

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MINUTES of Meeting of the EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE held in Council Chamber,
Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells,
TD6 0SA on Tuesday, 21st November, 2017
at 10.00 am

Present:- Councillors S Haslam (Chairman), S Aitchison (Vice-Chairman), G Edgar, C Hamilton, W McAteer, S Mountford, T Miers, M Rowley, G Turnbull, T Weatherston.

Apologies:- Councillor E Jardine.

Also present:- Councillor H Anderson, S Bell, H Scott.

In Attendance:- Executive Directors (P Barr and R Dickson), Chief Officer – Roads, Service Director Customer & Communities, Service Director HR, Financial Services Manager, Passenger Transport Manager, Infrastructure Manager, Democratic Services Team Leader, Democratic Services Officer (J Turnbull).

1. **MINUTE**

The Minute of the meeting of the Executive Committee of 7 November 2017 had been circulated.

DECISION

APPROVED for signature by the Chairman.

MEMBER

Councillors Aitchison and Rowley joined the meeting following consideration of the item above.

2. **STREET LIGHTING ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROJECT (SLEEP)**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Officer – Roads updating on the delivery of the “spend to save” Street Lighting Energy Efficiency Project, (SLEEP). The report explained that the initial project aimed to deliver the conversion of 13,500 traditional street lights to LED, between April 2014 and March 2020 using a total Capital funding allocation of £5.0m. Between 2014 and 2015 the Council had reviewed its current Capital Spend profile for this project in order to accelerate the programme for the installation of replacement lanterns. This acceleration in programme profile had reduced the length of the project to four years bringing the project completion in March 2018, two years earlier than anticipated. In 2015/16 a Project Business Case for SLEEP Phase 2, proposed replacing the remaining street lighting lanterns, illuminated signs and bollards with an LED alternative. An additional investment of £1.2m was allocated for Phase 2 of the project with the date for completion aligned with Phase 1 in March 2018. In response to questions, the Asset Manager advised that current column placement was determined by Lighting Standards. With regard to the use of double headed lanterns he clarified that these could be used where there was an inadequate covering of light. In answer to a question regarding the illumination of street signage, the Street Lighting Team Leader clarified that the criteria for signage was covered by traffic regulations.

DECISION

(a) NOTED:-

- (i) **The extension to the original Street Lighting Energy Efficiency Project and the accelerated progress that has been made in the delivery of the overall project.**
 - (ii) **that ongoing investment in the Capital Financial Plan would be required to upgrade identified lighting columns of limited remaining life; and**
 - (iii) **the estimated savings of £1.274m in the overall cost of the project.**
- (b) **AGREED the reallocation of the £1.274m savings to:**
- **replace the street lighting asset where the current column placement did not allow new LED fittings to provide an adequate coverage of light during the hours of darkness to the value of £730,000 to be delivered in 2018/19, with Virement for a timing movement of the budget to 2018/19.**
 - **convert ongoing developments which, due to the time of their approval, would result in traditional sodium lanterns being adopted by the Council to the value of £135,000 which would be delivered as a phased approach in line with the permitted developments, with Virement for a timing movement to 2018/19; and**
 - **the virement of the identified savings of £409,000 to the Council's Emergency and Unplanned Capital fund in 2017/18.**

3. **TRANSPORT SCOTLAND CONSULTATION ON CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL 2017**

3.1 There had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Regulatory Service advising of a consultation currently in circulation on concessionary travel commissioned by Transport Scotland. The report advised the closing date for responses was 17 November 2017. However, Scottish Borders Council had been given a special dispensation by Transport Scotland to submit a response after this paper had been discussed by Elected Members. A copy of the full consultation was attached as Appendix 1, to the report, with officers' recommended responses to the consultation questions provided in Appendix 2. The main points within the body of the consultation related to:

- the increase of the qualifying age for women travellers to 65 to bring this in line with the State Pension qualifying age,
- Free travel for Modern Apprentices, and
- Introduction of companion cards for disabled children under five years of age

3.2 The Committee queried the suggested response to question 4 of the consultation that the Council were not in favour of providing free bus travel to Modern Apprentices. The Passenger and Transport Manager clarified that although the Council were supportive of the Modern Apprenticeship scheme, the availability of free bus travel would be of limited benefit in a rural area. He suggested that it might be more equitable to provide a travel bursary that could be used towards the cost of any transport or the running costs of private transport. The Committee considered the question and asked that the response be changed to indicate that the Council were in favour of providing free bus travel to Modern Apprentices. However, it was agreed that the Leader and the Executive Member for Roads and Infrastructure, write to the Minister for Transport and the Islands highlighting the problems faced by Modern Apprentices in rural areas and seeking alternatives to free public transport.

DECISION
AGREED:-

- (a) **to include within the response to the Consultation that companion concessions for blind persons be included in the revised future concessionary travel scheme;**
- (b) **the responses as detailed in Appendix 2 as the Council's submission to the Consultation, apart from question 4 which be amended to indicate that the Council was in favour of providing free bus travel to Modern Apprentices; and**
- (c) **to request the Leader and the Executive Member for Roads and Infrastructure write to the Minister for Transport and the Islands highlighting the problems faced by Modern Apprentices in rural areas and seeking alternatives to free public transport.**

4. WINTER SERVICE PLAN FOR YEAR 2017/18

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Assets and Infrastructure presenting a review of the performance of Scottish Borders Council's Winter Service during 2016/17, and presenting, at Appendix 1 to the report, SBC's Winter Services Plan for 2017/18. Scottish Borders Council provided a winter service on nearly 3,000km of roads across the Scottish Borders. The report advised that an annual Winter Plan had been prepared to outline the steps that would be taken to ensure that the roads network was safe, within available resources. The winter of 2016/17 was not particularly bad in terms of snow and ice, during December 2016, temperatures were milder than average in all areas, by as much as 3°C over parts of Scotland; in January 2017, Scotland and Northern Ireland were particularly dry and sunnier than the average and during February 2017, rainfall was closer to average generally, however rather wetter for much of southern Scotland and northern England. The Winter Service Plan for 2017/18 was similar in terms of policy, priorities, routes, call out arrangements and resource planning (although it should be noted that significant work was done on the plan prior to 2015/16, including public consultation). The Asset Manager highlighted that an additional 35 salt bins had been provided for 2017/18. Following the major review in 2009/2010; 1,050 salt bins were now located in the Scottish Borders. In response to questions, the Asset Manager advised that the Council did not hold a supply of salt bins, any requests received were evaluated and, if appropriate, ordered for the following Winter. In response to a question on the problems caused by people removing salt from the bins for personal use, Mr Richardson explained that this was difficult to manage and tended to be more prevalent in rural areas.

DECISION:

- (a) **NOTED the performance of the SBC Winter Service during 2016/17;**
- (b) **ENDORSED the Winter Service Plan for 2017/18; and**
- (c) **AGREED the amendments to the plan for Winter 2018/19.**

5. INTRODUCTION OF CHARGES FOR STREET NAMING, HOUSE NUMBERING AND CHANGING A HOUSE NAME

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Customer and Communities proposing the introduction of charging for requests for street naming, property numbering or naming, and property name changing (renaming), in line with many other Scottish Local Authorities. The report explained that under the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982, Scottish Borders Council currently undertook the processes required to name a new street, number or rename a property but did this at no cost to the developer, be that an individual, a commercial organisation or a social landlord. Almost half of Scottish Local Authorities had introduced charges for these services. Given current public sector financial constraints and the duty, under the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, to secure best value, the Council had the right to introduce charging and cover the costs required to provide the service. With the ongoing tightening of public finances

and anticipated increases in house building, it was proposed that fees were introduced for those who made a request to name a street, number or rename a house, and that a more streamlined process was introduced to allow the collection of the information required to instigate and undertaken the process. In response to questions, the Service Director Customer and Communities advised that the FAQ guide on the Council's website would incorporate clarification that the charges reflected the cost of providing the service. With regard to phased payments for larger scale housing developments, she advised this could be discussed with developers if required.

DECISION

AGREED:-

(a) **to the introduction of charges to householders, developers and Registered Social Landlords (or any other individual or body who required this service) to cover costs associated with requests to name a street, number, name or rename a property and the introduction of an e-form for this purpose; and**

(b) **to set the following charging rates, for all requests made after 1 December 2017:**

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Street Naming: | £150 per street named |
| Property Numbering or Naming: | £75 per property |
| Property Renaming: | £75 per property |

6. SOUTH OF SCOTLAND ENTERPRISE AGENCY - INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS

There had been circulated copies of a report by Executive Director, Mr Dickson, updating Members on the establishment of an Interim Economic Partnership to lead the delivery of interim arrangements in advance of the new South of Scotland Enterprise Agency, and seeking agreement on a number of proposals to take these forward. Following completion of Phase 2 of the Enterprise and Skills Review, the Scottish Government announced the creation of a new Enterprise Agency for the South of Scotland and that the Agency would be a public body established via primary legislation. Given the long lead time to create a new public body, the Government also announced that it would establish interim arrangements so that momentum from the Review would not be lost. The interim arrangements had been the subject of extensive discussions between officers of all partners and the Scottish Government. Scottish Government Ministers had given a commitment that an interim approach would be put in place by end of 2017 to ensure that the South of Scotland benefitted from a new approach to economic development as soon as possible. The report explained that the Council's Executive Director, Mr Dickson, had been appointed by the Scottish Government as the Lead Individual to co-ordinate the partnership during the interim period. The Committee congratulated Mr Dickson on his appointment. Mr Dickson advised that the appointment was a two year secondment and he would still retain responsibility for economic development within the Council. He highlighted that this was a unique opportunity for the South of Scotland to make transformational impact on its economy and the wellbeing of its communities and citizens. In response to a question regarding whether the Council had sufficient resources to support the project, Mr Dickson advised that all partners had been asked to commit resources, mainly staffing, to support the Lead Individual and the Interim Economic Partnership as a priority.

DECISION

(a) **NOTED:-**

(i) **the arrangements proposed by the Scottish Government to support early delivery of services and the development of the South of Scotland Enterprise Agency in the period prior to its inception in April 2020;**

- (ii) that the Council had been invited by the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work to join the proposed Interim Economic Partnership; and
 - (iii) the contents of the Memorandum of Understanding that would establish the Interim Economic Partnership, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.
- (b) **AGREED:-**
- (i) that the Council should commit to the Memorandum of Understanding and join the Interim Economic Partnership that was being established to oversee and direct the interim arrangements;
 - (ii) that the Chief Executive, or her delegate, should represent the Council on the Interim Economic Partnership;
 - (iii) that in developing the budgets for 2018-19 and 2019-20, that allocations should be made to support the work of the Council through the Interim Economic Partnership during the interim arrangements for the South of Scotland Enterprise Agency;
 - (iv) that the Council should work with Scottish Government to ensure additional, new resources were made available to support the work of the Interim Economic Partnership and ensure early benefit from the development of the new Agency through the interim arrangements;
 - (v) that a report be brought before a future meeting of the Committee to allow Members to review and comment on the work plan developed by the Interim Economic Partnership;
 - (vi) that a report be brought before a future meeting of the Committee to consider options on how the Council might develop its relationship with, and influence over, the new South of Scotland Enterprise Agency; and
 - (vii) to receive further reports on the Interim Economic Partnership as proposals developed further.

7. QUARTERLY CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER 2 2017/18

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Executive presenting a summary of Scottish Borders Council's quarterly performance information with details contained within Appendix 1 to the report. The report advised that the Council had approved a Corporate Plan in April 2013, with eight priorities that it wished to address for the Scottish Borders over a five year period. In order to monitor progress against the eight priorities, a review of performance information was undertaken quarterly and presented to Executive Committee, as well as an annual summary in June each year. A summary of any changes made to performance indicators was provided at Section 4 of the report, followed by a high level summary of performance in Section 5. Appendix 1 provided more detail for each Performance Indicator (PI). The Policy, Performance and Planning Manager highlighted changes to performance indicators and confirmed that all information contained within the report and appendices was also available on the Council's website using the public facing part of SBC's Performance Management software (Covalent). This could be accessed at www.scotborders.gov.uk/performance and by clicking on "Scottish Borders Performs". With regard to the monitoring of complaints, the Service Director Customer & Communities explained that there had been no change to the way in which complaints were recorded since the introduction of the Complaints Handling process. However, enquiries about a service, for example dog

fouling, would not be escalated to the status of complaint unless a resolution had not been implemented. Councillor Haslam suggested that a breakdown of complaints by area be provided to Area Partnership Chairmen. Mrs Watters advised that a presentation on complaints could be provided at a future meeting.

DECISION

AGREED:-

- (a) To note changes to performance indicators outlined in Section 4 of the report; and**
- (b) to acknowledge and note the performance summarised in Section 5 of the report and detailed within Appendix 1, and the action being taken within services to improve or maintain performance.**

8. URGENT BUSINESS

Under Section 50B(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the Chairman was of the opinion that the item dealt with in the following paragraph should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency, in view of the need to keep Members informed.

9. SAFER COMMUNITIES TEAM

- 9.1 With reference to paragraph 4.1(c) of the Minute of 21 November 2017, the Chairman welcomed Mr Graham Jones, Safer Communities and Community Justice Manager. Mr Jones was in attendance to present to Members an overview of the Council's Safer Communities service. An organisational diagram was circulated at the meeting, which showed the Safer Communities Team and co located partners. Mr Jones began by advising that the total Safer Communities budget was circa £800k which was divided between the Team's core budget and generated income that funded the majority of the Domestic Abuse Service. He explained that the Service had to comply with legislation under the Antisocial Behaviour (Scotland) Act 2004, Data Protection Act 1998, the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 and contributed to a range of plans and strategies creating latitude in its delivery profile. In his presentation, Mr Jones explained that a number of performance measures existed that would provide the committee with detailed information on performance already presented at the Police, Fire & Rescue and Safer Communities Board. He then outlined the Safer Communities Strategic priorities for 2016 to 2019 which were to reduce the level and impact of: crime and antisocial behaviour, gender based violence, poor driver behaviour, substance misuse, and, accidents in the home. The Safer Communities activities aligned with these priorities. It was suggested that the committee might have an interest in indicators which reflected and demonstrated the actual work of the team, increased the number of ASB early interventions by partners, reduced the number of persons being monitored for ASB and increased the number of mediation referrals. Mr Jones then discussed in more detail, the Safer Communities indicators proposed for each of these five priorities. For the gender based violence priority he explained this would mean the number of referrals to gender based support services, the number of repeat users of Domestic Abuse Advocacy Support, and those referred on to other support services. With regard to the Poor Driver Behaviour priority, the service proposed increasing the number of people from vulnerable groups who attended the Drivewise training programme. Mr Jones concluded his presentation by highlighting the breadth of partnership working within and beyond the scope of the team.
- 9.2 Councillor McAteer as Chairman of the Police, Fire and Rescue Board, highlighted the importance of partnership working and the Board's expectation to consider each of the priorities thematically to influence issues, particularly with regard to antisocial behaviour. In response to a question regarding how the impact of these proposals would be measured. Mr Jones gave, as an example, the Domestic Abuse service. There was still a high demand for the service, but the number of repeat victims who accessed the service, had reduced over time. In response to a question regarding antisocial behaviour repeat offenders, Mr Jones explained that there was a formalised process which included sharing

information with partners to consider appropriate interventions. There was also the option of an application to secure an Antisocial Behaviour Order should other remedies fail to temper behaviour. The Chairman commended the work of the Safer Communities Team and thanked Mr Jones for the informative presentation which had explained the services' multi-faceted role.

DECISION

NOTED the presentation.

10. CORPORATE TRANSFORMATION PROGRESS REPORT

There had been circulated copies of a report by Executive Director, Mr Dickson, updating on progress in developing and delivering the Council's Corporate Transformation Programme in the period to end October 2017 and setting out planned activity in the reporting period to January 2018. This was the tenth quarterly progress report since the Programme was established in February 2015. The current areas of work within the Programme were set out in the tracker in Appendix 1 under the 8 Corporate Priorities. It included a brief description of the purpose of each Programme, a summary of progress made to date over the last period (rating them Red, Amber or Green) and key milestones in the next quarter. Section 4 of the report set out the key highlights over the last reporting period. Detailed performance reporting infographics for each element of the programme were reported on a rolling schedule covering all 14 sub-programmes over an annual period. In this quarterly report, the performance reporting infographics were set out in Appendices 2 to 3 of the report. Members noted that the Digital Transformation Programme was rated Amber and were informed that it was anticipated that delivery of the Customer Portal would now take place in 2018 and that the roll out of Business World functionality continued.

DECISION

NOTED the continued progress made in developing and delivering the Corporate Transformation Programme.

11. MONITORING OF THE GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2017/18

- 11.1** With reference to paragraph 7 of the Minute of 5 September, there had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Financial Officer providing budgetary control statements for the Council's General Fund based on actual expenditure and income to 30 September 2017 and explanations of the major variances between projected outturn expenditure/income and the current approved budget. The report explained that after the second quarter of 2017/18 the Council's budget overall was projecting a balanced position at 31 March 2018 with all known pressures being managed within the Council's overall 2017/18 revenue budget. The Council was managing a significant number of risks and pressures in the current year including delays in the delivery of a number of savings required in the 2017/18 budget. For this reason Corporate Management Team had agreed restrictions on discretionary budgets and the Chief Executive had written to managers regarding restrictions on discretionary spend for the remainder of 2017/18. This budgetary action aimed to mitigate any further budget pressures which might arise during the remainder of 2017/18 and maximised year end underspend opportunities to support transformational change going forward. The approach adopted around restricting discretionary spend towards the end of the financial year had been very beneficial to the Council in previous financial years.
- 11.2** In the last revenue monitoring revenue report it was highlighted to Members that work was ongoing to stabilise the new Business World ERP system. Work to enhance Business World functionality was progressing with CGI. Since the date of the last monitoring report good progress had been made with regard to the development of the Council's online reporting capability and budget monitoring reports were now in the process of being rolled out to budget managers. As at 30 September 2017, 78% of the savings had been delivered within the current year. The remaining 22% was profiled to be delivered during the remainder of 2017/18. Emphasis during the remaining six months of 2017/18 needed

to be placed on delivering as many savings as possible permanently as per the Financial Plan. Full details of pressures, risk and challenges were detailed in Appendix 1 to the report. Appendix 2 reflected virements required to realign budgets in line with current forecasts. Appendix 3 reflected earmarking of £1m which had been transferred to Allocated Balances to support the 2018/19 Financial Plan.

- 11.3 In response to a question regarding the classification of discretionary spend; Mrs Douglas advised that this was spend which was not essential for managers to run their service. With regard to the anticipated savings relating to Digital Transformation, Mrs Douglas explained that savings related to Business World would take longer to achieve than originally anticipated but would be delivered. Mr Dickson confirmed that CGI outcomes were being carefully monitored.

DECISION

(a) NOTED:-

- (i) the corporate monitoring position projected at 30 September 2017, the underlying cost drivers and the identified areas of financial risk as reflected in Appendix 1 to the report;**
- (ii) progress made in achieving Financial Plan savings in Appendix 4 to the report; and**
- (iii) the action taken by Corporate Management team to deliver a balanced budget in the current year.**

(b) AGREED:-

- (i) the virements attached as Appendix 2 in order to realign budgets in 2017/18 in line with current forecasts; and**
- (ii) the earmarking of budget from 2017/18 attached as Appendix 3 to the report.**

12. BALANCES AS 31 MARCH 2018

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Financial Officer providing an analysis of the Council's balances as at 31 March 2017 and advising of the projected balances at 31 March 2018. The report explained that the unaudited Council's General Fund useable reserve (non-earmarked) balance was £5.842m at 31 March 2017. This reflected a balance of £5,638m in line with the approved Financial Strategy. The projected balance as at 31 March 2018 remained £5.63m. The Council's allocated reserve balance was £6.049m at 31 March 2017. The projected balance in the allocated reserve at 31 March 2018 was £3.147m as a result of approved planned draw downs and further allocations during 2017/18. £1m had been transferred from Earmarked Balances to Allocated Balances to reflect budget being allocated to support the 2018/19 Financial Plan. The total of all useable balances, excluding developer contributions, at 31 March 2018 was projected to be £18.910m, compared to £19.705m at 31 March 2017. The projected balance on the Capital Fund of £4.501m would be affected by any further capital receipts, developer contributions, interest credited and any expenditure authorised to be financed from the Fund during the remainder of the financial year. Further detail of the balances and movements within the Council's funds were included within the report and Appendices.

DECISION

NOTED:-

- (a) the projected revenue balances as at 31 March 2018 as per Appendices 1 and 2; and**

(b) the projected balance in the Capital Fund as per Appendix 3.

13. MONITORING OF THE CAPITAL FINANCIAL PLAN

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Financial Officer providing an update on the progress of the 2017/18 Capital Financial Plan and seeking approval for projected outturns, associated virements and the reallocation of funds. The monitoring tables in Appendix 1 to the report showed actual expenditure to 30 September 2017. The tables identified a projected net variance of £0.609m against the approved budget due to a gross down in the projection for Plant and Vehicle replacement, fully funded from the P&V Fund. The net budget timing movements to future years amounted to £1.138m, the most significant of which were £0.5m for Energy Efficiency Works and £0.350m for School Estate Block. Appendix 2 to the report contained a list of block allocations approved for this year and the approved and proposed projects to be allocated from them within the 2017/18 Capital Plan. Appendix 3 contained a summarised list of timing and budget movements within the 2017/18 Capital Plan. Appendix 4 contained a list of estimated whole project capital costs for single projects which would not be completed in the current financial year. It was likely that as the year progressed additional timing movements would be identified. Specific reports on key major projects would be presented to Committee over the coming weeks with a comprehensive update on estimated timing movements presented as part of the final 2017/18 monitoring report in February 2018. In response to a question regarding capital allocation to the Union Chain Bridge, Councillor Edgar advised that the £1m anticipated to be funded from the Council was dependent on Heritage Lottery funding, the application for which would be submitted on 1 December 2017.

DECISION

(a) AGREED:-

- (i) the projected outturns in Appendix 1 to the report as the revised capital budget; and**
- (ii) to approve the virements as detailed in Appendix 3 to the report.**

(b) NOTED:-

- (i) the budget virements previously approved by the Chief Financial Officer and Service Director Assets & Infrastructure under delegated authority detailed in Appendix 2 to the report;**
- (ii) the block allocations detailed in Appendix 2 to the report; and**
- (iii) the whole project costs detailed in Appendix 4 to the report.**

The meeting concluded at 12.00 pm