

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTE of Meeting of the AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells on Thursday 18 April at 10.00 am

Present:- Councillors S Bell, (Chairman), H. Anderson, K. Chapman, S. Hamilton, J. Fullarton, N. Richards, E. Thornton-Nicol, S. Scott

Apologies:- Councillors H. Scott, Ms H Barnett, Mr M. Middlemiss.

In Attendance:- Mr G Samson – Audit Scotland, Principal Internal Auditor, Clerk to the Council, Trainee Democratic Services Officer.

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting and introductions were made.

SCRUTINY BUSINESS

2. INTRODUCTION OF SPEED BUMPS IN LANGLEE DRIVE

- 2.1 There had been circulated copies of an extract from the Audit and Scrutiny Committee Petitions procedure. The Chairman gave a reminder of the Petitions procedure to be followed at the meeting, highlighting the options available to the Committee. The Chairman welcomed Mrs Elspeth Johnston, Lead Petitioner, who was in attendance to present a petition on the introduction of speed bumps in Langlee Drive and who was accompanied by Mr Albert Cruikshank. Mrs Johnson gave further information in support of the supporting statement in the Petition, advising that 260 children attended Langlee Primary School, including her 2 grandchildren, and they were intimidated by speeding cars using Langlee Drive, which was the main access road to the Primary School. While the SBC survey showed an average speed of 18mph, this did mean that some cars were driving in excess of this. Braking distances increased exponentially with increased speed and it was felt that the only thing that would work would be the installation of speed bumps as accident prevention measures. The proposed speed bumps would help curtail the speeding of cars along this narrow residential area. Mrs Johnston made reference to the development of children's perceptual ability and judgement of distances, commenting that there should be no price on a child's life. Mr Cruikshank added that this had been an ongoing issue and he had been in communication with Scottish Borders Council for 4 years and he had also communicated with MP John Lamont, who had campaigned on their behalf and the issue had been reported in the local press and on local radio. The 20's plenty and cardboard pop up police officer were frequently ignored and were no longer effective on this one-way street. He further explained that young drivers were rushing to get to school along this one-way road, which had a straight stretch for 300 yards. Cars were parked diagonally so there were also issues with cars reversing out of spaces into oncoming traffic. Mr Cruickshank then passed round a photograph of the type of speed bump the petitioners wished to have installed, which were rubber and bolted to the road surface. The Chairman assured the petitioners that the Committee and the Council took child safety very seriously and he summarised the main points put forward by the petitioners: appropriate signage installed; reduced speed limit; installation of speed bumps; enforced speed restrictions on both Langlee Road and Melrose Road;

and an increased Police presence in the area at peak times. Members asked various questions of the petitioners to gain further clarification on the points raised.

- 2.2 There had been circulated copies of a presentation by the Service Director Assets and Infrastructure, Mr Joyce, and the Team Leader for Traffic and Road Safety, Ms Philippa Gilhooly. Ms Gilhooly explained that the road had been surveyed a number of years ago with the involvement of parents. The Safer Schools Team had worked with Langlee Primary School to encourage more walking to school over a period of many years and most recently the school had signed up to a walking initiative. The existing traffic calming features and initiatives included extending the radius of footways to improve the crossing at the school entrance and to slow vehicles. Ms Gilhooly reported that a Twenty's Plenty sign; echelon parking; school sign and plate; and stop, look and listen crossing mats had been included along Langlee Drive as well as a flat topped speed hump at the crossing point at the school access. The Safer Routes to School process included parents, Community Councils and the Police. Ms Gilhooly further reported that the zebra crossing on Melrose Road had been replaced with a Puffin light controlled crossing, the school crossing patrol was retained, and a part time 20mph speed limit was also in place. There was also a multi-coloured fence in place to indicate to drivers that a school was close by.
- 2.3 Ms Gilhooly went on to explain that traffic surveys had been carried out and showed general compliance with advisory Twenty's Plenty signs, and the low average and 85%ile speeds were to be welcomed, and would be welcomed at other school locations. Large scale traffic calming measures using speed humps had been constructed in other areas more than 15 years previously and smaller scale ones had been installed at a limited number of schools since then. A second flat topped speed hump and build-out at a revised crossing point to the school entrance was planned to be installed in the future. The presentation given showed clear data from Tracsis plc traffic and data services which highlighted traffic flows and speed of vehicles in this area with an average speed of 18mph. It was also noted that zero reported injury accidents were on record since 2003. Having spoken with Police Scotland a few times, Ms Gilhooly advised that they had not indicated any concerns about traffic speeds in Langlee Drive. Mr Joyce confirmed that the planning application for the new school at Langlee would have taken account of traffic and included any off-site road works as part of the conditions for the build and no such conditions had been put in place. Ms Gilhooly further advised that the rubber speed bumps being proposed by the petitioners were only for use in car parks as they were unfortunately not suitable for use on public roads as they were not robust enough and had a limited life span. The flat topped speed hump would be the better option. Discussions had taken place with Langlee Primary School as children were now using a different access point to the school than had been originally envisaged. Ms Gilhooly also suggested that moving the parking from the right hand side of the road to the left may help with some of the concerns of the petitioners over children running out from the grass verge. Residents could be asked their opinion on this change. In response to questions from Members, Ms Gilhooly advised she would be happy to pass on the data to the community; the Twenty's Plenty signs had been part of a programme from a few years ago; police were targeting resources where they were most needed and 20mph zones were not where accidents were happening. Mr Joyce confirmed that putting in a second flat top speed hump reflected the actuality of the entrance to school most used by children and was not in response to speeding concerns in the road.
- 2.4 Members of the Committee discussed the information which had been provided at the meeting and made reference to the enforcement of the 20mph speed limit. Ms Gilhooly reported that the Restricted Roads (20 mph Speed Limit) (Scotland) Bill was currently going through Stage 1 in Parliament and officers were waiting on that outcome. Langlee Drive would be covered by the 20mph zoning if the Bill became law. Members appreciated the frustrations of the petitioners and had some concerns over the vehicles that chose not to adhere to the speed limit, but overall were content by the number of vehicles within the speed limit, it being evident from the data that only one vehicle had been over the limit. In response to the Members' suggestion made on the presence of the

Police Community Action Team (CAT) at peak times and to work in this area to improve some of the issues the community were facing, it was noted that Ms Gilhooly would approach them to see if this would be feasible. Members then discussed the matter of communication with the community and how the Department managed this. It was the responsibility of parents to get their children to and from school safely, and there was a footway which children could use on one side of Langlee Drive. In response to a question about what would officers consider a safe speed, Mr Joyce confirmed that this was a difficult question to answer as injury incidents were significantly better at 20mph but there had been no recorded accidents in Langlee Drive since 2003. In the survey data, 1 in 5 vehicles were travelling at more than 20mph (16 out of 71) but that in itself did not cause undue alarm. Parking on the angle narrowed the road and slowed down traffic.

- 2.5 The petitioners expressed concern that the 2nd speed hump being located close to the school would not help slow traffic from the entrance to Langlee Drive which is where speeding took place. However, the site for the most recent survey of traffic had been requested by the community and that was where the data had been provided for the meeting. The speed bump was close to the school to offer children a safer crossing point to school from the footway. The petitioners again expressed concern that children did not always stay on the footway where it was safe. Members discussed the options available to them and considered the data output from the surveys, the concern of the petitioners, and what the Department could do to alleviate these concerns, taking account of the road layout and the resources available. The Chairman then advised the Committee Members of their options in response to the petition: to refer the petition to another Committee or Director for final decision; to refer the petition to a relevant Community Planning Partner; or that the issue(s) raised did not merit or did not require further action. The Chairman clarified the main points raised and thanked the petitioners and officers for their attendance and the comprehensive clear presentation that was provided to the Committee.

DECISION

AGREED to refer the petition to the Service Director Assets & Infrastructure, who would consider:

- (a) what improvements could be made to Departmental communications with communities about road issues, sharing the data from traffic surveys, and proposals for any changes to road architecture;**
- (b) investigating the opportunity for a mandatory 20mph speed limit being applied in Langlee Drive on either a temporary or permanent basis;**
- (c) the Police CAT monitoring speeds on Langlee Drive at peak times;**
- (d) the community being asked about changing the parking from one side of Langlee Drive to the other; and**
- (e) a further meeting with the community to explain the location of the 2nd speed bump and to ascertain if there were any other measures the Department could put in place to assist with road safety.**

3. HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE INTEGRATION UPDATE

- 3.1 With reference to paragraph 11 of the Minute of 14 May 2018, the Chairman welcomed Mr Robert McCulloch-Graham, Chief Officer Health and Social Care Integration, to the meeting who was in attendance to provide Members with a greater understanding on how the Health and Social Care Integration Joint Board (IJB) was delivering its Strategic Plan to improve the lives of Borderers and meet the growing demands in the care sector. Mr McCulloch-Graham began by informing the Committee that the Interim Chair of NHS Borders Board was Non-Executive Director Karen Hamilton, and the new Chief Executive of NHS Borders was Ralph Roberts who was due to take up the post on Monday 22 April

2019. Mr McCulloch-Graham updated Members on the identified challenges facing the Health and Social Care Partnership which included an increase in the population in the Borders, an increase in the complexity of cases being presented, and the reduction in available resources, with difficulties in balancing the budget. More people were accessing Primary Care (GPs) and presenting at hospital; admissions were more complex and therefore patients were remaining in hospital for longer; more care at home was required; and more care home places were also required. Mr McCulloch-Graham explained the governance of the Integrated Joint Board (IJB) and how funding under Delegated Funds and Set Aside Fund was allocated differently at a local level in the Scottish Borders and nationally, an example being that Palliative Care may or may not be included in this Set Aside Fund. The process for the Discharge to Home Service was now across the five localities and numbers had increased with the STEP down facilities at Garden View (Craw Wood) and Waverley improved. Work was ongoing to put savings in place to close the budget gap. There had been challenges during the previous winter period through significant delays and cancellations although due to the partnership working this year this had substantially improved and the joint winter plan had worked well. Mr McCulloch-Graham went on to explain how integrated services were provided and funded under the headings of Community Health Services, Acute Health Services provided in a hospital and Adult Social Care Services. Mr McCulloch-Graham reported that SB Cares and the NHS were working closely within the partnership with a consultation firm called Meridian now in place to look at improvements in processes. There had been a particular challenge around nursing care and the Council had helped to purchase beds at Queens House in Kelso. The question was how to make the best use of health care services in communities. A new system had been trialled at The Knoll, using a consultant from the BGH and nurse practitioners, with the rest of the Community Hospitals supported by GPs. The whole essence of the Health and Social Care partnership was to shift from acute to community based services, and there was a need to have a fundamental look at how health was managed in the Borders. The Primary Care Improvement Plan, led by GPs, was being introduced, with the intention being to support GPs work and adopt different models of triage going forward. Scottish Government was happy with progress made to date although there were some issues to resolve.

- 3.2 Members raised a number of questions, in particular around delayed discharges and lack of transport. Mr McCulloch-Graham advised that transport was reliant on the ambulance service and there was some funding of voluntary transport services. Some delayed discharges had been due to lack of transport at the weekends and SB Cares had brought in a vehicle/driver to assist. Issues still remained with transport and this was being worked on within the partnership. Rurality was an issue in the Borders but had not impacted on the recruitment of GPs in the Borders, although there were difficulties in recruiting nurses and care staff to work in residential and private homes. Some nursing homes were changing to residential care homes. Most of the GP practices in the Borders were individual companies but the property was owned by NHS. With regard to delayed discharges, the measure for these had changed and there had been a 10% improvement over the last year. If that rate of improvement continued, then it would be possible to release acute beds. In response to a question from Members on pay scales and terms and conditions for NHS and SBC staff, Mr McCulloch-Graham advised that the differences still existed as the IJB was not an employer. NHS and SBC mental health and learning disability had been operating as joint services for 8 years, but they were still using separate IT systems, etc. although that was being worked on to try to find a solution.
- 3.3 Further discussions followed in relation to the way the Borders was changing, with communities growing at different rates. Rurality was a very important factor and an example was given of physiotherapy service being hospital based when the service should be out in the community in clinics. The challenge was also around communication and ensuring the public understood the changes in services. The example was given of the recent gap in communication around proposed changes to the Day Centre provision. Mr McCulloch-Graham confirmed that only 40 clients were currently using the Day Centres and these Centres would not close until alternative provision had been put in

place for clients. The Chairman thanked Mr McCulloch-Graham for his attendance and update on the work of the partnership.

DECISION

NOTED the update.

4. **PRIVATE BUSINESS**

AGREED that under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the aforementioned Act.

SUMMARY OF PRIVATE BUSINESS

5. **DELIVERY OF THE COUNCIL'S IT STRATEGY AND PLAN WITHIN SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL**

The Committee noted the presentation by the Chief Financial Officer and Interim ICT Programme Manager regarding delivery of the Council's IT strategy.

AUDIT & SCRUTINY BUSINESS

6. **MINUTE.**

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of Meeting of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee held on 11 March 2019.

DECISION

APPROVED for signature by the Chairman.

7. **ACTION TRACKER**

With reference to paragraph 5 of the Minute of 11 March 2019, there had been circulated copies of the Action Tracker for the Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

DECISION

NOTED the Action Tracker

The meeting concluded at 1.10 pm