

MINUTES of Meeting of the CHEVIOT  
AREA PARTNERSHIP held in The  
Assembly Room, Jedburgh Grammar  
School, Jedburgh on Wednesday, 12  
September 2018 at 6.30 pm

Present:- Councillors S. Mountford (Chairman), J. Brown, S. Hamilton, T.  
Weatherston together with 24 Representatives of Partner Organisations,  
Community Councils and Members of the Public.  
Apologies:- Councillors E. Robson, S. Scott.  
In attendance:- Chief Planning Officer, Housing Strategy Manager, Locality Development  
Co-ordinator, Funding Officer, Democratic Services Officer (F. Henderson)

**1.0 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

1.1 The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Cheviot Area Partnership and thanked the Community Councils, Partners and local organisations for their attendance, and for participating and putting forward ideas.

**2.0 FEEDBACK FROM MEETING ON 28 MARCH 2018**

2.1 The minute of the Area Partnership had been circulated which included a summary of the discussion output as an appendix. The Locality Development Co-ordinator referred to the general concerns, issues, challenges and opportunities raised at that meeting and confirmed that the theme identified as a priority to take forward for more in-depth discussion was Our Place. This theme would therefore be the focus for debate for the remainder of the meeting.

**3.0 THEME: OUR PLACE**

3.1 The Chair presented the theme for the meeting – Our Place – and introduced Ian Aikman SBC Chief Planning Officer, who talked about the Main Issues Report (MIR) which had been approved by Council the previous week for a 12 week public consultation, likely to begin at the beginning of October 2018. The MIR was to all intents and purposes the forerunner to the Local Development Plan which came in 2 volumes: the first volume of the Development Plan contained policies which were applicable across the Borders and the second volume contained details applicable to each of the 80 different settlements in the Borders e.g. conservation areas, housing allocations, etc. The consultation would involve officers holding sessions in various places with local people encouraged to come to afternoon sessions and evening workshops to give feedback. The MIR asked a series of questions and Mr Aikman gave some examples. With regard to town centres, how could they be regenerated and made more dynamic and vibrant. What sites should be designated for housing, what type of housing was needed. Finding sites could be difficult and the MIR was trying to identify a lot more sites than would be required, so not all sites would be taken forward. People were invited to comment on proposed sites and suggest other sites. With regard to industrial land, where should that be located, how would sites be serviced, how would they be funded. Existing housing in the countryside policy required any new property to be part of an existing building group - should consideration be given to allowing single dwellings in more isolated areas. Officers would be available to listen to what local people's suggestions and everyone was encouraged to put forward their views either at one of the consultation sessions, or via the website or by phone. In response to a question about whether Scottish

Government could overrule a Local Plan, Mr Aikman advised that planning was never black and white, and there were grey areas, but decisions had to be in line with national planning guidance.

- 3.2 Ms Liz Hall, SBC Ecology Officer, then gave details of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan which was currently out for consultation. The Plan had last been updated in 2001 and was due for a review. Officers had looked at the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and based the themes of the Local Biodiversity Plan on this. While there were global targets to be achieved by 2020, any actions needed to work on the ground. One theme was eco system restoration which involved replanting trees and hedgerows; another was greenspace for health, both mental and physical health and wellbeing; another was marine and coastal eco-systems. People were asked to participate in the consultation and provide comments, letting officers know if priorities were correct or if something else should be included. The consultation was open until 30 November 2018 and could be accessed through the Citizen Space online system.
- 3.3 Mr Gerry Begg, SBC Housing Strategy Manager, discussed the Local Housing Strategy. Mr Begg explained that the Council did not have any housing stock, having transferred all its housing stock to be managed by local housing association. However, the Council was the strategic housing authority and was required to produce a Local Housing Strategy every 5 years in partnership with a wide range of partners, including Scottish Borders Housing Association. The Strategy covered a wide range of issues and solutions to increase the housing supply within the Scottish Borders including energy efficiency, condition of properties in the rental sector, homelessness and empty properties. The Strategy detailed the requirement to build 348 homes every year, 128 of which must be affordable. Much of the document was framed by guidance and policy drivers from the Scottish Government and a review was currently underway. The Strategy set out the 4 big challenges faced in the Scottish Borders: the needs of local communities being met; more quality homes being provided; homelessness being reduced and people remaining in own homes for longer. It was necessary to develop actions, working with partners, find funding and project over the 5 years of how to make this happen. The Strategy identified 1175 new houses across the Borders which represented a potential investment of £174m, which as well as providing homes for people also created jobs, including apprenticeships, in construction and the building supply industry. An issue in the Borders was the age of housing, with many homes built pre-1919 and pre-1945 which were not energy efficient, with issues of dampness and condensation, so were in turn expensive to heat. External funding was being sought to carry out external wall insulation and loft insulation which would help. Another area of activity was homelessness, where plans were being made to develop a new rapid rehousing plan in response to a Scottish Government direction for fast track arrangements.
- 3.4 Mrs Caroline Purcell, Housing Services Manager, Scottish Borders Housing Association (SBHA) was introduced by the Chairman. Mrs Purcell provided information about Scottish Borders Association, which was one of four housing associations in the Scottish Borders. Reference was made to the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) which was a 5 year plan for delivery not just of affordable housing but also mid-market rent housing. The SHIP was reviewed every 5 years by the 4 main Registered Social Landlords and the Council, with projects assessed on the criteria of deliverability, housing need, regeneration of areas and the impact on communities. Existing homes were also being worked on to bring properties up to current energy efficiency standards. While funding was available from Scottish Government at the moment for housing development and was being used as much as possible, there was no guarantee that this funding would be available in the future.

Responses were given to a number of general questions. Mr Aikman added that the private sector was in a fragile position as they could only recover what they could sell the property for. However, if they were in partnership with one of the housing associations they could plan new builds with confidence.

- 3.5 Colin Banks, Lead Officer for Localities explained that the meeting would now move into the discussion session. As previously, there were information packs available for each group and those present were invited to discuss the main issues relating to 'Our Place'. Thirty minutes were allocated for group discussion and each table was asked to record emerging points on the feedback sheets provided. A summary of the output of the discussions was provided as an appendix to this minute.

4. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be held on Wednesday, 5 December 2018 in Jedburgh at 6.30 p.m. The theme of the meeting would be confirmed in due course.

*The meeting closed at 8.20 p.m.*