SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MINUTE of Meeting of the EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, TD6 0SA on Tuesday, 4 June, 2019 at 10.00 am

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Present:- Councillors S. Haslam (Chairman), S. Aitchison (Vice-Chairman), G. Edgar, C. Hamilton, E. Jardine, T. Miers (from para 2), R. Tatler, G. Turnbull and T. Weatherston

Also present:- Councillors A. Anderson, S. Bell, S. Marshall, W. McAteer, D. Parker, H. Scott and E. Thornton-Nicol.

Apologies:- Councillors S. Mountford and M. Rowley

In Attendance:- Chief Executive, Chief Financial Officer, Executive Director (R. Dickson), Service Director Customer & Communities, Democratic Services Team Leader, Democratic Services Officer (F. Walling).

1. **MINUTE**

The Minute of the Meeting held on 30 April 2019 had been circulated.

DECISION

AGREED that the Minute be approved and signed by the Chairman.

MEMBER

Councillor Miers joined the meeting during the discussion of the report below.

2. **OUR PLAN AND YOUR PART IN IT: SBC'S CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2018/19 (ANNUAL SUMMARY AND DATA FOR QUARTER 4 2018/19)**

2.1 With reference to paragraph 5 of the Minute of 12 February 2019, there had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Customer & Communities, presenting a high level summary of Scottish Borders Council's 2018/19 performance information. The report included reporting on the progress of change and improvement projects across SBC, replacing what was the separate Corporate Transformation report. Change and Improvement Projects were monitored on a weekly basis by Corporate Management Team (CMT) and through the SBC Financial Plan and associated monitoring. More detail was contained within Appendix 1 to the report and Appendix 2 presented the performance information on a quarterly basis, with more detailed commentary on performance. To reflect the significant investment made by the Council during 2018/19, an overview of the work and impact of Police Scotland's Community Action Team was provided in the report and within Appendix 3. Senior Business Services Officer, Alasdair Collison, highlighted key successes identified from the performance measures and also drew attention to challenges facing the Council in terms of performance. During 2018/19, SBC had made a number of significant achievements. In particular economic development efforts had continued with further progress being made with the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal, the South of Scotland Economic Partnership and the upcoming establishment of South of Scotland Enterprise. There was an increase in the number of Affordable Homes provided in the Borders, rising to 191 during 2018/19. In February 2019, Scottish Borders Council announced the 'Inspire

Learning Programme', an investment of £16million over a ten year period in a world-class digital learning environment in Scottish Borders schools starting in 2019/20.

2.2 Members welcomed the positive news within the report and commented on particular achievements. In further discussion officers answered questions in relation to particular challenges identified from the performance indicators. With regard to the reduction in recycling rates Members were advised that discussions were taking place with partner Local Authorities who were experiencing a similar reduction in recycling. Scottish Borders Council already had a plan in place for a campaign to increase recycling but Members' concern would be reported back to the Waste Services Manager. With regard to the numbers of Looked After Children being in family-based placements Members asked for an evaluation around the response to the recent campaign to recruit foster carers. In terms of Asset Transfer enquiries the Service Director confirmed that the enquiries referred to in the report were ongoing, some informal enquiries now becoming formal She advised that each scenario was different and advised that she would send an update to all Members of the latest position together with observations from the team. In response to a question about timescales around the full deployment of a second Community Action Team, the Chief Executive advised that she expected the second team to be at full capacity within the next three months.

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DECISION
AGREED:-

(a) NOTED:-

(i) the progress update relating to Change and Improvement Projects, referenced in Section 4 and detailed further in Appendix 1 to the report;

(ii) the changes to performance indicators outlined in Section 5 of the report; and

(iii) the performance summarised in Sections 6 and 7, and detailed within Appendices 1, 2 and 3 to the report and that action was being taken within services to improve or maintain performance.

(b) AGREED that Members be provided with the further information requested in paragraph 2.2 above.

3. **2018/19 UNAUDITED REVENUE OUTTURN**

3.1 There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Financial Officer with a statement comparing final revenue outturn expenditure and income for 2018/19 with the final approved budget for the year along with explanations for significant variances. The Chief Financial Officer, David Robertson, explained that an unaudited outturn net underspend of £1.344m was achieved in the 2018/19 revenue budget. The £1.344m net underspend (0.52% of final approved budget) was delivered following a number of earmarked balances approved by the Executive Committee during 2018/19. In total, these amounted to £7.365m and related to a number of initiatives across departments and specifically included £1.158m of carry forward for Devolved School Management (DSM including PEF). The net outturn position had primarily been achieved through the completion of a balance sheet review previously reported through Executive revenue monitoring during 2018/19. This review highlighted a previous over accrual of Housing Benefit, the conclusion of which had resulted in a one-off benefit of £1.215m to the revenue account in 2018/19. The remaining services had delivered a small underspend position having delivered significant financial plan savings totalling £16.4m. Of these, £11.656m (71%) were delivered permanently. The remaining £4.758m (29%) of savings were achieved on a temporary basis. Particular emphasis was being placed by CMT on the permanent delivery of these savings during the early part of 2019/20 or where this

was not possible on the identification of alternative proposals. A high level summary of the outturn position in each Council Service was included in section 4 of the report with detail shown in Appendix 1 to the report. Within integrated Health & Social Care services, during 2018/19, additional in-year budget allocations were made to the value of £3.2m to support delayed discharge and alleviate service pressures of £1.8m. In year £1.4m of savings which were anticipated by the Financial plan were not delivered and this required additional financial resources from the Council to ensure that the Service did not overspend its allocated budget. The report highlighted the significant risks to the Council presented by the Health & Social Care partnership budget and noted that the Council would not be in a position to allocate substantial additional resources to the partnership in 2019/20.

3.2 Mr Robertson and his team were thanked for the report and Members recognised the achievements of departments in delivering 71% of permanent savings. In response to a question regarding the use of the balance of £1.344m and about how many of the priorities for funding identified by CMT would be ongoing requirements, Mr Robertson explained that spending on the waste contract would be recurring and also funding on additional frontline support for Children and Young People with mental health issues, including 24 hour supported places to prevent escalation and avoid more expensive support models. The Chief Executive added that this project would be an investment, to bring Young People into area placements and also provide other solutions, in the form of 'safe places', to achieve better outcomes for young people and adults in crisis. Members went on to express their serious concern about the implications to the Council of the budget pressures within the Health and Social Care partnership budget and referred to the need for robust management action in future years. A question was asked about the current stage of negotiations around a Single Public Authority. The Chief Executive explained that discussions between colleagues, Local Authorities, COSLA and Scottish Government were ongoing about a model for closer collaboration. The results of these discussions would be brought back to Members within the next 2 months.

DECISION
AGREED:-

(a) the content of this report and noted the outturn position for 2018/19 prior to Statutory Audit;

(b) to note that this draft unaudited outturn position would inform the budgetary control process during 2019/20 and financial planning process for the current and future years;

(c) to approve the adjustments to previously approved earmarked balances noted in Appendix 1; and

(d) to endorse the Corporate Management Team proposals for the use of the balance of £1.344m identified in section 6.2 of this report.

4. **BALANCES AT 31 MARCH 2019**

With reference to paragraph 3 of the Minute of 12 February 2019, there had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Financial Officer providing an analysis of the Council's Balances as at 31 March 2019. Included in the report were details of the accounts and funds operated by the Council and their respective balances. Appendix 1 to the report summarised the projected transactions and resultant balances at 31 March 2019 on the General Fund and Appendix 2 showed the projected non-General Fund balances. Appendix 3 detailed the balances currently held in the Capital Fund. The useable General Fund balance after earmarked funds, allocated reserves and the unaudited 2018/19 revenue outturn was £6.315m at 31 March 2019 in line with the financial strategy. The 2018/19 balances were before a series of technical accounting adjustments, the effect of which were expected to be broadly neutral. Adjustments

required as a result of the Statutory Audit process would be reported at the conclusion of the Audit. The total of all useable balances, excluding developer contributions, at 31 March 2019 was £27.799m compared to £28.798m at 31 March 2018.

DECISION
NOTED:-

(a) the revenue balances as at 31 March 2019 as per Appendices 1 & 2 to the report, including movement in the Allocated Reserve since the last reporting period; and

(b) the balance in the Capital Fund as per Appendix 3 to the report.

5. **CAPITAL FINANCIAL PLAN 2018/19 - FINAL UNAUDITED OUTTURN**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Financial Officer providing a statement comparing the final capital outturn for 2018/19 with the final budget for the year and identifying the main reasons for any significant variations. The final capital outturn statement for 2018/19 was included at Appendix 1 to the report and included the reasons identified by the Project Managers and Budget Holders for the variances to the final approved budget. This identified an outturn expenditure of £47.807m which was £16.673m below the final revised budget of £64.480m. Further appendices to the report contained summaries of the final outturn position for each block contained within the 2018/19 Capital Plan; each block allocation within the 2019/20 Capital Plan of approved and proposed proposals; and a list of estimated whole life project costs for those key schemes where the project had not been completed in the financial year 2018/19. The report included key highlights from the variances in Appendix 1 and noted that, although there was timing movement with regards to the funding and expenditure associated with these projects they remained in overall healthy positions with regard to service delivery. In terms of the remaining budget of £0.170m from Emergency and Unplanned Schemes, the report proposed that this would be used to fund pressures relating to Selkirk Flood Protection Scheme in 2019/20.

DECISION

(a) AGREED:-

(i) the final outturn statement in Appendix 1 to the report;

(ii) that the remaining budget of £0.170m from Emergency & Unplanned be allocated to Selkirk Flood Protection Scheme; and

(iii) to approve the block allocations in Appendix 3 to the report.

(b) NOTED within the appendices to the report:-

(i) the adjustments to funding in Appendix 1;

(ii) the final block allocations in Appendix 3; and

(iii) the whole project costs detailed in Appendix 4.

6. **DAY SERVICE TRANSFORMATION**

6.1 There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Officer, Health & Social Care outlining the progress made in delivering a Re-imagined Day Service for Older Adults and seeking approval for the decommissioning of individual day services, although only when suitable alternatives that met assessed needs were identified, based upon the introduction of the new model of Local Area Co-ordination for older adults. In his introduction to the report Robert McCulloch-Graham, Chief Officer, Health & Social Care, explained that,

despite significant increases in the numbers of older people living in our communities and accessing Social Care Services, the volume of clients using Day Services had reduced in number from 240 in 2014/15 to 43 in 2019. There has been a corresponding increase in people taking a direct payment to be supported to take part in activities of more interest to them and in their own communities. The Scottish Borders Health & Social Care Partnership strategic plan gave a focus on providing more access to opportunities and activities within our communities. This was being delivered by Local Area Co-ordinators providing access for the frail and elderly to a wider range of community services and support provision beyond traditional day centres catering solely for elderly people. This provision was bringing our older people back into our communities and maintaining the right to a community life. Social Workers would work alongside the Local Area Co-ordination team to ensure that clients' long term care needs and carers' respite needs were adequately met. The 2017-18 Financial Plan approved by Scottish Borders Council on 9 February 2017 outlined efficiencies and the need to "review current Day Services and staffing models". This was re-affirmed in the 2018-19 Financial Plan. This modernised approach aimed to provide better services focussed on the needs of individual people whilst also providing greater efficiency. Initial Local Area Co-ordination work in the Berwickshire area successfully developed community based alternatives for clients attending Saltgreens Day Service. This approach would be utilised across the whole of the Borders. Appendix 1 to the report showed indicative timescales for Day Service transformation across the remaining localities.

6.2 In the ensuing discussion Members expressed their support in principle for the proposals. In noting the increase in uptake of Self Directed Support they recognised that the Local Area Co-ordination approach gave people more choice and had the potential of achieving better outcomes. However the importance of continuing to provide respite for carers was emphasised. Discussion continued about the need for effective communications. Mr McCulloch-Graham confirmed that every service user had been contacted about the proposals, with communication to those without capacity being through relatives/carers. In response to questions about the services and community based alternatives identified in each locality it was agreed to re-circulate to Members the briefings that were issued in March. It was noted that for a small number of people whose needs were so complex that they could not benefit from community based support, appropriate alternatives would be developed.

DECISION

(a) NOTED the expansion of Local Area Co-ordination to all areas of the Scottish Borders; and

(b) AGREED:-

(i) to the decommissioning of individual Day Services when suitable alternatives that met assessed needs were identified following the introduction of the new model of Local Area Co-ordination for older adults; and

(ii) that the Day Service Transformation individual locality briefings be re-circulated to Members.

7. **PRIVATE BUSINESS**

AGREED under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the business detailed in the Appendix to this minute on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs of part 1 of schedule 7A to the Act.

8. **MINUTE**

The private Minute of 30 April 2019 was approved.

9. **MELROSE 3G - SYNTHETIC PITCH PROJECT**

Members approved a report by the Executive Director providing details of the proposed Melrose 3G synthetic pitch and seeking approval to deliver the project with part funding from the Council, the Scottish Rugby Union and sportscotland.

The meeting concluded at 11.25 am