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Eildon Area Partnership



MINUTE of Meeting of the EILDON AREA PARTNERSHIP held in the Victoria Hall, Selkirk on Thursday, 22 November 2018 at 6.00 pm

- Present:- Councillors S. Aitchison, G. Edgar, D. Parker, H. Scott and E. Thornton-Nicol
- Apologies:- Councillors A. Anderson, K. Drum, E. Jardine, T. Miers and C. Penman.
- In Attendance:- 20 Partners, Community Councillors, officers and members of the public.

1. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chairman, Councillor Edgar, welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Eildon Area Partnership and thanked Community Councillors, Partners and local organisations for their attendance. Councillor Edgar explained that the theme for the evening's discussion was the Council Budget. There would be a presentation about the Budget process followed by a facilitated discussion when views on the proposed approach to the budget would be welcomed.

2. **FEEDBACK FROM MEETING ON 20 SEPTEMBER 2018**

The Minute of the meeting of the Eildon Area Partnership held on 20 September 2018 had been circulated along with a summary of the discussion on the theme 'our place' attached as an appendix to the Minute. The Locality Development Co-ordinator, Gillian Jardine, summarised the feedback which highlighted priority issues including housing in the countryside, affordable housing and the importance of community hubs, entertainment and shops in town centres.

3. **THEME: COUNCIL BUDGET - ENGAGEMENT WITH COMMUNITIES 2019/20**

- 3.1 The Chairman introduced the Council's Chief Financial Officer, David Robertson, who was in attendance to give a presentation on the preparation of the Budget and to answer questions. He firstly gave the context to the Budget, explaining that in the 5 year plan 2013/14 to 2017/18 permanent recurrent savings of over £35 million had been delivered and a further in year savings of £8.8 million. Easy reductions had been made and future savings would rely on greater use of technology to reduce costs and redesign of services. The Council could not continue to deliver everything presently provided in the same way and the scope and scale of delivery may need to be reduced. Over the next 5 years it was estimated that the Council's projected spend would be £1.3 billion. 2019/20 would be the 2nd year of the 5 year plan first agreed in 2018/19 which required savings of £32 million over 5 years to balance the books. The Council had planned for reductions over the longer term, invested in transformation and avoided the need for the levels of cuts seen in other authority areas. However there were greater challenges ahead which required innovation and the delivery of an ambitious change programme.

- 3.2 Mr Robertson went on to show slides to illustrate the source of Council Revenue Funding, and to project estimated budget gap over the next 5 years. The current incremental gap for 2019/20 was £2,557,000. Charts disclosing the allocation of revenue by Department demonstrated that the highest proportion (43%) of spend was on Children & Young People followed by Health and Social Care (18%). In the 10 year capital spending plan the highest proportion (67%) was on Assets & Infrastructure. There was less money available to fund public services and demand on services was growing – particularly in respect of care for older people. The presentation referred to ways for the Council to modernise and become more efficient. In terms of services, over the next 5 years it was planned to maximise the use of digital technology; drive out waste and inefficiency; and invest in assets and infrastructure in a planned and sustainable way. Also summarised, as part of the 5 year plan, were ways the Council proposed to promote independent achieving people; support a thriving economy with opportunities for everyone; and facilitate empowered vibrant communities.
- 3.3 In response to a question about whether the Council could encourage the use of brownfield sites for development by the purchase of sites and unlocking private investment, Mr Robertson advised that although money could be borrowed effectively there was a limitation on the Council's powers of compulsory purchase. The Council would, however, be keen to attract external income to develop these sites. There was further discussion on transport issues with the request for the Council to put pressure on Scotrail for a full rail service to Stow. The point was made about the importance of investment in roads and support of bus services in addition to the ambition to extend the railway to Carlisle. It was very likely that fewer people would use the bus if the railway was extended. The Council should ensure the provision of reasonable transport for everyone. In response Mr Robertson explained that the Council currently provided in excess of £1 million per year in the form of bus subsidies. He emphasised that the budget was about choices and that this was why the views of the public about priorities for spending were important. He concluded by outlining the ways to provide feedback into the Budget process, either online to <https://scotborders.dialogue-app.com> by email to budgetteam@scotborders.gov.uk, on social media #bordersbudget or by post or telephone.
- 3.4 Following the presentation, officers joined Elected Members, partners and the public at their tables for a discussion on the Budget and spending priorities. Sheets with additional information on Council services and a short series of questions had been provided on the tables to aid the debate. A summary of the output of the discussion is provided as an appendix to this minute.

4. **LOCALITIES BID FUND ASSESSMENT PANEL**

The Chairman referred to the following Council decision in respect of the assessment panel for bids to the Localities Bid Fund (LBF):-

“ that membership of the assessment panel be proposed by each Area Partnership, up to a maximum of 2 Members per locality, with a view to improving gender balance”.

It had been previously agreed that the Chairman of each Area Partnership would be a member of the panel. Councillor Edgar, seconded by Councillor Aitchison, proposed that Councillor Thornton-Nicol be appointed as the second member for the Eildon area. This was unanimously agreed.

DECISION

AGREED to appoint Councillor Thornton-Nicol to the Localities Bid Fund assessment panel.

5. **LOCALITIES BID FUND - UPDATE ON CURRENT FUNDING ROUND**

Ms Jardine gave an update on the Localities Bid Fund (LBF). She explained that in the first round 18 projects in the Eildon area had been awarded total funding of £33,809. 13 of those projects were up and running, four were still to start and one was unable to take up the allocation and that grant had gone back into the Eildon Fund. The second round of

LBF had been launched on 1 July 2018 with £95,802.30 available for Eildon (subsequently increased to £119k with the return of funding from one of the first round projects). There had been a total of 28 applications, 12 of which were from Eildon. However the Assessment Panel had agreed that there were not enough sustainable bids to go forward to the public vote in all five areas. It was therefore proposed to request that Council revise the criteria. If this was approved the LBF would be re-launched in January 2019 with public voting to be carried out in April 2019. All those groups who submitted applications for the second round would be notified about the revised criteria and offered support to re-apply.

6. **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Eildon Area Partnership was scheduled for Thursday 24 January 2019 with the theme of 'Our Health, Care and Wellbeing'. The venue would be confirmed in due course.

The meeting concluded at 8.15 pm

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Scottish Borders Council Budget			
Question/Issue/Challenge	Proposed Solution (opportunities for area partnerships/communities?)	Consequence/Impact (positive and negative)	Priority rating
<p>Efficiencies Can we do things in a more streamlined way?</p>	<p>Each school have a community which homes the libraries etc that is open for all young people and community member staffed by a librarian. Leisure centres open at more convenient times for people in work- early mornings, evenings and weekends. More people using services = more cost effective= reduced prices. Transport- Dial a bus service for youth groups Electronic bus stops- Gives up to date information. School should be open in the evenings as a community hub and adult learning services. Issue= Single referral for any service within partnership Issue= incompatibility of IT Systems Challenge= Transport access to undrawn services. NHS/SBC Community empowerment act Invest directly in infrastructure Join up partnerships between communities Councils and councillors lack Don't need streetlights in rural areas Rural communities clear snow themselves, can this be done in towns?</p>	<p>Financial, Lack of access to services, decrease in efficiency.</p>	
<p>Identifying priorities Are there services, which in your view, should be prioritised?</p>	<p>Young peoples mental health services Learning support in schools based in library Public Transport Social spaces for young people with free wifi CLD/ Youth voice Leisure facilities/parks Roads maintenance (rural) impact of timber lorries Young people engaged in the process Greater use of facilities Remove barriers to community access to council assets Partnership to encourage ambition to try Mobile libraries Transport in local areas More invest in social care</p>	<p>Personal costs Service costs</p>	
<p>Different models of delivering services Are there services which we could deliver differently, or that communities could take</p>	<p>Community Hub Young people run Community centres – skills training for young people, merge community centres to larger facilities if possible.</p>	<p>Access to services Connectivity</p>	

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<p>responsibility for to maintain them in the long term?</p>	<p>Community transport Windfarm Take facilities to communities Do people need to travel? Responsive transport</p>		
<p>Increased charges to service users Should we be charging more for some services?</p>	<p>Maybe if reduced rates, more people might go= increased revenue. Would require better promotion. Yes- services cost money Yes if affordable and access for those who cannot</p>		
<p>Other funding options What services in your area do you value most which could be retained, expanded or enhanced through the use of additional funds?</p>	<p>Contract with local farmers for snow services Attracting more behaviour to the area Working in Partnership Traffic wardens more than pay for itself Invest in infrastructure through water assets</p>		

Notes

Live borders- Town hall management

Costs raised

Bordercare- Twice cost of East Lothian

SBC- better at explaining budget, what is external funding?

Same individuals in communities doing all the work eg call resilience