

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL held in Council Headquarters, Newtown St. Boswells on 10 November 2016 at 10.00 a.m.

Present:- Councillors G. Garvie (Convener), S. Aitchison, W. Archibald, M. Ballantyne, S. Bell, C. Bhatia, J. Brown, J. Campbell, K. Cockburn, A. Cranston, G. Edgar, V. Davidson, J. Fullarton, I. Gillespie, B. Herd, W. McAteer, S. Marshall, J. Mitchell, S. Mountford, A. Nicol, D. Parker (from para.5), D. Paterson, F. Renton, S. Scott, R. Smith, R. Stewart, J. Torrance, G. Turnbull, T. Weatherston, B. White.

Apologies:- Councillors M. Cook, J. Greenwell, D. Moffat.

In Attendance:- Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (People), Depute Chief Executive (Place), Corporate Transformation and Services Director, Service Director Assets & Infrastructure, Service Director Regulatory Services, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Roads Officer, Clerk to the Council.

1. CONVENER'S REMARKS

The Convener welcomed Ms Amanda Finlay, Headteacher of Clovenfords Primary School, Ms Shirley Potter, Class Teacher, and four pupils from Primary 7 to the meeting. The pupils presented their Remembrance Day Assembly to Members.

DECISION

THANKED the pupils for their very moving presentation.

MEMBER

Councillor Logan left the meeting.

2. MINUTE

The Minute of the Meeting held on 29 September 2016 was considered.

DECISION

AGREED that the Minute be approved and signed by the Convener.

3. COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Minutes of the following Committees had been circulated:-

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| Community Planning Strategic Board | 8 September 2016 |
| Galashiels Common Good Fund | 8 September 2016 |
| Eildon Area Forum | 8 September 2016 |
| Jedburgh Common Good Fund | 14 September 2016 |
| Kelso Common Good Fund | 14 September 2016 |
| Cheviot Area Forum | 14 September 2016 |
| Pension Fund | 15 September 2016 |
| Pension Fund Board | 15 September 2016 |
| Police, Fire & Rescue and Safer Communities Board | 16 September 2016 |
| Local Review Body | 19 September 2016 |
| Executive | 20 September 2016 |
| Teviot & Liddesdale Area Forum | 20 September 2016 |
| Scrutiny | 22 September 2016 |
| LLP Strategic Governance Group | 22 September 2016 |
| Civic Government Licensing | 23 September 2016 |
| Audit & Risk | 26 September 2016 |
| Planning & Building Standards | 3 October 2016 |

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Executive | 4 October 2016 |
| Petitions & Deputations | 6 October 2016 |
| Executive | 18 October 2016 |
| Jedburgh Common Good Fund | 19 October 2016 |
| Civic Government Licensing | 21 October 2016 |

DECISION

APPROVED the Minutes listed above subject to paragraph 4 below.

4. COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

With reference to paragraph 5.4 of the Minute of the Police, Fire & Rescue and Safer Communities Board of 16 September 2016, it was recommended that Council agree that the current Scottish Borders Local Fire Plan be extended until December 2017 and to approve the proposed timeline for the production of the next Scottish Borders Local Fire Plan.

DECISION

AGREED to approve the recommendation detailed above.

MEMBER

Councillor Parker joined the meeting.

5. OPEN QUESTIONS

The questions submitted by Councillors Logan, Turnbull and Cockburn were answered.

DECISION

NOTED the replies as detailed in Appendix I to this Minute.

6. DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE - HOUSING

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Regulatory Services seeking approval of the draft Supplementary Guidance on Housing, contained in Appendix A to the report, as a basis for public consultation. The report explained that the Scottish Borders Council Local Development Plan (LDP) was adopted on 12 May 2016. As recommended by the Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals following the Examination of the LDP, the LDP required the Council to identify a further 916 housing units within the Scottish Borders in order to address a housing shortfall. The process for identifying sites to accommodate the shortfall was via the production of Supplementary Guidance (SG). A draft SG had now been produced identifying proposed sites following consideration and analysis of a number of options. It was therefore recommended that Members accept the proposed sites within the draft SG with a view to carrying out a public consultation. It was proposed that the draft SG be subject to public consultation for a period of 8 weeks. Following public consultation, it was intended that a report would be brought back to a future meeting of the Council to seek final agreement before it was referred to Scottish Ministers and on approval it would become part of the adopted LDP. The Chief Planning Officer advised that the Section regarding Heather Mill, Selkirk would be amended to include an additional bullet point reading "There will be a clear requirement to provide an element of employment land on part of the site to reflect its mixed use allocation". Members welcomed the report and the proposed addition.

DECISION

AGREED to :-

- (a) approve the Draft Supplementary Guidance: Housing and its appendices, as amended, as a basis for public consultation;**
- (b) note the Environmental Report as set out in Appendix B; and**

- (c) **receive a further report following consultation for formal agreement of the Guidance.**

7. HAWICK ACTION PLAN - UPDATE

With reference to paragraph 12 of the Minute of 29 June 2016, there had been circulated copies of a report by the Corporate Transformation and Services Director providing an update on the Initial Hawick Action Plan approved in June 2016, and outlining the priority actions that should be taken forward in 2017. The report explained that the Initial Hawick Action Plan was structured around three key themes which were identified and agreed by the key stakeholders for the town. The first strategic theme focused on making Hawick a 'Great Place for Working and Investing'. The second theme focused on making Hawick a 'Great Place for Living and Learning' and the third theme focused on making Hawick a 'Great Destination to Visit', all aiming to make Hawick a great place to visit and stay. The work was being led by a partnership of Scottish Borders Council, Scottish Government, Scottish Enterprise and Skills Development Scotland. Since the previous update in June 2016, Council officers had been working to take forward some of the actions in the Plan in conjunction with key stakeholders, local businesses and other local organisations in Hawick. A number of key actions had been progressed and importantly, additional funding support had been offered by the Scottish Government in relation to regeneration support for the town and the Hawick Flood Protection Scheme. Members welcomed the report and noted that while progress was positive there was still a lot of work to do and engagement by all partners was important if the Plan was to succeed. Officers highlighted the tight timescale for spending the regeneration monies and that they were working hard to achieve this.

**DECISION
AGREED:-**

- (a) **to note the progress made in implementing the Initial Hawick Action Plan over the last 6 months, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report;**
- (b) **that the Council should support further work with businesses and stakeholders in Hawick in 2017/18 as outlined in Appendix 1 to the report; and**
- (c) **that the Corporate Transformation and Services Director present a progress report on the Action Plan to the Council at its meeting scheduled for 30 March 2017.**

8. ON-STREET PARKING AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

With reference to paragraph 14 of the Minute of 29 June 2016, there had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Roads Officer providing an update in relation to on-street parking and in particular reports on the findings of the town centre parking surveys. The report explained that following the withdrawal of the traffic warden service in February 2014 there had been concern, in some quarters, that a reduced level of enforcement had led to a deterioration in parking behaviour in some town centres. Comprehensive three day parking surveys were undertaken in 12 town centres to ascertain the extent of on-street parking issues. Details of the surveys were appended to the report. Analysis of the survey returns demonstrated that town centres were very busy in terms of parking and on occasions some operated at or above capacity. In general there appeared to be reasonable observance of waiting restrictions but there were specific areas where there was greater mis-use; some of which was for prolonged periods. Turn-over and duration of stay were positive with a high percentage of vehicles in all towns only staying for an hour or less. Other sources, such as the Household Survey and the Annual Footfall Survey, had also been examined to help determine how the removal of traffic wardens had impacted on town centres. Feedback from the Scottish Borders Household Survey suggested that the majority of respondents did not perceive parking as a common problem, but that the level of concern had increased since previous surveys. Analysis of the Annual Footfall Survey did not suggest that the removal of traffic wardens had had an impact on the number of pedestrians in town centres. While Officers recognised that there were intermittent traffic management issues in some locations

in the Borders, at this stage they considered that the introduction of Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) would be disproportionate, unnecessary and resource as well as cost prohibitive and suggested an alternative approach of requesting increased enforcement through Police Scotland, utilising powers in the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012. Members discussed the report in detail and a Motion and 2 Amendments were made as follows:-

Councillor Edgar, seconded by Councillor Paterson, moved that recommendation 2.1(d) be removed and replaced with “To instruct the Chief Officer Roads to carry out a full public consultation on the introduction of Decriminalised Parking Enforcement, using existing parking enforcement staff and systems, to include the use of a disc-based parking system and bring a report back to Council in February 2017.”

Councillor Parker, seconded by Councillor Mitchell, moved as an amendment that the existing recommendations be replaced with the following:-

“that Council agrees:

- (a) to note the results of the parking surveys and the updated position in regard to on-street parking;
- (b) (i) that, while commending Police Scotland on their work to date on parking enforcement, make stronger representations to enforce parking regulations, in particular in hot spots e.g. Gala, Hawick, Peebles and Selkirk, and to that end;
- (ii) to the use of the powers provided within the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 to inform the Local Policing Plan as a mechanism for greater control of on-street parking enforcement, using a targeted approach where necessary;
- (iii) Request that the Chief Executive and Council Leader establish a meeting at the earliest opportunity with Police Scotland to discuss improved parking enforcement, particularly in the hot spot areas identified.
- (c) to instruct the Chief Officer Roads to establish a rolling programme of inspections to ensure that all signage and line markings in restricted parking areas are clear, visible and enforceable;
- (d) to instruct the Chief Officer Roads to investigate the costs, resource, staffing requirements and financial viability of introducing a disc-based parking system for use in restricted parking areas to assist Police Scotland in their parking enforcement role and bring back a report on such a system to Council no later than 31 January 2017, and
- (e) Subject to the outcome of that report, for a three month trial period between 1 March 2017 and 31 May 2017 implement a pilot scheme in Selkirk and Hawick to test the effectiveness of a disc based parking system in partnership with Police Scotland.”

Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Marshall, moved as an amendment that the recommendations be amended by removing entirely the recommendations 2.1(b), 2.1(c) and 2.1(d) and replace with a new 2.1(b) “to instruct officers to proceed to develop a fully costed Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) Proposal that is capable of supporting an application to Scottish Ministers to seek authority for this Council to implement the management and enforcement of on-street parking.”

Councillor Edgar, seconded by Councillor Cockburn, moved that the votes be taken by roll call and this was unanimously approved. In terms of Standing Order 42(b) it was agreed that voting be carried out in the order of firstly taking Councillor Edgar’s Motion against Councillor McAteer’s Amendment and that the winner of that vote be then taken against Councillor Parker’s Amendment.

Roll Call Votes

| Councillor Edgar’s Motion | Councillor McAteer’s Amendment | Abstentions |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>Councillor Ballantyne</i> | <i>Councillor Aitchison</i> | <i>Councillor Archibald</i> |
| <i>Councillor Cockburn</i> | <i>Councillor Marshall</i> | <i>Councillor Bell</i> |

| | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Councillor Davidson</i> | <i>Councillor McAteer</i> | <i>Councillor Bhatia</i> |
| <i>Councillor Edgar</i> | <i>Councillor Parker</i> | <i>Councillor Brown</i> |
| <i>Councillor Fullarton</i> | <i>Councillor Renton</i> | <i>Councillor Campbell</i> |
| <i>Councillor Gillespie</i> | <i>Councillor Smith</i> | <i>Councillor Cranston</i> |
| <i>Councillor Mountford</i> | | <i>Councillor Garvie</i> |
| <i>Councillor Paterson</i> | | <i>Councillor Herd</i> |
| <i>Councillor Scott</i> | | <i>Councillor Mitchell</i> |
| <i>Councillor Turnbull</i> | | <i>Councillor Nicol</i> |
| <i>Councillor Weatherston</i> | | <i>Councillor Stewart</i> |
| | | <i>Councillor Torrance</i> |
| | | <i>Councillor White</i> |

Councillor Edgar's Motion received 11 votes against 6 Votes for Councillor McAteer's Amendment and there were 13 abstentions. Accordingly Councillor Edgar's Motion proceeded to be put against Councillor Parker's amendment as follows:-

| <i>Councillor Edgar's Motion</i> | <i>Councillor Parker's Amendment</i> |
|---|---|
| <i>Councillor Ballantyne</i> | <i>Councillor Aitchison</i> |
| <i>Councillor Cockburn</i> | <i>Councillor Archibald</i> |
| <i>Councillor Edgar</i> | <i>Councillor Bell</i> |
| <i>Councillor Fullarton</i> | <i>Councillor Bhatia</i> |
| <i>Councillor Marshall</i> | <i>Councillor Brown</i> |
| <i>Councillor McAteer</i> | <i>Councillor Campbell</i> |
| <i>Councillor Mountford</i> | <i>Councillor Cranston</i> |
| <i>Councillor Paterson</i> | <i>Councillor Davidson</i> |
| <i>Councillor Scott</i> | <i>Councillor Garvie</i> |
| <i>Councillor Turnbull</i> | <i>Councillor Gillespie</i> |
| <i>Councillor Weatherston</i> | <i>Councillor Herd</i> |
| | <i>Councillor Mitchell</i> |
| | <i>Councillor Nicol</i> |
| | <i>Councillor Parker</i> |
| | <i>Councillor Renton</i> |
| | <i>Councillor Smith</i> |
| | <i>Councillor Stewart</i> |
| | <i>Councillor Torrance</i> |
| | <i>Councillor White</i> |

Councillor Edgar's Motion received 11 votes and Councillor Parker's Amendment received 19 votes. Accordingly Councillor Parker's Amendment was approved.

DECISION

DECIDED:-

- (a) **to note the results of the parking surveys and the updated position in regard to on-street parking;**
- (b)
 - (i) **that, while commending Police Scotland on their work to date on parking enforcement, make stronger representations to enforce parking regulations, in particular in hot spots e.g. Gala, Hawick, Peebles and Selkirk, and to that end;**
 - (ii) **to the use of the powers provided within the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 to inform the Local Policing Plan as a mechanism for greater control of on-street parking enforcement, using a targeted approach where necessary;**
 - (iii) **to request that the Chief Executive and Council Leader establish a meeting at the earliest opportunity with Police Scotland to discuss improved parking enforcement, particularly in the hot spot areas identified;**

- (c) to instruct the Chief Officer Roads to establish a rolling programme of inspections to ensure that all signage and line markings in restricted parking areas are clear, visible and enforceable;
- (d) to instruct the Chief Officer Roads to investigate the costs, resource, staffing requirements and financial viability of introducing a disc-based parking system for use in restricted parking areas to assist Police Scotland in their parking enforcement role and bring back a report on such a system to Council no later than 31 January 2017; and
- (e) subject to the outcome of that report, for a three month trial period between 1 March 2017 and 31 May 2017, implement a pilot scheme in Selkirk and Hawick to test the effectiveness of a disc based parking system in partnership with Police Scotland.”

MEMBER

Councillor Stewart left the meeting.

9. RESPONSE TO SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON SOCIAL SECURITY IN SCOTLAND

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Executive on the proposed response to the Scottish Government’s Consultation on Social Security in Scotland. The report explained that the Scottish Government’s consultation on devolved Social Security powers began on 29 July 2016. The closing date for the consultation was 28 October 2016. However, an extension had been granted to Scottish Borders Council to allow its submission to be approved by Council. The consultation provided the opportunity to set out views on the shaping of the new Scottish social security powers that had been devolved to the Scottish Parliament under the Scotland Act 2016. These powers would provide opportunities to develop a strategic approach to welfare that could be closely linked to tackling local needs, reducing inequalities and supporting prevention. The Council’s response highlighted that local authorities had an important role to play in administering the devolved benefits and to co-ordinate a joined up approach to supporting claimants at the local level working with other Community Planning partners. It highlighted the importance of treating claimants with respect and dignity and of meeting the diversity of needs of claimants across Scotland, particularly those living in rural areas such as the Scottish Borders. The limitations of using digital technology were highlighted for the delivery of benefits and the need to promote digital inclusion. Also particular issues of importance to the Scottish Borders were outlined where claimants moved back and forward across the border to live and work. Members welcomed the proposals and Councillor Campbell suggested that the word “customer” within the response was not appropriate in this context and that it be changed to something more appropriate such as applicant or recipient. Members supported this change and agreed that it be left to officers to find a suitable replacement.

DECISION

AGREED to approve the response, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report as amended, to the Scottish Government’s consultation on Social Security in Scotland.

10. RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION BY BRITISH TELECOM ON THE PROPOSED REMOVAL OF PUBLIC PAYPHONES IN THE SCOTTISH BORDERS

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Executive on the proposed response to the consultation by British Telecom on public payphone removals in the Scottish Borders. The report explained that the Council had received details in mid-August 2016 from British Telecom of a consultation on the proposed removal of 104 payphones in the Scottish Borders, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report. This was part of wider consultation taking place across Scotland by BT about payphone removals. The consultation had been driven according to BT by the decline in the overall use of payphones. Local authorities had the responsibility from Ofcom, the telecommunications regulator, to gather views from local

communities and to provide a reasoned response either objecting or agreeing to the removal of payphones. The deadline for responses was 29 November 2016. The Council had carried out a consultation with local communities by contacting community councils and community resilience co-ordinators. A judgement had then been made on retaining or removing payphones based on the views of communities; the quality of mobile phone coverage; the use for 101/999 calls; proximity to main roads; and usage and access by local communities, as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report. It was considered that payphones needed to be seen as a key part of the resilience and emergency infrastructure of local communities linking to the Scottish and UK Government's national resilience structure. Members emphasised that although overall usage of phone boxes was low they were a vital lifeline in some areas, especially where mobile phone signals were poor, and that they must be retained as part of community resilience.

**DECISION
AGREED:-**

- (a) the response, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, to British Telecom's consultation on the removal of public payphones; and**
- (b) to make the case to the Scottish and UK Governments that public payphones should be recognised as a key part of the resilience and emergency infrastructure of local communities.**

11. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT FORESTRY CONSULTATION - RESPONSE

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Corporate Transformation and Services Director on the proposed response to the Scottish Government's consultation paper "The Future of Forestry in Scotland". The report explained that the Scottish Government had invited responses to a consultation on the governance of Forestry in Scotland. The focus of the consultation paper was on the continuing devolution of the UK Forestry Commission's responsibilities to Scottish Government Ministers. A two-tier governance solution was being proposed, reflecting the current separation of policy and regulatory functions at Commission level from the management of the forestry estate which was currently undertaken by Forest Enterprise Scotland. The consultation covered three broad areas: the new organisational and governance proposals; the development of effective cross-border arrangements within the new structures; and the regulatory and legislative framework. The proposed Council response was set out in Appendix 1 to the report and was broadly in favour of the consultation's organisational and governance proposals. However, the suggested response stressed the importance of the new agency having a remit to support economic development and wider social and environmental outcomes from the national forest estate, as well as the basic forest and timber production focus proposed. The response favoured strong cross-border links to support a range of UK wide functions, including research, tree health, forestry standards and technical issues and recommended that while the Forestry Directorate should continue to promote forestry, this should be as part of a wider commitment to sustainable land use. In particular, the development and maintenance of outdoor recreational and commercial facilities on forestry land was an essential use of the national forest estate, creating economic, environmental and social benefits for local communities. The consultation did not give emphasis to this issue, but officers considered that it was an equally important role alongside that of timber production. Recent experience had shown that the agencies in charge of the national forest estate needed to have more focus on local economic and community impacts, not less. Members supported the emphasis of the wider aspects, not just timber production.

DECISION

AGREED to approve the response to the Scottish Government's consultation on 'The Future of Forestry in Scotland' as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

12. **EARLY RETIREMENT/VOLUNTARY SEVERANCE**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Executive seeking approval for 2 members of staff who had requested early retirement and voluntary severance. If both applications were approved, a total one-off cost of £72,151 would be incurred. In total, £56,231 of direct recurring employee cost savings would be delivered each year. The average payback period for all staff was 1.3 years.

DECISION

AGREED to approve both applications as detailed in the report with the associated costs being met from the voluntary severance/early retirement budget for 2016/17 of £72,151.

13. **PRIVATE BUSINESS**

DECISION

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 II to this Minute on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 6, 8 and 9 of Part I of Schedule 7A to the Act.

SUMMARY OF PRIVATE BUSINESS

14. **Committee Minutes**

The private sections of the Committee Minutes as detailed in paragraph 3 of this Minute were approved.

15. **Open Question**

As agreed at paragraph 5 above, Councillor Bell provided the information requested.

The meeting concluded at 12.40 p.m.

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL
10 NOVEMBER 2016
APPENDIX I

Question from Councillor Logan

To the Executive Member for Economic Development

With reference to your assertion at the last Council meeting that there were other Councils interested in housing the Great Tapestry of Scotland, should we be concerned that the delays in coming to a final decision by this Council may result in the Borders losing out on the opportunity to house the tapestry?

Reply from Councillor Bell

At this time, there is no risk that the Tapestry will be lost to the Borders. Scottish Borders Council has had an ongoing dialogue with the Trustees throughout the progress of the project. The Trustees are satisfied that the project should reach a conclusion in the Scottish Borders before they consider any alternatives.

Although there have been alternative offers seeking to secure the Tapestry for other locations in Scotland, these have been made on the basis that other parties would seek to pursue housing the Tapestry if the ongoing discussions in the Scottish Borders do not secure a successful outcome.

Supplementary

In the absence of Councillor Logan, Councillor Cockburn asked if that, in private, Members could be advised who the other interested Councils might be and Councillor Bell agreed to provide further information once the meeting had gone into private session.

Question from Councillor Turnbull

To the Executive Member for Planning and Environment

What powers do the Council have to ensure action is taken to improve town centre properties, both retail and housing, and to improve the appearance of town centres, especially when property owners are unwilling to carry out repairs and basic maintenance?

Reply from Councillor Smith

The available powers in relation to the visual appearance of a building are contained within the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended. The powers to address repairs and maintenance are contained within the Building (Scotland) Act 2003 as amended.

If a building poses a danger the Council have authority under Section 29/30 of the Act to take appropriate action to make the building safe.

In situations where a building does not pose a danger but is in need of repair and or maintenance Section 28 of the Act allows the Council to become involved. This section however is discretionary and a decision to take action has to be balanced against the financial risk to the Council if costs can't be recovered.

If the visual appearance of a property or building is having a detrimental effect on the amenity of the area or street scape, Section 179 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1997 (Proper maintenance of Land) would be the appropriate power. This section is also discretionary and can again expose the Council to financial risk if costs can't be recovered.

Supplementary

Councillor Turnbull acknowledged that there were data protection issues in terms of the Council naming owners of property in poor condition and asked what assistance the Council could give responsible property owners. Councillor Smith confirmed he was sympathetic to this problem but the powers had generally only been used in respect of waste ground and although they could be

used in respect of property the bar in respect of poor condition was set high and it would be a difficult path to follow.

Question from Councillor Cockburn

To the Executive Member for Roads and Infrastructure

In April 2014 I asked you if you agreed that our Council should approach Midlothian Council and suggest that our two Councils should join forces and carry out a new review of the signage and the general layout of the junction at Leadburn. You replied that Midlothian Council carried out significant amendments to the junction in April 2012, and were undertaking before and after studies of driver behaviour and accidents at the junction.

Please could you tell me if Midlothian Council have supplied this Council with the results of their before and after studies?

On the 12th November 2015 you replied:

“I am advised that the results of the study have not been supplied to date as the studies are still ongoing. Midlothian Council is however happy to share their findings to date and speeds and accident data are being forwarded to SBC officers. Midlothian Council have also confirmed that they are still actively considering additional measures at the junction.”

I understand that this junction is the responsibility of Midlothian Council so any pressure to carry out improvements should be put on them, but can you tell me if Midlothian Council have shared their findings to date, and if the speeds and accident data was indeed forwarded to SBC officers? Please could you also tell me if you know what additional measures Midlothian Council are actively considering at the junction?

Reply from Councillor Edgar

The information promised by Midlothian Council was indeed supplied shortly following the Council meeting in November 2015. That information was forwarded to Democratic Services for circulation to all Councillors with a covering note from myself on 23 November 2015. As far as I am aware that circulation took place.

In addition to that a further email was forwarded to the 3 local ward members in May this year advising of some additional lining improvements that Midlothian Council were undertaking to improve visibility for vehicles emerging from the A6094 and A701. It is understood that this was further extended to include rumble strips and these are now present on all four approaches to the junction. This additional work has allowed temporary “New Road Layout Ahead” signs to be put in place as well. I am sure Midlothian Council will be continuing to monitor closely the impact that these additional measures have.

Supplementary

Councillor Cockburn did not recall receiving the information and asked that the Council continue to pressure Midlothian Council to carry out improvements and keep local Members informed.

Councillor Edgar confirmed that this would be the case. It was further confirmed that the information from Midlothian Council would be re-circulated to Members.