

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MINUTE of MEETING of the EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Newtown St. Boswells on Tuesday, 21 April 2015 at 10.00 a.m.

Present:- Councillors D. Parker (Chairman), S. Aitchison, S. Bell, J. Brown, V. Davidson (from para.4), G. Edgar, J. Mitchell, D. Paterson, F. Renton, R. Smith.
Also Present:- Councillors I. Gillespie, G. Logan, S. Mountford.
Apologies:- Councillors C. Bhatia, M. Cook, D. Moffat.
In Attendance:- Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive – Place, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Social Work Officer, Corporate Transformation and Services Director, Service Director Regulatory Services, Service Director Neighbourhood Services, Clerk to the Council, Democratic Services Officer (K Mason.).

MINUTE

1. The Minute of meeting of the Executive Committee of 24 March 2015 had been circulated and was approved subject to an amendment in that the meeting had been held in the Town Hall, Jedburgh not in Council Headquarters as stated in the Minute.

DECISION

APPROVED for signature, subject to the above amendment.

REQUEST FOR THE INCLUSION OF PATHS IN TWEEDBANK IN THE COUNCIL'S LIST OF PUBLIC ROADS

2. There had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Regulatory Services seeking approval for footpaths in the Tweedbank area of Galashiels to be added to the Council's List of Public Roads. The report explained that the Council had been asked to look at the possible upgrading of a trodden pedestrian link between the car park associated with 'Herges on the Loch' and the footpath around Gunknowe Loch. When it was agreed this should be to an adoptable standard, officers were asked what other paths in the area could also be considered for adoption in terms of their strategic nature. After lengthy discussions, the paths indicated on the plan attached to the report were deemed suitable for addition to the Council's List of Public Roads. In response to a question raised regarding future maintenance costs, the Service Director Regulatory Services advised that the appropriate budget amendments would be made.

DECISION

AGREED to the paths shown red on the plan attached to the report being advertised for adoption and thereafter being added to the Council's List of Public Roads subject to there being no substantive representations made against the proposal.

UK LANDFILL COMMUNITIES FUND

3. There had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Strategy and Policy recommending two projects for approval from the Landfill Communities Fund for the funding period to January 2015. The following projects were recommended for approval (a) BCCF Environmental – Innerleithen Pipe Band – Hall Refurbishment Phase 1 - £14,278; and (b) BCCF Environmental – Southdean Village Hall – Hall Extension - £32,250.

DECISION

APPROVED

- (a) a grant of £14,278 to BCCF Environmental (Innerleithen Pipe Band – Hall Refurbishment Phase 1); and
- (b) a grant of £32,250 to BCCF Environmental (Southdean Village Hall – Hall Extension).

MEMBER

Councillor Davidson joined the meeting during consideration of the following item.

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF OLDER PEOPLE'S CARE HOMES – REPORT OF MEMBERS/OFFICER WORKING GROUP

4. With reference to paragraphs 4 – 6 of the Minute of Meeting of the Social Work and Housing Committee of 5 June 2014, there had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Social Work Officer summarising the work of the Officer/Member Working Group which had been set up to consider ways to develop more pro-active approaches to maintain and improve the quality of service delivery within Care Homes for Older People. The work had been based upon research evidence of best practice and quality monitoring initiative. The report explained that a paper presented to Social Work and Housing Committee on 5 June 2014 provided an overview on the quality of Care Homes in the Borders. As a result of this, Members requested that an Officer/Member Working Group be set up to consider the quality of service delivery in Care Homes. Appendix 1 to the report contained the findings and recommendations of the Officer/Member short life Working Group which met to review the quality of Older People's Care Homes and considered proposals for improvements where required. The Working Group's Report reviewed the national and local context and challenges in the Care Home market. It considered current local mechanisms in place to address quality issues and looked to encourage improvements and new initiatives; analysed benchmarking and good practice in other areas of Scotland and the UK including alternative models; and identified gaps in service design and delivery and proposed recommendations for improvement to the Executive Committee. These would be taken forward via an action plan, attached as Appendix 2 to the report, over the next 12 months. Councillor Renton gave background information on the remit of the Officer/Member Working Group and thanked all those concerned for their input. Members discussed nursing provision in Homes, the number of beds available, and the role of carers and family members. In response to a question raised regarding the lack of information as to where the Homes were located and the number of beds provided together with their geographical spread, the Chief Social Worker advised that she would provide the relevant information to Members from work already undertaken relating to the Transforming Older Peoples Service.

DECISION

AGREED:

- (a) to endorse the report on Improving the Quality of Older People's Care Homes as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report;
- (b) the recommendations in the Members' review report as detailed in Section 12 of the report;
- (c) to note the action plan set out in Appendix 2 to the report;
- (d) that the Chief Social Work Officer would provide information on the number of beds and geographical spread of Care Homes in the Borders to Members; and
- (e) receive a progress report mid-2016.

DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS – 2014/15 PERFORMANCE REPORT

5. There had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Neighbourhood Services detailing the activity of the Discretionary Housing Payment Scheme in 2014/15, as requested by the Council at its meeting on 28 March 2013. The report provided an update

on the funding and performance of the scheme for 2014/15. The total amount of Discretionary Housing Payments awarded in 2013/14 was £492,855.04, with the total amount awarded and paid in 2014/15 £726,465.88. There were 2,238 Discretionary Housing Payment applications received. Of the 2,191 applications decided, 1,951 (89%) were successful. The high rate had been achieved by a designated Take Up officer employed by the Council working jointly with Citizens Advice Scotland and Housing Associations to identify people who might be eligible and improve the quality of applications. A joint take up campaign with the four main Housing Associations specifically targeted tenants who had been affected by the Removal of Spare Room Subsidy. At 31 March 2015 an estimated 89% of people affected had applied for a Discretionary Housing Payment. This reduction in the level of applications was due to the turnover of cases and the identification of new potential cases. The take up work was continuing with staff trying to engage with those people who had not yet applied. In response to questions relating to 2015/16 and the risk of there being insufficient budget available via the Department of Work and Pensions and the Scottish Government to meet demand, the Service Director Neighbourhood Services advised that the position would be closely monitored and policy would be revised if required with further information being reported to the Executive Committee. With reference to paragraph 1.4 of the report, the Service Director Neighbourhood Services undertook to provide information to Members relating to reasons for the 47 unsuccessful applications.

DECISION

- (a) **NOTED the activity relating to Discretionary Housing Payments for 2014/15 and that the position would continue to be monitored on a quarterly basis.**

- (b) **AGREED that the Service Director Neighbourhood Services would provide information to Members relating to the reasons for the 47 unsuccessful applications.**

PRIVATE BUSINESS

6. **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 the Appendix to this Minute on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 6 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Act.

SUMMARY OF PRIVATE BUSINESS

Minute

- 1. The Committee approved the Private Minute of Meeting of the Executive Committee of 24 March 2015.

Galashiels Transport Interchange Operating Model

- 2. The Committee asked for a report giving more details on the Galashiels Transport Interchange Operating Model to be presented to a future meeting of Council.

The meeting concluded at 10.55 a.m.