

MINUTE of Meeting of the EILDON AREA PARTNERSHIP held remotely by Microsoft Teams on Thursday, 25 March 2021 at 6.00 pm

Present:- Councillors G. Edgar (Chairman), S. Aitchison, E. Jardine, J. Linehan, D. Parker, H. Scott and E Thornton-Nicol (from para 4.2).
With 39 representatives of partner organisations, Community Councils, and members of the public.

Apologies:- Councillors A. Anderson and C. Cochrane

In Attendance:- Communities and Partnerships Manager, Locality Development Co-ordinator (K. Harrow), Democratic Services Officer (F. Walling).

1. **WELCOME**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Eildon Area Partnership held remotely via Microsoft teams, which included elected Members, guests attending within the meeting and those watching via the Live Stream. He gave a particular welcome to Councillor Jenny Linehan, newly elected Member for Leaderdale and Melrose. The Chairman went on to outline how the meeting would be conducted.

2. **FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION FROM MEETING OF 28 JANUARY 2020**

The Minute of the meeting of the Eildon Area Partnership held on 28 January 2021 had been circulated and was noted.

3. **PLACE MAKING APPROACH**

3.1 Portfolio Manager, James Lamb, gave a slide presentation to provide an overview of the Place Making Approach. The aim of this initiative was to facilitate a more joined-up, collaborative and participative approach to services, land and buildings, across all sectors within a place. This should enable better outcomes for everyone and increased opportunities for people and communities to shape their own lives. The intention was to build on learning from the operation of the Community Assistance Hubs and Resilience Teams which had worked effectively during the Covid-19 pandemic. The presentation slides set out the scope of the Place Making approach in terms of links with relevant strategies, reviews, programmes and frameworks which were operating in the Scottish Borders and South of Scotland. Phase 1 of the programme, Preparation and Planning, had already started with initial awareness raising taking place in March and April through forums such as the Area Partnerships. Work would be carried out in June to shape the framework with Phase 2 taking place late summer to develop initial High Level Locality Place Briefs through workshops and identification of priorities and needs. Phase 3 in the Autumn would focus on agreeing and developing Place Programme workstreams with delivery being started in Phase 4 at the end of the year and on into 2022. Mr Lamb was looking for views and invited feedback which could be sent to him via the email address communityengagement@scotborders.gov.uk

3.2 Councillor Aitchison referred to the challenge of identifying and quantifying the sums of money involved in different strategies and asked how this would be rationalised. Mr Lamb

emphasised that Area Partnerships would have a role in prioritising projects. Community Council representative Jenny Mushlin advised that Stow Community Trust for Stow and Fountainhall had funding for a community development worker who was currently undertaking a place assessment. She asked how this would fit into the overall project. Mr Lamb believed this would put the area in a good place to feed into the process. He confirmed that communities who already had plans in place should bring these to Area Partnership meetings to amalgamate towards the development of high level locality place briefs. He also confirmed that the third sector would be very much involved in the process.

PROPOSED GALASHIELS COMMUNITY CAMPUS

- 3.3 As an addition to the agenda, the Chairman introduced Project Manager, Steven Renwick and Architects from the Project Design team to give an update on the Galashiels Community Campus project. Mr Renwick explained that he and his colleagues were in attendance to raise awareness of the launch of a consultation exercise which had recently gone live as the design of the campus was progressing. Due to Covid-19 restrictions it was not possible to carry out face to face consultation in the usual way. Instead, the public was encouraged to visit the Scottish Borders Council website and to contribute to the on-line consultation. The launch of the consultation exercise would be followed up with MS Teams based meetings with various groups in the town, some of these leading to follow-on sessions during the remaining part of March and into April. Following on from this, in May, there would be a formal and mandatory Education consultation. In terms of obtaining planning consent, as the proposed development represented a major application there would be 2 planning stages. A 12 week Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) would be followed by a full planning application later in the year. The public would be able to send in representations as part of this planning process. Design would progress in tandem with the statutory processes and the project team were looking at site commencement in Autumn 2022 with early 2025 being the target date to open to public and pupils. Mr Renwick added that he did not intend to present all the design information at the meeting as all this material could be found on the website. However he was happy to answer any questions from anyone who had looked at that material and would like more information at this stage.
- 3.4 Mr Renwick confirmed that the consultation did include space at the end to add comments. He thanked the community for what had already been a good response to the consultation with 700 visits to the site and 21 representations within the first week. In response to a question about what was being offered at the proposed campus in terms of community benefit, Mr Renwick explained that the swimming pool would be replaced with a 6-lane 25 metre community swimming pool, there would be a hydrotherapy facility, games hall, fitness suite, dance studio, gymnasium, 2G hockey pitch, 3G combined rugby/football pitch, stand-alone grass pitch and 6-lane athletics track. External tennis courts would be provided to ensure continuity of club sport. In answer to a question about the possibility of indoor tennis facilities, Mr Renwick advised there were ongoing discussions with Live Borders but there was no firm position on that at present. The development did encroach upon part of Scott Park but landscaping proposals around the school would enhance community access to the area and the design for a replacement playpark was currently being explored. With regard to car park facilities, Mr Renwick explained that once the new swimming pool was open the ground occupied by the existing pool would be used for bus drop-off and car parking. There were also plans to augment the existing path network in Scott Park to give enhanced pedestrian access to the facility. In recognition of a focus in social media about part of Scott Park disappearing it was noted that there would be additional space made available around the school for public access and that the re-development of the park would be locked into planning conditions. Although this was the preferred design option of all those considered, the importance of the public taking part in the consultation was stressed, as there were still unknowns. It was vital to get the design right and constructive suggestions would be taken on board. In further discussion, the project, which represented a huge investment for the Council, was recognised as a fantastic opportunity, for the young people and community of Galashiels, in providing a new school and wide-ranging community facility.

In conclusion the representatives from the project team advised that they would be happy to return to future meetings to provide an update at various stages and to answer questions.

4. **FIT FOR 2024: REVIEW OF AREA PARTNERSHIPS & COMMUNITY FUND**

With reference to paragraph 5 of the Eildon Area Partnership Minute of 28 January 2021, Locality Development Co-ordinator, Kenny Harrow, gave an update following the presentations of 2 reports to full Council that morning (25 March 2021) which followed the outcomes of each Area Partnership's review in relation to the findings of the Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) and the review of the Community Fund. The full reports can be accessed from the following link:

<https://scottishborders.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=132&MId=5281&Ver=4>

In terms of the Community Fund, based on feedback and proposals from Area Partnerships there were a number of changes proposed to take effect from 1 April 2021. Mr Harrow gave a brief outline of the proposed changes. Area Partnerships could decide whether to adopt these changes or to continue with the status quo. A further report on the outcome of the changes after one year of operation would go back to Council where further recommendations would be made as appropriate. The Chairman asked for views about the proposed changes and suggestions about how to move forward, noting that, if adopted, the changes should be in place by the June Area Partnership meeting. Views were expressed supporting the proposed changes, particularly with regard to the establishment of an Assessment Panel and scoring mechanism for applications to the Community Fund. This was an opportunity for the Area Partnership to provide direction and decide how money should be spent. After further discussion it was suggested that a small sub group be set up and that this meet within two weeks to look at a scoring and monitoring mechanism. Prior to the meeting, evidence should be collected and shared. The following members were proposed and agreed to form the sub group:

Jim Johnston

Jenny Mushlin

Susan Hunter

Councillor Aitchison

Councillor Edgar

Councillor Thornton-Nicol

There were further suggested names put forward of people who were not present at the meeting. These would be followed up by Mr Harrow who would confirm the membership and arrange the first meeting of the group.

5. **SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Steve Oliver introduced himself as the Station Commander for Galashiels Community Fire Station, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service (SFRS). He explained that there had been a few structure changes in the area with 4 Station Commanders providing 24/7 cover of the area which included Eildon. The group manager was now Tony Collins and the Area Commander Steve Gourlay. Current priority for SFRS was to maintain safe availability of the service during Covid. There had been some impact to stations but the retained crew had maintained cover in the same way, with certain measures being taken such as no mixing of watches on change over. In partnership with SBC and NHS Borders, fire stations were now being used for asymptomatic testing. The number of incidents requiring attendance by SFRS had been low during lockdown, probably due to a low level of activity. Presentations around Prevention and Protection and home prevention advice continued where requested and protectors provided where necessary. Fire safety audits were still being conducted with PPE, where risks would outweigh any risk from Covid. Steve Oliver can be contacted on steve.oliver2@firescotland.gov.uk

6. **LOCALITY PLAN PRIORITY: Reduce our impact on the local (and global) environment by raising awareness of what local communities can do in terms of their homes, their businesses, their schools, their travel etc.**

Youth Ambassadors for Sustainability, represented by Ewan Cameron-Lyle and Faye Turpie-Laird, had made a short video which was shared with the Area Partnership entitled “A Climate Emergency – our future in the Borders”. The video gave examples of how the Scottish Borders was not yet equipped to deal with global warming and challenges to address such as litter damaging local green spaces, too many diesel and petrol vehicles, too few public transport links and too few electric charging points. There were also a lack of jobs, particularly green jobs, to keep people living in the Borders. What was needed was a community not reliant on fossil fuels, an efficient transport system, green jobs and shared resources. The presentation referred to several initiatives and groups in the Borders already working towards zero carbon and zero poverty, such as Café U; Greener Melrose; Plastic Free Borders; Sea the Change; Peebles CAN; Greener Hawick; Peebles Biodiversity & Ecology group; Selkirk Community Shed and many more. With reference to the Council’s declaration of a Climate Emergency, the presentation called for more electric charging points, more community places, improved transport links, re-wilding, creation of more green jobs and change from fossil fuels to renewables. Youth Ambassadors for Sustainability were launching a new campaign named “Our promise to the planet” which asked for everyone who lives in the Borders to make one promise to the planet. Members of the Area Partnership thanked Euan and Faye for showing the video and welcomed the messages conveyed. Many made a commitment to join the campaign by agreeing to make a promise to the planet as requested. Anyone wishing to record and share their pledge should send a photograph to Pam Rigby, Youth Engagement Worker, at pam.rigby@scotborders.gov.uk who would add this to the social media site.

7. LOCALITY PLAN PRIORITY: Strengthen partnership working between local services

With reference to paragraph 4.1 of the Eildon Area Partnership Minute of 28 January 2021, Team Leader Oonagh McGarry, provided an update on the Eildon Community Assistance Hub. As previously explained, the hubs were originally set up to ensure that individuals had the support they needed during the pandemic. Ms McGarry advised that although the number of assistance requests was now decreasing there was help provided in February/March to obtain food and medicines during self-isolation; energy supplies; and digital devices through the Connecting Scotland scheme. Information and advice was also provided around areas such as Free School Meals, fuel debt etc. Weekly Community Hub meetings involved 27 services/organisations (statutory and third sector) and 33 individuals. Key themes emerging for the Eildon area were digital inclusion, fuel poverty, poverty, transport, mental health, employment, disadvantaged groups and volunteer and paid staff wellbeing. The Community Assistance Hub continued to operate and could be contacted on Covid-19community@scotborders.gov.uk 0300 100 1800.

8. EILDON COMMUNITY FUND 2020/21

Assessments of five applications to the Eildon Community Fund had been circulated, plus a summary of grant funding within Eildon in 2020/21 and the source of that funding. Mr Harrow referred to the summary which showed grant applications awarded, those under assessment and those to be considered by the Area Partnership. He advised that if the pending applications were approved there would still be just over £31k in the Eildon pot for distribution. Consideration should be given as to how to encourage groups to apply for support through the Community Fund. Before giving consideration to the five following applications, Mr Harrow gave a summary of each and confirmed that each met the Community Fund criteria.

8.1 Selkirk Community Council

The application under consideration was submitted by Selkirk Community Council on behalf of the local Cycling Without Age group for £2,250 for the purchase of a second trishaw for the town, the first having been purchased using funding from Selkirk Common Good Fund. The purpose of the scheme was to allow elderly and “mobility limited” individuals to get out and about in their community. Cycling without Age had demonstrated that trishaw projects had a positive effect on emotional well-being and improved mental health. As two volunteers always needed to be present on an outing it

was felt that it would be useful for them to be piloting a second trishaw with another person. After receiving answers to questions the request for £2,250 was approved in full.

8.2 **Interest Link Borders**

The application from Interest Link Borders was for £5,000 to continue the development of an existing volunteer befriending project which supported up to 45 socially isolated children, young people and adults with learning disabilities living in Eildon/Central borders annually. Support was currently being given on-line and through other distance methods. There was increased demand due to other facilities being closed. The Group was projecting a shortfall in salary funding and was applying for a one-off grant of £5,000 for project staff costs. The request for £5,000 was approved in full.

8.3 **TD1 Youth Hub**

TD1 Youth Hub was applying for £11,803 match funding to deliver the TD1 Pathfinder programme, a project which aimed to promote and support positive mental health and inclusion through access to facilities and by encouraging young people to develop new skills that pushed their personal boundaries. The TD1 Pathfinder programme would run 2 sessions a week. One would have a food/health focus and the other would be around physical activity with a focus on cycling and inclusion of other sports such as football, walking and golf. There would be links into existing sports clubs in the area and youth awards given where applicable. The funding would cover staffing costs for 52 weeks, 3 bikes and facility bookings. Area Partnership members were very supportive of the project, particularly in respect to the integration with existing clubs in the area. The request for £11,803 was approved in full.

8.4 **Workplace Chaplaincy Scotland**

The request was for a grant of £4,266 to recruit individual session workers to support the sessional project leader deliver the Wellbeing Community Resilience Project. The workforces served by chaplains amounted to a combined workforce of around 4,550 with more than 100 workers being supported. The group would aim to offer training modules including Redundancy – what now; Building Resilience; Trauma support; and Depression and Bereavement. The group also aimed to offer workplace training including health and wellbeing weeks and events. The request for £4,266 was approved in full.

8.5 **Newtown & Eildon Community Council**

The request was for £3,068.97 to cover the cost of 6 gazebos. These would be used to host various stalls at the Newtown St Boswells craft fair, which was held after a parade to celebrate the switching on of the village lights and Christmas Tree. The gazebos would also be used for community fundraising events all year around and be available to other community groups within the village and surrounding area. Use of the gazebos would help in the Covid recovery plan in providing covered outside spaces for events. The request for £3,068.97 was approved in full.

9. **COMMUNITY FUND EVALUATIONS - UPDATE ON PROGRESS**

Update from YouthBorders

Susan Hunter, from YouthBorders, was in attendance to give an update. She explained that YouthBorders was funded by the Community Fund to sustain their Part-Time Membership Development Officer. Since November the Development Officer had provided proactive support to youth groups (staff, volunteers, trustees) in the following areas: Trustee Recruitment and Diversity; Child Protection; Volunteer Induction; and Development and Implementing Policies in youth groups. Training had also been organised for Child Protection and Social Media. Partnership activity which had benefited the Eildon area included an opportunity between Alchemy Film and Arts with youth clubs in Galashiels, Langlee and Tweedbank; work to develop inclusive youth work for ASN youth with BANG; and the administration of a small grants scheme for creative practitioners to work with youth and community groups and schools which would bring financial benefit to the Eildon area. YouthBorders provided re-active support to youth groups in relation to risk assessment; new Covid-19 guidance for youth work; job

descriptions and recruiting staff; developing play and after school activities; promotion of the Rural Action Fund; and making connection between identified need and existing groups. The Development Officer had also been supporting the growth of the YouthBorders membership with new members joining the network: Alchemy Film and Arts; Live, Learn, Earn; and a few more who were in the process of joining. Celebrating our network and the achievements of YouthBorders members had also been part of this role – and this had taken place on social media and through the regular e-bulletin and YouthBorders news.

10. **ANY OTHER FORMAL BUSINESS**

The Chairman referred to an appendix which had been circulated prior to the meeting with information on current SCB consultations, reports, information on the Community Empowerment Act and useful links. He also drew attention to the Evaluation form which was available through the meeting's chat box to collect feedback from the meeting. A summary of feedback received during the meeting is shown from the following link: <https://forms.office.com/Pages/AnalysisPage.aspx?id=ojLtiWub20G7bzduyPzRHek6Osf4lNxHuENZi6RBIH1UN1JBQ0FES0owNUUzMk5EVks3OTkxSIFZOS4u&AnalyzerToken=X6ilzkcufuXln3J8o8q1h1sa2xqgZRbl>

11. **OPEN FORUM**

Mr Johnston gave a quick update about the Galashiels trishaw. Routes were in place, volunteers recruited and the trishaw was ready to go once Covid restrictions allowed. Jim McPherson agreed that this was also the position in Selkirk. Mr McPherson added that he was hoping to become qualified as a trainer for volunteer pilots.

12. **NEXT AREA PARTNERSHIP**

The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday 24 June 2021. Suggestions for agenda items could be sent to the Locality Development Co-ordinator at kenny.harrow@scotborders.gov.uk. by 10 June 2021

CHAIRMAN

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 8.00 am