

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL
TWEEDDALE AREA FORUM

MINUTE of the MEETING of the
TWEEDDALE AREA FORUM held in
the Council Offices, Rosetta Road,
Peebles on 1 March 2017 at 6.30 p.m.

Present:- Councillors W. Archibald (Chairman), S. Bell, C. Bhatia, K. Cockburn, G. Garvie, G. Logan.
Community Councillors L. Hayworth, C. Lewin, M. McIntosh, G. Parker, J. Taylor, G. Tulloch.

Apologies:- Community Councillors M. Douglas, R. Howard, R. Tatler.

In Attendance:- Neighbourhood Assistant Area Manager, Inspector T. Hodges, (Police Scotland), S. Mitchell, AIFireE – Station Manager (Scottish Fire and Rescue Service), Democratic Services Officer (K. Mason).

Members of the Public:- 4.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. The Chairman varied the order of business as shown on the agenda and the Minute reflects the order in which the items were considered at the meeting.

2.1 MINUTE

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the Meeting held on 23 November 2016 for approval.

**DECISION
APPROVED.**

2.2 With reference to paragraph 11(a) of the Minute, the Neighbourhood Assistant Area Manager tabled a plan relating to the proposed works at the top of the Old Town beside the junction leading to Young Street. The Neighbourhood Assistant Area Manager advised that a traffic island would not be provided. She confirmed that dropped kerbs would be put in place at either side of the road at the top of the Old Town, and it might be necessary for traffic lights to be in place. Patching works would be carried out during the school holidays in April. The Neighbourhood Assistant Area Manager further advised that she would liaise with Mandy Taylor, Business Partner, On a Shoe String regarding the proposals.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

3. PENSION WISE SERVICE

Mr Ian Heard, Pension Wise Guidance Specialist, Citizens Advice Bureau, was present at the meeting to give a presentation on the Pension Wise project which began in 2015 to provide guidance to clients who had Defined Contribution Pension Schemes. The aim was to help people become more aware and knowledgeable about their pension options. The project had now been running for two years. The initial funding was for the Scottish Borders area but as the initial take up was lower than expected at the end of the first year he was asked to cover Dumfries and Annan to retain the full time position. Whilst the current position was still to be confirmed it looked like the funding would be reduced from 1 June 2017 meaning his hours would be reduced although the project was planned to continue. Since the beginning of the

project the job had grown considerably to cover not only Pension Wise appointments but also promotion, training of Bureau volunteers, attending PACE events, meeting Councillors, MP's, MSP's and various other roles. Appointment numbers had grown steadily over the two years because of continued national advertising and also the considerable work being done locally to promote the service. There was a 40% increase in total appointments from this time last year. Initially the project was set up to be a one appointment only service. However, owing to the complexities of pensions and also the fact that clients wanted to re-check facts before making a big decision meant that Pension Wise were now able to see people more than once. The major issues covered were six options open to clients, also providing information on the potential impact on tax and state benefits which could help prevent major issues in terms of losing benefit or having a large tax bill. Mr Heard went on to give details relating to promotional and other activities. Statistics provided by Ipsos/Mori had shown 92% of clients surveyed had been satisfied with the service provided. Online guidance was available from www.pensionwise.gov.uk; telephone appointments on 0300 330 1001 or at the local Citizens Advice Bureau. For the avoidance of scamming Community Councillor Taylor recommended that Pension Wise set up a link with the Scottish Public Pensions Agency.

DECISION

NOTED and thanked Mr Heard for his informative presentation.

4. POLICE SCOTLAND

Inspector Hodges highlighted there had been 3 serious assaults (all detected) as opposed to 7 this time last year. There had been 57 Common Assaults (60% detected to date) as opposed to 58 this time last year. These figures buck the current trends for this policing division and whilst every assault is one to many, he hoped it was reassuring that violent crime was not seeing any rise in the Tweeddale Area. It was difficult to give an evidenced based rationale for this but the good working relationship with the licensed premises in the Tweeddale Area fostered through the local licensing board must take some of the credit. There were 455 incidents of reported Anti-Social Behaviour as opposed to 534 this time last year. This was also a significant decrease in comparison with the rest of the region and the ongoing partnership approach fostered by the SBC Anti-Social Behaviour Unit and the local housing associations was undoubtedly paying dividend. He explained that Dishonesty was the area which was causing him most concern in relation to both Tweeddale East and West. He had highlighted this at the November Forum and Police Scotland had seen a continuation of Acquisition Crime across the area on a very unwelcome basis since the turn of the year. Thefts of motorcars, motorcycles, pedal cycles and housebreakings continued to feature and as previously reported were very much connected with criminality in Edinburgh and the Lothians. Whilst rural policing in the hours of darkness could often be the proverbial needle in a haystack, the combined efforts which Police Scotland afforded was ensuring the current issues in Tweeddale were not lost in the bigger picture. He submitted that when a car thief sentenced to a year in prison at Edinburgh Sheriff Court, the reality was that he or his associates were highly likely to have been responsible for crime in this area. He urged everyone to ensure their respective communities assisted by taking a strong approach to personal security and appreciate that a house or car in Tweeddale was just as an inviting a target as one in Silverknowes or Dalkeith. Community Officers were available should residents or businesses wish any specific Crime Prevention Advice. Inspector Hodges welcomed members of Community Councils accompanying Community Officers on Hand Held Rader Speed Checks. Further, he urged Members to challenge and encourage their constituents to act in a grown up manner when it came to parking. Councillor Garvie expressed concern at this advice as it was neither legal nor within

Councillors' roles to police parking. expressed exception to this comment advising it was not within a Councillors' role to police parking. Community Councillor Lewin advised he had previously complained about the lack of Policy community liaison with Upper Tweed Community Council, he was pleased to advise that there had been much improved liaison in the last few months. Community Councillor Tulloch referred to the Nominated Neighbour Scheme and advised that he had problems downloading leaflets and cards from the website and Inspector Hodges undertook to investigate this. Following a comment from Community Councillor Parker, Inspector Hodges advised he would ascertain why Tweedsmuir Community Council had not been receiving Police Reports. Inspector Hodges concluded his update by thanking the Chairman for his excellent stewardship of the Forum and wished him all the best in his retirement.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

5. SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Mr S. Mitchell, AIFireE – Station Manager, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service was welcomed to his first meeting of the Forum. Mr Mitchell presented information on the activities of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in the Tweeddale area since the last forum meeting on 23 November, 2016. The statistics included 4 house fires and 32 unwanted fire alarm signals. In relation to prevention and protection, some of the activities ongoing in the Tweeddale Area, were (a) provision of home safety visits; (b) pupils from Peebles High School undertaking a development programme focused on Leadership and Wellbeing - the outcome of the programme would be the delivery of a Resilience Day, planned and delivered by S3 pupils, which would involve multiagency participation; (c) all stations would be involved in exercising operational preparedness at specific risks within the area; (d) all stations were participating in the British Heart Foundation initiative – Call Push Rescue; and (e) all Stations would soon be involved in the SFRS Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest project. It was noted that a national recruitment campaign was on-going for Retained Duty System firefighters and West Linton had three candidates within the recruitment process.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

6. SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE ON RENEWABLE ENERGY

- 6.1 The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Mr Charles Johnston, Principal Officer Plans and Research, to give a presentation on the Supplementary Guidance on Renewable Energy. Mr Johnston gave the background to the preparation of the Supplementary Guidance. One of the recommendations of the Local Development Plan, adopted on 12 May 2016, was to prepare, within one year, a Supplementary Guidance on Renewable Energy. Mr Johnston confirmed that a draft had been approved by Scottish Borders Council on 22 December 2016 and that there followed a 12 week public consultation period which would end on 17 April 2017. He explained how responses to the Supplementary Guidance could be made. In line with national support for the promotion of sustainable development and renewable energy the Council would continue to be supportive of renewable energy within appropriate locations. Shown within the presentation were maps of the Scottish Borders indicating all wind development applications of over 5 MW and under 5 MW colour coded to show the status of each and the height to blade tip. Looking at the policy context of the guidance, Scottish Planning Policy reaffirmed support for renewable energy and the need to attain national energy targets. This was to achieve 100% of electricity from renewable energy by 2020. However a balance must be sought; emphasising the right development in the right place and not to allow development at any cost. The planning system should facilitate positive change while maintaining and enhancing distinctive

landscape character. There was general support of renewable energy within the Local Development Plan. However if there were judged to be unacceptable significant adverse impacts, or effects which could not be satisfactorily mitigated, consent would only be granted if it was considered that the wider economic, environmental and other benefits outweighed any potential damage. The Guidance confirmed that the Council was positive in its support of other renewable energy types; those referenced included micro renewables, field scale solar photovoltaics, biomass, energy from waste, anaerobic digestion, hydropower and ground source heat pumps.

- 6.2 Mr Johnston referred to the Wind Energy Spatial Framework within the draft Guidance and maps of the Scottish Borders were shown indicating: national scenic areas where wind farms would not be acceptable; areas of significant protection where wind farms may be appropriate in some circumstances; and areas with potential for wind farm development. Scottish Planning Policy also made reference to the need to consider Landscape Capacity and Cumulative Impact studies. As a strategic study and starting point, an updated Landscape Capacity and Cumulative Impact Study had been produced by consultants. Extracts from the study were shown in the presentation, including maps showing landscape capacity in areas of the Borders for turbines of different height ranges. A summary map of opportunities and constraints was also shown. Mr Johnston concluded the presentation by listing the development management considerations within the Supplementary Guidance, including those not previously mentioned such as impacts on communities, built heritage and archaeology, tourism and recreation, natural heritage, opportunities for energy storage and contribution towards renewable energy targets. He advised that, following the consultation period an update of findings and conclusions would be referred back to elected Members in summer 2017. The Supplementary Guidance would ultimately be referred to Scottish Ministers to become part of the Development Plan.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

7. PREPARATION OF NEW LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Mr Johnston's second presentation related to the preparation of a new Local Development Plan (LDP). He confirmed that, as part of a 5 year cycle, work on a new Plan was just commencing. He summarised the timeline for the production of the Plan and highlighted that the first stage, the Main Issues Report (MIR), would be prepared by December 2017. The MIR was a front runner to the LDP which in essence sought to identify a range of issues which the LDP should address. The MIR, which would be sent out for public consultation, identified preferred sites for houses as well as alternatives. It also proposed where planning policies could be updated, removed or merged. The MIR sought public opinion on a range of matters such as the main aims of the LDP, proposals for allocation of employment sites, housing policy, retail policy, regeneration issues, green space protection and climate change issues. Community engagement would be carried out through a series of exhibitions and workshops with community groups throughout the summer of 2017. Mr Johnston was thanked for his attendance.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

8. OPEN QUESTIONS

Ms H Anderson, Lamancha referred to recent publicity relating to additional funding being made available to the Area Forums. Powers were to be given to Area Forums to decide how the money would be allocated and any decisions would not be subject to ratification by the Council. This would meet with the objectives of the Community

Empowerment (Scotland) Act to promote and facilitate the participation of members of the public in the decisions and activities of the Council. It was anticipated that the sum available to the Tweeddale Area Forum would be approximately £70,000.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

9. COMMUNITY COUNCIL SPOTLIGHT

No issues were raised.

VALEDICTORY REMARKS

10. Councillor Bell, on behalf of the local Members and Community Council Officers, thanked Councillor Archibald for his stewardship of the Tweeddale Area Forum. Captain Sir David Younger KCVO and Community Councillor Mollie McIntosh MBE also expressed their thanks to the six local Councillors for all they had done for Tweeddale East and Tweeddale West.

The meeting concluded at 8.10 p.m.