

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL CHEVIOT AREA PARTNERSHIP

MINUTES of Meeting of the CHEVIOT
AREA PARTNERSHIP held on
Wednesday, 31 May 2023 at 6.30 pm.
Via Microsoft Teams.

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

Graeme Hayward - Jedburgh Community Council
Gavin Horsburgh – Kelso Community Council
Carol Spalton - Crailing Nisbet and Eckford Community Council
David Watson – Ednam, Stichill and Berrymoss
Andy Carter – Makerstoun, Nenthorn and Smailholm CC
Cath Henderson – Kalewater CC
Clare Starla-Nicoll – Heiton & Roxburgh CC

Hazel Woodsell – Kelso Heritage
Dean Weatherston - Chair of Cheviot Assessment Panel
Alison Grainger – Police Scotland
Fiona Benton – The Bridge
Katy Jackson
Martin Sloan
Shona Mitchell

Apologies:- Councillor S. Scott
Susan Oliver – Headteacher, Jedburgh Campus
Charles Strang – St Boswells, Mertoun and Community Council
Louise Rawlins – CLDS Worker

In attendance: - Community Co-ordinator – Gillian Jardine, Community Engagement Officer – Emma Husband, 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.

2.0 **FEEDBACK FROM THE MEETING ON 29 MARCH 2023**

2.1 With reference to paragraph 2.3 of the Minute of 29 March 2023, the responses received had indicated that a discussion / workshop on climate change at the future meeting would be welcomed and Officers would look to organise this for the September meeting. They would like to hear what topics in particular people would like to see covered or any agencies / services to be invited to attend future meetings.

2.2 With reference to paragraph 3, of the Minute of 29 March 2023, Feedback from the five Area Partnerships on the draft Health and Social Care Strategic Framework was being worked into a report which would be presented to the Health and Social Care Partnership. There would be a full report and a summary report both of which would be made available.

3.0 **SECTION 1: SERVICE & PARTNER UPDATE AND CONSULTATIONS**
3.1 **LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY CONSULTATION 2023 - 2028**

The Chair welcomed Lindsey Renwick, Strategic Housing Development Officer to the meeting to present some background on the proposed Local Housing Strategy (LHS) and raise awareness of the consultation which was underway. The 2001 Housing Scotland Act placed a requirement on Scottish Borders Council to prepare and submit a Local Housing Strategy every five years. The strategy was set within the context of a number of local and national strategies, but there were many more, covered in detail in the evidence paper, which was published alongside all the other supporting documents. Since August 2021, there had been engagement with stakeholders and the community on the LHS which had included the following and the formal consultation stage of the LHS had started: –

- Early Engagement Survey
- Resident and Stakeholder Workshops and Surveys
- Gypsy Travellers
- Key Workers
- Private Landlord Survey

3.1 Ms Renwick went on to highlight the key challenges the LHS was trying to address while operating in a challenging financial climate, particularly in terms of capital and construction costs, but more widely as the cost of living continued to impact on people across communities, and service delivery. This was also impacting on the delivery of housing, the costs of installing energy efficiency and renewable technologies, the general cost of repairing and maintaining homes and buildings, bringing empty homes back into use and generally the delivery of services and would impact on what realistically could be delivered in the coming years. The LHS was also required to set the Housing Supply Target which was reasonable and properly reflected the HNSA estimate of housing demands in the market sector and be compiling evidence. The HST was, however, a policy view of the number of homes that each authority had agreed would be delivered in each housing market area of the period of the LHS.

3.2 The draft vision was that **“Everyone in the Scottish Borders has access to a home which meets their needs and is part of a sustainable community”**. Meets their needs covered a range of factors, including affordability, (not just affordability in terms direct housing costs but was it affordable to maintain, keep warm), was it energy efficient, the right size, and in the right location, part of a community with access to local services, does it meet people’s needs in terms of physical or other disabilities, the needs of older people, younger people, families, people who required housing support or other support services So when we say meets their needs we are talking about a very wide range of diverse, but also changing needs. In order to deliver the vision successfully five draft strategic outcomes had been developed and are detailed below:-

Strategic Outcome 1: More homes in well designed, sustainable communities that increase opportunity for all

Strategic Outcome 2: People have access to homes which promote independence, health and wellbeing

Strategic Outcome 3: Improved energy efficiency of homes and a reduction in fuel poverty while supporting a Just Transition to Net Zero through decarbonising domestic heating and energy

Strategic Outcome 4: Communities are regenerated through improving the quality and condition of housing and the built heritage.

Strategic Outcome 5: Homelessness is prevented wherever possible and a range of housing options are provided so people can secure a suitable and sustainable housing outcome as quickly as possible

Where to find:

- The full version of the Consultative Draft LHS 2023 can be found here: [Local Housing Strategy 2023-2028](#)
- A number of documents have been developed to support the LHS. If you would like to read these documents you can find them using the link above.
- You can complete an online questionnaire through the Council's CitizenSpace website: <https://scotborders.citizenspace.com/housing/local-housing-strategy-2023-28-consultation>

- 3.3 Any further questions or anything to discuss please contact - LHS@scotborders.gov.uk or Lindsey Renwick, Principal Officer – Housing Strategy, Policy and Development lrenwick@scotborders.gov.uk

**DECISION
NOTED.**

4.0 REFRESHED COMMUNITY PLAN PRIORITIES

The Chair welcomed Shona Mitchell, speaking on behalf of the Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership (CPP) who were consulting on a range of potential priorities for the new Community Plan. It was explained that Community Planning was the process by which councils and other public bodies such as Health Boards and Police Scotland worked with local communities, businesses and community groups to plan and deliver better services and improve the lives of people who live in Scotland. Community Planning Partnerships was the name given to the group of organisations who delivered community planning. Initially the responsibility for leading CPPs sat with LAs, however the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 changed the responsibility to sit equally with five public sector bodies: LAs, NHS, Police Scotland, SFRS and Enterprise companies – in the Borders these lead partners were:

NHS Borders
Police Scotland
SBC
Scottish Fire & Rescue Service
South of Scotland Enterprise

Other partners included:

Borders College
Borders Community Action (Third Sector)
Health & Social Care Integration Joint Boards
Live Borders
Berwickshire Housing Association
Eildon Housing Association
Scottish Borders Community Councils' Network
Scottish Borders Housing Association
Waverley Housing

- 4.1 The last plan had been agreed in May 2018; however a lot had changed over the past five years, with new priorities for many and it was important that these were included in a new plan. Therefore, the Community Plan was being reviewed in order that it focused on what was most important for the area now and would cover a 10 year period, being reviewed at least twice in the ten year period to ensure that it remained relevant. In putting together the draft priorities for the new Plan, the data had been analysed to understand what was working well and what required improvement. The views of the public had been sought through other surveys and community based meetings, including the Council's Community Conversations and 16 priority areas identified which had been arranged under five themes - Economy, Skills

and Learning; Enjoying Good Health and Wellbeing; Good Place to Live, Grow Up and Enjoy a Full Life and Community Empowerment and the partnership was seeking information on which of these priorities were most important to the Community and whether these themes were the right ones. The consultation was available online on the SBC's website and also available as a paper copy.

- Consultation closes 16 July 2023
- Available online at <https://scotborders.citizenspace.com/>
- For paper copies contact Communities & Partnerships Team on 0300 100 1800 or communityplanning@scotborders.gov.uk
- New Plan presented to Community Planning Strategic Board on 7 September 2023

DECISION NOTED.

5.0 TWEED VALLEY RAILWAY CAMPAIGN

The Chair welcomed Mr James Boulton and Ian Aitchison, representing the Tweed Valley Railway Campaign who were campaigning for the extension of rail networks from St Boswells to Berwick-Upon-Tweed to be known as the Tweed Valley Railway, which they believed was central to the strategic growth and sustainable low-carbon future of the Scottish Borders and north Northumberland. Extending the existing rail network east from St Boswells to Berwick-upon-Tweed would build upon the proven success of the Borders Railway and provide enormous benefits and opportunities for businesses, communities and individuals. The extension to the railway would provide a strategic rail connection corridor north-south and east-west, improving journey times, both in the region and across the border, offering greater connection for residents and visitors. There was the opportunity to ease road congestion and provide greater travel, business and tourist opportunities and to link the regions world-class cycling facilities and proposed walking trail with the Tweed Valley. Encouraging rail travel was a viable alternative to private vehicle, facilitating decarbonisation, improving health and wellbeing through less pollution. As explained that the aim was to build a railway connection between the Borders Railway and Berwick-Upon-Tweed. The three-point plan was to Gauge support; conduct a feasibility study and then build the railway. The exact route of networks from St Boswells to Berwick-Upon-Tweed would be decided by the results of the feasibility study.

DECISION NOTED.

6.0 CAMPAIGN FOR A NATIONAL PARK

The Chair welcomed Malcom Dickson from the Campaign for a National Park Group, who believed that a compelling case could be made for the National Park shaped for the Southern Border, and wished to share the advantages and potential that a National Park could bring. An independent Feasibility Study published in September 2017 confirmed that the proposed area met the three conditions for National Park status required by Scottish Legislation:-

- outstanding national importance;
- distinct character and cohesion; and
- special needs that National Park status can address.

6.1 The Feasibility Study also found that the designation would strengthen the economy within the Scottish Borders National Park and of the wider area surrounding it, encouraging tourism and attracting other businesses to the region. There was enthusiastic support from local people, communities and businesses as National Parks were proven contributors to sustainable economic growth in rural areas.

6.2 The proposed area as a National Park would provide Beauty, Cultural Heritage, Accessibility, Ecological variety and good Facilities and would help the struggling economy, Particularly Southern Border; ageing population declining faster than in urban

areas, under-used valuable asset and to preserve the; landscape and cultural heritage in perpetuity. In Scotland overall, 2019 was the strongest it had been in the previous ten years for overnight tourism; tourist businesses grew (15,000 -17,500); and GVA per head increased from £1.5 billion to £2.5 billion, however in the Scottish Borders 2013-19, there was a drop in domestic tourism spend and overseas spend remained more or less the same, therefore a decrease in real terms.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

POLICE REPORT

- 7.0 The Chairman welcomed Sergeant Alison Grainger to the meeting to give an update on policing in the Cheviot Area. Sergeant Grainger advised that following a re-structure there remained two Community Police Officers and two CAT Officers covering the Cheviot Area. Officers had been heavily involved in Hawick Common Riding and the St Boswells Fair. In terms of rural crime, there would be an event held on 29th June 2023. Work with partners was ongoing in terms of cross border crimes and the events season continued. Police Scotland happy to advise and work with Organisers of Community Events with regard to them providing Marshalls with support from the Police.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

8.0 **SECTION 2: COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND COMMUNITY FUNDING Cheviot Funding Tables 2023/24**

There had been circulated copies of the Cheviot Funding for 2023/2024 which detailed the funding available together with information on the allocation of the Neighbourhood Support Fund in 2023/24. The opening balance at 1 April 2023 was £46,383. Other sources of funding included Local Festival Grant Budget totalling £16,675.00, Annual Support Grant to Community Councils totalling £10,470.00, Common Goods, SBC Enhancement Grant, SBC Welfare Grant and SBC Small Schemes totalled £192,112.69. There had been no Neighbourhood Support Fund applications awarded since 1 April 2023 and applications assessed and awaiting decision totalled £1,628.00.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

Neighbourhood Support Fund

- 8.1 There had been 2 applications received for the Cheviot Neighbourhood Support Fund totalling £1,628.00, which was a significant decrease on previous rounds, although to be expected following the very encouraging number approved in March 2023. There had been circulated copies of a report which detailed the recommendations of the Cheviot Community Fund Assessment Panel. The Meeting noted that there had only been three Members of the Assessment Panel present to discuss the applications received, as a result of resignations. The report provided a brief description of each application received and a recommendation on the sum to be awarded to each project. As previously reported, projects with a mean score of 80+ in terms of their ability to deliver, clear evidence of need, potential impact, use of public money, innovation and sustainability and therefore would be recommended for approval and those were detailed below:-

8.2 **Ancrum Community Council**

An application had been received from Ancrum Community Council in the sum of £630 to develop the existing 'Community Polytunnel and Hub' with the addition of raised planting beds and a secure, dry space for equipment storage. The project would encourage greater composting, recycling and improve a community asset. The Panel were supportive of the project and recommended that £630.00 be awarded.

A further application had been received and had been discussed by the Assessment as follows:-

8.3 **Jedburgh and District community News Group**

An application had been received from Jedburgh and District Community News Group in the sum of £998.00 for the development of a dedicated website. The website would allow the group to considerably expand its community news and information services and aimed to become self-sufficient through a subscription service. The Panel expressed concerns that the development of a new website, may a duplication of services. Following discussion and the receipt of additional information from the Group, there was consensus amongst the panel to recommend the application for funding of £998.00

8.4 With reference to paragraph 6.21 of the Minute of 29 March 2023, Mr D Weatherston again raised the matter of recruitment to the following positions:-

- Member of the Public (Jedburgh & District)
- Community Councillor (Jedburgh & District)
- SBC Councillor (Kelso & District)
- SBC Councillor (Jedburgh & District)

SBC Officers had publicised the available roles amongst their contacts with no noted interest. The Group were joined by Youth Engagement Worker, P. Rigby, who proposed that two places on the panel be kept aside for young people. After discussion and agreement of the benefit, P. Rigby agreed to work towards recruitment and training of two young people. The logistics and voting capacity of these young people would be decided depending on their age and abilities. The Group reviewed the roles available within the Assessment Panel, and as a result agreed that:

1. Permanent SBC Councillor positions be removed and, instead, applications be circulated to all Councillors in advance of the Assessment Panel for comments;
2. Two spaces would be made available to any individual in the community that wished to join regardless of the location within the Cheviot area, in order to assure the Group continued to be quorate.

DECISION AGREED:-

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

- **Ancrum Community Council - £630**
- **Jedburgh and District Community New Group - £998**

(b) **that the following recommendations by the Cheviot Assessment Panel be accepted:-**

- **Permanent SBC Councillor positions be removed and, instead, applications be circulated to all Councillors in advance of the Assessment Panel for comments; and**
- **Two spaces would be made available to any individual in the community that wished to join regardless of the location within the Cheviot area, in order to assure the Group continued to be quorate.**

9. **SECTION 3: PLACE MAKING**

Having asked in advance for Community Councils to provide an update, only Makerstoun, Nenthorn and Smailholm CC had responded. Alan Carter explained that Smailholm had

held two engagement meetings and had 30 participants (50% of Community). There were some challenges to be overcome including engagement with local Farmers, however the local Estate Owner was very engaged and work on attracting funding would be undertaken and reported back at a future meeting.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

9.1 Community Council Updates:-

- Jedburgh CC -
- Town Library not up and running.
 - Business Plan being drawn up for the Town Hall
 - The Public Toilet Debate continued
 - No progress update available on Grammar School Site
 - progress on own Team
 - Gaps on the High Street being discussed.

Crailing, Nisbet and Eckford CC

- Lothian Hall Committee re-established following leafletting of the area and now has Committee of 8 who will be advertising the use of the hall through facebook and website.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

10.0 SECTION 4: Other

10.1 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.**

11.0 DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

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

Wednesday, 22 November 2023

Wednesday, 31 January 2024

Wednesday, 27 March 2024

The next meeting would be held on **Wednesday, 20 September 2023 at 6.30 p.m.** via Microsoft Teams.

12.0 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 8.15 pm