

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

MINUTE of SPECIAL MEETING of the SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL held in Council Headquarters, Newtown St. Boswells on 28 February 2019 at 10.00 a.m.

Present:- Councillors D. Parker (Convener), S. Aitchison, A. Anderson, H. Anderson, J. Brown, S. Bell, K. Chapman, K. Drum, G. Edgar, J. Fullarton, J. Greenwell, C. Hamilton, S. Hamilton, S. Haslam, E. Jardine, H. Laing, S. Marshall, W. McAteer, 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.

Apology:- Councillor T. Miers.

In Attendance:- Chief Executive, Executive Director (P. Barr), Executive Director (R. Dickson), Service Director Assets and Infrastructure, Interim Service Director Children and Young People, Service Director Customer and Communities, Joint Director of Public Health, Chief Financial Officer, Clerk to the Council.

1. FIT FOR 2024

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Executive proposing a new 5 year programme of transformation across the Council - called 'Fit for 2024' - with the aim of delivering a Council that was adaptable, efficient and effective, and one ultimately capable of not only meeting the challenges ahead, but of fully optimising outcomes for the citizens and communities for which it is responsible. The report noted the scale and breadth of the challenges the Council faced and the opportunities provided by the coalescence of a number of initiatives, including the South of Scotland Enterprise Agency and the Local Governance Review. It recognised changing citizen and customer expectations, both in terms of operational contacts with the Council, and in a desire for increased involvement in its decision-making processes. A template for Fit for 2024 was set out which built on the primary purposes for which the Council existed and guiding principles drawn from international, national and local commitments. This held that, through delivery of excellent leadership, and top class services, the Council would drive improvements in wellbeing guided by the Christie principles, by principles of Sustainable Development and the necessity of everyone playing 'our part' pursuant to the Corporate Plan. The Fit for 2024 Forward plan contained a range of projects and initiatives necessary to the delivery of Fit for 2024, highlighting the importance of a 'whole' Council approach, the cross-cutting nature of what was required, and the need for all elements of the programme to be driven corporately. As the first of a series of practical issues, which would emerge as a result of Fit for 2024, it was proposed that a range of Council community funds and grants to external bodies were consolidated in a single fund, and devolved across the Council's five Area Partnerships. The background to and rationale for this proposal and related proposals were set out in Annex A to the report. Members discussed the proposals in details and amendments were put forward. The Chief Executive and Service Director Customer and Communities answered Members' questions and highlighted that this was not about the Council stopping providing services but providing them in a different and more efficient way.

VOTE

Councillor Aitchison, seconded by Councillor Mountford, moved the recommendations in the report subject to amending recommendation 2.2 to read as follows:-

2.2 With reference to Annex A of this report, I recommend that Scottish Borders Council agrees to:-

- (a) establish a Community Fund for devolvement to the five Area Partnerships from 1 April 2019 by consolidating the Council's existing Localities Bid Fund, Quality of Life Fund, Community Grant Scheme, Local Festival Grant, Federation of Village Halls Grant, Community Council Grant and the current contribution to the Third Sector for accommodation costs;
- (b) continue to fund Community Councils at the same level for 2019/20 to allow a review of these grants to take place at the same time as the forthcoming review of the Scheme for Community Councils;
- (c) receive a further report on options for the allocation of the Community Fund to each Area Partnership, including any required changes to governance, following further engagement with Elected Members;
- (d) offer in kind accommodation, in place of the current financial contribution, to the Third Sector; and
- (e) consider the allocation of a further £445,000 as part of the 2019/20 budget process to the Community Fund (referred to in paragraph 2.2(a) above) across the five Localities based upon head of population, to support communities in taking forward locally agreed community priorities and solutions.

Councillor H. Anderson, seconded by Councillor Bell, moved as an amendment:-

"Whilst agreeing with the principle of consolidating a number of community focussed budgets into one overarching Community Fund and distributing these funds through the 5 Area Partnerships, we consider that we have insufficient information in this report to make an informed decision about the future allocation of these funds.

We therefore propose that Recommendation 2.2 is amended as follows:

- (1) Delete the words "With reference to Annex A of this report,"
- (2) Replace recommendation 2.2 (c) with the following:
" asks officers to bring back to the Council a report which clarifies current locality specific spend from these funds and identifies options for the future management and distribution of these funds between and within the 5 localities."
- (3) Delete recommendation 2.2 (d)

On a show of hands Members voted as follows:-

Motion	-	17 Votes
Amendment	-	16 Votes

The Motion was accordingly carried.

DECISION

- (a) AGREED to:-

- (i) approve the transformation programme Fit for 2024;
- (ii) approve the proposed vision for Fit for 2024 and guiding principles to facilitate that transformation journey, namely:
 - (1) A Council which through the delivery of excellent leadership and top class services drives improvements in wellbeing across and throughout the Scottish Borders;

- (2) A Fit for 2024 Transformation Programme that is guided by the Christie principles, by principles of Sustainable Development and the necessity of us all playing ‘our part’.
- (iii) note the significant strategic implications of Fit for 2024 for the Council, and the proposed elements of the programme as described in paragraph 4.3 of the report;
 - (iv) approve the preparation of internal and external communications plans to support Fit for 2024; and
 - (v) approve investment in resources to deliver Fit for 2024
- (b) DECIDED with reference to Annex A of the report:-
- (i) establish a Community Fund for devolution to the five Area Partnerships from 1 April 2019 by consolidating the Council’s existing Localities Bid Fund, Quality of Life Fund, Community Grant Scheme, Local Festival Grant, Federation of Village Halls Grant, Community Council Grant and the current contribution to the Third Sector for accommodation costs;
 - (ii) continue to fund Community Councils at the same level for 2019/20 to allow a review of these grants to take place at the same time as the forthcoming review of the Scheme for Community Councils;
 - (iii) receive a further report on options for the allocation of the Community Fund to each Area Partnership, including any required changes to governance, following further engagement with Elected Members;
 - (iv) offer in kind accommodation, in place of the current financial contribution, to the Third Sector; and
 - (v) consider the allocation of a further £445,000 as part of the 2019/20 budget process to the Community Fund (referred to in paragraph 2.2(a) above) across the five Localities based upon head of population, to support communities in taking forward locally agreed community priorities and solutions.

2. INSPIRE LEARNING: A WORLD CLASS DIGITAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR THE SCOTTISH BORDERS
- 2.1 There had been circulated copies of a joint report by the Interim Service Director Children and Young People and the Chief Financial Officer presenting an overview of the implications of Scottish Borders Council’s intent to create a world-class digital learning environment across the Scottish Borders that would reduce inequality and improve academic performance amongst young people. Approval was sought for the necessary capital and revenue funding provision to be made within the 2019/20 financial planning process and to secure a mandate to proceed with this ground-breaking and ambitious programme that would inspire learning, teaching and success Scottish Borders-wide. It was intended that the Digital Learning Transformation Programme would contribute significantly to the delivery of a range of strategic Council and Children and Young People Directorate objectives through factors including improving retention of teaching staff, reducing staff turnover, enabling a virtual learning environment, better connecting students with the wider school community and greatly improving connections between school leavers and local business. The financial model summarised within the report had been costed over an 11 year period (the remaining duration of the existing Scottish Borders Council contract with CGI) and was fully inclusive of all known component elements required. In particular, the proposed programme covered:

- All training and professional development over the life of the programme
 - Full support to deliver the business change
 - All supporting infrastructure subject to full site survey (on which assumptions have been made for the purposes of the model)
 - The ability to deliver an iPad into the hands of every child from P6 to S6 and 1:5 ratio for P1 to P5
 - A programme of maintenance through periodic refresh
- 2.2 Options for the required Capital and Revenue financial provisions were laid out separately in the draft Financial Plans of the Council's Administration and Opposition parties. The financial model had been regularly and rigorously re-modelled and since the inception of the initiative, a significant reduction in the overall projected cost of the programme of around £8.2m had been achieved through robust scrutiny, challenge and renegotiation with CGI, Apple and XMA reducing the total additional cost of ownership from £24.000m to £15.760m and a total net additional cost to the Council of £11.119m over the life of the project, including all borrowing costs. Two videos supporting the project were shown. While no Members were opposed to the project in principle there followed a lengthy discussion on the timing of the rollout, whether or not the project should be piloted in the first instance and possible issues caused by all teachers not being sufficiently IT literate to make this project work effectively in all schools.

DECISION

AGREED to:-

- (a) **note the report and in particular, the financial implications of the proposed Digital Learning Transformation Programme;**
- (b) **consider the required revenue and capital funding provisions as part of the 2019/20 Financial Plan; and**
- (c) **approve the Inspire Learning Transformation Programme enabling its formal initiation and delivery within the proposed timescales.**

3. **BUDGET COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Financial Officer on the steps taken to engage with stakeholders as part of a consultation exercise on the budget. The report highlighted the budget Communication Strategy used and provided feedback gathered from the Dialogue Community Engagement tool and Area Partnership meetings. This approach was being developed within the Council's new Corporate Plan (Our plan – and your part in it). The feedback had been considered as part of the 2019-2024 Financial Planning process. As part of the agreed budget consultation exercise on the Council's updated Financial Plan, the Dialogue Community Engagement tool was made available from 25 October 2018 to 31 January 2019 to members of the public on the Council website. This interactive tool allowed residents and other stakeholders to provide ideas and suggestions on how the Council could do things differently and improve services, in a challenging economic climate, as well as allowing them to comment on other contributions already made on the system. As at 31 January 2019, 30 differently themed discussion threads were recorded using the Dialogue Community Engagement tool, with further 48 comments. The budget was also discussed at all 5 Area Partnership meetings during November and December 2018. These meetings allowed attendees to bring forward proposed solutions to questions, issues and challenges faced by the community. A summary of the public feedback from the Dialogue tool was detailed in Appendix 1 to the report and a summary of the feedback from the Area Partnership meetings was detailed in Appendix 2 to the report.

DECISION

NOTED:-

- (a) the budget Communication Strategy used;
- (b) the feedback from the Dialogue Community Engagement tool and the feedback from the Area Partnership meetings contained in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report;
- (c) the actual responses from the Dialogue tool; all comments were available on the Council's website and a hard copy was available in the Elected Member's Library; and
- (d) the Council's responses to the issues raised in the form of a 'you said, we did' analysis.

4. MOTION BY COUNCILLOR HASLAM

With reference to paragraph 5 of the Minute of 20 December 2018, and in terms of Standing Order 26, Councillor Haslam, seconded by Councillor Aitchison, moved the Motion as detailed on the agenda in the following terms:-

"The 2019/20 Local Government Settlement handed down from the Scottish Government has been one of the most challenging financial settlements in recent years, with inadequate funding to fully support the needs of local government.

Nevertheless, the Administration of Scottish Borders Council will continue to work hard to deliver a budget that meets the aspirations of Borders Council tax payers. Later today, the Administration will put forward spending proposals which will see investment in new services and many exciting new initiatives, benefiting the whole of the Scottish Borders. This, combined with sound financial management, has allowed the Administration to mitigate the worst of the poor financial settlement imposed by Scottish Government.

Following lobbying by Local Authorities and COSLA, the Scottish Government has changed its position and allowed Councils to consider raising the Council Tax rate by a maximum of 4.79% in 2019/20.

The Administration of Scottish Borders Council has said from the outset that it would do everything possible to deliver an affordable Council Tax policy, which properly ensures that the needs and aspirations of all Borderers are met. Consequently, the Council agreed on 20 December 2018 to set the Council Tax rate for 2019/20 at an increase of 3% in line with the limits imposed by Scottish Government in the Finance Circular 8/2018 published on the 17 December 2018.

As a result of this change, and after much debate and consideration, the Administration now proposes that the Council Tax should be increased by a further 1% to 4% for financial year 2019/20 to specifically deliver the following spending proposals:-

1. An additional £2.3m of revenue spending for roads, pavements and infrastructure over the next four years;
2. Accelerate our plans to replace four high schools in the Borders, and secure the delivery of the new Hawick High School commencing design and construction in 2022/23, with a match funding contribution of £20m funded through capital borrowing. It is envisaged this project will be match funded by the Scottish Government under the Schools for the Future programme.

The Council Tax rate that will therefore apply in the Scottish Borders across all Council Tax Bands in 2019/20 is shown in Table 1 below;-

Table 1

Council Tax Band	Proportion of the Band D Tax	Annual Charge Applicable from 1 April 2019
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Band A	6/9	£ 797.35
Band B	7/9	£ 930.24
Band C	8/9	£ 1,063.13
Band D	9/9	£ 1,196.02
Band E	12/9	£ 1,571.44
Band F	15/9	£ 1,943.53
Band G	18/9	£ 2,342.21
Band H	22/9	£ 2,930.25

This spending will leave a significant and lasting legacy that is a clear investment in the future of the Borders.

The spend profile is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Future Years
	'£000	'£000	'£000	'£000	'£000	'£000
Additional Roads and Pavements Revenue spend(1)	600	600	600	500	0	0
Loans Charges to fund capital borrowing (2)	0	0	0	100	600	600*
Annual revenue total raised by 1% increase in council tax to 4%(1+2)	600	600	600	600	600	600
One off Capital Investment	0	0	0	3,000	17,000	0

Council also agrees the following:-

3. The establishment of a Member/Officer Schools Oversight Group to facilitate the delivery of the four new high schools in Galashiels, Hawick, Selkirk and Peebles and the new primary schools in Eyemouth and Earlston.

Proposer - Councillor Shona Haslam

Seconder - Councillor Sandy Aitchison

Signatory 3 - Councillor Robin Tatler

Signatory 4 - Councillor Carol Hamilton

Signatory 5 - Councillor Gordon Edgar

Signatory 6 - Councillor George Turnbull

Signatory 7 - Councillor Neil Richards"

Councillor Haslam spoke in support of the Motion. Members discussed the Motion and Councillor Bell, seconded by Councillor Drum, moved as an amendment that the Motion be not approved. Councillor Turnbull proposed that the vote be taken by “roll call” and this was unanimously approved.

VOTE

MOTION

*Councillor Aitchison
Councillor Edgar
Councillor Fullarton
Councillor Greenwell
Councillor C. Hamilton
Councillor S. Hamilton
Councillor Haslam
Councillor Jardine
Councillor Mountford
Councillor Parker
Councillor Richards
Councillor Rowley
Councillor S. Scott
Councillor Small
Councillor Tatler
Councillor Turnbull
Councillor Weatherston*

AMENDMENT

*Councillor A Anderson
Councillor H. Anderson
Councillor Bell
Councillor Brown
Councillor Chapman
Councillor Drum
Councillor Laing
Councillor Marshall
Councillor McAteer
Councillor Moffat
Councillor Paterson
Councillor Penman
Councillor Ramage
Councillor Robson
Councillor H. Scott
Councillor Thornton-Nicol*

The Motion was accordingly carried by 17 votes to 16.

DECISION

DECIDED to approve the Motion as detailed above.

5. FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND RESOURCES 2019/20

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Financial Officer on the estimated revenue and capital resources available for financial year 2019/20 following publication of the local government finance settlement on 17 December 2018 and subsequent funding notification from Scottish Government for 2019/20 on 31 January 2019. The report recommended the financial strategy to be followed by the Council the following year and identified the financial constraints and major risks to be addressed. The report also outlined the process supporting the construction of the draft revenue and capital Financial Plans for 2019/20 as well as draft plans for future years. The Corporate Management Team had worked with political groups to support Members set a corporate revenue and capital budget, meeting identified pressures facing the Council. These pressures had arisen from a variety of factors. The principle pressures identified were due to the anticipated continuing constraints on external revenue and capital funding from central government, the impact of national pay negotiations, the increasing pressures from demographics, particularly the increasing numbers of very elderly people requiring care services, as well as inflation. The budget development process had been conducted to ensure that the financial plans of the Council were aligned with its business and people planning objectives and the level of resources available. The report highlighted that total revenue resources of £283.238m were available assuming the Council accepted the 2019/20 settlement offer from Scottish Government along with a 3% increase in the Council Tax rate approved by Council on 20 December 2018 based on the parameters set out in the LGFS. Subsequently the Cabinet Secretary wrote to Council Leaders on 31 January 2019 explaining he was now willing to allow Councils to vary Council Tax by up to 4.79% in 2019/20. The impact of other potential variations in the Council Tax was shown in the tables in paragraph 7.2 and 9.1 of the report. The benefits, in terms of financial stability and effective change management, derived from adopting a longer term corporate approach to the revenue and capital planning process and were widely

accepted. Financial year 2019/20 represented the second year of the revenue 5 year financial plan for the Council agreed in February 2018. It was anticipated Members would continue to adopt a longer term approach to financial planning and consequently the estimated resources available over the following four financial years were also shown. These estimates would continue to be updated annually as the detail of the financial settlement from Scottish Government became known. It was anticipated from 2020/21 that a three year settlement would be provided from Scottish Government assisting long term financial planning. Regular monitoring reports submitted to the Executive Committee during 2018/19 had identified that there were significant savings which had not yet been delivered on a permanent basis. The Corporate Management Team had therefore considered a revised approach to organisational change under the banner of 'Fit for 2024' which would reshape the transformation programme ensuring individual projects were more cross-cutting and focused on joined up business process review as detailed at paragraph 1 above. In line with previous Audit Scotland recommendations scenario planning had once again been used to model a range of scenarios with regard to Scottish Government grant, Council Tax increases and estimated future inflation. This analysis was included at Appendix 2 to the report. Approval was also sought for the financial strategy for the Council covering the period 2019/20 – 2023/24. The strategy provided the overall framework for the financial management of the Council and covered the revenue budget, capital investment plan, the Council's treasury management arrangements and the recommended policy on reserves. The approach to the development of the 2019/20 budget had been aligned with the financial planning process in the NHS reflecting the increasing maturity of the Integration Joint Board (IJB) and the requirement to deliver shifts in the balance of care across the partnership from acute to community settings. The financial plan was highly dependent on the delivery of savings and a risk based approach had once again been used to set the level of recommended balances. These were held both as contingency against unforeseen circumstances, to facilitate the delivery of savings and to smooth the financial plan in the event of non-realisation of the savings envisaged.

DECISION

AGREED to:-

- (a) note the estimated revenue resources for 2019/20 to 2023/24;**
- (b) note the estimated capital resources for 2019/20 to 2028/29 and the requirement to adhere to the prudential code for capital borrowing;**
- (c) note the flexibility provided by the Cabinet Secretary to allow Council Tax to be increased by up to 4.79% in 2019/20;**
- (d) approve the financial strategy set out in section 4.4 (a) to (h) of the report having considered the risk register highlighted in appendix 1 to the report;**
- (e) proceed to consider the Administration's proposed Financial Plan for 2019/20 including the council taxes to be paid in respect of all chargeable dwellings to fund these plans as part of the budget motion.**

6. CAPITAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Financial Officer presenting Scottish Borders Council's first Capital Investment Strategy (CIS) supporting the 2019/20 financial planning process. The report explained that the Council recognised that the requirements of the Prudential Code were updated in December 2017 including the recommendation that Councils publish a Capital Investment Strategy for 2018/19. The Code recognised the short timescale available for the production of this document and therefore allowed deferral of this development to 2019/20. Consequently Scottish Borders Council had produced this document for 2019/20. The Capital Investment Strategy was designed to highlight the capital investment priorities and explained how these priorities would assist with the delivery of the Council's Strategic Corporate Plan 2018 -2023. As such the CIS was

structured to reflect the themes of this Corporate Plan. The document should be read in conjunction with the Council's 10 year capital investment plan 2019 – 2029 and the Treasury Strategy which provided detail of the Council's Prudential Indicators and set out how the Capital Investment plans (CIP) of the Council would be financed.

DECISION

AGREED to approve the Capital Investment Strategy as part of the suite of 2019/20 budget papers.

7. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2019/20

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Financial Officer seeking approval of the Treasury Management Strategy for 2019/20. The Treasury Management Strategy was the framework which ensured that the Council operated within prudent, affordable financial limits in compliance with the CIPFA Code. The Strategy for 2019/20 was appended to the report and reflected the impact of the Administration's Financial Plans for 2019/20 onwards on the prudential and treasury indicators for the Council. Councillor Bell, as Chairman of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee, advised that the Strategy had been reviewed by that Committee on 15 and 26 February 2019.

DECISION

AGREED to:-

- (a) **approve the Treasury Management Strategy 2019/20 as set out in Appendix 1 to the report;**
- (b) **note that the draft amended Treasury Management Strategy had been considered by the Audit & Scrutiny Committee on 15 and 26 February 2019;**
- (c) **review capital expenditure plans going forward to ensure they remained realistic, affordable and sustainable; and**
- (d) **ensure that the revenue consequences of all capital projects be fully reviewed in all investment decisions.**

8. FINANCIAL PLAN EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director HR providing assurance that any potential equality impacts of the proposals brought forward within the Council's Financial Plan from 2019/20 had been identified and would be managed accordingly. The report explained that the Council had a legal obligation in terms of the Equality Act 2010, when exercising functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Carrying out and considering the findings of an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) provided evidence that as part of the decision making process there had been "due regard" to the effect of the relevant policy or practice on the Council's obligations under the Public Sector Equality. Initial Equality Impact Assessments on the 2019/20 Financial Plan proposals had been undertaken as an integral part of the revenue and capital budget planning processes in order to fully inform decisions proposed by officers and approved by members. While some of the assessed proposals indicated no impact, it was recommended that any potential impact continued to be monitored, given the nature of the proposals. These 90 proposals

might potentially impact in a positive or negative way on one or more of the Protected Characteristics and any potential negative impact would require ongoing management through their implementation stage, in terms of mitigating and alleviating these impacts. Any positive impacts identified at this stage should be maximised during the planning and implementation stage of the proposals.

DECISION

AGREED:-

- (a) **to note the summary outcomes of the 90 Initial Equality Impact assessments undertaken in respect of the 2018/19 Financial Plan proposals;**
- (b) **to undertake further and ongoing Equality Impact work in respect of these proposals with specific reference to the equality groups on whom there may be possible negative impact;**
- (c) **that where there was an identified relevance to the Council's statutory duty and there was a possible positive impact on one or more equality characteristic group, actions to maximise this impact were identified and implemented as part of the project planning and delivery of each proposal or project; and**
- (d) **that where there was an identified relevance to the Council's statutory duty and where there was a possible negative impact on one or more equality characteristic group, actions to mitigate and alleviate this impact were identified and implemented as part of the project planning and delivery of each proposal or project.**

ADJOURNMENT

The Convener adjourned the meeting at 1.20 pm for lunch and reconvened at 1.50 pm.

9. DRAFT 5 YEAR REVENUE AND 10 YEAR CAPITAL FINANCIAL PLAN

9.1 There had been detailed on the agenda Motions by both the Administration and the Opposition Groups and supporting papers had been circulated relating to each.

9.2 Councillor Haslam, seconded by Councillor Tatler, moved:-

"The Conservative/Independent Alliance Administration recommend approval of the 5 year revenue budget and 10 year capital plan set out in document 12(a) and in doing so ask the Council to note:

Despite being faced with significant financial challenges as a result of reductions in funding from the Scottish Government, this Administration is presenting a really exciting budget for the Borders, packed with huge investment plans at a truly vital time for our economy.

Millions of pounds will be invested in new and improved schools as part of our 10 year capital plan, £16m being provided for a new of Eyemouth Primary School, £9m for a new Earlston Primary School, and funding for a new Galashiels Academy.

The Conservative and Independent Administration has taken the difficult decision to raise council tax to 4% next year. This will provide match funding for a new Hawick High school and provide an extra £2.3m investment in our roads and pavements over the next 4 years. This administration also plans to transform Education in the Borders with a £16 million investment over a ten year period in a new 'Inspire Learning' programme across all primary and secondary schools in order to make sure children learn in the best possible environments with the latest technology at their fingertips. This will include iPads being provided to all P6-S6 pupils, and at a ratio of one per every five P1-P5 pupils from 2019/20. The rollout will completed within just two years.

This Administration is committed to protecting the most vulnerable individuals, families and communities of the Borders. An additional £3million will be invested in new extra care

housing for projects in Hawick, Kelso, Eyemouth and Peebles in addition to those already committed to at Todlaw, Duns and Langhaugh, Galashiels.

We aim to make the Borders one of the best areas in Scotland to live, work and visit, and this proposal, alongside our other investment plans confirms our commitment to that."

As part of these budget proposals:

- Frontline services such as waste and recycling collections will remain unchanged.
- There will be no change to public toilet provision in 2019/20.
- A second Community Action Team (CAT) for the Borders will be permanently funded.
- A new recycling awareness campaign will be funded to encourage people to recycle properly in order to reduce landfill tax costs and pollution.
- More money than ever before will be available for communities to allocate as they see fit through a new £1.167m consolidated Community Fund. This will make it easier than ever before for communities to access funding and to have a say in how it is used in their area.
- An extra £2.3m will also be spent on roads and pavements with £86m investment for road/transport infrastructure over 10 years being planned.
- We will continue to invest in outdoor education to provide destination parks in all our major towns and provide facilities to encourage people of all ages to be active and stay healthy.
- £58m for flood protection including Hawick.

The council is also constructing the foundations of a more efficient council which can drive ever better outcomes for the people we serve. Fit for 2024 is a major new strategy forming a key part of our budget plans to improve wellbeing, drive out inefficiency and to do so on the basis of sustainable development.

The budget provides the funding for major projects that will regenerate our high streets, create new and high quality jobs and increase the number of tourists coming to the Borders as well as attracting people to come and live and work here.

This budget is bold, brave and builds the future prosperity of the Borders, placing us at the cutting edge of new developments in education, technology and care. It's a budget we can be proud of and members across the political spectrum can support our plans knowing they are voting for a budget that benefits the whole region."

9.3 Councillor Bell, seconded by Councillor Robson, moved:-

"1. The Opposition Parties on Scottish Borders Council – the Scottish National Party and the Liberal Democrat Party - recommend approval of an alternative 5 year revenue plan of £1.4bn for the Scottish Borders and a 10 year capital plan of £347m; both as set out in document 12(b) and in doing so ask Council to note the following principles and proposals:

- This budget builds on opportunities and improves the lives of Borderers whatever their age. It focuses on delivering quality services, opportunities for all in a thriving economy, empowering communities and enabling people to live independently and achieve their goals.
- This budget rebuilds educational support, protecting teacher numbers, library services, school mental health services and frontline Council services; whilst also recognising that we must modernise service delivery and make efficiencies.
- The Opposition budget specifically proposes :-
 - £34m investment over ten years into new or refurbished Primary schools
 - To add to Government support in order to build 2 new High Schools over the capital period

- £11.4m investment in a carefully introduced Digital Learning programme in schools
- Investing £2.8m capital and £6.4m revenue in 2019/20 into Early Learning & Childcare
- To continue investment to a total of £58m in Flood & Coastal Protection over the capital period
- To continue the £0.282m funding for a community policing team to prevent low level criminal activity, and proposes that the Council starts a new initiative to control on-street parking
- To earmark £2.4m contribution to re-establish Reston Station at a time that is in phase with the Transport Scotland investment

2. The Opposition Parties also recommend that:

Scottish Borders Council mainstreams funding – initially £1m - from September 2019 into Borders Decides. This will devolve decisions about road maintenance, traffic management and the environment to local level. Prioritisation of spend will be decided by the community through participative budgeting, and based on officer recommendations.”

In response to the decision at paragraph 4 above to increase the Council Tax to 4%, Councillor H. Anderson, seconded by Councillor Bell moved that the following be added to the Opposition Motion:-

- “(a) Following the decision by the Administration to propose a revised 4% Council Tax increase in financial year 2019/20, it is with regret that the following amendment is proposed to the Opposition Parties’ budget at item 12b) to allocate the resources deriving from the additional council tax increase as set out in table 1 below.

Table 1

2019/20	£600k to be applied to Roads
2020/21	£600k to be applied to Roads
2021/22	£600k to be applied to Roads
2022/23	£500k to be applied to Roads and £100k to be applied to Loans Charges to fund 50% of new Hawick High School capital expenditure
2023/24	£600k to be applied to Loans Charges to fund 50% of new Hawick High School capital expenditure

- (b) £600k will be transferred from the £1m increase identified in the opposition budget for roads expenditure in 2019/20 revenue, to be used for new investment in Education for teachers and support services.
- (c) Amend the Capital programme to include assumed expenditure of £40m supported by Loans Charges and an assumed 50% contribution from Scottish Government to the costs of a new Hawick School.
- (d) Amend years 8, 9 and 10 of the Capital Investment Plan to re - allocate £3m from Hawick High School to provide enabling funding for a further High School to be rebuilt.”

9.5 Councillors spoke in support of their respective Motions and unanimously agreed that the vote be taken by “roll call”.

Roll Call Vote

Motion by Councillor Haslam

Councillor Aitchison
Councillor Edgar
Councillor Fullarton
Councillor Greenwell
Councillor C. Hamilton
Councillor S. Hamilton
Councillor Haslam
Councillor Jardine
Councillor Mountford
Councillor Parker
Councillor Richards
Councillor Rowley
Councillor S. Scott
Councillor Small
Councillor Tatler
Councillor Turnbull
Councillor Weatherston

Motion by Councillor Bell

Councillor A. Anderson
Councillor H. Anderson
Councillor Bell
Councillor Brown
Councillor Chapman
Councillor Drum
Councillor Laing
Councillor Marshall
Councillor McAteer
Councillor Moffat
Councillor Paterson
Councillor Penman
Councillor Ramage
Councillor Robson
Councillor Thornton-Nicol

Abstention

Councillor H. Scott

There being 17 votes for Councillor Haslam's Motion and 15 votes for Councillor Bell's Motion, as amended, and 1 abstention, Councillor Haslam's Motion was accordingly carried.

DECISION

DECIDED to approve the Motion as detailed in paragraph 9.2 above including the Administration's Budget as contained in the Appendix to this Minute.

The meeting concluded at 15.20 p.m.