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## SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL BERWICKSHIRE AREA PARTNERSHIP

MINUTE of Meeting of the BERWICKSHIRE  
AREA PARTNERSHIP held in Conference  
Room, Duns Primary School, Duns on  
Thursday, 6 December 2018 at 6.30 pm

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Present:- Councillors J. A. Fullarton (Chair), C. Hamilton (from para. 3), H Laing (from para. 3), M. Rowley, together with 16 representatives from Partner Organisations, Community Councils and members of the public

Apologies:- Councillors J. Greenwell  
In Attendance:- Chief Financial Officer, Communities and Partnerships Manager, Locality Development Co-ordinator, Clerk to the Council, Trainee Democratic Services Officer

### 1. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair, Councillor Fullarton, welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Berwickshire Area Partnership and thanked the Community Councils, Partners and local organisations for their attendance, and outlined the programme for the evening.

### 2. **FEEDBACK FROM MEETING ON 6 SEPTEMBER 2018**

The Minute of the meeting of the Berwickshire Area Partnership held on 6 September 2018 had been circulated along with a summary of the discussion attached as an appendix to the Minute. Councillor Fullarton gave some highlights from the feedback received at that meeting.

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

3.1 The Chairman welcomed David Robertson, SBC Chief Financial Officer, who gave a presentation on the Scottish Borders Council Budget for 2019/2024. The 5 year plan 2013/14 to 2017/18 had delivered permanent recurrent savings of over £35m and further in year savings of £8.8m. The existing planned savings in 2019/20 included contract efficiencies, energy efficiency measures, procurement savings and service reviews e.g. day services, waste and teacher allocations. The easy reductions had already been made and future savings would rely on greater use of technology to reduce costs and redesign services. The Council could not continue to deliver everything they did now in the same way and might need to reduce the scope and scale of service delivery. 2019/20 was the second year of the 5 year plan agreed in 2018/19 which required savings of £32m 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 elsewhere but there was lots still to do with greater challenges ahead. The Council had to remain financially sustainable and over the next 5 years it was estimated that £21m would need to be saved from the current forecasted spend of £1.3 billion. Meeting this challenge was not about making cuts but about investments for the future delivery of services and required forward thinking, innovative and focus on delivering an ambitious change programme. The Council also had a 10 year capital allocation of £294m. There were a number of challenges facing the Council. There was less money to fund public services and income was not keeping pace with real increases in prices and meanwhile demands on services were growing – e.g. increasing numbers of older people - with the population over the age of 75 in the Borders at a higher percentage than in the rest of Scotland. The infrastructure of the region required significant investment. There were still significant pockets of deprivation across the region and hidden poverty in communities and the Council needed to increase opportunity and reduce inequality for all in the Borders. Mr

Robertson outlined where the Council's funding came from and how it was allocated across Council services in terms of both capital and revenue. In order to modernise, the Council needed to make significant savings in what the Council bought; invest in new digital technology to reduce costs; ensure that assets were used as efficiently as possible; ensure that the Council had a capable, motivated workforce that adopted new ways of working and that was flexible enough to deliver savings when and where they were required 7 days a week, 365 days a year; invest in prevention strategies; grow the economy of the Borders; and support all people to live well. Over the next five years the Council planned to implement the following:-

- Design and deliver as many Council services online as possible to maximise the use of digital technology and build the digital skills of Borders communities and staff;
- Develop customer advice and support;
- Drive out waste and inefficiency, cutting red tape and providing better value for money;
- Explore different models of service delivery;
- Reduce the amount of property the Council owned and operated;
- Invest in the roads infrastructure in a planned, sustainable way; and
- Redesign waste services

Mr Robertson also outlined the plans to support the aims of independent achieving people, a thriving economy with opportunities for everyone, to promote future employment opportunities and empowered vibrant communities. 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](mailto:budgetteam@scotborders.gov.uk), on social media #bordersbudget or by post or telephone.

3.2 A number of questions were asked and Mr David Robertson provided appropriate responses:

- Reopening Reston Station – it was confirmed that the Council was fully committed to this with funding contained within the capital programme
- Statutory Services – the Council targeted non-statutory services and while there was clarity on what was a statutory function the level of provision could vary; the fundamental aim was to protect core services
- Community Council Funding – a request was made for an increase in this funding which may not be possible
- Distribution of the Budget to Berwickshire – the Council needed to ensure it was investing in all areas of the Borders but also had to prioritise where there was greatest need while at the same time having finite resources; not all projects could be undertaken at the same time. Investments in new primary and high schools had been made in Berwickshire with 50 new extra care housing and plans around Eyemouth town centre regeneration – with people to get involved in the Borderlands Initiative.
- Broadband – reference was made to a recent review by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee of the Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband Programme and Councillor Rowley gave an explanation of how this report would be used for future broadband infrastructure projects.

## **MEMBERS**

Councillors Laing and Hamilton joined the meeting during consideration of the above item.

3.3 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. The Chairman thanked Mr Robertson for attending the meeting.

## **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 for each Area Partnership, up to a maximum of two members per locality with a view to improving gender balance. The membership of the assessment panel to be 10, plus the Executive member for Neighbourhoods & Locality Services, with a quorum of 6”. As Councillor Fullarton had already been appointed to the Panel previously, Councillor Hamilton, seconded by Councillor Rowley, proposed that Councillor Laing be appointed to the Assessment Panel. This was unanimously agreed.

## **DECISION**

**AGREED to appoint Councillor Laing to the Localities Bid Fund – Assessment Panel.**

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

Ms Smith, SBC Communities and Partnership Manager, gave an update on the Localities Bid Fund (LBF). She advised that the second round of LBF had been launched on 1 July 2018 with a total of £296k available for eligible projects. However, in October the LBF Assessment Panel had agreed that there were not enough sustainable bids to go forward to the public vote in all five areas. It had been therefore proposed that the criteria would be revised, and with that approved at Council on 29 November, the Localities Bid Fund would be re-launched in January 2019, and the Assessment Panel would assess bids received against the criteria with the intention of public voting being carried out in April 2019. The groups who had already submitted applications for the second round had been contacted and would be notified about the revised criteria and offered support to re-apply. The Chairman explained that any monies would be carried forward to April 2019 and the pilot would be re-evaluated.

### **6. CENTENARY FIELDS INITIATIVE**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Assets and Infrastructure which set out the aims of the Centenary Fields initiative to commemorate World War 1 and recommended the nomination as a Centenary Field of Duns Park. The report explained that Centenary Fields (CF) was a partnership programme led by Fields in Trust and the Royal British Legion to commemorate World War 1 through protecting green spaces. It had been launched by HRS The Earl of Strathearn in 2014 and would close in 2018. CF aimed to protect at least one site (containing WW1 war memorial(s)) and was aimed at creating a long lasting legacy of WW1, protection, promoting green space for recreation, increasing physical activity, promoting social cohesion and improving the environment. Upon a successful application to Fields in Trust for Centenary Fields status, sites were subject to a Minute of Agreement, similar to those which were in place on all King George V Playing Fields. This would safeguard the sites for recreational used as protected green space. The report advised that following a regional appraisal and in consultation with communities and Fields In Trust, three sites had been identified in the Scottish Borders as potentially appropriate – Wilton Lodge Park, Hawick; Lower Green at West Linton; and Duns Park. Upon designation a commemorative plaque would be installed. The site name would not change and there were no funds associated with CF status. Designation as a Centenary Field would not only protect the historic and conservation value of these sites, but would also strengthen the case to attract external funding. The management of these sites would be retained by the local authority. Duns Park was situated in the south of the town and was home to two wartime commemorative structures - Duns War Memorial and Polish War Memorial - and was also home to a memorial bronze bust of Duns Scotus. It formed the main civic greenspace in the town, with mature planting, informal recreation areas, a play park and tennis court and it was proposed to nominate the civic park area as a Centenary Field.

## **DECISION**

**AGREED the nomination of Duns Park for Fields in Trust Centenary Field status**

### **7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Berwickshire Area Partnership was scheduled for Thursday 7 February 2018. It was suggested that the venue for the next meeting could be Eyemouth High School. The Chairman thanked all those who had attended the meeting for their participation and input.

***The meeting concluded at 8.25 pm***

Discussion Output: Scottish Borders Council Budget (6 <sup>th</sup> December 2018)			
Question/Issue/Challenge	Proposed Solution (opportunities for area partnerships/communities?)	Consequence/Impact (positive and negative)	Priority rating
<p><b>Efficiencies</b> Can we do things in a more streamlined way?</p>	<p>Use grey recycled paper like NHS. No colours on council tax leaflets Printing and postage waste. Option for email if you don't want paper. Don't put paving slabs down in Eyemouth high street – lorries and vans wreck them. See Manchester. Pot hole repair in summer! More power to communities. There are a vast range of resources available that could be better utilised if the right level of input is allocated. Integration of health services and social care There are good models Explore innovative methods/ material for road surfacing Do we have to demand the workload coming in (reactive)/instead go out and provide services (proactive)? More joint approaches to procurement and deliver services together Shared services – within and outwith the Borders</p>	<p>People feel better supported in the communities. Lack of funding or funding coming to an end. Better/wellbeing Reduced NHS bed space</p>	
<p><b>Identifying priorities</b> Are there services, which in your view, should be prioritised?</p>	<p>Digital access in rural areas! Better integration of mental health services for schools. Early intervention and prevention. SB Cares management team needs to be sorted, Care services need to work together. Transport – rail station at Reston Transport to BGH from East Berwickshire Provision of social care for elderly, dementia Services for older people Attracting families into the area Housing developments - affordable, quality of life Connections with work employment- digital/broadband Transport</p>	<p>Difficulty in getting to appointments/visiting</p>	
<p><b>Different models of delivering services</b> Are there services which we could deliver differently, or that communities could take responsibility for to maintain them in the long term?</p>	<p>Youth projects Neighbourhood services model IJB briefing note not being communicated Deep water harbour Disaggregate services from a central point into 5 areas College provision for eastern borders No charge for green waste services</p> <p>Care services – Resilient communities is a good example of community responsibility More investment in local initiatives ie social enterprises Tourism, agriculture, Care sector Skills shortages- textile centre of excellence</p>	<p>Community focused/pride in service delivery funding/sustainability long term.</p>	
<p><b>Increased charges to service users</b> Should we be charging more for some services?</p>	<p>People are often keen to make contributions for services that are efficient Do we cover operating costs?</p>	<p>People making difficult choices in order to pay for services</p>	

<p><b>Other funding options</b> What services in your area do you value most which could be retained, expanded or enhanced through the use of additional funds?</p>	<p>Medical NHS Services/care in the community Social transport Increase funding to invest and seeing that investment. Providing services that could be commercial that doesn't impact on the private sector?</p>	<p>More people supported &amp; connected and services are improved</p>	
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Notes:

Can library services encourage borrowing kindles - Oxford looked into this and it saves a huge costs in transporting heavy books.

Public toilets charging/closing – Hits tourist's towns more, seems to save money but reduces tourist income

Learning from peers

Community spaces

A hub- A heart for duns