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Berwickshire Area Partnership



MINUTE of Meeting of the BERWICKSHIRE
AREA PARTNERSHIP held in the Canteen,
Berwickshire High School, Duns on
Thursday, 1 February 2018 at 6.30 pm

Present:- Councillors J. A. Fullarton (Chairman), J. Greenwell, C. Hamilton, H. Laing,
D. Moffat and M. Rowley.
In Attendance:- Councillor S Aitchison.
34 partners, Community Councillors, officers and members of the public.

1. **WELCOME**

The Chairman, Councillor Fullarton, welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Berwickshire Area Partnership and referred to the Community Councils, Partners and local organisations represented at this event. The Chief Executive of Berwickshire Housing Association, Helen Forsyth was unable to attend due to illness and the Chairman read out a message from her - "Berwickshire Housing Association is committed to the Locality Plan and will seek to develop and implement strategies that will meet the goals outlined in the Community Plan for the Scottish Borders. We will hope to be invited again to the Partnership to discuss these in more detail. It is our intention that our Business Plan, which is in draft at present, will reflect the aspirations of the Locality Plan where appropriate and feasible."

2. **INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW AREA PARTNERSHIP**

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Locality Services, Councillor Aitchison, set the scene for how the new Area Partnership would develop. He explained that Area Partnerships would bring together key organisations, groups, businesses and individuals from across the public, private and third sectors and from within the local communities to work together to identify what the issues and priorities were for each Area. This first meeting of the Berwickshire Area Partnership would be provide an introduction to the new format of meeting, provide some context to both community planning and locality planning, as well as an overview of grants and funding. Future Area Partnership meetings would be themed to help discuss and debate issues in a more manageable way.

3. **SCOTTISH BORDERS COMMUNITY PLAN AND BERWICKSHIRE LOCALITY PLAN**

Jenni Craig, Service Director for Customer and Communities, explained that the introduction of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 had seen the Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership publish a Community Plan to address Borders-wide challenges and opportunities. Copies of the Community Plan were included in the information packs provided at the meeting. At a local level, Area Partnerships would take forward the development of Locality Plans. Meetings of the Area Partnership were the opportunity to participate in an informal discussion about the challenges and issues affecting the Berwickshire area. There were four main themes of the Community Plan, namely: our Economy, Skills & Learning; our Health and Wellbeing; our Quality of Life; and our Place. An additional theme of Community Transport had been identified as a priority issue for Berwickshire and had therefore been added to the Community Plan.

4. **OPEN FORUM**

The Chairman invited those present to discuss at their tables the emerging issues in

Berwickshire across the themes identified in paragraph 3 above and to write these down on the post-it notes provided. From the responses, it was clear that the debate had included issues, challenges and opportunities across all five themes, with 'Economy Skills and Learning' emerging as the priority theme for discussion at the next meeting of the Berwickshire Area Partnership. This feedback was summarised and attached as the Appendix to this Minute.

5. **GRANTS AND FUNDING OVERVIEW**

Shona Smith, Communities and Partnership Manager, summarised the grants and funding streams available to local communities and introduced the Scottish Borders Council team of officers who could provide further information and assistance. She also gave an update on the Localities Bid Fund in the Berwickshire Area where there were 10 projects being put forward to a public vote which would take place from 1 to 28 February 2018. In response to questions, Ms Smith explained that there were security measures in place to avoid duplicity of voting and that only votes cast with an accompanying post code would be counted. She also advised that future adjustments in terms of funding allocation could be made if it was found that projects from communities with a low population were at a significant disadvantage in the voting process. On receipt by Scottish Borders Council, applications to the Localities Bid Fund were assessed to ensure that the forms had been completed in full and that they met all the required criteria before going forward to the vote.

6. **SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS**

There was a general discussion about where future Berwickshire Area Partnership meetings would be held. The start time was also discussed and representatives were given the opportunity to identify the most convenient for them to attend meetings and could also comment about meeting arrangements on the evaluation forms. The next meeting would be held at Eyemouth High School in East Berwickshire, starting at 6.30pm on a date still to be confirmed but this was likely to be mid-March 2018. Further information would be circulated in due course. Arrangements for future meetings could be changed based on feedback from the evaluation forms; currently, the meeting after March was scheduled for Thursday 7 June 2018 (time and venue to be confirmed.) The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and looked forward to the future development of the Berwickshire Area Partnership.

The meeting concluded at 8.10 pm

Discussion Output: General Concerns, Issues, Challenges or Opportunities (1st February 2018)

Summary/Area of Discussion:

Economy, Skills and Learning

- Lot of focus on central Borders in terms of educational opportunities
- Low wage economy, agricultural industry. No good quality employability, lack of opportunity
- Spaces for people to learn not just online
- Business start-ups – lack of premises and units, lack of infrastructure and no incubation space
- Economy in Eyemouth needs investment. Fishing industry has gone what is replacing them?
- Eyemouth High School, increase learning opportunities for students
- Lack of college tuition in Berwickshire
- Lack of apprenticeships
- Excellent facility in Duns Centre, the Volunteer Hall. Borders college non existent
- Need to take steps to encourage grocery retailers other than Co-op, only supermarket in Berwickshire
- Grow the economy
- Improve attainment
- Schools good, children coming from Berwick to Berwickshire schools, young people moving away from the area to find work, no large employers, low wage economy
- Access to information
- Ultrafast digital connectivity, aim 100% and 4G 5G mobile
- Digital communities
- Need to attract employers that aren't low wage
- Partnership funding for preventative services – a new approach?
- Tourism signage throughout, not just coastal routes
- Loss of banks is a major problem for the economy and town centres
- Coastal path should be integral to economy
- Lack of maths teachers
- Adult learning facility missing. Lifelong learning plan focus on young people
- Agriculture and fishing missing from Community Plan
- Employability and Learning support for adults, access to adult learning, lack of training opportunities, transport and connectivity issues
- Poor rural broadband and phone signal

Summary/Area of Discussion:

Health, Care & Wellbeing

- GP – If call that day at 8am can usually get an appointment
- GP in Berwickshire provide a very personal experience (old fashioned)
- Not enough being done for mental health problems, 4-6 month wait
- Cross Border health issues
- Knoll Hospital in Duns is old and needs upgrading to act as minor injuries
- Nursing care in the community
- Travel to the BGH is difficult, outreach services required, mobile vans with GP's etc
- Lots of whole community projects, active Mens Shed, Ace Group – Parkrun for all ages
- Primary School in Eyemouth does CPR Training
- Healthy Village or Town competition
- NHS Facility for Chiropody
- NHS, Health and Social Care plan should be one!
- Services need to provide care to reduce delayed discharge
- Mental Health – getting across the door is a challenge, skills sharing and skills match
- Health – one central hospital, lack of travelling
- Few cottage hospitals
- Support for carers – access and affordability of transport, relief and respite for carers - social isolation?

Summary/Area of Discussion:

Quality of Life

- 20's Plenty campaign in Berwickshire
- Rural and farming isolation compared to town living
- Rural crime in Berwickshire
- Great community resilience in Eyemouth
- Access to services – all the same in areas
- Tackling inequality
- Social inclusion
- Drivers ignoring speed limits in rural areas and poor condition of roads. Lack of village shops, pubs and banks and not a lot for young people
- Food – Food banks, community café and better knowledge about food
- Micro fund a Caring Café – allows socialising, discussion about mental health, very informal
- Lots of hidden issues behind closed door, how do you shed light and offer support
- Changes in demographics, older population and the impact this has on future issues

Summary/Area of Discussion:

Our Place

- Need to map services incl. NHS and education and map success (physical)
- Damage to play areas in Duns
- Mens Sheds needed to combat social isolation, offer coffee and chat – support for the community
- Heavy focus in Eyemouth, perhaps more visible?
- Better use of village halls, people to come together in safe and trusting environments. An asset based approach.
- Lack of shops, too many supermarkets
- Provision of affordable housing in the right areas including elderly care
- Sustaining rural communities through collaboration to help mitigate removal of service points
- Intra and Inter community communication information sharing
- Communities learning from each other
- Housing market stagnant, broadband issues and lack of mobile phone signal

Summary/Area of Discussion:

Transport

- Local outcome should be transport accessibility
- Limited options for travel particularly in the evenings
- Why don't bus service providers make sure more services/timetables dove tail? Maximise profit?
- Buses must work more collaboratively with SBC – partnership
- Very little public transport in rural areas, school bus provision is limited – CC launched a community consultation to ask community what is missing and what people want
- Hume – no public transport at all. School bus provision but unsure of the public can use this?
- Transport hub (red cross) will provide but at a cost to the patient
- Limited public transport to BGH especially if a morning appointment, this is an issue and for the elderly
- An on demand transport app?
- Public transport – timing or scheduling difficulties for work, education, health appointments. Lack of return transport for Edinburgh (theatre visits etc)
- Physical connectivity – public transport and community transport
- Rural isolation – lack of accessible and affordable transport options
- A1 Action Group?
- Reston Station is vital!
- Support for Berwickshire Wheels to access education, entertainment and banks
- Lack of availability of transport

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