

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL TWEEDDALE AREA PARTNERSHIP

MINUTES of Meeting of the TWEEDDALE
AREA PARTNERSHIP held in the Burgh
Hall, Peebles on Wednesday, 7 November
2018 at 7.00 p.m.

Present:- Councillors R. Tatler (Chairman), H. Anderson, K. Chapman, S. Haslam, E. Small, together with 17 representatives from Partner Organisations, Community Councils and members of the public.

Apologies:- Councillors S. Bell

In Attendance:- Chief Financial Officer , Communities and Partnerships Manager, Locality Development Co-ordinator, Neighbourhood Area Manager, Democratic Services Team Leader.

1. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the fifth meeting of the Tweeddale Area Partnership and outlined the programme for the evening.

2. **FEEDBACK FROM MEETING ON 5 SEPTEMBER 2018**

The Minute of the meeting of the Tweeddale Area Partnership held on 5 September 2018 had been circulated along with a summary of the discussion. With reference to paragraph 5.1 it was noted that the 12 week consultation on the Main Issues Report had now commenced and there were events in the Burgh hall on 26 November and the Village Centre, West Linton on 28 November. The Chairman highlighted the main points which had been raised at the previous meeting.

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

3.1 The Chairman welcomed David Robertson, Chief Financial Officer and Suzi Douglas, Financial Services Manager 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 eg 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 2nd year of the 5 year plan agreed in 2018/19 which required savings of £32m. 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 £32m would need to be saved from the projected spend of £1.3 billion. Meeting this challenge required forward thinking, innovative and focus on delivering an ambitious change programme. 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. 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 year the Council planned to implement the following:-

- Design and deliver as many Council services online as possible to maximise the use of digital technology
- Build the digital skills of Borders communities and staff
- Develop customer advice and support
- Drive out waste and inefficiency, cut red tape and provide 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
- Redesign waste services

Mr Robertson also outlined the plans to support the aims of independent achieving people, a thriving economy with opportunities for everyone and empowered vibrant communities.

3.2 Having been given the background the Groups then had 20 minutes facilitated discussion to provide their views on the proposed approach to the budget. Sheets were supplied which providing additional information on council services together with a short series of questions on which views were sought on how the Council could modernise and operate and invest more efficiently in the future.

3.3 Following the discussion each table gave feedback and the points raised included:-

- Better aids and adaptations to keep people at home
- Waste recycling efficiencies
- Sell land for commercial development
- Communities doing more in the longer term
- No service reductions or cost increases
- Increase the level of council tax
- More housing in small communities to increase sustainability e.g. education provision
- More economic development and support for small businesses
- Innovations in roads maintenance e.g. pothole repair
- Use of digital meetings – e.g. replace need to travel to Galashiels to sign on
- Have specific staff available in local offices at set times to allow face to face meetings
- More services available on-line
- Opportunities for property consolidation
- Bin collection efficiencies
- Replace mobile libraries with e-readers
- More cross boundary working with other local authorities
- Increase planning fees

The Chairman thanked Mr Robertson and Mrs Douglas for attending the meeting and it was agreed that a copy of the presentation would be circulated with the Minute of the Meeting.

4. **LOCALITIES BID FUND ASSESSMENT PANEL**

In response to the decision by Council to appoint additional Members to serve on the Assessment Panel, Councillor Tatler, seconded by Councillor Haslam, moved that Councillor Anderson be appointed and this was approved.

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

Ms. Shona Smith, SBC Communities and Partnership Manager, advised that following the first round of the fund 15 projects costing £206,000 had been successful. 1 Bid was subsequently withdrawn as the project could not go ahead. The second round had been launched with amended criteria. However, there were insufficient bids to allow a public vote so a report would be considered by Council on 29 November 2018. The Assessment Panel were to meet to look at new criteria with a planned re-launch in January 2019 followed by voting in April. All 29 applicants would be advised and would be given the opportunity to re-submit their application.

6. **OPEN FORUM**

No Items were raised.

7. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

7.1 **Centenary Fields**

The Neighbourhood Area Manager explained the aims of the Centenary Fields initiative to commemorate World War 1 and advised that 3 sites in the Borders were being recommended for nomination as a Centenary Field and this included Lower Green, West Linton. 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 was launched by HRH The Earl of Strathearn in 2014 to mark the centenary of World War 1 and would close in 2018. CF aimed to protect at least one site (containing WW1 war memorial(s), and used for active recreation/sport/play) in each local authority area across the UK which met specific criteria relating to ownership, accessibility, land use, management and wartime heritage. This was aimed at a creating a long-lasting legacy of WW1, protecting and 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 Field status, sites were subject to a Minute of Agreement, similar to those currently in place on all King George V Playing Fields. This safeguarded the sites for recreational use as protected green space. Upon designation, a commemorative plaque (supplied by CF) was 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. This proposal had been approved by the Council's Executive Committee yesterday subject to consultation with the Area Partnership. Councillor Anderson advised that this was supported by the local Community. Mr Hedley undertook to report back on the outcome of the application.

7.2 **Small Schemes**

The Neighbourhood Area Manager proposed the following schemes:-

Location	Proposal	Estimated cost	Budget
Innerleithen	To Install pedestrian bollards on the north side of the High Street	£1,250	Small Scheme
West Linton	Purchase and installation of WW1 Commemorative Seat	£1,000	Quality of Life
West Linton	Reconstruction of wall and creation of footway @ junction of A702 & B7059	£8,000	Small Scheme

The Members present agreed to approve the Schemes listed above.

8. **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Tweeddale Area Partnership was scheduled for Wednesday, 16 January 2019 (Note: subsequently changed to 6 February 2019). The venue would be in Innerleithen. The Chairman thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting concluded at 8.55 p.m.