

# SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL BERWICKSHIRE AREA PARTNERSHIP

MINUTES of the Special Meeting of the  
BERWICKSHIRE AREA PARTNERSHIP  
held Via Microsoft Teams on Thursday, 22  
April 2021 at 6.00 pm

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Present:- SBC Councillors: J. A. Fullarton (Chairman), J. Greenwell, C. Hamilton, H. Laing, D. Moffat and M. Rowley  
Other organisations' attendees: J. Amaral (BAVS), J. Anderson (Eyemouth CC), J. Brown (Swinton & Ladykirk CC), K. Dickinson (Gavinton, Fogo & Polwarth CC), D. Fisher, L. Inglis (Reston & Auchencrow CC), A. Manley (Foulden, Mordington & Lamberton CC), A. Mitchell (Duns CC), A. McNeill (A Heart for Duns), D. Renton, J. Sutton (Cockburnspath Community).

In Attendance:- Chief Executive, Locality Development Co-ordinator, Strategic Community Engagement Officer and Chief Executive.

## 1. **WELCOME**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the special meeting of Berwickshire Area Partnership which was being held to consider the proposed framework for the Community Fund. The Review Sub-Group had spent a lot of time, hearing feedback and working up the proposals which would be considered. The Chairman thanked the Sub-Group members for their sterling work to achieve transparency and a clear focus for the Fund.

## 2. **BERWICKSHIRE COMMUNITY FUND FRAMEWORK**

2.1 Clare Malster, SBC Strategic Community Engagement Officer, presented the Community Fund Framework which had been put together by the Community and Partnership team to help the Sub-Group in its work. Berwickshire was really far advanced but there were a few outstanding items for consideration.

### (a) **Membership of Assessment Panel**

Keith Dickinson, Chair of the Sub-Group advised that in terms of membership of the proposed Assessment Panel, around 10 was proposed (including 3 SBC Elected Members), although this was not a precise number to allow for flexibility and this could be increased to 11 members. The Chair of the Panel would chair meetings to assess applications to the Fund and then present the findings of the Panel to the Area Partnership for decision. Decisions in the Assessment Panel on recommendations to the Area Partnership on applications to the Fund would be reached by a simple majority with all Panel members having an equal vote, and the Chair having a casting vote if required. A quorum of 5 was suggested for the Panel.

### (b) **Number of Applications**

Keith Dickinson advised that it was proposed a two applications could be made to the Fund within a year by the same Group/organisation.

### (c) **Themes/Priorities**

Keith Dickinson advised that there had been general discussion within the Sub-Group and there was certainly a desire to reference themes/priorities within the Locality Plan, Action Plans and Place Plans once they became available.

### (d) **Communications/website**

Details of the Fund and promotion of the Fund would be carried out principally by SBC Communications team through the Council website and social media accounts. It was anticipated that each organisation would also promote the Fund and provide links to the guidance and application forms.

(e) **Recommendations to the Area Partnership**

Keith Dickinson advised that some applications to the Fund were likely to be recommended for full funding, others for part funding, with some refused or deferred. While the Assessment Panel would work with a checklist/checked sheet, this would be a reference document and not expected to be considered by the Area Partnership. Recommendations from the Assessment Panel would be presented to the Area Partnership for decision with sufficient details to show that the Panel had used a rigorous process in assessing applications. This would ensure applicants had confidence that the process was fair. There would be a summary of the process and how and why the Panel had come to form their view. The Panel would come to a view on how the Fund should be allocated and this could include where applications were justified for funding but there were insufficient funds available. Other sources of funding could be investigated or more funding could be allocated to the Community Fund from the Council during the year. Any award letter of funding would be issued by the Council after the Area Partnership had made its decision.

(f) **Evaluation and Monitoring**

Keith Dickinson advised that the Sub-Group recommended an annual evaluation and it would be better if this was not carried out by the Assessment Panel, although the Assessment Panel could carry out a self-assessment which could be passed on for independent monitoring. The evaluation and monitoring could be carried out by the Area Partnership or another group from within the Area Partnership. Clare Malster also confirmed that there would be an evaluation of each project to ensure that expectations had been met.

- 2.2 There followed discussion on various aspects of the Community Fund. With regard to involving the views of the wider community in considering applications, Keith Dickinson advised that the main route for this was an open invitation for people to join the Panel. The Panel would be meeting in private to consider applications to the Fund, to allow a free exchange of views before coming to conclusion on recommendations. It would be made clear in the guidance for applicants to the Fund that evaluation of projects was mandatory. A summary paper would be provided to the Area Partnership with recommendations from the Assessment Panel and should anyone wish further information or explanation this could either be sought from the members of the Assessment Panel in advance of the Area Partnership meeting or at the meeting itself. Clare Malster confirmed that a communications plan would be developed in conjunction with the Assessment Panel and a year-end report would be provided to the Area Partnership and/or the Council on the funding which had been distributed. Mr Dickinson then thanked all the members of the Sub-Group who had worked very hard over the last few months and been well supported by SBC officers. While the original recommendations from the Sub-Group for a Sub-Committee with full delegated decision making powers had not been taken forward by Council at its meeting in March, the proposals being put forward now for the Assessment Panel were a step in the right direction. It was further agreed that the word "elderly" in the Framework paper would be changed to "older people".

3. **BCF ASSESSMENT PANEL**

Details had been issued of the planned recruitment communication for the members of the Assessment Panel for the Community Fund. Councillor Rowley asked that rather than the submission of a CV and letter, applicants were asked to complete a form in the first instance for a first sift. This would potentially make it easier for people not used to producing CVs and accompanying letters. SBC officers would pick up on this and also provide advice to potential applicants.

4. **BCF APPLICATIONS AND ASSESSMENT**

Copies of Draft Guidance Notes and an Application Form had been circulated. Keith Dickinson advised that there was a lot of cross-referencing between the two documents. Now that there was more money available within the Fund, the maximum grant had been increased to £5,000 from £2,500. The Community Fund Assessment Sheet, also circulated, was new and showed the weightings which were being proposed as part of the assessment process and the eligibility criteria had also been separated out. Applicants had to satisfy this criteria, which would be assessed by SBC Officers, before it could go forward into the full assessment process through the Panel. This would all be published so that applicants would know what they needed to do to go forward for funding.

5. **PROPOSED TIMESCALES**

Consideration was given to the proposed timescale, which seemed a little tight, and Keith Dickinson acknowledged that while applications to the Community Fund should be opened up, and recruitment to the Assessment Panel begin, a little more time was needed to make the necessary appointments and allow some development sessions for the Panel so they all understood the process. It was likely that recommendations from the Assessment Panel on applications would be brought to the September meeting of the Area Partnership for decision. This would still leave time to have 3 tranches of funding.

6. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chairman introduced Netta Meadows, the new Chief Executive of Scottish Borders Council, who had been listening in to the meeting. Ms Meadows thanked everyone for the interesting discussion on such an important issue. She intended to dip in to as many of the Area Partnership meetings as possible and if there was anything specific the Area Partnership wished her to talk about then she would be happy to attend. The Chairman welcomed Ms Meadows to the Borders on behalf of the people of Berwickshire.

7. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next scheduled meeting of the Area Partnership would take place via Microsoft Teams on 20 May 2021 at 6.30 p.m.

***The meeting concluded at 6.50 pm***