

# Public Document Pack



## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TUESDAY, 16 MAY 2023

A MEETING of the EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE will be held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS, NEWTOWN ST BOSWELLS AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS on TUESDAY, 16 MAY 2023 at 9.00 am

**All Attendees, including members of the public, should note that the public business in this meeting will be livestreamed and video recorded and that recording will be available thereafter for public view for 180 days**

J. J. WILKINSON,  
Clerk to the Council,

9 May 2023

<b>BUSINESS</b>		
1.	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>	
2.	<b>Order of Business</b>	
3.	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
4.	<b>Minute</b> (Pages 3 - 12)  Minute of meeting held on 18 April 2023 to be noted for signature by the Chairman. (Copy attached.)	2 mins
5.	<b>Office Premises</b> (Pages 13 - 24)  Consider report by Director – Infrastructure and Environment. (Copy attached.)	15 mins
6.	<b>Scottish Borders Council Queen's Platinum Jubilee Fund</b> (Pages 25 - 30)  Consider report by Director – Resilient Communities. (Copy attached.)	15 mins
7.	<b>Any Other Items Previously Circulated</b>	
8.	<b>Any Other Items which the Chairman Decides are Urgent</b>	
9.	<b>Items Likely to be taken in Private</b>  Before proceeding with the private business, the following motion should be	

	approved:-  “That under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the aforementioned Act.”	
10.	<b>Private Minute</b> (Pages 31 - 32)  Private Section of the Minute of Meeting held on 18 April 2023 to be noted for signature by the Chairman. (Copy attached.)	2 mins
11.	<b>Second Homes Council Tax Affordable Housing Investment Budget</b> (Pages 33 - 46)  Consider report by Director – Infrastructure and Environment. (Copy attached.)	10 mins

#### NOTES

1. **Timings given above are only indicative and not intended to inhibit Members' discussions.**
2. **Members are reminded that, if they have a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest in any item of business coming before the meeting, that interest should be declared prior to commencement of discussion on that item. Such declaration will be recorded in the Minute of the meeting.**

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**Membership of Committee:-** Councillors E. Jardine (Chair), C. Cochrane, L. Douglas, M. Douglas, J. Greenwell, C. Hamilton, S. Hamilton, J. Linehan, S. Mountford, D. Parker, J. Pirone, E. Robson, M. Rowley, F. Sinclair, R. Tatler, E. Thornton-Nicol and T. Weatherston

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**SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

MINUTES of the Blended Meeting of the EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE held in Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells and via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday, 18th April, 2023 at 10.00 am

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Present:- Councillors E. Jardine (Chair), L. Douglas, M. Douglas, J. Greenwell, C. Hamilton, S. Hamilton, J. Linehan, S. Mountford, D. Parker, J. Pirone, E. Robson, M. Rowley, F. Sinclair, R. Tatler, E. Thornton-Nicol and T. Weatherston.

Also Present:- Councillors W. McAteer

Absent:- Councillor C. Cochrane

In Attendance:- Chief Executive, Director- Infrastructure and Environment, Director - Resilient Communities, Acting Chief Financial Officer, Chief Officer - Economic Development, Chief Planning Officer, Democratic Services Team Leader, Democratic Services Officer (D. Hall), Ms S Harkins (South of Scotland Enterprise)

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS**

Present: Mr G Clark (Federation of Small Businesses), Ms S Petrie (Chamber of Commerce), Mr Trevor Jackson.

**DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Councillors Robson and Rowley declared an interest in the following item of business in terms of Section 5 of the Councillors Code of Conduct and left the meeting during the discussion.

**1. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

- 1.1 There had been circulated copies of a report by the Director of Resilient Communities which provided elected members with an update on key areas of economic development delivery affecting the Scottish Borders. The report identified the major policies and strategies that were driving regional economic development and detailed key pieces of work. The Local Employability Partnership (LEP) was established in September 2021 to drive the employability agenda and to foster a strong collaborative approach to delivery. The importance of the LEP had been recognised by the Scottish Government to ensure that there was further integration and alignment of employability and skills provision at local level. Over the last year the LEP had gained a stronger understanding of the local employability needs in the Scottish Borders supported by partners such as Skills Development Scotland (SDS), Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE), employability services, third sector, educational organisations and the NHS, and was working to deliver a more coordinated approach to service delivery. Scottish Borders Council (SBC) and SOSE agreed to form a strategic partnership in relation to the delivery of the Business Gateway Service in November 2020, with the transfer of services completed in April 2021. The report provided a regular update on delivery and confirms a general increase in Business Gateway activity over recent months. The refreshed Scottish Borders Strategic Events Plan was approved in August 2022 for a five year period to 2027. The new plan was ambitious and targeted support towards strategic events which had regional economic impact, were sustainable and worked towards the delivery of net zero. As a host venue Glentress and the Scottish Borders would have a major role during the Cycling World Championships which would

see around 1,000 riders representing national teams, international cycling media, and an anticipated 20,000 spectators come to the Tweed Valley from 6 to 13 August later in the year. There was an expected TV audience (across the entire World Championships) of one billion people, and the Tweed Valley would host five of the championship events. The South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership (REP) held its first in-person meeting on 24 March 2023. Partnership members agreed that the key areas of focus for the REP over the next two years would be housing, skills and transport as the 'grand challenges' that were central to realising the ambitions detailed in the Regional Economic Strategy. The Chief Officer – Economic Development, Ms Sam Smith presented the report and responded to Members questions. Regarding the potential for cross-ticketing of appropriate attractions and events, Ms Smith confirmed that discussions had begun to ensure cohesion between the different Borderlands investments. In response to a question regarding the total financial support available through the Community Festivals and Small Grant Scheme, and the Council Community Cycling Scheme Grant Fund, the Principal Officer – Economic Development, confirmed that £125k was available for the former, and £70k for the latter. Ms Smith confirmed that the criteria for the Community Festivals Fund was published on the SBC website, and undertook to share the link with Members. In response to a question regarding creating links with the South of Scotland Destination, Ms Smith undertook to organise a members briefing at a future date.

- 1.2 The Chair welcomed Ms Susan Harkins of SOSE to the meeting. Ms Harkins delivered a presentation on Driving Entrepreneurs in the South of Scotland. An overview of the SOSE Entrepreneurial lifecycle was presented, which outlined how support was provided to supporting people and enterprise explained. The focus was on individuals, with no set rules on where to find or define entrepreneurs. There were 4 pillars of activity, aimed at inspiring individuals to start a business and provide a cycle of support throughout that process. Ms Harkins explained that a gap had been identified in the region regarding inspiring people to start businesses. Whilst Business Gateway could assist individuals who had already decided to start a business, there was little impetus on inspiring new entrepreneurs. It was hoped that by offering a full suite of support potential entrepreneurs would be inspired to start a business. An inclusive approach had been developed, and work was expected to take place in communities, and within educational facilities. Ms Harkins highlighted that a Game Freak event in Galashiels had been well received by attendees. Connection and networking events had been held in Eyemouth, Hawick, Peebles, Kelso and Galashiels, at which 20-20 people had been in attendance. Members thanked Ms Harkins for her insightful presentation and highlighted that working in partnership was key to success in the area. It was agreed that copies of the slide presentation would be shared.

## **DECISION**

### **AGREED to:-**

- (a) note the information that was provided regarding the current economic development landscape affecting the Scottish Borders; and**
- (b) note where future delivery updates will be reported back to Executive.**

## **2. COMMUNITY LED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FUND**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Director, Resilient Communities which provided an update on the delivery of the Scottish Government's Community Led Local Development (CLLD) Fund 2022/23. The CLLD Fund was a specific fund for rural areas of Scotland provided by the Scottish Government since 2020. The report explained that the term CLLD was used to indicate that the decisions on funding allocations should be made locally rather than nationally. The fund was distributed to Local Action Groups (LAGs) across rural Scotland and could overlap with Local Authority areas such as Dumfries and Galloway, whereas other LAGs could cover parts of a number of Local Authorities such as in the case of the Cairngorms. The Scottish Borders had its own LAG that was made up of Public, Private and Third Sector organisations. Membership was open to anyone

resident or working within the Scottish Borders region. Scottish Borders Council acted as Lead Partner for the Local Action Group and distributed the funding based on the recommendations of the LAG. The Scottish Government announced in December 2021 that additional funding of £11.6 million would be made available for a new Community CLLD Fund in financial year 2022/23. The Place and Enterprise Manager – Economic Development, Mr Graeme Johnstone, presented the report, highlighted that since the publication of the report it had been announced that SBC would be allocated £391k of funding for the current financial year, and responded to Members questions. Regarding evaluations of successful projects, Mr Johnstone confirmed that they would occur, and that they were expected to be presented to the Committee at a future date. Work to ensure that interested parties were aware of the latest round of funding would be undertaken as soon as was practicable. Mr Johnstone confirmed that applicants could utilise other sources of funding, such as applications to Area Partnerships. Members thanked Mr Johnstone for the report, and welcomed the positive impact that the funding had made on communities across the region.

## **DECISION**

### **AGREED:-**

- (a) to note the progress made regarding the allocation of Community Led Local Development funding during the financial year 2022/23;**
- (b) that Scottish Borders Council continued to administer the Community Led Local Development Funding on behalf of the Local Action Group during financial year 2023/24; and**
- (c) that regular progress reports on the funding allocation were brought back to the Executive Committee.**

### **3. UK COMMUNITY RENEWAL FUND (CRF)**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Director, Resilient Communities which provided an update on the delivery of the UK Community Renewal Fund (CRF) for Scottish Borders and noted the outcome of the 2021/2022 Fund. The UK Government announced the Build Back Better Community Renewal Fund in the UK Budget in March 2021. The Community Renewal Fund (CRF) was a competitive one-off revenue fund with spending required to be undertaken by successful projects initially by the end of March 2022 but this was later extended by UK Government to 31st December 2022. The aim of the Fund was to pilot projects across the UK and prepare the way for the UK Prosperity Fund from 2022/23 onwards. Projects were required to align with at least one of the following investment priorities:

- Investment in skills;
- Investment for local business;
- Investment in communities and place; and
- Supporting people into employment.

A call was put out for project bids in April 2021 which attracted 29 applications totalling £9million (Local Authorities could bid for up to £3million of UK CRF monies). Those were assessed by an Independent Panel and a shortlist of projects devised for Council approval in June 2021. Eighteen project bids totalling £2,999,040 were submitted to UK Government for consideration. The UK Government announced in November 2021 that eight projects were successful, totalling £1,296,814. All eight projects were successfully delivered by the deadline of 31st December 2022 with final grant funds of £1,251,018 drawn down from UK Government. In response to a question regarding feedback on the projects which had not been successful, the External Funding programme Co-ordinator, Ms Linda Cornwall, explained that only basic feedback had been received from the UK Government. Regarding the underspend detailed within the report, Ms Cornwall explained that some of the projects had been able to source materials at a cheaper rate, and that one planned workshop had been unable to go ahead as planned due to the workshop lead being unavailable. In response to a question poor attendance and malaise

at Area Partnerships, Ms Smith outlined that it was hoped that a shift to funding more sustainable projects would take place, and that placemaking and shared prosperity could help improve attendance levels and improve engagement. The Director – Resilient Communities confirmed that work would be undertaken to provide clarity on the different sources of funding available across the various sources. Regarding the funding for Borders Employment Advice and Mentoring (BEAM) being separate from existing services, Ms Smith explained that due to the timing of the project and funding source it had not been possible to link the service to other services. It was not expected that a different funding source would be a barrier to partnership working. In response to a question regarding four employment coaches at Berwickshire Housing Association as part of the BEAM project, Ms Cornwall confirmed that the coaches had been contracted for the lifespan of the project, and that Berwickshire Housing Association were exploring deploying the coaches in a similar role in the future.

## **DECISION**

**AGREED to note the outcome of the UK Community Renewal Fund in relation to project delivery.**

### **4. PLACE MAKING UPDATE**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Director – Resilient Communities which provided an update on progress made with Place Making since Council agreed to take a collaborative approach with Area Partnerships to roll-out Place Making across Borders Communities. In August 2021, Council agreed an approach, working with Area Partnerships, to develop and enable place making activity across Borders communities. The approach was intended to complement the related Place Programme under the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal which focused on the four target towns of Eyemouth, Galashiels, Hawick and Jedburgh. In practice, all place making activity, whether it's Borderlands or the wider Area Partnership-led approach, shared the same core characteristic – it was about communities leading on the development and delivery of an action plan for their place which identified local needs and ambitions, and which then prioritised actions and projects to address them. By taking an inclusive approach open to all communities, the five Area Partnerships had between them, identified over 40 communities that were interested in developing community-led action plans. Those communities were set out in in the report. The report highlighted the progress in supporting the development in the overall approach and the practical progress that was being made in communities including the four Borderlands target towns of Eyemouth, Galashiels, Hawick, and Jedburgh. The report outlined the support for place making from SBC and CPP partner staff and further support which was being put in place in terms of additional capacity and funds that could support communities in the development and delivery of their plans. Place making represented a significant opportunity for communities across the Borders and was increasingly the key to unlocking external funding opportunities by evidencing the need and will of the community through demonstrable inclusive engagement. That also facilitated a community led approach to shaping and informing the planning and delivery of critical public services. The approach was increasingly built into legislation (e.g. the Page 23 Planning (Scotland), Joint Working (Scotland) and Community Empowerment Acts) and would impact on – and needed to transform – the way both the Council and its Community Planning Partners worked together with communities to understand, support and respond to local needs and ambitions. Over the coming year, the main focus of place making activity would be around three main areas of work: a) Continuing to support all participating communities to progress their plans and ambitions; b) Ensuring that funds, such as the Shared Prosperity Fund, and the Place Based Investment Fund were used to best effect in supporting communities deliver credible investment proposals, built on a body of community led evidence; and c) Ensuring that place making was seen as “the way things get done” – informing service and community planning, the way that projects were identified and developed and the key to accessing external funding – all built on community needs, aspirations and priorities. It was explained that whilst Selkirk had been highlighted in the report as part of the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, it was not part of that Deal.

Selkirk had been pro-active and had followed the same timeline as the Borderlands towns. In response to a question regarding capacity within the Communities and Partnerships team, the Director – Resilient Communities explained that a collaborative approach had been developed to ensure that there was capacity across the Council to assist with placemaking, including officers in planning and the economic development team. It was highlighted that communities were responsible for leading the placemaking process. Members highlighted that the various funding streams, rules and where to apply could be complex for communities. The Director – Resilient Communities undertook to update out-of-date infographics which outlined the various sources of funding available to communities and other interested parties in a simplified manner. In response to a question regarding reporting of what progress each community was making, in order to allow comparisons, the Director confirmed that regular reports would be made to allow communities a sense of timelines and to provide local competition. Regarding Energise Galashiels, the Director confirmed that it was important not to side-line already established local groups, and that each community would have to incorporate such groups on an individual case-by-case basis.

#### **DECISION**

##### **AGREED:-**

- (a) to note the progress that had been made in relation to place making activity across the Borders; and**
- (b) that regular progress reports be brought back to the Executive Committee.**

#### **5. UPDATE ON THE BORDERLANDS INCLUSIVE GROWTH DEAL AND THE EDINBURGH SOUTH-EAST SCOTLAND CITY REGION DEAL**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Director – Resilient Communities which provided an update on progress with the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal and the Edinburgh and South-East Scotland City Region Deal, particularly the programmes and projects that directly affected the Scottish Borders. The Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, was signed in March 2021 by the Borderlands Partnership, the UK and Scottish Governments, and the five local authorities within the Borderlands area: Carlisle City Council, Cumbria County Council, Dumfries and Galloway Council, Northumberland Council, and Scottish Borders Council. The Deal would provide a total funding package of £452m over 10 years for the Borderlands area, with £150m available for the South of Scotland, comprising £65m from the UK Government and £85m from the Scottish Government. The report described the progress being made with the programmes and projects affecting the Scottish Borders. The Edinburgh and South-East Scotland City Region Deal was signed in August 2018 and involved East Lothian, Midlothian, West Lothian, Fife, City of Edinburgh and Scottish Borders Councils along with universities and colleges, the private sector, the third sector and relevant public sector agencies. The 15-year Deal was worth £1.3bn, which included £600m of Government funding and £700m of funding from other partners. This report gave an update on those City Region Deal projects that directly affected the Scottish Borders. Members highlighted that the revised business cases referred to in the report did not represent failures, but that the Council had recognised that it needed to invest in the right projects for the right reasons. The Director confirmed that discussions were regularly held with officers and partners regarding the skills programme and the regional prosperity framework.

#### **DECISION**

##### **AGREED:-**

- (a) to note the progress that had been made on the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal and the Edinburgh and South-East Scotland City Region Deal;**

- (b) to note that a number of business cases related to the Borderlands and City Deal programmes would be brought back to Scottish Borders Council for approval in 2023 as detailed in the report; and
- (c) that regular progress reports on both growth deals were brought back to the Executive Committee.

### OTHER BUSINESS

#### 6. **MINUTE**

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the meeting held on 14 March 2023.

#### **DECISION**

**APPROVED for signature by the Chairman.**

#### 7. **CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023/24 - BLOCK ALLOCATIONS**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Acting Chief Financial Officer which sought approval for the proposed individual projects and programmes within the various block allocations in the 2023/24 Capital Financial Plan. Appendices A-R to the report contained proposals for various projects to be allocated from the block allocations. Those overall block allocations were approved in the 2023/24 Capital Financial Plan at the meeting of Scottish Borders Council on 23 February 2023. Not all projects had been fully identified at the point of production of the report and as and when this information was available this would be brought to the Committee for consideration as part of the quarterly monitoring reports. In response to a question regarding electric vehicle charging points, the Acting Chief Financial Officer, Mrs Suzy Douglas, undertook to contact the appropriate service to discuss the proposed locations of points and update members. In response to a question regarding the proposed spend on Council HQ, the Director – Infrastructure and Environment explained that the proposed works included refurbishment, upgrading the Council Chamber, EV charger installations, and further blended meeting room provision amongst other improvements. Regarding the merits of undertaking £136k of proposed works to Lowood lodge, the Director and the Chief Executive provided assurance that the works were required to bring the building in to a habitable state as a consequence of damp problems, and were essential to preserve the value of the building. With regards to play parks, more projects than outlined in the report would be undertaken due to agreements made at a national level. In response to a question regarding the level of detail provided on the proposed Roads & Bridges allocation, the Director – Infrastructure and Environment outlined that works which were planned 3 years into the future had been shared with Members, and that the full details of the planned works had been held back to allow for the plans to be presented in a more professional form, including using correct road names in place of colloquial or local names. In response to a question regarding the inconsistent Wi-Fi connections in schools, the Chief Executive provided assurance that there should be no issue with students being connected to the Wi-Fi in any building of the school estate, and that all of the school buildings had been surveyed and no issues had been detected. Regarding Appendix G to the report, the Director confirmed that the works related to the expansion of facilities to allow the provision of free school meals to a greater number of students. The Director undertook to investigate whether the works to upgrade windows at Chirnside Primary School involved all of the windows. Members agreed to defer the decision on approving the works to Peebles swimming pool as it would be discussed in detail later in the meeting. Follow extensive discussion regarding the proposed works to upgrade Council Headquarters, it was agreed that a report would be produced which outlined all of the works to be undertaken, and the benefits which would be realised from the planned spend.

#### **DECISION**

**AGREED to approve:-**



- (a) **the block allocation breakdowns as contained in Appendices A-R to the report, with exception of:**
  - (i) **the £480k Council HQ Building Upgrade Works, which was deferred to allow the production of a strategy report outlining the details and benefits of the proposed spend; and**
  - (ii) **the £500k Peebles Swimming Pool Roofing Upgrade, which was deferred for consideration later in the meeting.**
- (b) **the re-allocation of available budget in the Health and Safety Works Block to the Building Upgrades Block of £63k; and**
- (c) **a timing movement of £440k from 2023/24 to 2024/25 in the Play Areas and Outdoor Community Spaces Block.**

**8. SCOTTISH BORDERS CONSULTATIVE DRAFT LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2023-2028**

With reference to paragraph 6 of the Minute of the meeting held on 17 November 2020 there had been circulated copies of a report by the Director – Infrastructure and Environment which provided an update on the consultative draft Local Housing Strategy 2023 to 2028 and information on further planned consultation. The report explained that the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 placed a statutory requirement on local authorities to develop a Local Housing Strategy (LHS), supported by an assessment of housing need and demand. The LHS provided direction for tackling housing issues and informs future investment in housing and related services. The current Scottish Borders Local Housing Strategy (LHS) covered the period 2017-2022 and was approved by the Executive Committee in June 2017. In November 2020 the Executive Committee agreed to the deferral of the next LHS to 2023. The new, proposed, consultative draft LHS had been prepared in accordance with Scottish Government Guidance which set out the statutory requirements, essential links and outcomes that should be considered within the strategy. The Lead Officer, Housing Strategy and Development, Ms Donna Bogdanovic presented the report and responded to Members questions. In response to a question regarding Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report and full Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) the Chief Planning Officer, Mr Ian Aikman, explained that SEA was a statutory process, and that they formed part of a cumulative process which were taken into account as part of the Local Development Plan. The Local Housing Strategy formed a key part of the LDP. Regarding feedback, in particular from landlords and Registered Social Landlords (RSL), Ms Bogdanovic explained that RSLs had been a key partner as part of the formal consultation and had done excellent work in helping tenants share their opinions and needs through tenant groups and meetings. In response to a question regarding the pattern of non full-time occupation of homes across the Borders, Ms Bogdanovic undertook to highlight the area as requiring work in the LHS action plan. Members thanked Ms Bogdanovic for her report, and highlighted the importance of the LHS to the region.

**DECISION  
AGREED:-**

- (a) **to approve plans for formal consultation and engagement;**
- (b) **to approve submission of the Draft Local Housing Strategy 2023 to 2028 to the Scottish Government More Homes Division for Peer Review; and**
- (c) **to note plans for finalising the strategy.**

**9. COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT SMALL SCHEMES**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Director – Infrastructure and Environment which provided draft guidance to Elected Members on the arrangements for undertaking Community Enhancement Small Scheme Projects. The Director presented the report and responded to Members questions. Following discussions regarding the procedure for instances where there was no clear majority for or against a proposal, it was agreed to amend paragraph 5.1 (f) to substitute “the matter can be referred to Council for a decision” with “the Chairman of the relevant Area Partnership shall have the casting vote”. In response to a question regarding the process for requesting works to private property, the Director explained that it was up to Members to reach a consensus on whether there was demonstrable public benefit, or legitimate reason for the public to undertake the work, and to decide whether or not to proceed. Regarding the evaluation of the impact of works once they had been completed, the Chief Executive explained that the capacity of officers to undertake such assessments was unclear. In response to a question regarding whether funding could be further divided to Ward level, the Chief Executive confirmed that it was for all of the respective Area Partnership Members to decide.

#### **DECISION**

**AGREED to approve the operational arrangements associated with the Community Enhancement Small Schemes Budget as amended.**

#### **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Councillor Weatherston declared an interest in the following item of business in terms of Section 5 of the Councillors Code of Conduct and left the Chamber during the discussion.

#### **10. PEBBLES SWIMMING POOL**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Director – Infrastructure and Environment which provided an update on the repair works to Peebles Swimming Pool and sought approval for further repair works to be carried out. Reinstatement works began in January 2023 focused on repairs to the damaged roof, plant room, and the internal fabric of the main pool hall. Works were due to be completed to enable reopening of the swimming pool for operation by Live Borders by the end of April 2023. During works, a number of other issues had been identified which the Council intended to address whilst progressing with the reinstatement works, however this was expected to delay completion of the works until July 2023. In response to a question regarding what activities had been undertaken at the site between June 2022 and January 2023, the Director – Infrastructure and Environment explained that various groups had accessed the building and undertaken a range of activity. Specialist decontamination teams had checked the building for the presence of asbestos. Engineers had undertaken assessments of structural problems and damage to the plant equipment. The entire process had been complicated due to the building being occupied by LiveBorders, a third party. That arrangement had led to two teams of insurers and two teams of loss adjustors working at the site. Following that process, SBContracts had accessed in the site in January 2023 and uncovered damage to the electrical systems, fire alarms, security system, and roof which had not been detected to that point. The Director confirmed that a full breakdown of all of the costs involved was being worked on, and conversations were ongoing regarding settlement of the insurance claim. The Director agreed to undertake the production of a lessons learned report which would outline where problems had arisen and how they could be avoided on future projects. The Chief Executive confirmed that the insurance claim, which would only cover works to reinstate the pool to its previous condition, and not the additional works under discussion, represented a net payment of £450k to SBC. Following an extensive debate on whether to fund the additional works from financial reserves or the capital budget, Members agreed not to use financial reserves to fund the additional works, and agreed that a report should be produced which would explore alternative methods of financing the works.

#### **DECISION**

**AGREED:-**

- (a) to note the continued reinstatement works at Peebles Swimming Pool;
- (b) to approve the work required to the remaining roof as identified in the report as part of the Capital Programme 2023/24 Block Allocation;
- (c) to approve the additional works identified in the report which were estimated to cost in the region of £200k;
- (d) that an additional report would be brought back to the Executive Committee in the event that additional costs were incurred or works required;
- (e) that a lessons learned report evaluating the project be prepared; and
- (f) that a report exploring alternative methods of funding the additional works agreed at B and C be brought back to the Executive Committee.

**MEMBER**

Councillor Weatherston re-joined the meeting.

11. **PRIVATE BUSINESS**

**AGREED** under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the business detailed in Appendix 1 to this Minute on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part I of Schedule 7A to the Act.

**SUMMARY OF PRIVATE BUSINESS**

12. **AMENDMENT TO HOUSING BENEFIT & COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION VERIFICATION POLICY**

A report by the Director – Resilient Communities was considered and the recommendations approved.

*The meeting concluded at 13.35 pm*

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## OFFICE PREMISES

**Report by Director Infrastructure & Environment**

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## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**16 May 2023**

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### 1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1. **The purpose of this report is to set out the proposed approach for how Scottish Borders Council intends to utilise its office accommodation, post pandemic, to realise best value and support communities effectively.**
- 1.2. A programme of work, commenced during the pandemic, is in progress and remains to be completed. There are some key areas within Council Headquarters that are the current area of focus which, once complete, will offer flexible solutions to office accommodation and enable improved opportunities for inter-agency and third party collaborative working.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. **I recommend that Executive Committee:-**
  - a) **Endorse the Proposal and Vision for HQ explained in Section 4;**
  - b) **Approve that the planned works to Council HQ are further developed and completed as outlined in Section 7 at £480k, funded from the Asset Rationalisation & Demolition Capital Block Allocation;**
  - c) **Approve that further opportunities for the remaining areas of the HQ campus be developed in greater detail; and**
  - d) **Undertake an assessment on the effectiveness of the flexible working policy, its implications for the Council and its impact on Service Delivery detailed within a report to Executive Committee in September 2023.**

### 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. The Scottish Future's Trust (SFT) published Infrastructure Investment Plan for Scotland - A Guide to Property Asset Strategy in the Scottish Public Sector in August 2022. This report underpins the planned approach for how SBC intends to manage and optimise its estate in future. It promotes a systems wide approach to support effective decision making and prioritisation around 3 themes:
- Enabling the transition to net zero emissions and environmental sustainability;
  - Building resilient and sustainable places; and
  - Driving inclusive economic growth
- 3.2. The SFT's New Frontiers for Smarter Working report concluded that there is a "small window of opportunity to deliver on the positive impacts" of the pandemic, which led to a rapid and significant change to the way people work. The report recognises that a blended approach can lead to positive outcomes for staff wellbeing and mental health; service delivery through improved productivity and greater collaboration with other organisations; and corporately in reducing overall building footprint, associated energy consumption, travel and commuting and carbon emissions.
- 3.3. Following the lockdown caused by the Covid pandemic, the Council has allowed those who are able to work in an agile way, either working from home or booking desks in Council offices if that is their preference. Providing the option of hybrid working has assisted the Council in meeting a range of recruitment challenges in its central functions. This flexibility is one of the key benefits employees are now looking for when looking for a new role and considering which organisations they wish to work for in an increasingly competitive labour market.
- 3.4. The Council's neighbouring authorities all operate a variety of hybrid and flexible working arrangements. Most are looking to rationalise property and reduce carbon footprint and hybrid working has enabled this work to commence. One council is implementing contractual home working and hybrid working for those who wish to work in this way, to assist with their assessment of future property requirements. As with the Council these Authorities recognise the benefits of a more agile way of working, supporting better work life balance and wellbeing whilst still being responsive to service needs.
- 3.5. Blended/hybrid working is also becoming the norm for many private sector organisations, with many employees operating part of or a majority of their time working remotely or from home. Hybrid/blended and remote working is recognised by several private sector organisations as being essential to promote flexibility and trust within their company. Many private sector companies recognise blended and hybrid working practices are essential to not only attract and retain staff but also encourages a diverse and inclusive workforce. Some examples of private sector companies embracing hybrid, blended and remote working are Vodafone; Skipton; Microsoft and Mastercard.

- 3.6. Several organisations in the private sector have opted for less flexible blended working practices, including having mandatory 'in-office' workdays. These include Apple; Amazon and Disney. Many of the organisations that are considering less flexible hybrid working are based in the United States. There are reports of strong employee opposition to these policies and many have been portrayed in a negative light in the media.
- 3.7. A 2022 report by Microsoft, "Making Hybrid Working Work", suggests that 53% of employees are more likely to prioritise health and well-being over work than before the pandemic and that 53% were considering a shift to hybrid work in the next year. This rose to 58% among younger employees.
- 3.8. Evidence from exit questionnaires indicated that a lack of options for flexible working in certain areas of the Council is the main reason for those employees leaving the Council's employment.
- 3.9. In Summer 2020, the council conducted a Homeworking survey with employees to gain a better understanding of staff views on Homeworking. The survey received 582 responses with a majority of staff (71%) stating they felt home working was either excellent or good. Benefits highlighted by staff included:
- Reduced commute/travel (83%);
  - Improved use of Technology (65%);
  - Financial benefit, eg. Less travel expense (60%);
  - Improved personal focus and outputs (48%); and
  - Better work life balance (47%).

Challenges of homeworking highlighted by staff were:

- Technical issues, such as connectivity (51%);
- Environment, eg. Work set up (45%);
- Isolation (38%);
- Financial costs eg. Increase in utility bills (38%); and
- Team communication/collaboration (27%).

Following the survey, the Council undertook a number actions to address the challenges highlighted by members of staff, including updates to technology and assistance with purchasing office equipment to enable staff to work from home.

- 3.10. In 2021, a group was established and a sustained exercise of staff and elected member engagement undertaken focused upon workspace environment. This found that:
- The existing office accommodation was not suited to modern day working practices;
  - The use of space needed to be more flexible to allow different styles of work patterns, e.g. individual, team and group settings;
  - Adequate welfare provision needed to be in place;
  - The office environment needed to support blended working and "drop-in" opportunities for home working and/or peripatetic staff; and

- Offices needed to be welcoming for staff.

3.11. In Summer 2022 the Council conducted the 'Employee Engagement survey' to gain a better understanding of staff experiences across the Council and how staff feel about working at the Council. The survey received 1,127 responses, with many sharing positive views regarding the Council's flexible/blended working practices:

- 58% of employees shared that they felt supported to work in an agile and flexible way;
- 58% felt that they had the opportunity to make suggestions on how we can improve the working environment at SBC;
- Conversely almost 32% of staff still felt that there were barriers to flexible working;
- A majority of employees also reported that they felt like part of a team while at work (72%); and
- Many reported that they had a good work/ life balance (58%).

The survey also gave staff the opportunity to share their thoughts in their own words as to what was going well at the Council and how employee engagement could be improved. Agile/blended/flexible/home-working was specifically mentioned by 102 employees under 'what's going well'. On the other hand 21 employees noted that they would like to have more access to office space for teams and 3 employees mentioned that staff should be encouraged back into the office.

3.12. Teams have entered into "Team Agreements" which govern how team members engage with each other. This has allowed teams to reach the right individual solution for them as to which meetings should take place in person and which can be conducted virtually.

3.13. The vast majority of Council staff work in frontline roles, 4,168 Full Time Equivalent staff work in Schools, Social Work Centres, Care Homes, and other front line functions such as Care at Homes, Waste, Roads and Parks. These are critical, face to face client-focussed, locality specific services being provided to the public. The hybrid working policy applies to approximately 1,500 staff of whom approximately 400 were previously based in Council HQ.

3.14. A recent assessment of travel expenses claimed by elected members has found that hybrid working has had a positive financial, time and environmental impact. Comparing the average of the two pre-pandemic years with the projections for 2022/23 (post-pandemic) results in:

- Reduction of 89,610 miles travelled;
- Cost reduction of approximately £40,300;
- 2,240 hours less travel time; and
- Reduced carbon emissions of 15.77 tonnes CO2 per annum.

If these figures are extrapolated for the Council workforce, the cost, time and environmental benefits of hybrid working are substantive.



## **4. PROPOSAL**

- 4.1. The vision is to reimagine HQ as a Civic Hub, to optimise use of the building, increasing occupancy and utilisation. This provides opportunities to support public and third sector partners by working more closely and collaboratively, pooling resources whilst also helping to share/ reduce operational costs and maximise investment that SBC have already committed.
- 4.2. Scottish Futures Trust have conducted workshops on this model and a route map for this type of building operation can be accessed at [How to Develop and Operate Shared Workspace](#).
- 4.3. SBC is in active discussions with NHS Borders, Live Borders and Borders Community Action about co-location opportunities at HQ.
- 4.4. Preliminary, exploratory discussions have been arranged with Police Scotland and SFT about opportunities for co-location and greater collaborative working in the Scottish Borders. These opportunities may not be restricted to Council HQ.
- 4.5. Newtown St Boswells has been identified as a community that wants to develop a Place Plan this year and there is a real opportunity to bring the local neighbouring community into the building through the creation of community space (beyond and/ or including the existing community wing in the Old School Building) and consider how the HQ footprint supports future plans for the town and the potential extension of the Borders Railway. There is an opportunity to create community gardens and community food growing areas in and around the building so that HQ becomes more than just the administrative office for the neighbouring community.
- 4.6. SBC and partners provide grant support to many local businesses, often these grants are used by businesses to help cover their building operating costs. There is an opportunity to create a business hub/ incubator space which could be enhanced by enabling direct access to officers and our partners to help support businesses as they emerge, grow and/ or sustain.
- 4.7. Offering community access to dynamic workplace settings akin to those found in city centre locations by encouraging residents to work locally – reducing commutes and associated carbon - and businesses to operate in the area to bolster the local economy. Our return on investment can further be considered against the benefits in attracting young people to work in the Borders, and within our own workforce, by providing high quality interiors which support productivity and foster employee wellbeing.

## **5. REFURBISHMENT PROGRAMME GENERALLY**

- 5.1. In 2020 a refurbishment programme began at 3 key SBC office locations – Headquarters at Newtown St Boswells; Hawick Town Hall; and Paton Street Galashiels. This programme was part of a long-standing plan to

create a more agile and decluttered working environment within SBC offices.

- 5.2. The nature of the work varied between sites, but generally comprised alterations to create a modernised office environment that is easier to maintain, more flexible to use and more welcoming for staff and visitors through decluttering, redecoration; new flooring; electrical, lighting, wi-fi and IT upgrades along with staff toilets and comfort facilities. Where possible existing furniture has been reused and repurposed to provide a consistent and clean layout across the office estate.
- 5.3. During the pandemic, the new office layouts were determined by social distancing supporting the hybrid working policy, where only a limited number of desks are equipped with docking stations and monitors for staff use, with desks being booked by staff as required. Post pandemic, there is greater demand from staff, desk provision is increasing particularly to support clustered team working – which is particularly beneficial for training, new staff induction, and collaborative working and knowledge exchange. However it is worth noting that there are still some supply chain issues with some equipment.
- 5.4. Works completed in Hawick resulted in a reduction in the footprint, enabling a portion of the building above the contact centre to be sold as town centre flatted accommodation. Missives for this are being concluded at present.

## **6. HEADQUARTERS, NEWTOWN ST BOSWELLS – COMPLETED WORKS**

- 6.1. At HQ, works undertaken include the reimagining the reception at HQ and 'café' area on the ground floor. Investment in this area was determined on pre-pandemic ways of working, and as a consequence the full vision for that space has not yet been realised. By moving towards a Civic Hub, it is expected that we will get closer to that vision by creating a viable operating café, catering to the community and SBC team members and a range of public and community partners.
- 6.2. The ground floor of the main building and extension building has been arranged to provide bookable desk space for staff and has been in use by a large number of staff since February 2022. The impact of the Hybrid Working policy is that there are a reduced number of staff working in HQ compared with pre-pandemic levels. Occupancy varies and is increasing but typically there are between 60-70 staff working at HQ each working day. The current Covid safe distancing desk capacity is 72. The space available in the ground floor extension has potential to be let to third party organisations to generate an income to SBC and benefit from collaborative working. There will be capacity to accommodate 204 staff (excluding the County Buildings and Emergency Planning). 38 spaces are available in 7 meeting rooms.
- 6.3. The first floor of the main building has been refurbished as a shell space and is intended to be completed to provide collaborative/ group working. This will be particularly suited to colleagues who need to have drop-in sessions or for wider inter-disciplinary working. To complete this space ready for use some new furniture remains to be purchased for this area

to make it suitable for the intended use. This will accommodate up to 77 staff plus 18 spaces in 3 meeting rooms. It is envisaged that this space could be made available to external organisations to generate an income and benefit from collaborative working.

- 6.4. NHS Borders have already relocated approximately 60 staff from the Learning Disability service from Earlston to HQ occupying space on the first floor of the extension building, generating a rental income for SBC. The remaining accommodation on the first floor will be retained for the Council's Management Team without any investment.
- 6.5. The second floor has been set out with the intention of having bookable desks for team working, i.e. clusters being booked to accommodate those teams that work regularly together and that require adjacency to undertake their normal tasks productively. This space is now being occupied. It will have the capacity to accommodate 77 staff plus 28 spaces in 5 meeting rooms as well as break-out space for 18 staff.
- 6.6. The first phase relocation of CGI to Tweedside Park in Tweedbank allowed a portion of their former accommodation to be remodelled in order to create a new Emergency Planning Control Centre and to co-locate the Communications Team to this area. This has offered a fit for purpose space and facility that allows direct access to/ from the outside without the requirement to open the wider building. It has built-in audio visual capabilities that are significantly greater than the former windowless area housed in the Council HQ basement and known as "the Bunker". This new facility which allows the co-location of emergency services and council staff during an incident or event requiring planning and co-ordination of a multi-agency response has received very positive feedback from partner agencies who have used it.

## **7. HEADQUARTERS, NEWTOWN ST BOSWELLS – PROPOSED WORKS**

- 7.1. The office refurbishment programme is part of the wider Asset Rationalisation programme and the final phase of the works planned at HQ has identified a requirement for a further £0.5m of expenditure to re-provide the former Committee Room One in the space previously occupied by CGI. The Council Chamber has recently been adapted with a more fixed layout and audio visual equipment to enable more effective and inclusive blended meetings and to better enable online broadcasting of meetings. The additional works will provide an alternative meeting space for larger groups of staff; permit the use of this space for citizenship ceremonies; and provide an appropriate waiting area for the council chamber. It will be available for the use of staff and elected members as breakout space for informal meetings. It will also provide an area where media interviews can be conducted. These interviews are often conducted in corridors or outside the building. The space will be split into 3 zones for differing uses and will be able to accommodate up to 45 people.
- 7.2. One of the key success factors to service provision is staff training. SBC benefits from a wide variety of training resources through the SBLearn Online Training platform, however there are many roles within the Council that require physical face-to-face and interactive training. This is

currently undertaken within the Old School Building however the training facility is not fit-for-purpose and it is proposed that new enhanced, accessible and modern training facilities are provided within the ground floor of the main building to suit today's requirements whilst being adaptive to changing needs. 3 rooms are proposed providing capacity for 54 users in total, plus break-out space for another 20. The rooms will be as flexible as possible to accommodate traditional "classroom" training, digital skills plus physical training for programmes needed by front-line colleagues and external agencies, e.g. NHSB. Co-locating these facilities within the main building, adjacent to the new reception and café area also presents an opportunity for other partners and agencies to use and benefit from these facilities should they require them.

- 7.3. As noted in paragraph 6.3 above, some new furniture needs to be purchased for the first floor of the main building to make it suitable for the intended use.
- 7.4. There is an opportunity to further expand the work already undertaken across the rest of the building, to:
  - Incorporate some of the workspace pilot ideas to provide a wider range of choice and flexibility of working environments for concentrated or collaborative work, including improving acoustics;
  - Provide desktop power points for charging in flexible space, such as the café, to provide touch down space;
  - Provide tightly laid out team designated zones to improve morale, personal development and team building;
  - Increase available meeting accommodation with a well-considered fit-for-purpose AV systems that better support blended working; and
  - Provide a flexible meeting space adjacent to reception that can be used by differing groups and that can support the needs of the Emergency Planning Centre during a major incident.
- 7.5. There are a number of key stages to progress within the HQ campus to allow this vision to be realised and to have sufficient, suitable accommodation to be able to adopt the Civic and Community hub outlined above. These are:
  - Complete toilet accommodation refurbishment to ground floor of main building;
  - Purchase furniture and re-open first floor of main building as collaborative work zone (para 6.3 and 7.1);
  - Develop remodelling of remaining CGI area to form flexible meeting zone (para 7.1);
  - Rationalise existing server room space to form consolidated footprint for CGI use and usable space by SBC;
  - Provide additional workstations within refurbished accommodation, increasing capacity beyond the Covid-restricted layout; and
  - Develop proposals for training suite within Ground Floor of main building and undertake works (para 7.2).

## 8. IMPLICATIONS

### 8.1. Financial

The table below outlines the financial position of the programme indicating works completed & planned works. Please note that the planned works are budget estimates at this time.

	<b>Works Completed</b>	<b>Works Planned</b>	<b>Target for Completion</b>
HQ Reception / Canteen	£1,042,729		
HQ Lift	£75,448		
HQ Emergency Planning	£40,708		
HQ Offices	£848,285		
Visioning Pilot (consultancy)	£22,883		
First Floor Furniture		£35,000	Summer 23
Main GF toilets		£20,000	Summer 23
Meeting / Civic Zone		£230,000	October 23
Server Room		£20,000	December 23
IT / Workstations		£25,000	August 23
Training Suite		£150,000	Summer 24
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£2,030,053</b>	<b>£480,000</b>	

It is proposed that the £480k works are funded from the Asset Rationalisation & Demolition Capital Block Allocation considered at Executive Committee on 18 April 2023.

### 8.2. Risk and Mitigations

- a) A substantial amount of work has already been delivered to create an improved office estate suited to modern working practices; however, the programme requires to be completed in order to gain the benefits of the vision. Completing the programme, as outlined in the table above, will allow the Newtown St Boswells campus to operate effectively and efficiently as a Civic Hub as well as office and democratic accommodation for Council.
- b) Failure to complete these works will leave an incomplete solution that will provide a negative visual perception of Council Headquarters to colleagues and visitors alike, and will not allow the Council to capitalise fully realise the benefits of agile, hybrid and collaborative working.

### 8.3. Integrated Impact Assessment

An IAA has not been undertaken yet, this will be carried out as part of the planning of the proposals outlined; however, it is not anticipated that there will be any negative issues to address.

### 8.4. Sustainable Development Goals

1. No Poverty – The project is envisaged to encourage and support community enterprise.

2. No Hunger – The project is expected to encourage and support community enterprise through multi-agency approaches.
3. Good Health – The project is intended to encourage partnership working and planning to reduce pollution.
7. Renewable Energy – The consolidation of office accommodation seeks to ensure we make best use of Council buildings and create opportunities to improve transport and reduce energy consumption per person along with a corresponding reduction in carbon emissions.
8. Good Jobs and Economic Growth – The project seeks to provide safe, fit for purpose inclusive working environments for our staff and partners.
9. Innovation and Infrastructure - The introduction of improved audio-visual / communications technology within the building, along with wide adoption of Microsoft Office 365 and Microsoft Teams aids the use of remote and hybrid working. The hybrid model contributes to reducing travel (meetings/ site visits/ commuting) reducing transport related carbon emissions.
17. Partnerships for the Goals – The project seeks to encourage partnerships between public sector, third sector and community partners.

#### 8.5. **Climate Change**

1. Energy Use/Carbon Emissions from Buildings and other Infrastructure – the project will contribute to optimising efficiency of operation and energy consumption. Although separate, the HQ Smart Grid project to install solar panels and electric vehicle chargers at Newtown St Boswells, has been integral to the office rationalisation vision.
2. Transport – the project will reduce the need for unnecessary car journeys through collaborative partnership and hybrid working.
3. Waste and Resource Use – the project seeks to reuse existing furniture wherever possible. Surplus furniture has been offered to a variety of groups, on a managed basis, to allow this to be reused prior to disposal for recycling, etc. During the construction works, redundant cabling has been removed & recycled, rather than being disposed of. This approach has even extended to damaged musical instruments from storage being taken by a specialist charity.
4. Infrastructure & Land Use – the project seeks to reuse and conserve and existing under-utilised buildings whilst also providing local opportunities for food growing, community enablement etc.
5. Biodiversity – the project has potential to create opportunities for community led initiatives enhancing biodiversity within the grounds of HQ.
6. Adaptation – the project seeks to enhance the resilience of the community and our key stakeholders and partners.

#### 8.6. **Rural Proofing**

This report does not affect or amend rural proofing policies.

#### 8.7. **Data Protection Impact Statement**

There are no personal data implications arising from proposals contained in this report.

#### 8.8. **Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

There are no changes to the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the proposals within this report.

## 9. CONSULTATION

- 9.1. The Director (Finance & Corporate Governance), the Monitoring Officer/Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Director (People Performance & Change), the Clerk to the Council and Corporate Communications are being consulted and any comments received will be incorporated into the final report.
- 9.2. Others to be consulted if required are –
- Procurement Officer – if you are buying any goods or services.

### Approved by

Name	Title
John Curry	Director – Infrastructure & Environment

### Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
John Curry	Director – Infrastructure & Environment

**Background Papers:**  
**Previous Minute Reference:**

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## **SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE FUND**

### **Report by Director – Resilient Communities**

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## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**16 May 2023**

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### **1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report provides evaluation and outcomes of the awards made in relation to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Fund, which was open from 5 January 2022 to 30 April 2022.**
- 1.2 It was agreed at Executive Committee on 16 November 2021 to allocated £70k to create a Queen's Platinum Jubilee Fund. The purpose of this fund was to enable non-profit making community/voluntary groups, schools and churches within the Borders to apply for grant funding to take part in celebratory events/community and legacy projects to mark the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee Weekend 2 – 5 June 2022.
- 1.3 Approval for decision making for the fund was to be agreed at Officer level, with final approval and sign off by the Director - Resilient Communities.
- 1.4 The Executive Committee asked that a report providing evaluation and outcomes of the awards made in relation to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Fund be brought back to at a later date.

### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 I recommend that the Executive Committee:-**

**Notes the number, evaluation and outcomes of the awards made from the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Fund.**

### **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 It was agreed at Executive Committee on 16 November 2021 to allocate £70k to create a Queen's Platinum Jubilee Fund. The purpose of this fund was to enable non-profit making community/voluntary groups, schools and churches within the Borders to apply for grant funding to take part in celebratory events/community and legacy projects to mark the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee Weekend 2 – 5 June 2022.
- 3.2 The extended Bank Holiday, from Thursday 2 to Sunday 5 June provided an opportunity for communities and people throughout the United Kingdom to come together to celebrate the historic milestone. The four days of celebrations included public events and community activities, as well as national moments of reflection on the late Queen's 70 years of service.
- 3.3 It was agreed that the fund would open on 5 January 2022 to allow communities to plan events and activities, and close on 30 April 2022 to allow grant payments to be processed before the Platinum Jubilee Weekend.
- 3.3 Awards up to a maximum of £2,500 were available. Due to the timescales involved, and to allow processing of awards to be made on a fast track basis - approval for decision making for the fund was agreed at Officer level, with final approval and sign off by the Director, Resilient Communities.
- 3.4 The Fund opened on 5 January and closed on 30 April 2022 as agreed. Due to the significant interest and community demand generated, the fund was oversubscribed at several points in time and the funding allocation was increased to meet that demand. The Director of Resilient Communities and the Director of Finance & Corporate Governance agreed to allocate additional funding from underspends in the department's budget which the Executive Committee approved through financial reporting on 14 June 2022 (£54k) and 16 August 2022 (£40k).

### **4 EVALUATION AND OUTCOMES**

- 4.1 A total of £164,091.72 was awarded to 114 organisations and community groups. Awards ranged from £120 to £2,500 with the average award being £1,439. For a breakdown of the number of successful applicants per Locality and the total funds awarded per Locality, see Appendix 1.
- 4.2 It was the intention of the fund to increase the number of opportunities for communities to celebrate the special occasion and/or create a lasting legacy of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Of the 114 successful applications, 75 received a grant for celebratory and community activities and 39 received a grant for legacy and community facilities.
- 4.3 To date, 96 evaluations have been submitted – a return rate of 85.7%. 2 evaluations are due in June due to project extensions. Examples of QPJF projects supported are available here [Queen's Platinum Jubilee Fund](#)

4.4 The QPJF Fund enabled communities to come together and celebrate this historic milestone. The range of organisations who applied for funding reflects the high level of interest that there was in this fund. Projects made use of local sites and spaces and connected people across generations to recognise the Queen's 70 years of public service.

## **5 IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 Financial**

There are no further financial implications relating to this report. Financial implications were considered in the original report to the Executive. An overview of the final spend is detailed within Appendix 1.

### **5.2 Risk and Mitigations**

There are no risks associated with this report.

### **5.3 Integrated Impact Assessment**

There is no impact or relevance to Equality Duty or the Fairer Scotland Duty for this report. This is a routine evaluation report which forms part of the governance of Community Funding function within the Council.

### **5.4 Sustainable Development Goals**

There are no direct economic, social or environmental issues with this report which would affect the Council's sustainability policy.

### **5.5 Climate Change**

There are no direct carbon emissions impacts as a result of this report

### **5.6 Rural Proofing**

N/A

### **5.7 Data Protection Impact Statement**

There are no personal data implications arising from the proposals contained in this report

### **5.8 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

No changes to the Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation are required as a result of this report

## **6 CONSULTATION**

6.1 Acting Chief Financial Officer, Acting Chief Corporate Governance, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Director (People Performance & Change), the Clerk to the Council and Corporate Communications were consulted with and any comments received were incorporated into the final report –

## Approved by

**Name**

**Title**

### Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Jenni Craig	Director, Resilient Communities
Gillian Jardine	Community Co-ordinator

**Background Papers:** Scottish Borders Council's Queen's Platinum Jubilee Fund – Report to Executive

**Previous Minute Reference:** Executive Committee, 7 December 2021

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communityengagement@scotborders.gov.uk

**APPENDIX I**

<b>Locality</b>	<b>Funding Awarded</b>		
	<b>Groups Awarded</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of Fund</b>
Berwickshire	26	£36,407.60	22.3%
Cheviot	26	£37,349.58	22.8%
Eildon	31	£47,004.99	28.7%
Teviot & L	18	£26,771.82	16.4%
Tweeddale	13	£16,557.73	10.1%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>£164,092</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<b>Locality</b>	<b>Evaluations Returned</b>	<b>Evaluations Overdue</b>
<b>Berwickshire</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Cheviot</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>1 (1 due 01.06.2023)</b>
<b>Eildon</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>3 (1 due 31.05.2023)</b>
<b>Teviot &amp; Liddesdale</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Tweeddale</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>

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