

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL TEVIOT AND LIDDESDALE AREA PARTNERSHIP

MINUTES of Meeting of the TEVIOT AND LIDDESDALE AREA PARTNERSHIP held via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday, 16 November 2021 at 6.00 pm

Present:- SBC Councillors: N. Richards (Chair), W. McAteer, C. Ramage, G. Turnbull. Other organisations attendees: Ms H. Batsch (The Bridge), Ms R. Dickson, Mr W. Douglas, Mr W. Fletcher (Burnfoot CC), Ms D. Friel (Upper Teviotdale and Borthwick Water CC), Mr W. George, Ms C. Jeffrey, Mr P. Kerr (Southdean CC), Ms C. Knight, Mr C. Knox (Hawick CC), Mr G. Kolbe, Mr D. Tait (Future Hawick), Mr A. Warburton (Upper Liddesdale & Hermitage CC), Ms R. Woods (Southdean CC).

Apologies:- Councillor D. Paterson.

In Attendance:- Communities & Partnerships Manager (S. Smith), Director Resilient Communities (J. Craig), Locality Development Coordinator (G. Jardine), Portfolio Manager (J. Lamb), Community Engagement Officer (S. McKail), Network Manager (B. Young), Flood and Coast Management Team Leader (D. Morrison), Clerk to the Council, Democratic Services Officer (W. Mohieddeen), Mr A. Sheridan (Forestry Scotland).

1. **WELCOME AND MEETING PROTOCOLS**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Teviot & Liddesdale Area Partnership. The meeting was held via Microsoft Teams and the Chairman outlined how the meeting would be conducted and how those both in the meeting and watching via the live stream could take part. The Chair welcomed Scott McKail who had recently been recruited to the position of Community Engagement Officer.

2. **FEEDBACK FROM MEETING HELD ON 7 SEPTEMBER 2021**

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the Meeting held on 7 September 2021. With reference to paragraph 9.1 of the Minute, Mr Tait advised that the first sentence was incorrect and should read "Mr Tait advised that it had been reported in the press about the Volunteer Park Stand but the Council had done nothing since 2018." It was hoped an update could be provided at the next meeting. The Chair advised attendees that the software Menti would be used to take feedback at the end of the Meeting.

DECISION

APPROVED the Minute, subject to the above amendment.

3. **PLACE MAKING UPDATE**

- 3.1 With reference to paragraph 3 of the Minute of 7 September 2019, Portfolio Manager, James Lamb, presented an update on progress with Place Making. Mr Lamb advised that the approach to Place Making presented at the previous meeting had been approved by Scottish Borders Council. Feedback following the previous meeting had suggested that a structured feedback form was created which went online in October 2021. With regards to staff recruitment, five community engagement officer posts had been filled along with two planning and regeneration officers, and a green space officer. Recruitment for the

climate change officer remained ongoing.

- 3.2 Mr Lamb presented a summary of feedback received from the five Area Partnerships on joint principles, framework, prioritisation and the role agreement, incorporating oversight of Place Making. Across the five Area Partnerships, 21 responses were received, including three received from the Teviot and Liddesdale Area Partnership. Mr Lamb noted that approximately 570 email addresses received the Place Making consultation questionnaire, and the response rate represented just under 4% return. That rate would not be representative and was not therefore conclusive, but the feedback was informative for the process. It was further noted that the Council report may not have been an effective means to consult and that feedback may be supplemented by other means including a special meeting or workshop. Attendees noted that the timeframe for the consultation was short and didn't lend itself to Community Council meeting schedules to provide more effective feedback.
- 3.3 Mr Lamb then presented an overview of feedback based on the proposals. Feedback on the joint principles was generally in agreement; however it was reported that there were issues with complexity of the language used and scepticism on delivery and sustainability of the principles. There was mixed feedback received on prioritisation; however a majority of respondents agreed with the proposal. There was not clear consensus of where to start on prioritisation and it was suggested this may be due to the complexity of prioritisation. During discussion, attendees considered a tiered structure to prioritisation placing communities on a gold/silver/bronze scale to start assessment. Feedback on the role agreement reported that respondents generally felt that Area Partnerships were supported to provide an oversight role; however there was a need for more inclusivity. It was discussed whether Area Partnerships provided the right level of inclusivity across communities and that attendees may vary depending on applications for funding overseen by the Area Partnership. Attendees noted that communities needed to be empowered and not to face barriers to participate in application processes. Mr Lamb concluded by presenting next steps which included forming a direction on the principles framework and role agreement. Furthermore, workshops would be arranged for February 2022.

DECISION

NOTED the update.

4. BUILD BACK A BETTER BORDERS RECOVERY FUND APPLICATIONS

The Locality Development Coordinator, Ms Jardine, presented the summary of applications to the Build Back a Better Borders Recovery Fund:

(a) Riddell Fiddles

An application had been received for £6,120 to start a new weekly after school group in Burnfoot, based at Burnfoot Hub, teaching fiddle and guitar to the P4/5 age group. The application was assessed as high, noting the intention to increase number of opportunities for children to be involved in a group activity and that Riddell Fiddles have referenced examples of support for the project and the positive impact they were having in the community before the pandemic.

DECISION

AGREED to award Riddell Fiddles the sum of £6,120, subject to the following conditions:

- (i) The applicant must follow Scottish Government Covid-19 guidance,**
- (ii) Instruments purchased must be available for wider community use.**

(b) Upper Liddesdale and Hermitage Community Council (ULHCC)

An application had been received for £1,974 to purchase and install a defibrillator on the B6357 road adjacent to the resilience shed opposite Larriston Farm. The application was assessed as medium noting the installation of defibrillators would provide a rural community with a resource that would improve the chances of

someone surviving a cardiac arrest. ULHCC had still to outline how the cabinet and defibrillator would be maintained to prolong its lifespan. ULHCC planned to insert solar panels on their resilience shed with a battery inside and the defibrillator located in an insulated enclosure. ULHCC had since submitting the application confirmed the Community Council would be responsible for the defibrillator's maintenance and planned to train a local response group.

DECISION

AGREED to award Upper Liddesdale and Hermitage Community Council the sum of £1,974, subject to the following conditions:

- (i) The applicant must follow Scottish Government Covid-19 guidance,**
- (ii) A plan must be put in place for the maintenance of the defibrillator and cabinet.**

(c) Wilton Park and Hawick Tennis Club

An application had been received for £4,240 to deliver several new initiatives to encourage more people to access tennis including free taster sessions for key groups such as disability sessions, tots, children, beginners and ages over 60. The application was assessed as high as the club was looking to extend the opportunity for different community groups to try tennis for the first time following the pandemic and the proposals were inclusive and removed barriers to participation.

DECISION

AGREED to award Wilton Park and Hawick Tennis Club the sum of £4,240, subject to the following conditions:

- (i) The applicant must follow Scottish Government Covid-19 guidance,**
- (ii) Equipment must be available for wider community use.**

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Ramage declared an interest in the following item of business in terms of Section 5 of the Councillors Code of Conduct and left the Teams meeting during the discussion, returning once the item had been finalised.

(d) Burnfoot Community Futures (BCF)

An application was received for £14,850 to provide the community with training and development opportunities to assist recovery from the pandemic with focus on supporting those in the community directly impacted by Covid-19 including those who were isolated and those affected by poverty and loneliness. The application was noted as medium as the community had always been at the centre of BCF activities and they have had a successful history of delivering activities. It was noted that the BCF accounts were outwith the 15-month period allowed for the Build Back a Better Borders Recovery Fund with an expectation that their latest accounts would go to their Board for approval in December with their annual general meeting likely to take place in December. Attendees were asked to consider whether the account submission would be an obstacle to the application. Attendees noted funding would have a high value for the Burnfoot community, that Burnfoot Community Futures was deserving of support and that the Area Partnership should take steps to help look after those in Burnfoot.

DECISION

AGREED to award Burnfoot Community Futures the sum of £14,850, subject to the following conditions:

- (i) The applicant must follow Scottish Government Covid-19 guidance,**
- (ii) Equipment purchased must be available for wider community use.**

5. COMMUNITY FUND UPDATE

The Locality Development Coordinator, Ms Jardine, presented an update on progress of the Teviot and Liddesdale Community Fund. With reference to paragraph 10 of the Minute of the Meeting held on 7 September 2021, the Area Partnership agreed to divide the Community Fund into two pots, which both held £23,899. Pot A was divided between each Community Council and applications closed on 12 November 2021 with checks on eligibility still having taken place. Two applications had been received for Pot A and seven applications had been received for Pot B. Most of Pot B applications were from Hawick-based groups applying for funding up to £5,000. A request had been received from Newcastleton Community Council to increase the limit of the Pot A fund. Attendees noted that increasing the limit on fund applications may provide flexibility for applicants. Attendees discussed the scheduling of Area Partnership meetings in relation to the deadline for reopening fund applications. It had been suggested that the Teviot and Liddesdale Area Partnership meeting scheduled for 25 January 2022 be moved back to 1 February 2022 to avoid clashes related to Burns Night. It was noted that if this change was to take place, fund applications could open from 7 December to 7 January allowing officers to assess applications for the Area Partnership to decide on funding applications on a meeting on 1 February.

DECISION

AGREED:

- (a) to reopen applications to the Community Fund from 7 December 2021 to 7 January 2022; and**
- (b) that Community Councils review the funding limits for Pot A funds and change if necessary.**

6. FORESTRY - SOUTH OF SCOTLAND

6.1 Andrew Sheridan of Forestry Scotland gave a presentation on Scottish Forestry and their work in South of Scotland. Forestry Scotland was one of two agencies formed in 2019 to take forward work previously undertaken by Forestry Commission Scotland and Forest Enterprise Scotland. Scottish Forestry responsibilities were for forestry policy and the regulation of public and private forestry, including those managed by Forestry and Land Scotland. Mr Sheridan advised the main work of Forestry Scotland was the forestry grant scheme for woodland creation which had approximately £45 million. Funding included strategic timber transport fund, which had been used to build bypasses around communities heavily affected by timber transport. Details were given of consultation processes noting areas of work including felling permissions and forest plan approvals. Upon approval of a forestry application assessment, Forestry Scotland would undertake a consultation. Consultation periods were 28 days for comment submissions and Scottish Borders Council was a statutory consultee. It was further noted that Community Councils were not statutory consultees. Forestry Scotland was in the process of establishing a South of Scotland Regional Land Use Partnership and developing a Regional Land Use Framework. Wider priorities being led by the Scottish Government included climate change and achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2045. This priority placed responsibility on Forestry Scotland to woodland creation including planting 18,000 hectares of forestry annually by 2024.

6.2 Attendees discussed the presentation by Mr Sheridan, including processes for consultation. Ms Friell of Upper Teviotdale and Borthwick Water Community Council noted the importance of consultation for their community in relation to the importance of forestry to their community. Walks in Craik Forest were used frequently by residents and visitors and concern was raised regarding felling close to paths and the installation of forest roads. Concern was also raised regarding funding applications for strimming work on paths in Craik Forest. Larch felling was referenced and Mr Sheridan advised that where larch had been identified as being affected by a serious notifiable disease, landowners were required to conduct felling in a short timescale. The impact of forestry on flooding was queried with Mr Sheridan and whether felling had an impact on flood frequency. Mr Sheridan noted that large-scale felling tended to be approved in 5-year phases where applicants could fell every tree in an application over a 5-year phase.

Difficulty of gauging impact on flooding was noted with issues of harvesting run off also referenced. If Community Councils wanted to be consulted on forestry applications, they could contact Forestry Scotland, but they would need to respond within the timescales.

7. TIMBER TRANSPORTATION

Councillor Turnbull introduced Brian Young, Network Manager for Environment and Infrastructure, who gave a presentation on timber transportation in the Scottish Borders. Mr Young reported that almost a fifth of the area of the Scottish Borders was forest, and that the road network was not in as good a state as it had been. Mr Young presented pictures to the Area Partnership that had been used in a presentation for the timber industry. Issues associated with timber transport were the prevalence of single-track roads, noise associated with empty timber-lorries, occasions of roadside stacking, driver behaviour and incidents with other road users, vehicle convoys, damage to roads and verges and unsafe loading. The weight of full timber-lorries required a period of time where there would be no other timber-lorries on a route to allow road material to re-expand. Positive developments included the Borders Timber Transport Forum, establishment of agreed route maps and strategic timber transport management plans (STTMP). STTMPs were established to address routes with issues such as passing schools. Scottish Borders Council had successes with bids to the Strategic Timber Transport Fund. Agreed route maps (ARMs) were voluntary protocols which acknowledged that timber transport has rights to use public road network. ARMs had been used to agree and exclude routes including weight restrictions and local communities are usually encouraged to be consulted. It was noted that transport associated with felling plans would be known to the industry and this may be accessed through the South of Scotland Timber Transport Officer. Driver behaviour was discussed with incidents raised regarding hauliers becoming angry when approached by other road users. It was recognised that often drivers were under pressure to complete hauls within time limits.

8. FLOODING UPDATE

Duncan Morrison, Flood and Coastal Management Team Leader, presented an update on flood management and scheme works. Ground investigation had been ongoing in Newcastleton where residents had noted water flowing back up pipes in drains. There had been issues drilling through boulders after 2.5 metres. This had been affected by a shortage of speciality drills to get through boulders where rotary rigs were used by HS2 works in England. Due to a nationwide funding shortage for new flood schemes temporary measures were being investigated for the Green in Newcastleton, along with dredging and bridge removal. Schemes waiting to be funded were in Newcastleton, Slitrig and Peebles. It was noted that Scottish Borders Housing Association was budgeting to take property-level action in Newcastleton and Hawick which may be followed by other registered social landlords. Mr Morrison advised that the Hawick Flood Scheme was progressing with recent floods providing some concern with a part-built flood defence. The study for the Slitrig flood defence was ongoing with a public exhibition being considered for the new year, with temporary measures being put in at Crowbyres and Whitlaw. Drainage issues at Hobkirk Road, Bonchester Bridge were being investigated. The national consultation on flood risk management had concluded on 31 October 2021. Mr Morrison advised that the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) have a gauge network for rivers and a new process for requesting additional gauges with a proactive system to assess applications. Attendees noted recurring issues that were still affecting their communities and thanked Mr Morrison for their presentation.

9. SBC ROADS

Attendees noted the written update on SBC Roads planned works programme.

10. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR NOTING

The Chair advised that additional information was included in the agenda on current consultations, community empowerment requests and an update on the Community

Assistance Hub, funding table overview for Teviot and Liddesdale and a report from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

11. **NEXT AREA PARTNERSHIP MEETING**

It was noted that the next Area Partnership meeting was scheduled for 25 January 2022 and attendees were asked to consider rescheduling the meeting for 1 February 2022.

DECISION

AGREED to reschedule the 25 January 2022 meeting of the Teviot and Liddesdale Area Partnership to 1 February 2022.

12. **ANY OTHER FORMAL BUSINESS**

It was noted that information was due to be announced for details of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Fund for community groups to organise celebratory events.

13. **FUTURE MEETING DATES**

The future meeting dates of the Teviot and Liddesdale Area Partnership were noted as:

- 1 February 2022
- 22 March 2022
- 21 June 2022

14. **MEETING EVALUATION**

Attendees concluded the meeting with submission of meeting evaluations using the software Menti.

The meeting concluded at 8.40pm