

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MINUTE of Meeting of the EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells on Tuesday 29 November 2016 at 10.00 am.

Present:- Councillors C. Bhatia (Chairman), S. Aitchison, S. Bell, J. Brown, V. Davidson (from para. 2), G. Edgar, J. G. Mitchell, D. Moffat, D. Paterson, R. Smith.

Also Present:- Councillor I. Gillespie.

Apologies:- Councillors M. Cook, D. Parker, F. Renton.

In Attendance:- Depute Chief Executive - Place, Corporate Transformation and Services Director, Chief Financial Officer, Democratic Services Officer (F. Henderson).

1. **MINUTE**

The Minute of meeting of the Executive Committee of 15 November 2016 had been circulated.

DECISION

APPROVED for signature by the Chairman.

MEMBER

Councillor Davidson joined the meeting during the discussion below.

2. **STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN 2017-2022**

2.1 There had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Regulatory Services which sought approval of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2017 -2022 prior to submission to the Scottish Government by 30 November 2016. The report provided comment on how affordable housing priorities would be addressed through assistance from the Scottish Government's Affordable Housing Supply Programme and the SHIP identified housing projects which were anticipated to be delivered in Scottish Borders over a five year period within this funding framework. The report explained that Local Authorities were required to produce and submit their SHIP to the Scottish Government bi-annually for review. Scottish Borders Council, with the involvement of its key partners via the SHIP Working Group, had prepared the SHIP submission. The SHIP articulated how the Council and its RSL partners would seek to assist the Scottish Government fulfil its commitment to deliver at least 50,000 new affordable homes during this Parliament and to extend delivery beyond that time period, and how the Council's affordable housing investment needs and priorities identified in the Council's forthcoming Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2017-2022 would be delivered in practice over a five year period.

2.2 Underpinned by a verbal resource planning assumption from Scottish Government officials of between £8.6m up to as much as £15m per annum, along with RSL partner private sector borrowing and a commitment from the Council's Affordable Housing Budget, the SHIP set out how, when and where the Council and its partners could potentially deliver up to as many as 1,192 affordable homes over the period of SHIP and beyond. This was providing that all identified challenges and infrastructure issues were resolved in a timely manner, the anticipated grant funding was forthcoming, the sector had the capacity to deliver on such a scale, then Officers and partners were optimistic that substantially more affordable homes could be delivered which also included a number of additional extra care housing developments in key Borders towns. Group Manager (Housing Strategy and Service) and

the Housing Strategy Manager were present at the meeting to answer Members' questions. Members discussed the SHIP and raised issues such as the capacity of the construction industry to meet the increased target and what support they would require, the financial capacity of the Council and Partners to deliver agreed funding, the low uptake of funding from the Rural Housing Fund and the Southern Upland partnership. In response, the Group Manager explained that there had been a Housing needs study carried out to identify where people needed to live rather than demand and investigations were ongoing with regard to the possibility of securing funding for a post to tackle empty homes. Councillor Bell moved the following motion to include an additional recommendation:-

'request that officers rapidly engage with the Local House construction sector to inform them of these opportunities and get their feedback on the practicalities and that a short report on these discussions be submitted to a future Executive meeting.'

The meeting unanimously agreed to include the additional recommendation, changing the timescale of the report back to Executive to a maximum of 6 months.

DECISION

- (a) APPROVED the SHIP 2017-2022 for submission to the Scottish Government More Homes Division by 30 November 2016.**
- (b) AGREED:-**
 - (i) to request that Officers rapidly engage with the Local House construction sector to inform them of these opportunities and get their feedback on the practicalities; and**
 - (ii) that a short report on these discussions be submitted to an Executive meeting within six months.**

The meeting concluded at 11.40 a.m.