

MINUTES of Meeting of the
CHEVIOT AREA PARTNERSHIP
held on Wednesday, 1 February
2023 at 6.30 pm. Via Microsoft
Teams.

Present:- Councillors P. Brown, (Chairman), S. Hamilton, S. Mountford, E. Robson, S. Scott, T. Weatherston, together with 18 Representatives of Partner Organisations, Community Councils and Members of the Public.

In attendance: - Community Co-ordinator – Gillian Jardine, Democratic Services Officer (F. Henderson).

1. **WELCOME**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the in person meeting, which included Elected Members, Community Council representatives, Community Organisations and guests attending within the meeting. She outlined how the meeting would be conducted.

2. **FEEDBACK FROM THE MEETING ON 23 NOVEMBER 2022**

The minute of the meeting of the Cheviot Area Partnership held on 23 November 2022 had been circulated with the Agenda. There were no specific actions to follow up from the last Area Partnership meeting and Katy Jackson would continue to keep the Area Partnership informed as the new coast to coast cycle route was prepared for opening.

3. **SECTION 1: SERVICE & PARTNER UPDATES AND CONSULTATIONS**
3.1 **COMMUNITY CONVERSATION FEEDBACK**

Last summer elected members and senior SBC Officers toured the Borders to meet with communities to discuss the issues important to them. 11 community conversations were held in total, two of which were in Cheviot. A summary of the feedback from these conversations was included in the Agenda Pack and overall people seemed to like the format of these sessions and another round of conversations was being planned for later in the year. The issues raised so to date were to be considered as part of SBC's budget process and should feed in to local planning. Observations from those who had attended the conversations were that they required to be publicised better, with a more targeted approach and not all questions had been answered. The Community Engagement Officer requested that matter wishing to be raised be forwarded to her by e-mail on GJardine@scotborders.gov.uk. It was also highlighted that there had been a difference of opinion as to what was expected and other partners to be invited to future conversations.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

3.2 **HARRY WHITMORE - COMMUNITY LED HOUSING COORDINATOR, SOUTH OF SCOTLAND COMMUNITY HOUSING - SOSCH**

The Chairman welcomed Harry Whitmore, Community Led Housing Co-coordinator with SOSCH who support community organisations to consider solutions to local housing issues and deliver community led housing projects. It was explained that Community Led housing was delivered by and for local communities, rather than relying on traditional providers, it was a way for local people to produce place-based solutions to local problems through a process of participation and empowerment. There were many types of community led housing, but in Scotland it typically took the form of housing developed and owned by a community organisation such as a Community Development Trust. As a result of Scotland's land reform legislation and the Community Development Trust model, there was a vibrant landscape of community-led housing. The Scottish model allowed for not only housing, but for community trusts to own other assets like shops and renewable energy sources. There were 612 assets in community ownership across Scotland in December 2020. Mr Whitmore went onto to explain the benefits of community ownership and community led housing which included – sustaining communities, regenerating places in decline, a flexible approach to housing, providing affordable homes for local people and a reliable source of revenue for community organisations.

3.3 Mr Whitmore then went onto explain that SOSCH was a community-led housing enabler established in 2006 in order to address a shortfall in rural housing supply in South West Scotland. SOSCH support community organisations to deliver affordable community-led housing within the context of community ownership of land and assets and Land Reform. SOSCH had a long track record of project delivery across South West Scotland and were engaged with 35+ communities in southern Scotland. They operated on a fee-based system which were included where possible in funding packages so communities were not paying out of their pockets. SOSCH worked with community organisations at an early stage to set themselves up to deliver community led housing, either supporting a group to constitute itself properly, or direct them towards partners to help. The two key requirements to setting up your voluntary or community organisation correctly were an open membership, and a defined geographical area, in order to use certain legal powers and access to certain funding. By working with SOSCH, the capacity of your organisation was increased by reducing the burden on the organisation. The amount of involvement SOSCH had in the project varied depending on the confidence and ability of the group to deliver a project. SOSCH could increase a community's capacity by helping them hire a member of staff, such as a development officer to manage the day to day delivery of the project, which could be included as part of the feasibility funding, and could be either short term, or long term. SOSCH could also help increase a community's capacity to deliver community housing by working in partnership with other groups, such as housing associations, to deliver projects. This may be a good option for large-scale projects, where a community lacked confidence to deliver it themselves.

3.4 In terms of Finance and Funding, SOSCH used its partnership and experience to help communities' access resources, putting together comprehensive and bespoke funding packages to deliver CLH projects. The starting point of financing a project was with the Rural Housing Fund (RHF) and Scottish Land Fund (SFL) and early stage expressions of interest helped secure funding for feasibility work. Rural Housing Fund can then offer capital works funding, and the Scottish Land Fund can support the purchase of an asset. The Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF) can be accessed when re-purposing existing buildings, especially within conservation areas or listed buildings and they can provide grants for feasibility work, and loans for capital works South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE). SOSE had previously helped finance community led projects, as well as several SOSCH projects, such as the Langholm Old Police Station. They had also supported Kirkhope Steadings, the first CLH project in the Borders. Other sources of funding were Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF); Borderlands Growth Deal; Ecological Building Society; Wind Farm Funds; Empty Homes Grant Scheme; SSE - Scottish Borders Sustainable Development Fund.

- 3.5 In terms of South East Scotland, Mr Whitmore explained that a 'Community Led Housing Coordinator - South East Scotland' had been recruited to expand the work of SOSCH from South West Scotland to South East Scotland, to replicate the SOSCH approach and successes. SOSCH were very encouraged by existing community led development in the Borders and were keen help to accelerate this by raising awareness around community led housing and how it could fit into the wider community development agenda. The last three months had been spent building partnerships across the region to help support communities to deliver community led housing and work had already begun directly with communities with early discussions.
- 3.6 In terms of Cheviot, it was explained that there was a population of around 19,345.34% of the population who lived in settlements under 500 people. Jedburgh (3774 in 2020) was the only settlement not eligible for the rural housing fund, despite Kelso (6833 in 2020) having a higher population. Existing community owned assets in Cheviot included: The Port House, Jedburgh; Laidlaw Memorial Pool, Jedburgh and Morebattle Village Shop and Post Office. While vacant and long term empty homes were everywhere, Cheviot had a few key 'hotspots'. These hotspots had a high number of both vacant and LTE properties and while data can help to identify housing need and areas with a particularly high number of vacant and long term empty properties, empty buildings anywhere can help address challenges that communities face. Most of all, SOSCH relied on local knowledge of empty, vacant and derelict properties to deliver CLH.
- 3.7 SOSCH could help across the entire process of community led housing, but needed the local knowledge and ideas. Therefore, they were looking for information on;
- Could your community benefit from Community Led Housing?
 - What is the housing need in your community?
 - Are you interested in any buildings or land to develop housing?
 - If you've identified a building or land:
 - Who owns the building/land?
 - How long has it been vacant?
 - Is it currently on the market?
 - Are you interested in other forms of community ownership and regeneration?

For more information on SOSCH South East Scotland project, please contact the Community Led Housing Coordinator for South East Scotland, Harry Whitmore. Email: harry.sosch@outlook.com.

DECISION NOTED.

MEMBER

Councillor Mountford left the meeting prior to consideration of the following item.

4.0 SECTION 2: COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND COMMUNITY FUNDING Cheviot Funding Tables 2022/23

There had been circulated copies of the Cheviot Funding for 2022/2023 which detailed the funding available together with information on the allocation of the Community Grant Fund in 2022/23. The Community Co-ordinator advised that the two applications from Jedburgh Community Council and the Rural Space Agency's application had been withdrawn. The opening balance at 1 April 2022 was £80,268.39 plus underspend from the Community Fund in 2021/22 of £28,640.65, underspend in the Local Festival Grant in 2021/22 of £2,953.00 and underspend in the Community Fund 2019/20 of £2,175, which resulted in an overall budget of £114,037.04. Other sources of funding included Local Festival Grant Budget totalling £16,675.00, Annual Support Grant to Community Councils totalling £11,100.00, Common Goods, SBC Enhancement Grant, SBC Welfare Grant and SBC Small Schemes totalled £197,882.69. Neighbourhood Support Fund applications

awarded since April 2022 totalled £19,209.71 and application assessed and awaiting decision totalled £28,237.56.

DECISION NOTED.

Neighbourhood Support Fund

- 4.2 There had been 14 applications received for the Cheviot Neighbourhood Support Fund which was a significant increase on previous rounds and very encouraging that more community organisations were coming forward. There had been circulated copies of a report which detailed the recommendations of the Cheviot Community Fund Assessment Panel. The report provided a brief description of each application received and a recommendation on the sum to be awarded to each project.
- 4.3 **Perfect Harmony**
An application had been received from Perfect Harmony requesting £1,350 to fund an additional 5 concerts per year throughout Cheviot care facilities. The concert engaged local musicians with the purpose of enhancing the lives of the recipients. The application scored an average of 80+ in terms of their ability to deliver, evidence of need, potential impact, use of public money, innovation and sustainability. The Panel were supportive of the project and recommended that £1,350 be awarded.
- 4.4 **QME Care**
An application had been received from QME Care in the sum of £2,250 to offer a subsidised meal during their Sunday Lunch Club as well as a contribution to resources for additional activities, e.g. music, games, crafts, group discussion and reminiscence, and cognitive stimulation, within their existing Place and Space Day Service. The Panel were supportive of the project and recommended that £2,250 be awarded.
- 4.5 **Ancrum Community Council**
An application had been received from Ancrum Community Council in the sum of £468.98 towards the erection of signage to encourage responsible dog ownership, and disallow dogs on the village green. The Panel were not supportive of the project.
- 4.6 **Jedburgh Community Council**
Applications had been received from Jedburgh Community Council requesting £1,251 to replace all floral displays throughout Jedburgh with perennial plants to move to a more sustainable model and reduce the use of bedding plants. The application scored an average of 80+ in terms of their ability to deliver, evidence of need, innovation, sustainability, potential impact and use of public money. The Panel were supportive of the project and recommended that £1,215 be awarded.
- 4.7 **Kelso Walking Festival Committee**
An application had been received from Kelso Walking Festival Committee in the sum of £5,000 to deliver the Annual Scottish Borders Walking Festival. The Funds would be used to support the rental of the Community Centre as well as design and publication of marketing material to promote the event. The application scored 80+ in terms of their ability to deliver, evidence of need, potential impact and use of public money. The Panel were supportive of the project and recommended that £5,000 be awarded.
- 4.8 **Kelso Heritage Society**
An application had been received from the Kelso Heritage Society in the sum of £989 to support the purchase of updated software and equipment to be used throughout their programme of monthly talks of local and Scottish historical interest. Kelso Heritage Society's application scored an average of 80+ in terms of their ability to deliver, evidence of need, potential impact, use of public money, innovation and sustainability. The Panel were supportive of the project and recommended that £989 be awarded.

4.9 **Art at Ancrum**

An application had been received from Art at Ancrum in the sum of £540 towards supporting the annual arts fair located within the village of Ancrum. The fair supported artists and makers to display and sell their work, drawing interest and tourism to the village. Funds would also be used to produce a high-quality A3, colour catalogue for the event displaying information as well as a village map. The panel felt they produced a strong case in terms of their ability to deliver, clear evidence of need, potential impact, use of public money, innovation and sustainability and recommended that £540 be awarded.

4.10 **Kelso Camera Club**

An application had been received from Kelso Camera Club in the sum of £1,062 towards the hosting of their annual exhibition. The exhibition was open to the public, free of charge and funds would be used to support the town hall hire as well as printing and mounting images. An application was made for £1062.18 from Kelso Camera Club to host their annual exhibition. The Panel agreed that the application produced a strong case in terms of their ability to deliver, clear evidence of need, potential impact, use of public money, innovation and sustainability and therefore recommended that £1062.18 be awarded.

4.11 **St Boswells PS**

An application had been received from St Boswells Primary School Parent and Friends Partnership and St Boswells Community Council sub-groups, Green St Boswells and Friends of the Community Woodland in the sum of £1,159. The application was to support a project aimed to create a Community micro-orchard, a commemorative Queen's Green Canopy mini-woodland and associated wildlife areas around St Boswells Primary School grounds. The project aimed to create community opportunities for learning and development surrounding wildlife and fruit. The application scored an average of 80+ in terms of their ability to deliver, clear evidence of need, potential impact, use of public money, innovation and sustainability and it was recommended that £1,159 be awarded.

4.12 **Kelso Skatepark Project**

An application had been received from the Kelso Skatepark Project in the sum of £5,000 towards supporting consultancy fees for the improvement of safety, security and lighting to the Skatepark. The application scored an average of 80+ in terms of their ability to deliver, clear evidence of need, potential impact, use of public money, innovation and sustainability and it was recommended that £5,000 be awarded.

4.13 **Thomas Maconochie KHS Trust**

An application had been received from the Thomas Maconochie KHS Trust, in partnership with CLD Service to run an intergenerational project between the residents of Kerfield Court and pupils from the High School. The group would work with a stone carver to produce sculptures that would be placed within the residents' garden at Kerfield Court and the application was in the sum of £2,106. The application scored an average of 80+ in terms of their ability to deliver, clear evidence of need, potential impact, use of public money, innovation and sustainability and it was recommended that £2,106 be awarded.

4.14 It was noted that Dean Weatherston has been appointed as Chair of the Panel following the resignation of the previous Panel Chair. Mr Weatherston highlighted that the resignation of the previous Chairman and a further Panel Member indicating his intention to stand down following the next meeting, membership required to be addressed.

DECISION AGREED:-

(a) that the following sums be awarded to each of those listed:-

- **Perfect Harmony - £1,350**
- **QME Care - £2,250**

- **Jedburgh Community Council – Replacement of Floral Displays - £1,215**
- **KCC Walking Festival Committee - £5,000**
- **Kelso Heritage Society - £989**
- **Art at Ancrum - £540**
- **Kelso Camera Club - £1,062**
- **St Boswells PS - £1,159**
- **Kelso Skatepark Project - £5,000**
- **Thomas Maconochie KHS Trust - £2,106**

(b) that no award be made to Ancrum Community Council

MEMBER

Councillor Weatherston left the meeting following consideration of the above item.

5.0 SECTION 3: PLACE MAKING

5.1 It was reported that the Cheviot Place Making Working Group had recently met with Sarah McDonald, Selkirk BIDS to hear about the two community engagement events which had been delivered in Selkirk. This was in anticipation of Cheviot communities planning their community engagement activities. It had been agreed that Alison Grainger, Police Scotland be invited to attend the Jedburgh Place Making workshop scheduled for March 2023.

5.2 Community Council Updates:-

Jedburgh CC - Working with SOSE and SBC and looking at

- Hydro Poll with in Swimming pool Building
- Asset Transfer of Town Hall
- Energy from water
- Working with Harry Whitmore in respect of 50 Vacant Buildings
- Pedestrian Walkway re-installed
- Streetscape
- National Park

Kelso CC - Update

- Old Kelso High School
- Trinity Church

5.3 Cost of Living Update

The Community Engagement Officer reported that three applications had been received for the Warm and Well Fund – 2 applications had been funded and one application had been withdrawn.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

6.0 SECTION 4: Other

6.1 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION DOCUMENT

The Chairman advised that additional information was included in the agenda pack which contained information on current consultations and links to useful information.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

6.2 DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Future Meetings of the Cheviot Area Partnership would be held on the following dates:

Wednesday, 31 May 2023

The next meeting would be held on **Wednesday, 29 March 2023** and the venue was to be confirmed.

6.3 **MEETING EVALUATION**

Ms Jardine reminded those present about the meeting evaluation form which could be accessed via the link <https://forms.office.com/r/HHH1dEcmz3>. She added that feedback about the Area Partnership meetings was really helpful and always appreciated.

The meeting concluded at 8.00 pm