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SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL BERWICKSHIRE AREA PARTNERSHIP

MINUTE of Meeting of the BERWICKSHIRE
AREA PARTNERSHIP held in Berwickshire
High School, Langtongate, Duns, TD11 3QG
on Thursday, 5 September 2019 at 6.30 pm

Present:- Councillors J. A. Fullarton (Chair), J. Greenwell, H. Laing, M. Rowley (from para.4) together with 16 representatives from Partner Organisations, Community Councils and members of the public.

Apologies:- Councillors C. Hamilton and D. Moffat

In Attendance:- Strategic Community Engagement Officer, Locality Development Co-ordinators (J Pringle, G Jardine), Clerk to the Council, Trainee Democratic Services Officer

1. **WELCOME**

Councillor Fullarton welcomed everyone to the Berwickshire Area Partnership and thanked the Community Councils, Partners and local organisations for their attendance. He outlined the programme for the evening and introduced the speakers. The Chairman welcomed Paul Gilbert from Scottish Borders Council (SBC) and Changeworks Project Officer, Neil Robertson, who were the partners in the Home Energy Scotland project and were present to give an update to raise awareness on the energy efficiency measured for home owners and private landlords. Mr Gilbert explained that Home Energy Scotland was a free, impartial energy efficiency advice service funded by Scottish Government designed to help householders stay warm in their homes and save money on their energy bills. Home Energy Scotland would also provide information on funding, incentives and finance options for energy efficiency improvements. The funded energy efficiency programme which was run by the local authority was designed to help householders install internal wall insulation. He explained that insulating homes with internal wall insulation would make homes much warmer and was also better for the environment. This project would work alongside community groups and community councils in order to engage and promote the measures that could be taken. Contact could be made through the links on the SBC website or by contacting Home Energy Scotland for free and impartial advice and support or by contacting the Communities and Partnership Team at Scottish Borders Council (SBC). Leaflets were also available at the meeting which gave full information on the project.

2. **LOCALITIES BID FUND 1**

The Chairman welcomed representatives from Connect Berwickshire Youth Project (BYP) who gave a presentation on Summer 2018 at Connect BYP funded by the Localities Bid Fund. Stephan White and Amy Walker from the project advised that the Youth Project had been extremely grateful to have been chosen by the community to receive the funding for their Summer Programme which covered transport costs for young people throughout the Summer. They explained that access to transport was one of the biggest barriers for young people as was the cost of taking part in the activities for low income families. This funding helped to offer discount cards to young people and to lease a minibus so that young people could take part in holiday club sessions within different towns. They further explained that the summer programme of sessions had also themed trips which included: an animal week with a trip to 5 Sister's Zoo and the safari park; family week; enterprise week; challenge week and a trip to M&D's theme park. There had also been a one week sailing trip to Dorset with a voyage round the Channel Islands to various places which included RYA Competent Crew and Watch Leader training whilst on board. Mr White responded to the following questions:-

Questions/Comments

- (a) Question – how do you choose the people who go on the various voyages?
Response – we ask young people if they would like to attend, although the Dorset trip required experienced sailors.
- (b) Question – how do you tell people - do you market it through the schools?
Response – we have youth sessions in Duns and also promoted this through the Berwickshire schools, mainly Berwickshire and Eyemouth High Schools. We also use social media and after school clubs.
- (c) Question – could you explain about the Saltire Awards?
Response – all volunteers signed up to Saltire Awards working towards 100 and 200 hours then they get the Young Scot Award. They could also do youth achievement awards, bronze through to platinum.
- (d) Question – what were your objectives?
Response – mainly to get those families on low incomes to get new experiences and make more friends and to allow young groups to travel to and from different youth groups.
- (e) Question – how many young people do you have?
Response – we have 30 to 60 young people at the moment.

The Chairman thanked Stephan and Amy and recommended that everyone looked at the photographs on display to see what they had been doing throughout the summer.

3. FEEDBACK FROM MEETING ON 6 JUNE 2019

The Minute of the Meeting of the Berwickshire Area Partnership held on 6 June 2019 had been circulated along with a summary of the discussion attached as an Appendix to the Minute. The Chairman gave a brief outline of the previous discussion.

4. BERWICKSHIRE LOCALITY PLAN

- 4.1 There had been circulated copies of a presentation on Transport Planning by Timothy Stephenson, Passenger Transport Manager for Scottish Borders Council. The Chairman outlined the background around the problems with regard to transport, advising that this was an opportunity to raise any ideas and to think about various options. Mr Stephenson advised that engagement with communities to assess views was very important and group discussions would take place after the presentation. Mr Stephenson explained that the subsidised local bus services across the Borders currently cost £1.5m per annum. The local bus service was not a statutory requirement but was discretionary and it was school transport that was a statutory requirement. There was an obligation this year to make savings of £85k which had already been secured, without further cuts to bus services, and £165k saving was required for 2020. The plan for 2020 and beyond identified a number of under-performing bus routes with passenger numbers declining and the cost per passenger subsidy was very high. He also outlined the programme to meet with communities and Bus Users Scotland to form a transport plan. The local bus services in the area were highlighted in the presentation with information relating to the net subsidy per annum, total passengers per annum and average cost per passenger outlined for service number: 72 Berwick/Hutton/Paxton; 85/87 Kelso/Greenlaw/Berwick; 710 Kelso/Coldstream; and 902 Westruther/Stichill/Kelso routes, with the 85/87 route at £11 per passenger and £47,749 net subsidy being too high. The Borders bus network needed to be reviewed to potentially put something better in place. The average cost per passenger across the Borders bus network was £3.65. This did not mean that these routes would be withdrawn but as they could not be sustained, there was a need to find a way to still be able to provide a service. Some ideas and innovations suggested were: NEED of Alnwick, a Community Transport Scheme; West Linton taxi scheme; Bo'ness

Community Bus and non-bus related options – eg e-car, e-bike, trip share; and community transport/social car schemes.

- 4.2 This consultation was about hearing from communities who had any new suggestions and for them to play their part by bringing innovative ideas to take this project forward. There was a full discussion held and Mr Stephenson answered the following questions:

Questions/Comments

- (a) Question – why had Westruther never had a bus through it for years?
Response – there was a demand led bus service which had been in place since 2010 and could be run on the back of other routes or via the school bus service. A telephone call was required first to SBC to arrange to be picked up and be taken anywhere along the route.
- (b) Question – what percentage of cost was subsidy and who was using the route?
Response – in most cases where the subsidy was very high because passenger numbers were very low – ie on the Greenlaw route, the one-way fare was £3 but was costing £14 as SBC subsidy was £11. As an example, the gross cost of the 67 route Berwick/Galashiels was £890k bringing in revenue of £840k so the net cost was £50k.
- (c) Question – would there be an integrated transport system around Reston Station similar to the Galashiels interchange station and would services in Berwickshire east to west, for example to the BGH, be improved?
Response – as we did not have a railway in the Borders until 2015 there had been Scottish Government funding to allow some connections to continue but passengers were not using the services. Work would be carried out with communities in Reston to lobby the government for funding but people would need to continue to use the services otherwise they would not be sustainable. Transport Scotland would be attending a meeting in Reston Village Hall on 18 September which would be open to all for a full discussion on the points raised.
- (d) Question – there seemed to be a demand for responsive services that were not being publicised – how would this be revisited?
Response – if SBC were not advertising services this would need to happen as SBC received revenue. Leaflets would be available at Community Council meetings for distribution around villages and letters would be circulated to communities with information on where the services were. It was noted that the more people that used the service then the subsidy cost per passenger would reduce.
- (e) Question – one of the issues was the lack of confidence that communities generally had in public transport so there would be a decline until a more comprehensive system was put in place – ie feeder services into main routes although communities may not be in the best position to think through the design. How would you communicate wider with communities?
Response – we do not have all the answers to hand but one solution could be looking at the 85/87 route as it was not a well-used service and consider not having the service at all, but instead using a feeder bus service into the main route as an option.
- (f) Question – suppressed demand – there could be lots of people who were not using the bus service but would use it if they had confidence in it?
Response – there would be drop in sessions in the areas where people do not use the bus service and this would be an opportunity for people to attend and tell us why they did not use buses.
- (g) Question – what was SBC's contribution to the West Linton taxi scheme?

Response – our contribution to the bus route was £135k, the same amount for Dumfries & Galloway and Midlothian Councils. The tender came up after the fifth year and the subsidy was reduced to £35k so the route was still available 7 to 7. SBC had given initial funding to the taxi service from Penicuik to West Linton after 9pm which linked in to buses from Edinburgh. However, the application to the Council's Community Fund had been unsuccessful and the taxi service had stopped. It was noted that this project would always be on a knife edge if reliant on annual fund raising or people in the communities leaving the area so no longer requiring the service.

(h) Question – what was the breakdown of the large increase of operation costs +20%?
Response – Border Buses tendered a few years ago so it had not increased here yet. The 20% figure came from the national average and the number of operators in the Scottish Borders was now down to 5 from 12.

(i) Question – the main route from Berwick to Galashiels was using big buses with occasionally only one or two people on the bus, so why was a smaller bus not used?

Response – this had already been looked at. It would only be a small saving by reducing the size of the bus as the cost for the fuel and driver did not change. It was also noted that there had been a lot of issues with the 60 service which did not seem to have any regular users, with inconsistent numbers and there was no logic behind this.

4.3 Those present at the Area Partnership meeting then split into groups to discuss specific passenger transport related network and connection issues within the Berwickshire area and to highlight any options going forward.

MEMBER

Councillor Rowley joined the meeting during the above item.

5. BERWICKSHIRE INTERIM COMMUNITY FUND

(a) Interim Community Fund Overview Map

There had been circulated copies of the Interim Community Fund Overview Map which showed the current position as of September 2019. The total budget allocation for the interim community fund 2019/20 was £212,494, with an available balance remaining of £148,246. Ms Pringle outlined the details of the allocations which showed: the Community Council commitments total £13,680; Berwickshire Federation of Village Halls at £13,502 and the local festival grant commitments at £14,060.

(b) Internal & External Funding Maps for Berwickshire

There had been circulated copies of the internal investment in Berwickshire for the period April 2016 to March 2019 which totalled £916,049. Ms Pringle explained that the internal and external funding maps for Berwickshire were broken down and showed a snapshot of the funding secured. There had also been circulated copies of the external investment for the same period totalling £1,531,537 along with the breakdown of each category.

(c) Berwickshire Community Fund Application – Swinton & Ladykirk Community Council

With reference to paragraph 8 of the Minute of the meeting held on 6 June 2019, the Communities & Partnership Manager, Jan Pringle, explained that the Berwickshire Community Fund 2019/20 was now up and running. An application had been received for approval from Swinton & Ladykirk Community Council with a funding request of £2,241 to upgrade unsafe/non-compliance electrical supply and distribution system to Swinton Village Green, in turn supporting a wide variety of community events and activities. Any approval would be subject to an SBC

framework contractor being used for the electrical works so that all works would meet the appropriate electrical standards. The Chairman of Swinton & Ladykirk Community Council thanked Ms Pringle for her assistance and support in getting the application submitted within the required deadline. It was agreed to approve the grant of £2,241 to Swinton & Ladykirk Community Council to upgrade the unsafe/uncompliant electrical supply and distribution system to Swinton Village Green, subject to the work being undertaken by an SBC Framework contractor and that all work met the appropriate electrical standards.

- (d) **Eyemouth & District Community Council** – it was noted that this application was from Eyemouth & District Community Council and not Chamber of Trade. This had been fast tracked and the application for £930 had been approved.
- (e) **Honour our Troops** – this application had also been fast tracked and the application for £501 had been approved.

6. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

The Chairman asked for any suggestions/proposals for future agenda items or any items to be submitted to Ms Pringle for the next meeting. The following topics were submitted:-

- (a) Passenger transport discussion
- (b) Computer Mapping - Gavinton Community Council requested a 10 minute slot to highlight the successful use of the computer mapping system to highlight to other community councils and communities what use could be made available through the Ordnance Survey (OS) data which could be accessed through SBC.
- (c) Budget setting process – to have a more in-depth discussion with Finance colleagues on a realistic look at the budget setting process.
- (d) Overview on Homecare Services from SB Cares – to assess the direction of travel for Berwickshire.
- (e) Supporting Mental Health in Berwickshire – how services were provided and local needs made available.
- (f) Drug & Alcohol Support Services Provision.
- (g) Regeneration – how communities could get stronger and support regenerative activities - joint presentation from SBC Economic Development and SoSEP with groups involved.
- (h) Successful Projects/Programmes within the Berwickshire Area
- (i) Capacity in Communities to take on activities/volunteering – e.g. Cockburnspath Action Plan had just started to be developed, with a 2 pronged approach: people needed to realise what the options were and to think about what they would want and then to prioritise.

7. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Ms Pringle gave an update on forthcoming events:

- (a) Lord Lieutenant's Volunteering Event on 25 September at Springwood Park, Kelso – to celebrate and develop the tremendous work carried out throughout our communities; the event was open to the public from 2.00pm – 4.00pm to find out what volunteering opportunities were available;

- (b) Eyemouth community drop-in centre event on 26 September at Eyemouth Primary School - 4.00pm - 7.30pm - to view plans for the new Eyemouth Community Campus;
- (c) Open Consultation on the SBC website to help develop the scheme on the Area Partnership and Community Fund;
- (d) Review of Polling District/Polling Stations; and
- (e) Grow your own Food.

8. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Berwickshire Area Partnership was scheduled for Thursday 6 December – venue to be agreed. Councillor Fullarton thanked all those who had attended the meeting for their participation and input.

The meeting concluded at 8.30 pm

Berwickshire Locality Plan – Community Transport: Solutions and Actions

Suggestions made:

- Electric solar information panels at key locations
- Border Integrated Transport App
- Expand volunteer driver schemes + social car share schemes
- E-bikes scheme (Energy Trust)
- SBC e-car scheme
- Extended Rail Connections/Accessibility
- Maximise the use of Borders College /SBC /NHS/Post Office/Third Sector minibuses
- Remove need for travel – extended outreach, use of skype for appointments, telecare
- Demand Responsive Transport i.e. community taxi, uber type scheme

Locality suggested transport solutions	Would this work in your community?	Who would take this forward – we need key champions/organisations	What support would be needed (financial, time, resources etc), and what would this look like?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinated town/village approach/Privacy issue – not everyone wants others to know they are attending the BGH • Post Bus – Need to identify who would use the bus if it was provided. • Investigation of transport options to transport people from small settlements to main routes – co-ordinated approach across the locality • Investigate areas of a similar size to see what 	<p>Replicate a successful model from elsewhere</p>	<p>SBC to help communities consider options</p>	

<p>works for them i.e. Highlands and Islands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at continuing young people's discount past the age of 19 years old • Repurpose old railway line for cycle pathways to improve connectivity • Install a Driving theory app on school iPads to help young people past their theory tests and pass their driving tests quicker <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eyemouth E-Bikes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Transport <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-Car Scheme 	<p>Would help to connect people and places</p> <p>Would help increase people's confidence and ability to pass the test</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This would work well in our community as there is plenty of tourist trails to use. • This would be an excellent resource to invest in as there a clear need for more transport options in the Berwickshire area. • A terms and conditions review would be required to see if it is feasible 	<p>national</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Community Councils would take this forward. • Transport Services would take this forward. 	<p>We would need to look at how to get registered drivers insured (Need to learn from a model that works)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the E-Bikes to work, it would require a regional trail/demo for it to be viable. • For improved community transport to be a success it would require paid drivers. • Hybrid services cracking at seems – Hospital appointments?
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electric Solar information panels at key locations - this refers to the type of electronic signs seen at bus stops informing bus users of the next service due in X mins etc, or advises of any service changes • Borders Integrated Transport App - Would cover cross Border connections to Berwick-upon-Tweed (rail and onward bus services) and cover Reston station when operational • Expand volunteer driver schemes + social car share schemes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes – there would be some benefit to our communities. • Yes – this would work for residents and visitors alike. • Expanding Volunteer Driving schemes = Yes (if recruitment and retention is sustainable) • Social Car Sharing Schemes – may need more information on how these work practically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We would assume that the bus operator(s) would lead on this. • We would presume that this would need to be a joint venture between the key stakeholders, e.g. Bus operators, train operators, SBC, (SOSEP?) third sector providers. • In our area we would assume that the lead on expanding recruitment would be taken by Berwickshire Wheels in the first instance • In our area we would assume that the lead on expanding recruitment would be taken by Berwickshire Wheels in the first instance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance, time and resources to procure, install and maintain. • Technical dependency on digital connectivity (e.g. 4G/wifi) for each unit to receive real-time updates. • Some consideration to the cost/effort/reward of installing such technology – may be superseded by existing Aps e.g. Border Buses App. However the consideration of connectivity applies to both this and access to mobile apps in rural/isolated areas • Funding, effort and technical capability to create deploy and maintain. - There was some concern that this excludes those who are unable to use digital technologies
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-Bikes Scheme (Energy Trust) • SBC E-Car scheme – Electric car “range anxiety” can be removed/reduced and That the network of charging points can be extended • Extend Rail Connections/accessibility • Maximise the use of Borders College/SBC/NHS/Post Office/Third Sector Minibuses – is there a way to co-ordinate the demand for transport to the transport provision? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsure as such schemes seem better suited to more urban areas or where the settlement density is higher than many areas of Berwickshire. • Yes • Yes • Yes – there has been some notable success with the community transport hub. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SBC initially • Once demand is established establish the feasibility of third sector/ community operation. • Transport Scotland, RAGES, SBC, Rail operator, Network Rail • Borders Community Transport Flow Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding/investment for an extended network of charging points • Funding for the procurement, deployment and maintenance of vehicles • There were some comments regarding the number of cars that may need to be made available at each location. • There was an untested assumption that there would need to be a fleet of vehicles • It is hoped that Berwickshire will benefit form services being run form Reston Station • TBC
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove need for Travel – extended outreach, use of skype for appointments, telecare Demand Responsive Transport i.e. community taxi, Uber Type scheme - Uber is largely the same as booking a conventional private hire taxi albeit the booking is done on-line 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to time constraints this item wasn't discussed There was little time to get into the detail – but there was a feeling that such services could be used in addition to and complimentary to existing traditional services (buses) i.e. to get people from areas currently not served by a bus route so that they could meet a bus service for the remainder of their journey. If cost efficient they could also be used to plug gaps in traditional scheduled services that may not meet users' needs currently.
<p>Community Capacity - The issue of sustainability was highlighted a number of times – once schemes are off the ground there can be a reliance on a few individuals and when/if they are no longer able to steer the project then the ongoing viability of the scheme can be jeopardised.</p> <p>There wasn't a shared understanding of what is currently available in terms of traditional schedule transport and on-demand transport options. Unclear why that is.</p>			
<p>UBER type scheme</p>	<p>Taxi style approached, unlicensed but approved. Access via smart phone technology/apps. Drivers Screened – criminal checks Safety Features built-in, tracking customer reviews, driver profiles Vehicle safety inspections</p>		
<p>Bo'ness and Area Community Bus Association – reintroduction of bus links between Bo'ness and Edinburgh</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruited 2 Full Time drivers and 1 Part time driver and 1 Volunteer driver Recruited an Operations Consultant Recruited an Administration Assistant Delivered 10235 passenger journeys since February 2018 Make 58 journeys a week to and from Edinburgh Covered over 120,000 miles 		

Killin & District Volunteer Car Scheme	<p>Volunteer based scheme that aim to assist people in our district who have real problems in accessing transport or coping with the long journeys. The service is provided by volunteer drivers who use their cars to provide transport to people who struggle to access other forms of transport, due to a variety of reasons and where there is a need to access services that are essential and/or in the interest of their general wellbeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journeys are subsidised – 45p per mile for drivers and 20p per mile for a passenger • The driver's expenses cover fuel, maintenance and depreciation of their vehicle so that they are not out-of-pocket.
Badenoch & Strathspey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Transport model operating a set bus route, although providing door to door service • Operates 5 days per week, 9.30-4.30pm • Must be booked in advance •
NEED Ltd (Alnwick)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Largely self-financing model • Range of services – car scheme / dial-a-ride / family vehicle / group transport • Contracts for Council and NHS • Entrepreneurial
Chariotts (Wrexham)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Branded fleet of accessible vehicles • Paid co-ordinator but all volunteer drivers <p>In 2015 provided 12,645 trips, of which 6,642 were for wheelchair users</p>
Transport Access People (Cornwall)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer car scheme for non-emergency healthcare appointments • Journeys to and from the Hospitals in Truro and Plymouth • Door to door transport for people who find difficulty accessing transport