

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL held in Council Headquarters, Newtown St. Boswells on 30 August 2018 at 10.00 a.m.

Present:- Councillors D. Parker (Convener), S. Aitchison, H. Anderson, J. Brown, S. Bell, K. Chapman, K. Drum. G. Edgar, J. A. Fullarton, J. Greenwell, C. Hamilton, S. Hamilton, S. Haslam, E. Jardine, H. Laing, S. Marshall, W. McAteer, T. Miers, D. Moffat, S. Mountford, D. Paterson, C. Penman, C. Ramage, N. Richards, E. Robson, M. Rowley, H. Scott, S. Scott, E. Small, R. Tatler, E. Thornton-Nicol, G. Turnbull, T. Weatherston.

Apologies:- Councillors A. Anderson.

In Attendance:- Chief Executive, Executive Director (P. Barr), Executive Director (R. Dickson), Service Director Children & Young People, Service Director Customer & Communities, Service Director Regulatory Services, Joint Director of Public Health, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Legal Officer, Chief Social Work Officer, Chief Officer Roads, Clerk to the Council.

1. **CONVENER'S REMARKS**

The Convener presented Sanna Aziz and Tanya Thomson with a trophy to mark the completion of their time as Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament, thanked them for their service, and wished them well for the future.

DECISION

AGREED to endorse the comments of the Convener.

2. **MINUTE**

The Minute of the Meeting held on 28 June 2018 was considered.

DECISION

AGREED that the Minute be approved and signed by the Convener.

3. **COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The Minutes of the following Committees had been circulated:-

Berwickshire Area Partnership	7 June 2018
Pension Fund Committee	14 June 2018
Pension Fund Board	14 June 2018
Community Planning Strategic Board	14 June 2018
Executive	19 June 2018
Lauder Common Good Fund	19 June 2018
Civic Government Licensing	22 June 2018
Planning & Building Standards	25 June 2018
Audit & Scrutiny	26 June 2018
Peebles Common Good Fund	30 June 2018
Local Review Body	16 July 2018
Planning & Building Standards	16 July 2018
Civic Government Licensing	20 July 2018

DECISION

APPROVED the Minutes listed above

4. **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

With reference to paragraph 2 of the Minute of the Peebles Common Good Fund Sub-Committee Of 30 July 2018, it was recommended that Council approve a loan of up to £20,000 to the Eastgate Theatre for developments to the theatre. However, it was reported that the Eastgate Theatre had subsequently achieved their project funding requirements and would not be taking up the offer of the loan.

DECISION

NOTED.

5. **OPEN QUESTIONS**

The questions submitted by Councillors McAteer, Marshall, S. Scott, Ramage, H. Anderson, Bell and Moffat were answered.

DECISION

NOTED the replies as detailed in Appendix I to this Minute.

6. **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN: MAIN ISSUES REPORT**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Regulatory Services seeking approval of the Local Development Plan Main Issues Report as a basis for public consultation. The report explained that the Main Issues Report (MIR) was a forerunner to the review of the forthcoming new Local Development Plan (LDP2) which would replace the existing adopted LDP 2016. In essence the MIR sought public views on a range of key material considerations which LDP2 must address including the economy, housing, sustainability, regeneration and policy. It raised a series of questions under eight areas for consideration and where possible suggested preferred and alternative approaches for addressing identified issues. As part of the MIR consultation a series of presentations and workshops would be held in venues across the Scottish Borders. Responses from the MIR consultation would be reported back to the Council and taken forward for consideration in the preparation of LDP2. Members welcomed the report and encouraged everyone to get involved. The Service Director answered Members questions and agreed to consult with Scotland's Rural College with regard to recent research they had carried out on sustainable land use and the implications of Brexit. He also agreed that transport links needed to be considered and that developer contributions would be examined. He undertook to provide details of the presentations and workshops to Members so that they could encourage attendance.

DECISION

AGREED to:-

- (a) **approve the Main Issues Report of the Scottish Borders Local Development Plan, as set out in Appendix A to the report, as a basis for public consultation;**
- (b) **note the summary of officer conclusions, as set out in Appendix B to the report, as to the suitability or not of all sites submitted for inclusion within the MIR;**
- (c) **note the Environmental Report, a hard copy of which has been placed within the members' library;**
- (d) **to consult on the Main Issues Report and the Environmental Report for a period of 12 weeks;**
- (e) **delegate any non-policy editorial changes to the Main Issues Report and the Environmental Report to the Service Director of Regulatory Services; and**
- (f) **the responses to the MIR being reported back to the Council.**

7. **BORDERLANDS INCLUSIVE GROWTH DEAL - UPDATE**

With reference to paragraph 8 of the Executive Minute of 17 April 2018, there had been circulated copies of a report by the Executive Director, Mr R. Dickson, setting out progress since April 2018 in developing a Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal proposition; and seeking agreement to the establishment of a Members Reference Group to support the on-going development of the Deal. The report explained that alongside four partner Councils, the Council had been progressing work on the development of a Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal proposition. This work had involved close liaison with both UK and Scottish Governments in order to develop a small number of strategic programmes and projects. It would be essential that these programmes and projects complimented the South of Scotland Enterprise Agency proposals and supported the inclusive growth agenda. The aim was to formally submit a Deal overview document and associated strategic outline business cases to the UK and Scottish Governments at the end of September 2018. Based on knowledge gained from the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal process, another key step for the Council to take is the establishment of a Member Reference Group. This advisory group would support the development of the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal by ensuring ongoing political oversight of the development of the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal proposition and the Deal process. It was proposed that the membership of this group should be those already serving on the South of Scotland Alliance. Councillor McAteer proposed the addition of a member from either one of the Hawick or Jedburgh Wards to the group.

VOTE

Councillor Rowley, seconded by Councillor Edgar, moved approval of the recommendations as contained in the report.

Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor H. Scott, moved as an amendment that at recommendation (c) a member from either one of the Hawick or Jedburgh Wards be added to the membership of the group.

On a show of hands Members voted as follows:-

<i>Motion</i>	-	<i>19 votes</i>
<i>Amendment</i>	-	<i>7 votes</i>

The Motion was accordingly carried.

DECISION

DECIDED:-

- (a) to note the positive progress made in developing a Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal proposition;**
- (b) to establish a Members Reference Group to support the on-going development of the Deal proposition;**
- (c) that the Members Reference Group should be those Elected Members nominated by Council to the South of Scotland Alliance; and**
- (d) that a report setting out the details of the proposed Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal submission would be presented to the Council at its meeting on 25 September 2018.**

8. **DELIVERY OF SBC'S CORPORATE PLAN: A FRAMEWORK FOR MANAGING PERFORMANCE**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Executive presenting a revised Performance Management Framework (PFMT) to support the delivery of Scottish Borders Council's Corporate Plan 2018 -2023. It built on the progress achieved under the previous

PMF and placed emphasis on changing the culture in relation to performance management and on developing and improving SBC's current performance reporting. The Council had approved its existing PMF in 2013 which was structured around the eight Corporate Priorities set out in the SBC Corporate Plan (2013-2018). The new PMF, contained in Appendix 1 to the report, proposed that reporting was aligned to the four Corporate themes set out in the new SBC Corporate Plan (2018-2023), approved by Council in February 2018. The report also contained summary of the key proposals within the PMF relating to a strengthened culture within the Council around the use of performance management to drive and support continuous improvement in order to optimise and demonstrate that the Council was achieving "best value" for tax-payers. Consideration of the best way to report performance was to be undertaken.

DECISION

AGREED to approve the Performance Management Framework as described in Appendix 1 to the report.

9. APPOINTMENT OF A SELECTION COMMITTEE – EXTERNAL MEMBERS OF AUDIT COMMITTEES

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Officer Audit and Risk seeking approval to appoint a Selection Committee for the purpose of interviewing, selecting and appointing persons for the positions of external member of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee (Audit business only) and external member to the Scottish Borders Health and Social Care Integration Joint Board (IJB) Audit Committee, the latter subject to the IJB's formal approval. The report explained that Scottish Borders Council had had at least two external members on its Audit Committee since 2002 to improve independence and objectivity and to ensure that the Committee's role in the scrutiny process would be robust as a key part of the Council's governance and in line with best practice. The appointment of the existing external members of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee would end on 31 October 2018. The one existing external member had indicated his interest in being re-appointed and a formal recruitment process for the remaining vacancy would commence soon. Furthermore, the (IJB) was looking to appoint an external member to its Audit Committee for the first time to enhance its performance in line with best practice, and it was proposed to utilise the same recruitment process. Approval was sought for the appointment of a Selection Committee for the purpose of interviewing, selecting and appointing persons as external member of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee (Audit business only) and as external member of the IJB Audit Committee, noting that the latter would require ratification by the IJB as part of its business.

DECISION

AGREED to appoint a Selection Committee, comprising the Chairman of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, the Convener, the Executive Member for Finance and the Chairman of IJB Audit Committee, for the purpose of interviewing, selecting and appointing persons as an external member of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee (Audit business only) and an external member of the IJB Audit Committee, noting that the latter would require ratification by the IJB as part of its business.

10. MOTION BY COUNCILLOR BROWN

Councillor Brown, seconded by Councillor Laing, moved the following motion as detailed on the agenda:-

"The Scottish Government has an allocated budget to fund projects in high visitor areas to improve facilities for tourists. It is proposed that Scottish Borders Council take advantage of these funding opportunities and submit an application with the goal of improving and expanding public toilet provision in key tourist areas across the Scottish Borders."

Councillors Brown and Laing spoke in support of the Motion. Members discussed the Motion and Councillor Aitchison, seconded by Councillor Rowley, moved the following amendment:-

“The Scottish Government allocated a budget in 2017 to fund projects in rural high visitor areas to improve facilities for tourists. Officers of Scottish Borders Council should investigate the possibility of submitting an application with a goal of improving public toilet and other tourism infrastructure provision in key tourist areas.”

The meeting was adjourned for 15 minutes to allow Members to consider the amendment. When the meeting reconvened, Councillor Brown agreed to accept this amended Motion which was unanimously approved.

DECISION

AGREED the following:-

“The Scottish Government allocated a budget in 2017 to fund projects in rural high visitor areas to improve facilities for tourists. Officers of Scottish Borders Council should investigate the possibility of submitting an application with a goal of improving public toilet and other tourism infrastructure provision in key tourist areas.”

11. COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT

It was noted that Councillor Laing no longer wished to be a Member of the Health and Social Care Integrated Joint Board. Councillor Bell, seconded by Councillor Weatherston, nominated Councillor Thornton-Nicol and this was unanimously accepted.

DECISION

AGREED that Councillor Thornton-Nicol be appointed to the Health and Social Care Integrated Joint Board.

12. URGENT BUSINESS

Under Section 50B(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the Convener 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 make an early decision.

13. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Following the resignation of Councillors McAteer and Marshall from the Council's Administration a number of appointments required to be made. Councillor Haslam, seconded by Councillor Aitchison, proposed the following:-

- That Councillor Turnbull replace Councillor McAteer as Executive Member for Community Safety ;
- That as Executive Member for Community Safety, Cllr Turnbull be appointed as a member of the Police, Fire & Rescue, & Safer Communities Board, and the COSLA Community Wellbeing Board;
- That Councillor Turnbull replace Cllr McAteer as the Chairman of the Police, Fire & Rescue, & Safer Communities Board;
- Given that Councillor Turnbull was already a member of the Police, Fire & Rescue, & Safer Communities Board, that Councillor Richards be appointed as a member of the Board;
- That Councillors Turnbull and Richards replace Councillors McAteer and Marshall as members of the Police CAT Oversight Group, with Councillor Turnbull as Chairman in his capacity as Executive Member for Community Safety;
- That Councillor C. Hamilton replace Cllr Marshall as a member of the Standards Committee; and

- That Councillor Richards replace Cllr Marshall as Chairman of the Teviot & Liddesdale Area Partnership;
- That subject to the appointment of Councillor Turnbull above being agreed, that Councillor Tatler be appointed as the Executive Member for Finance ; and
- That Councillor S. Scott replace Councillor Tatler as a member of Audit & Scrutiny Committee.

The above appointments were accepted with the exception of the Chairman of the Teviot and Liddesdale Area Partnership. Councillor H. Scott, seconded by Councillor McAteer, moved that Councillor Marshall retain this appointment. In terms of Standing Order 43(b) the vote was taken by secret ballot the result of which was as follows:-

Councillor Richards	-	19 votes
Councillor Marshall	-	14 votes

Councillor Richards was accordingly appointed

DECISION

DECIDED to approve the appointments as listed above.

14. **PRIVATE BUSINESS**

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 Appendix II to this Minute on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 6, 8 and 9 of Part I of Schedule 7A to the Act.

SUMMARY OF PRIVATE BUSINESS

15. **Minute**

The private section of the Council Minute of 28 June 2018 was approved.

16. **Committee Minutes**

The private sections of the Committee Minutes as detailed in paragraph 3 of this Minute were approved.

17. **Urgent Business**

Under Section 50B(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the Convener 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 make an early decision.

18. **Open Questions**

With regard to the policy for the submission of open questions it was agreed to amend the deadline for the submission of Open Questions for Council from the second to the fourth working day prior to the Council meeting for a trial period of 3 months.

The meeting concluded at 12:15 p.m.

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL
30 AUGUST 2018
APPENDIX I

OPEN QUESTIONS

Question from Councillor Paterson

To the Leader

Will Scottish Borders Council be following the lead of North Lanarkshire Council and be providing free sanitary products for ladies that are unable to pay for them?

Reply from Councillor Haslam

The Council are planning to provide 'all pay cards' to all secondary aged female, transgendered and non-binary pupils, so that they can purchase free sanitary wear in local outlets in a dignified manner. This option will also enable the purchase of sanitary wear all year round and the most personalised, private and dignified solution for pupils.

We are also looking to remit to the CPP the consideration of how free access to sanitary wear for vulnerable adults in the Scottish Borders could be taken forward.

There are no plans, at the moment, for wider distribution of these products.

Question from Councillor McAteer

To Executive Member for Children & Young People

In the months prior to this year's school holidays, Hawick High School suffered disruption from a small group of persistent unruly children. Their actions impacted pupils and teachers and resulted in wide-scale public concern. Can the Executive Member assure her colleagues, the parents and most importantly the children who have returned for the new school term that these problems are now resolved and that they will be able to study in a safe, secure and fully staffed learning environment?

Reply from Councillor Haslam

None of us should be under any misapprehension about the nature and intent of this question. It is an unashamed attempt by the Member to stoke fears in the school and community for his own narrow political purposes. That is utterly reprehensible, and it is not a situation that we in this Chamber should countenance again. If the Member is truly concerned for the interests of those he claims to represent, let him approach me with the issues directly, and I and the Service Director will work with him and others to develop a collective approach to issues which arise. If, on the other hand, the Member persists in fear-mongering for petty political gain, then he shames himself and this Chamber, and does gross disservice to the ward he is supposed to represent.

Working with partners, Hawick High School has put in place a range of supports to respond to the needs of a small group of students, as well as implementing an approach to build a positive school ethos for the benefit of all. The school has a range of new staff both teaching and non-teaching, and home economics and fashion & textiles have been reinstated. The school has a vacancy in technical that remains unfilled despite several adverts and one principal teacher post which has had to be re-advertised. The school has a plan with the leadership team to manage this post. This is already known to the Member or would be if he had troubled to pursue this matter in the constructive way normally adopted by Members.

He asks can I assure council colleagues, parents and new children at the school term that the problems are fully resolved? It is important to realise that complex issues of the type which gave rise to the difficulties experienced in Hawick cannot be switched off like a light. However, I am confident that with the arrangements we have put in place and ongoing support that pupils will enjoy the secure and motivational educational environment that we expect.

In responding, I have referred to the efforts of the Council and its partners. Together these organisations have provided leadership. The obligation of leadership does not end with the Chief Executive, Service Director or the Executive Member. All of us in this chamber have a duty to provide leadership, most especially where the circumstances of our communities demand it. Going

forward, I look to the Councillor to provide the reassurance, the support and leadership that his position in Hawick demands.

Supplementary

Councillor McAteer advised that he had been requested by the community to ask this question and asked if assurances could be given to the people of Hawick that the school was safe and secure for pupils and teachers. Councillor Haslam responded that the school was safe and secure and advised that children were not born bad but needed a support network in place to help them overcome their problems.

Questions from Councillor Marshall

1. To Executive Member for Children & Young People

With the commencement of the new school term - Can the Executive Member confirm that Burnfoot School is fully staffed with fully experienced teachers and can she also indicate the ratio of probationer teachers to experienced staff?

Can she also reassure Members that where probationer teacher training is being undertaken, that such training will be completed during the times available as a result of the Asymmetric week in order to avoid impacting on pupil education time?

Finally can she provide details of how many children from the Burnfoot area who are now attending primary schools in other parts of the town?

Reply from Councillor Haslam

The Member actually asks 3 questions. The answer to the Member's first two questions is 'yes' in both instances. Burnfoot PS has one class teacher vacancy and one Principal teacher vacancy. Classes are being covered by experienced supply teachers until these vacancies are filled. Burnfoot PS has one Newly Qualified teacher for session 2018-19. Last year's NQT remains at the school and is an outstanding classroom teacher. New does not mean lesser quality.

SBC operate a robust induction programme for newly qualified teachers which is based on developing practice and strategies to ensure high quality learning every day. The General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) stipulates the allocation of time spent teaching and on professional development – SBC adhere to that national agreement.

It must be recognised that placing requests come from all districts and the reasons for them vary considerably. The school roll for Burnfoot Primary is 315. 22 placing requests from Burnfoot were received for schools elsewhere and 3 requests were received for pupils to join the school. This is not a spike in the number of placing requests for schools outwith Burnfoot, but is consistent with a pattern of placing requests in Hawick over the longer-term.

Finally, let me reinforce the point already made in answer to Councillor McAteer. It is time that Councillors McAteer and Marshall resisted the temptation to stoke the fears of those they are supposed to serve in some perverse popularity contest.

2. To The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Locality Services

Can the Executive Member provide me with an update and a timescale as to where his department is when dealing with the many uncut bankings that we have within my Ward and indeed throughout Hawick?

Will he also reassure me that these untidy and out of control areas will be cut this grass cutting season?

Can the Executive Member also provide me with a timescale as to when all elected members are likely to receive information identifying areas of their communities that are being set aside for "Biodiversity reasons"?

Reply from Councillor Aitchison

As Members will be aware the issue of working on steep embankments delivering grass maintenance operations has been reviewed in light of our approach to health and safety within neighbourhood services. The outcome of which has meant that alternative methods of maintenance need to be undertaken to maintain those embankments.

The vast majority of these sites either have already received maintenance, or are scheduled for maintenance, albeit at a reduced level due to the different approach to cutting.

Some sites however remain uncut and plans remain to be developed for their maintenance, which may include no grass cutting being undertaken at some locations.

Where sites remain uncut, they may be considered for changes to their management into the longer term.

Members will also be aware of the duty to promote and enhance the biodiversity of the Borders, and I encourage Members to come forward with their suggestions of areas where they believe that less intensive and changed management regimes can be supported into the longer term within their wards. There is no timescale associated with this duty it is something we are required to consider at all times.

Your local neighbourhood managers would be the initial point of contact on this matter.

Supplementary

Councillor Marshall asked if the Executive Member would acknowledge that once beautiful areas had been spoiled and that until this was resolved the public would keep raising the issue.

Councillor Aitchison advised that he had been to visit Hawick and that communities would be consulted to develop a policy within budget and health and safety constraints which would be acceptable to all.

Question from Councillor S. Scott

To the Executive Member for Planning & Environment

Would the Executive Member please remind me how long the scaffolding has been in place on the building in Jedburgh Square on the corner of the High Street and Exchange Street? More importantly could he give an indication when it will be removed?

Reply from Councillor Miers

The original Scaffolding crash deck was erected in June 2015 to protect the public from falling debris. The scaffolding crash deck was subsequently extended in to an access scaffolding, and crash deck, to allow for a more detailed assessment to be undertaken, and facilitate the removal of the corner chimney in December 2017. The scaffolding was strengthened in early 2018 to allow the proposed tie straps to be installed. Due to the further movement of the building on the South Elevation the structural scaffolding was strengthened and works to this was completed in early August 2018.

The Council are in the process of reviewing the options for this building and the scaffolding will require to be retained to ensure public safety until the building is made safe.

It's not yet possible to confirm how long the scaffolding will require to remain in place.

Supplementary

Councillor Scott asked if this building could be included in a priority list and Councillor Miers agreed that the problem did need to be resolved in a safe manner.

Question from Councillor Ramage

To Executive Member for Children & Young People

I understand that Scottish Borders are not shutting any school libraries but moving to a “library without staff” and that the pupil voice will be at the heart of this scheme. Why then am I getting complaints from pupils about this proposal? They feel that the bullying they are subjected to in other areas within the school will now carry over into what they feel is currently a safe learning environment – the library. Pupils left, unsupervised with expensive equipment, is a recipe for disaster. How do you propose to mitigate these potential problems?

Reply from Councillor C. Hamilton

As has been mentioned before, this is a pilot project in three High School libraries, Kelso, Peebles and Galashiels. Six High Schools will remain as they are.

We have not said that the pilot libraries will run without staff; we are modernising provision and trying out a range of developments, e.g. a self-serve model for borrowing/returning books, as well as a range of staff being in the library to extend opening times. I am surprised you are receiving complaints from pupils as we have not reduced any staff time yet. The Council will be engaging regularly with pupils throughout the pilot period to ascertain their views before any conclusions are drawn. The modernisation will be responsive and dynamic to pupil feedback.

S1 to S4 will have library provision in their timetable with a class teacher. S5/6 students may use the library during study periods and will be trusted to use the space. However, it will be monitored by senior pupils who have volunteered on a rota basis. We have confidence in our senior pupils to provide leadership, just as they lead and mentor in other aspects of school life.

All books will be tagged and security gates fitted to mitigate theft or loss.

We do not anticipate bullying as the new Quarriers ‘resilience practitioners’, who support pupils with emotional resilience matters, will be in the library space at peak times.

Supplementary

Councillor Ramage commented on the costs of a similar scheme in Edinburgh and that the loss of librarians was short sighted. She asked what the timescale for the pilot was. Councillor Hamilton advised that the librarian in Hawick was looking forward to the library refurbishment and she would get back to Councillor Ramage with details of the timescale.

Question from Councillor H. Anderson

To The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Locality Services

In July this year I wrote to our Chief Executive asking if cemeteries could be re-designated as High Amenity sites and thereby benefit from a more frequent grass cutting regime without having to overturn a budget decision. I had hoped this would give the council the opportunity to respond appropriately to the distress caused to individuals and family members who were deeply offended by the lack of maintenance in cemeteries across the Borders. I was advised by the Chief Executive that this would not be possible as this would require additional manpower resources.

Can I ask Cllr Aitchison if he agrees with me that cemeteries are no less important than football pitches and agrees that they should be re-designated as High Amenity sites in time for next year’s maintenance programme?

Reply from Councillor Aitchison

In managing our budget situation this administration agreed to changes to grass maintenance, which included cemeteries, further savings measures also encompassed floral displays, access maintenance budgets, reviewing our arrangements to the management of third party land and efficiencies from our schools budget derived from changes to grass maintenance.

This administration has and continues to listen to feedback from communities around these service changes, and indeed has already positively responded by finding budget to retain floral displays for a further year, allowing more time for community discussions around the changes.

The importance of our 154 cemeteries and burials grounds to the community is well established, officers understand that an acceptable level of service is provided in cemeteries given our financial constraints as a Council.

We are happy to discuss future service arrangements with our communities and would encourage communities to continue to engage with Council officers who will offer advice and guidance around helping communities to achieve their aspirations.

Supplementary

Councillor Anderson asked if this could be reinstated in the next budget round. Councillor Aitchison advised that he expected the budget discussions to be difficult and challenging and needed input and co-operation from communities. All areas would be discussed but he could not predict the outcome at this time.

Question from Councillor Bell

To Executive Member for Children & Young People

I remain concerned about the future of Peebles High School. You undertook in answer to a question at the last Council meeting to communicate to local Members the dates and times of the further consultation "at the beginning of the new term." Pupils went back to school last Tuesday, when will we know the dates & times of the consultation events?

Reply from Councillor C. Hamilton

The Director has followed up the previous consultation with the Parent Council Chair and before we can set dates with Members a conversation must take place with the whole Parent Council and the Primary Parent Council Chairs from the Cluster Primary Schools as to how the consultation should best proceed to be more inclusive.

The matter will be discussed at Parent Councils next week – the first opportunity since the start of term. A meeting will then be held with the Primary Chairs the following week. Members will then be updated the week beginning 17th September as to the plan of consultation suggested by the parents.

Supplementary

Councillor Bell asked if, in light of this timescale, the October deadline could be reconsidered and Councillor Hamilton advised she would go back to officers regarding timing.

Question from Councillor Moffat

To the Executive Member for Business & Economic Development

In December 2017 I asked how are the Duns and Coldstream Business Parks were being marketed, as there was a public perception that nothing was happening on either site. I was advised that 1 site in Coldstream was under offer and 3 sites in Duns were at the planning stage but since then there has been no signs of progress. Could Executive Member please give me an update on the current position?

Reply from Councillor Rowley

One plot at Coldstream is now going through the legal process of a sale, with the offer to the purchaser's solicitors issued at the start of August 2018. Two further interests have been expressed in the site since the last update in December 2017; one coming forward after seeing the on-site signage, the other having seen the information on the Council website.

At Duns one further interest has come forward since December 2017. There are now only 2 businesses at the planning stage, as previous enquirers have either changed their plans or decided that the capital investment required is too great.

Supplementary

Councillor Moffat asked if the local communities could be made aware of progress. Councillor Rowley advised that this was outwith the control of the Council and that private discussions with businesses could not be shared.