how these investments could be sustained through alternative models of service delivery; and
- The pressing need to look at how limited financial resources could be prioritised to continue to support these developments.

9.2 It was proposed that a further report be brought to Council in February 2021 setting out detailed proposals for a programme of community engagement over the next year to review priorities for service provision and associated investment, ongoing funding and support. It was proposed that the review would take a locality "Place-Making" approach which would fully engage with communities drawing on the principles of Community Empowerment legislation and seeking the participation of communities in the redesign of future public services in the Borders. It would involve key partner organisations including Area Partnerships, Community Councils, Live Borders, Police Scotland, local Registered Social Landlords, NHS Borders and communities themselves to ensure the most effective and sustainable models of service delivery were developed. Members welcomed the report and highlighted the importance of getting the consultation right and the need to include partner organisations. It was also critical to ensure that the needs of rural communities were included.

DECISION

AGREED:-

- (a) to note the continuing investment in services and the Council's extensive estate;**
- (b) the need to review the prioritisation of associated investment and resources to ensure future models of public service delivery in the Borders continued to meet the needs of local people in the most effective and sustainable way;**

- (c) **to reaffirm the need to examine new service delivery models as set out in the Fit for 2024 strategy, which improved the Council's carbon footprint, make better use of technology and deliver savings;**
- (d) **the need to involve Community Planning Partners, Area Partnerships, Community Councils and communities in the future design of public services;**
- (e) **that a further report be brought to Council in February 2021 setting out the details of an estate-wide, community engagement-led review of services which would be undertaken in phases; and**
- (f) **that in anticipation of the report to Council in February, a report on the Learning Estate be brought to January Council.**

10. **EYEMOUTH PRIMARY SCHOOL UPDATE**

With reference to paragraph 14 of the Minute of 27 August 2020, there had been circulated copies of a joint report by the Service Director Assets and Infrastructure and Service Director Young People, Engagement and Inclusion providing an update on the progress with the Eyemouth Primary School project. The previous report provided approval to undertake a feasibility study on alternative education delivery models in the town. The feasibility study had been concluded and Officers had validated the options considered. Initial consultation had taken place on the options with the High school and Primary school senior leadership teams and respective parent councils. Progress would now be made with wider community based consultation prior to a statutory consultation in accordance with Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 legislation. Local members welcomed the report and looked forward to the consultation and hoped that the community would take the opportunity to comment.

**DECISION
AGREED:-**

- (a) **to note the contents of this report;**
- (b) **that community engagement and consultation should take place on the feasibility study options prior to a statutory consultation in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010; and**
- (c) **that a follow on report be provided as the project progressed.**

CHAIRMAN

Councillor Parker vacated the Chair as he wished to speak as a local Member on the following item. Councillor Weatherston chaired the meeting for this item.

11. **GALASHIELS CAMPUS UPDATE**

With reference to paragraph 15 of the Minute of 28 November 2018, there had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Assets and Infrastructure providing an update on the progress with the new Galashiels Community Campus. The previous report recommended that individualised delivery plans should continue to be prepared for Galashiels, Hawick, Selkirk and Peebles HS. The report identified that the new secondary school for Galashiels should remain the Council's priority. During 2019 and 2020, design progress had continued to be made within the capital budget allowance. The project delivery team had now examined all of the details of the possible locations for the new building and concluded that Option 3 provided the greatest benefits overall. However, this had an impact on the adjacent Scott Park and as a consequence, a statutory consultation in accordance with Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 legislation would be required. In the continued presence of COVID-19, community consultation would have to rely on digital forms of communication. To assist with the next stages of the project, a

stakeholder engagement organisation would join the delivery team. Members welcomed the report and, in supporting the proposed option, emphasised the importance of causing as little disruption to the education of pupils as possible during the construction phase. It was viewed as an opportunity to provide a building which would be much more than a school, as a centre for all ages, with the inclusion of a new swimming pool and other sports facilities and leading to an improved Scott Park. It was confirmed that options would form part of the public consultation. In response to a question about the future of the Focus Centre, Mr Curry confirmed that there had already been engagement with the Management Committee. It was noted that a petition against the proposed site had been received which, unfortunately had not been considered earlier but would be dealt with by the Audit & Scrutiny Committee in January 2021.

**DECISION
AGREED:-**

- (a) to note the contents of this report;**
- (b) that Option 3 should be taken forward as the preferred option for public consultation for the new Galashiels Community Campus;**
- (c) that a statutory consultation in accordance with Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 would commence;**
- (d) to approve the appointment of engagement consultants to assist with a digital themed community consultation process; and**
- (e) that a follow on report be provided as the project progressed.**

MEMBER

Councillor Miers left the meeting.

12. PEEBLES HIGH SCHOOL UPDATE

With reference to paragraph 15 of the Minute of 28 November 2018, there had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Assets and Infrastructure providing an update on the progress with the Peebles High School project. The report to Council on 28 November 2018 identified that individualised delivery plans should continue to be prepared for Galashiels, Hawick, Selkirk and Peebles High School. The report identified the priority ranking for the delivery of Peebles High School in terms of following on from Galashiels, Hawick and Selkirk. The fire at the school in November 2019 necessitated a reactive change of approach to Peebles High School and the inclusion of a project in the 2020/21 Capital Investment Plan. Discussions had continued during 2020 with the Council's insurance provider over the claim for loss associated with the fire. This was now reaching settlement. Progress had been made with the feasibility study that had considered the replacement of the parts of the building lost or damaged by the fire. This would require the retention of significant parts of the building and lead to compromises in form, and function. The delivery timescales for fully opening the new school would also be extended. The retention of the Millennium Wing would require the rebuild to proceed in close proximity to the functioning school and as such officers had now considered whether a complete new build would provide better value in terms of time and cost. A further short study had therefore now been undertaken to explore an alternative new build solution at Peebles High School. The purpose of this was to assess the benefits, cost and timescales of the different solutions available to establish which best supported educational objectives, supporting learners in Peebles over the longer term. The initial proposal was considered to have merit, overcoming the issues associated with the retention of the Millennium Wing noted above. It was therefore proposed that the complete new build option should be worked up into a full proposal for consideration. In the continued presence of COVID-19, community consultation would have to rely on digital forms of communication. To assist with the next stages of the project, the

appointment of an external stakeholder engagement organisation to work with the delivery team was proposed. Members welcomed the report and emphasised the need for effective consultation with the community. Councillor Bell proposed that the word “now” be removed from recommendation (f) and this was unanimously approved.

DECISION

AGREED:-

- (a) to note the contents of this report;**
- (b) that the further entirely new build feasibility study work was concluded;**
- (c) the appointment of engagement consultants to assist with a digital themed community consultation process;**
- (d) to note the insurance settlement for the school was likely to fall short of original expectations and would require additional council capital funding to complete the project;**
- (e) that a follow on report be provided in January setting out the costs and benefits of the partial rebuild, full rebuild options for inclusion in the capital programme; and**
- (f) that in a change to the original plan, the old science block would be demolished reducing future running costs for the school.**

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1.30 pm for lunch and reconvened at 2.00 p.m.

13. EU EXIT UPDATE: PREPARING FOR THE END OF THE TRANSITION PERIOD

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Executive Director Corporate Improvement and Economy to provide confidence that appropriate and effective planning and preparation arrangements were in place for the end of the Transition Period following the UK's departure from the European Union (EU) on 1 February 2020. The report set out the present planning context for the end of the Transition Period on 31 December 2020. It noted that, whether or not the UK and EU reached an agreement on their future relations, come 1 January 2021, there would be significant changes. People, communities and businesses, as well as the Council, needed to be prepared to address these changes. The report focused on four areas of change or potential change which the Council must address, namely: People, Procurement, Economy and Civil Contingencies. It identified the nature of risk in those areas and set out how the Council, in many cases working with partners nationally and regionally, planned and prepared to address those risks. Members welcomed the preparations which had been made. Mr Cook answered Members' questions and confirmed that many matters required to be dealt with at a national level.

DECISION

AGREED to:-

- (a) note the risk-based planning and preparation arrangements for the Council for the end of the EU Transition Period, described in the report; and**
- (b) confirm that the Council was satisfied that these arrangements constituted a satisfactory basis for Council planning and preparation for the end of the EU Transition Period.**

14. CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN TIMELINE

With reference to paragraph 6 of the Minute of 25 September 2020, there had been circulated copies of a report by the Executive Director Finance and Regulatory providing an update on the development of a Climate Change Action Plan and proposing a slightly amended timeline for the delivery of the Plan. At its meeting of 25 September 2020, Scottish Borders Council agreed a series of recommendations contained within the report 'Responding to the Climate Emergency'. One of the recommendations agreed was that the Council set out a clear plan of action to reduce our carbon emissions and other greenhouse gases, such a plan to return to Council for consideration before the end of March 2021. A timeline had been developed which set out the details of the preparatory actions required to deliver such a plan. These actions included the identification of strategic themes, provision of planning workshops for each theme, assessing and identifying an approach to both corporate and regional emissions baseline development and maintenance, structuring corporate governance and reporting processes across climate change issues, and developing proposals for Council wide staff training and engagement. It had emerged from this planning approach however, that the original March timescale could not now be achieved. It was requested that in order to produce a robust strategic approach to the development of a net zero pathway within a Climate Change Action Plan, that the timescale was extended by 3 months, with an Action Plan presented to Council in June 2021. It was emphasized that re-scheduling Council's consideration of the Climate Action Plan did not inhibit Council's ability to progress existing Climate Action. For example, the Energy Efficiency Programme continued to deliver carbon and cost savings through a programme of energy efficiency and renewable energy retrofit. It did mean that the strategic overview of activity would be delayed in being brought before Council, but it was considered that the benefits in taking limited additional time to strengthen the Climate Action Plan meaningfully outweighed any deficits caused by the delay in presentation of the Plan. Members supported the extension although an interim report to the Sustainable Development Committee was requested.

DECISION

AGREED the Climate Change Action Plan Timeline, in particular that a Climate Change Action Plan was considered by the Council before the end of June 2021.

MEMBER

Councillor Fullarton left the meeting.

15. MOTION BY COUNCILLOR THORNTON-NICOL

Councillor Thornton-Nicol, seconded by Councillor Bell, moved her Motion as detailed on the agenda in the following terms:-

"That Scottish Borders Council requests Officers bring a report to Council to amend the current Scheme of Administration as it applies to the functions referred to the Major Contracts Governance Group. This amendment would provide detail as to the particular matters the Group would monitor in respect of the performance of the Live Borders contract and the CGI contract, and would give clarity to Elected Members as to their monitoring role in the Group."

Councillor Thornton-Nicol spoke in support of her motion which was unanimously approved.

DECISION

AGREED to approve the Motion as detailed above.

MEMBER

Councillor Aitchison left the meeting.

16. OPEN QUESTIONS

The questions submitted by Councillors H. Scott, Robson, Ramage and Bell were answered.

DECISION

NOTED the replies as detailed in Appendix I to this Minute.

17. **PRIVATE BUSINESS**

DECISION

AGREED under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the business detailed in Appendix II to this Minute on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 6, 8 and 9 of Part I of Schedule 7A to the Act.

SUMMARY OF PRIVATE BUSINESS

18. **MINUTE**

The private section of the Council Minute of 26 November 2020 was approved.

19. **COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The private sections of the Committee Minutes as detailed in paragraph 3 of this Minute were approved.

20. **HAWICK FLOOD PROTECTION SCHEME**

Members approved a report by the Service Director Assets and Infrastructure on the final funding for the Scheme.

The meeting concluded at 3.20 pm

**SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL
17 DECEMBER 2021**

Questions from Councillor H. Scott

1. To Executive Member for Children and Young People

Education Maintenance Allowance - for each of the last three years external auditors have noted, and brought to notice, that council attendance records for pupils were not being adequately updated by schools and did not always match payment details during the year. Whilst assurances were received from management that this was a housekeeping issue and did not impact on the payments claimed for the year, auditors recommended that arrangements were put in place to confirm records are being correctly updated.

Please detail what management steps are in progress to improve the maintenance of these records, and by whom?

Response from Councillor C. Hamilton

Internal Audit has now conducted a review on the operation of Education Maintenance Allowances and their draft report including recommendations they consider necessary to improve the maintenance of EMA records.

These will be agreed with management and any actions that should be taken, including any improvements required by Schools, to improve the administration of the EMA process will be reported to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee on 8 February 2021.

The value of Education Maintenance Allowances paid out to Students in 2019/20 was £230,952 with 304 pupils receiving an EMA payment during the financial year.

During the 2019/20 statutory audit process, Audit Scotland raised 21 queries with regards to the Administration of the EMA process. Of these 21 queries, only 2 errors were identified and corrected.

With respect to the other 19 questions, all were answered and followed up as required.

7 of these initial questions related to study periods, which qualify for EMA purposes, but are not recorded in Seemis as the students do not attend classes. 12 questions regarding lateness, self-certification and attendance were resolved.

Supplementary

Councillor Scott commented that it was disappointing that this had been raised for the last 3 years and hoped things would now improve. Councillor Hamilton advised that she would follow this up.

2. To Executive Member for Public Protection

Section 40 of 'Transport Scotland's Good Practice Guide on 20mph Speed Restrictions', states that, *"Any decision to lower the speed limit to 20mph should seek to avoid the need for extensive police enforcement, as 20mph speed limits will not routinely be enforced, unless it is necessary and in the interest of casualty reduction. The only exception to this is the enforcement of 20mph speed limits outside schools, which takes place on a regular basis."*

- On how many occasions in 2020 has the CAT monitored the 20mph speed limits outside schools?

- What steps will the CAT Strategic Oversight Group take to ensure this level of enforcement is maintained and enhanced?
- Can details of future speed checks outside schools be included on CAT reports to give parents confidence that enforcement of the 20mph speed limit outside schools is being taken seriously?

Response from Councillor Turnbull

- The CAT have not undertaken any 20mph speed checks outside schools in the Borders during 2020. This was against a back drop of extended school closures due to Covid from March to August. The CAT have however responded to complaints relating to parking, specifically Peebles, Duns and Selkirk since September 2020.
- If a specific complaint is made in relation to speeding and or parking outside a school liaison takes place with the Safer Routes to School Coordinator and Education staff and an assessment is made of the situation. Based upon the options available enforcement may be necessary and fed into the CAT tasking process.
- Information on speed check activity is already provided to members who participate in the CAT Oversight Group.

Supplementary

Councillor Scott asked that more effort be put into this work as it was a Government recommendation and asked for more CAT activity at schools in future. Councillor Turnbull confirmed he would take these comments back to officers.

Question from Councillor Robson

To the Leader

Can I be advised when and in what way the Staff Directories in @Work are to be updated?

Response from Councillor Haslam

The directories will be maintained through regular interfaces between Business World and CGI systems. If members are unsure of the correct Officer to contact for an issue they should e mail the members enquiries mail box.

Supplementary

Councillor Robson asked that they be kept up-to-date as it was difficult to trace some people in the organisation. Skype also needed to be updated. Councillor Haslam advised that this was a big task for officers at the current time when there was such a demand for front line support.

Question from Councillor Ramage

To Executive Member for Adult Wellbeing

When will the Teviot Day Centre reopen in Hawick?

Response from Councillor Weatherston

This pandemic has unfairly impacted on some groups of the population much more than others, and those people that used the Teviot Day Centre are included within this group. We continue to regularly review the potential of opening of the centre in the light of evolving Scottish Gov't guidance.

As we work and live through this second wave, we need to be reminded just how virulent and highly infectious this virus is. We are still right in the middle of our response and recovery efforts and we must continue to be vigilant in what we can and can't do.

The Borders has in the main done very well, with limited outbreaks, because of the measures that have been put in place but it is essential that we continue with great care to

protect those groups who are at most serious risk. Opening the Teviot Day Centre now for these very vulnerable families, would be simply be too risky at present.

“Managers and staff teams across the Health & Social Care Partnership are however doing as much as they can to alleviate the hardship brought by Covid 19. Our Community Assistance Hubs provide advice and information about the wide range of support that is available and they work closely with Third Sector colleagues like the Borders Carers Centre and Alzheimer’s Scotland on specific support for older people and family carers.

Our Local Area Co-ordinators and RVS Social Centre Co-ordinators maintain contact with our vulnerable households and we are looking closely at what may be possible in terms of opening some form of social centre day support for our learning disability and mental health communities, as well as older people. These will follow Scottish Government guidance linked to the number of households that can meet safely indoors.

“Should anyone be looking for advice and support in the meantime, they can contact the Council’s Community Assistance Hubs on 0300 100 1800 or at www.scotborders.gov.uk/cahs.”

Supplementary

Councillor Ramage advised she had received distressing calls from carers who had no support. A letter was sent by Scottish Government stating that Day services for adults could reopen with local agreement and she asked why was this not happening at Teviot Day Centre. Councillor Weatherston advised that he would raise this with officers.

Question from Councillor Bell

To Executive Member for Adult Wellbeing

Councillors recently had an informative and reassuring private briefing from officers on how the management of Covid-19 outbreaks in council run care homes and associated care facilities has developed as a consequence of responding to recent events.

I think it is in the public interest that the general learnings we heard about are made public.

Whilst clearly there should be no publicity about specific individuals or specific situations; could the general learnings be made public through the usual channels?

Response from Councillor Weatherston

Throughout the pandemic the Council has operated within the strongest possible response, recovery and debrief models. At every stage officers have sought to utilise all learning available and from each separate outbreak.

At this stage I think it is helpful to highlight seven points of general learning:

1. The incubation period of the virus can be up to 14 days in all including older people and a significant proportion of positive cases can be asymptomatic or have symptoms which are not the typical four core COVID symptoms.
2. Symptoms in the elderly can also include: new or worsened confusion and delirium. Diarrhoea and or vomiting. Marked fatigue and tiredness, muscle aches, a sore throat, abdominal pain, a persistent headache and a rash. Staff are now trained to be looking for these symptoms as well as the normal COVID symptoms
3. The Infection Control Team from NHS visit the setting and ensure strict infection control measures are in place pertaining to PPE, PPE stations, Waste Stations and that enhanced cleaning regimes are implemented.

4. Daily multi- disciplinary staff meetings are implemented with the staff managing any outbreak to reinforce key messages and operating procedures.
5. As soon as a COVID outbreak occurs the defined COVID response team follow detailed guidance and :
 - a. Develop urgent staffing contingency plans assuming a worst case scenario for a loss of up to 50% of staff,
 - b. Staff are asked as to their ability to move to 12 hour shifts which reduces the staff numbers in any home in a 24 hour period, increases the staff on any shift and allows a smaller number of staff to be required to provide the necessary care.
 - c. Staff are cohorted into dedicated teams to care for COVID and Non-COVID patients to further improve infection control.
6. Staff and Clients in defined areas that are close to any COVID positive cases are all tested to identify any further spread.
7. District Nursing in the local area are contacted and a response implemented immediately to support clients and staff.

Each of these key elements of learning and many more detailed points result in improved care for those we look after and reduced risks for them and our staff. We will continue to do everything possible to learn at every opportunity and improve our response to COVID 19.