

## **SCOTTISH BORDERS COMMUNITY PLANNING STRATEGIC BOARD**

### **MEETING**

**Date:** 7 March 2019 @ 2pm

**Location:** Council Chamber, Scottish Borders Council, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells

**Attendees:** Councillors Mark Rowley (SBC)[Chair], Mr David Alexander (RSLs representative), Mr Frank Beattie (Scottish Enterprise), Councillor Stuart Bell (SBC), Mr Stephen Gourlay (Scottish Fire & Rescue Service), Councillor Carol Hamilton (SBC), Mr Tony Jakimciw (Borders College), Mrs Marjorie Hume (Third Sector), Councillor George Turnbull (SBC).

**Also in**

**Attendance:** Angela Cox (Borders College); Phil Ford (SDS); Colin McGrath (Chairman, SBCCN); Tim Patterson (NHS/SBC); Philip Barr, Jenni Craig, Rob Dickson, Stuart Easingwood, Shona Smith, Jenny Wilkinson (all SBC).

1. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and there was a round of introductions.

2. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies had been received from Councillor Sandy Aitchison (SBC), Mr Andy Bruce (Scottish Government), Ms Karen Hamilton and Mr John Raine (NHS Borders), Superintendent Angus MacInnes (Police Scotland), Ms Elaine Morrison (Scottish Enterprise), Councillor Simon Mountford (RSL representative).

3. **MINUTE**

The Minute of the previous meeting of the Strategic Board held on 22 November 2018 had been circulated. Mrs Marjorie Hume made reference to the Water Services Consultation at paragraph 7.2 of the Minute and advised that only 107 responses had been received to the consultation across all of Scotland, which was very disappointing.

**DECISION**

**APPROVED the Minute.**

4. **DRAFT SOUTH OF SCOTLAND REGIONAL SKILLS INVESTMENT PLAN**

4.1 Phil Ford, Skills Planning Lead from Skills Development Scotland (SDS), gave a presentation on Draft South of Scotland Regional Skills Investment Plan (RSIP), starting with a summary of SDS delivery in the South of Scotland. The RSIP development process had been facilitated by SDS and supported and

shaped by the South of Scotland Enterprise Partnership's Education and Skills Group. Key messages from the South of Scotland Skills evidence based included: the South of Scotland being different from other parts of Scotland and within the region with rurality and place crucially important; high levels of economic activity with low unemployment (including young people); highest concentration of jobs in 5 sectors – health, education, construction, tourism and manufacturing – but many were low skilled/low wage jobs; lowest percentage of skills gaps in Scotland, but the highest rates of under-utilisation of skills; relatively stable but aging population with declining numbers of young people meaning a high dependency ratio which was set to increase sharply going forward; and the vast majority of learners being in Further Education, with a more modest contribution from Higher Education and Work-Based Learning, but too many young people were leaving the region for education and work. Information was then given on the key messages from sub-regional analysis and primary research. A Strategic Framework had been produced with areas of action, broken down into 6 themes:

- Theme 1 – Improving access to skills and training
- Theme 2 – Better meeting the skills needs of all employers
- Theme 3 – Growing and developing the workforce
- Theme 4 – A Region for young people
- Theme 5 – Creating a culture of Enterprise and Innovation
- Theme 6 – Future Proofing the system

- 4.2 A workshop had been held with Community Planning representatives on 5 March 2019, with feedback including the need to prioritise and schedule activities over the 3 year period through the Implementation Plan. Further work was required with parents to educate them on the career and progression opportunities that were available. There was an opportunity to explore further lifelong learning opportunities within communities. The importance of the Third Sector was recognised in supporting the employability/equalities agenda and as partners in the delivery of the RSIP. Development of a demand responsive transport system would help address workforce mobility barriers. Support for businesses to take risks and 'scale up' linked to resilience. The RSIP would link to regional STEM Hubs (via colleges) and Regional Improvement Collaboratives. Identifying best practice e.g. around innovation, and seeking to embed this in the South of Scotland would be of benefit.
- 4.3 The next steps for the RSIP would be to refine the final version and action plan through engagement with key partners; agree the governance and ownership of the RSIP; and finalise the RSIP by the end of March 2019 for subsequent publication in April 2019; and develop an Implementation Plan with detailed KPIs and financial 'asks' of SOSEP by mid-June 2019. Mr Ford further advised that education centres would be used as a different way to deliver education in the Scottish Borders. In terms of the City Region Deal, Scottish Borders was linked in to that while Dumfries & Galloway was not, but work was underway to ensure duplication was avoided where possible and that any work complemented both City Region Deal and the RSIP. Ms Cox confirmed that Borders College was involved in the City Region Deal with skills delivery aligned to both programmes, not separate. Mr Dickson confirmed that the new Enterprise Agency for South of Scotland would be in a better position to fill the gap between the public sector and business, and it was vital that partners and businesses thought about how best the Agency could help.

## **DECISION**

**AGREED to note the presentation which would be issued to members of the Strategic Board.**

### **5. DIGITAL LEARNING PROJECT**

- 5.1 Ms Angela Cox, Principal of Borders College, gave a presentation on the South of Scotland Skills and Learning Network, a joint project with Borders and Dumfries & Galloway Colleges, to create a digital and physical skills and learning network, using a digital and physical hub and spoke model. This would provide everyone across the South of Scotland an equitable opportunity to access skills and development opportunities, drawing from the best practice and research globally. Funding for the 2-year project came from the South of Scotland Enterprise Partnership, with the project designed to act as a catalyst to transform how skills opportunities were developed and delivered across the South of Scotland. The project included the creation of up to 20 Digitally Connected Hub & Spokes across the South of Scotland in schools, community settings and businesses; development of physical Care Career Academy Hubs in Galashiels and Dumfries; the development of a regional STEM/Innovation Hub in Hawick with a focus of construction and renewable energy; and the development of increased opportunities to access higher level skills and degrees locally. Success measures included delivering the structural implementation within the timescale; increasing the number of employers upskilling employees through the hub structure; increasing the number of students studying and achieving qualifications in STEM related courses in colleges; increasing the number of school students accessing a wider curriculum via the Hub and Spokes; and increasing the volume and proportion of credits delivered at HE level.
- 5.2 With regard to progress, the digital spokes had been implemented in Earlston and Eyemouth, with plans progressing in Kelso, Peebles and Kelso High Schools in time for the August term. The STEM hub in Hawick and the Care Academy in Galashiels were both progressing on time. For 2019/20 a number of new offers would be available for Foundation Apprenticeships, National Certificates, Professional Development Awards, Graduate Apprenticeships, HNCs, and HNDs. Discussions were ongoing with Edinburgh based Universities regarding the South of Scotland network hosting post graduate online programmes and developing in partnership a number of short 'masterclasses' for local employees and businesses to access. There were a number of challenges and implications in taking forward the project including managing expectations, capacity, and the cultural change required within colleges and with partners. Ms Cox explained that there was an ongoing dialogue between schools, colleges and Skills Development Scotland to try to capture data with a number of transition programmes available which were usually more focussed on employability and not necessarily on specific skills.
- 5.3 Ms Cox answered a number of questions from members. In terms of a balance between existing core structures and the Hub & Spoke model delivering new courses, the target for the college was for a minimum 30% being delivered online. In Peebles, child care would move from the college out to Peebles High School with a combination of lessons and online teaching. Higher Psychology was being taught in Earlston and Eyemouth with the teacher based in Earlston with one group of students and the lesson screened to Eyemouth to another group. Students would still be encouraged to transfer to college from school but data had shown that the further away the student

lived from college the greater the likelihood they would drop out, so the Hub & Spoke model was about providing enhanced opportunity and choice. By June 2019, the Hub & Spoke model would be operating in Peebles, Kelso, Eyemouth and Selkirk. Registered Social Landlords would also be welcomed into the project. The timing of careers advice and guidance was also being discussed. Stuart Easingwood advised that there was a very clear view that the Borders needed to be more ambitious and productive on the range of options available for pupils across the region. Utilising the technology was the way forward, and looking from a multi-agency point, changes for the future needed to be looked at and not simply what was happening on the ground at the moment. Ultimately, young people should not feel the need to leave the Borders as there should be enough opportunities for them here. Rob Dickson confirmed that the dynamic was changing and there was an opportunity at the moment to change how organisations worked to ensure that challenges were met. With the new Agency coming in, recognising that the economy and needs here were different, the area would have a higher profile, greater funding would be available, and opportunities would need to be grasped to continually link stakeholders to get inclusive growth, higher skills level of those of working age, etc.

## **DECISION**

**AGREED to note the presentation which would be issued to members of the Strategic Board.**

### **6. COMMUNITY PLAN AND LOCALITY PLANS**

With reference to paragraph 5 of the Minute of 22 November 2018, Jenni Craig, SBC Service Director Customer & Communities, advised that there had not been a huge amount of change, and work was still underway at Area Partnerships to develop Locality Plans. Tweeddale Area Partnership had considered the first draft of their Locality Plan at their last meeting which had led to a really productive discussion. Some revisions were being done to the Plan based on feedback and this would be widened out to stakeholders and communities. It was hoped by late Spring to have all 5 Locality Plans drafted. Transport was coming through strongly in all areas as a priority and work was underway to see how best this could be addressed going forward, with Transport possibly becoming a Theme in its own right in each Plan. Marjorie Hume asked about consulting and engaging with communities and the provision of services through the Third Sector. Jenni Craig responded that it was an evolving picture in terms of engagement and different ways were being tried. Monthly meetings had been set up with the Third Sector and any input on Area Partnerships was welcomed, including whether the Third Sector could take on a consultation role. Shona Smith advised that links from the Locality Plan landing pages would provide further information, including third sector activities. Actions would also be taken from Health & Social Care Locality Plans into the Community Locality Action Plans.

**Noted.**

### **7. THEME GROUP UPDATES**

#### **7.1 Our Economy, Skills and Learning**

With reference to paragraph 6.1 of the Minute of 22 November 2018, copies of an update to February 2019 for the Group had been circulated. Theme Lead Rob Dickson explained that the main challenge for the Group at the moment was the refresh of the Economic Strategy to 2023 and the Action Plan that underpinned this. It was intended to bring a refreshed Strategy and Action Plan to the Strategic Board shortly. In the wider economic landscape,

progress was being made with the new South of Scotland Enterprise Agency, the City Region deal and Borderlands investment, all of which were at transition points.

**Noted.**

## 7.2 **Our Health and Wellbeing**

With reference to paragraph 6.2 of the Minute of 22 November 2018, copies of an update to March 2019 had been circulated. Theme Lead Tim Patterson highlighted the areas of progress which included additional funding for diabetes management; a new wellbeing service; support for mental health including training for key members of staff in suicide prevention; health in all policies; and Public Health liaison staff now assigned to each Area Partnership. In response to a question about support for active lifestyles, Dr Patterson referred to funding which had been made available from the Diabetes Forum to the Berwickshire 'beat the streets' initiative. Marjorie Hume also advised that the University of the Third Age did an enormous amount of work supporting people; there were country dancing groups; the number of men's sheds was increasing; all of which contributed to the mental health of older people and reduced social isolation. Reference was also made to GP referrals in relation to diabetes or overweight/obesity, which gave subsidised attendance at Live Borders venues/classes. Councillor Hamilton commented that primary schools were doing a lot of work in resilience building in young people which in turn should lessen the need for mental health support in later years.

**Noted.**

## 7.3 **Our Quality of Life**

With reference to paragraph 6.3 of the Minute of 22 November 2018, copies of an update to February 2019 had been circulated. Theme Lead Stuart Easingwood highlighted the reduction in domestic abuse incidents with Police Scotland officers currently undertaking significant training on the new psychological element of domestic abuse. It was hoped to bring in the 'Safe and Together' model which was about commonality of language across multi-agencies. There had also been a decrease in anti-social behaviour incidents and the Police Community Action team had helped alongside other partners to provide a multi-agency approach. Unfortunately, there had been an increase in fatalities in road traffic accidents; 40% of accidents involved motorcycles and discussion was underway to try to find ways to reduce this. Police Scotland was looking at the various factors across all rural areas including winter driving, being visible, speed, the nature of rural roads, etc.

**Noted.**

## 7.4 **Our Place**

With reference to paragraph 6.4 of the Minute of 22 November 2018, copies of an update to February 2019 had been circulated. David Alexander advised that the Registered Social Landlords had an ambitious programme to address issues, and he drew attention to the lack of capacity within the construction industry to deliver new and upgraded housing.

**Noted.**

## 8. **BEST VALUE AUDIT**

Jason McDonald, SBC Senior Manager Business Strategy & Resources, gave an update on the Best Value audit currently underway. The purpose of the audit was to look at key areas of the Council including how well the Council

delivered services through partnership and collaborative working, and the link between the Council's self-evaluation, improvement actions and the changes in outcomes for local people. The approach taken by the Council was to highlight the achievements backed up with evidence and to hold structured dialogue around the Best Value scope. The Auditors had carried out interviews with officers and Elected Members with a series of structured questions, giving the opportunity for individuals to put forward from their own perspective how well the Council operated. A matrix had been developed to assist with information and a copy of this would be sent out to the Strategic Board members. With regard to implications for the Community Planning Partnership, there was the likelihood that partners would be interviewed or asked for information. This would give the opportunity to highlight areas of joint working over the last 8 years and also areas for future development. A draft Audit report was expected in July with final publication in October.

**Noted.**

9. **BREXIT**

Philip Barr, SBC Executive Director, gave an update on the Council's preparations for Brexit. The Council's Brexit Response Team met weekly and discussed as many aspects as possible, for example, school trips, EU citizens, staff, etc. A risk matrix and communications plan had both been development. A meeting had been held with the Community Planning Programme Board and partner organisations had also shared their information with the Council. No strategy was in place as it was still unclear as to what would happen. Small businesses had yet to really engage on what the implications of Brexit could mean for them, although they may be getting information through their own business associations, and could be reluctant to commit resources until they had greater clarity. In terms of worst case scenario planning, civil contingencies were already in place and plans were in place to provide for the poorest and most vulnerable in case of food shortages.

**Noted.**

10. **THIRD SECTOR INTERFACE**

With reference to paragraph 7.1 of the Minute of 22 November 2018, Mrs Hume, Third Sector representative, advised that the framework for the Third Sector Interface (TSI) had been submitted to Scottish Government mid-December 2018 and no comment had yet been received back. There was a conference that day in Edinburgh for TSIs and it was hoped further information would be received there. Funding was only in place until September 2019 which made it very difficult to plan ahead, and there could be changes to financial distribution in future which could mean changes to the way the TSI operated in the Borders.

**Noted.**

11. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

No items of business were raised.

12. **DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

The dates for the next scheduled meetings of the Community Planning Strategic Board (all starting at 2pm) were confirmed as 13 June 2019, 12 September 2019, 21 November 2019, 5 March 2020 and 11 June 2020.

**Noted.**

*The meeting concluded at 4.10 pm.*