

MINUTES of Meeting of the TEVIOT AND
LIDDESDALE AREA PARTNERSHIP held in
Lesser Hall, Town Hall, Hawick on Tuesday,
18 February 2020 at 6.30 pm

Present:- Councillors N Richards, S Marshall, W McAteer, D Paterson, C Ramage, G Turnbull
With 18 representatives from Partner organisations, Community Councils, officers and members of the public.

In Attendance:- Communities and Partnership Manager, Locality Development Co-ordinator (G Jardine), Democratic Services Officer (J Turnbull)

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman, Councillor Richards, welcomed everyone to the Teviot and Liddesdale Area Partnership and thanked Community Councils, Partners and local organisations for their attendance. He outlined the programme for the evening and introduced the speakers.

2. STORM DENNIS

2.1 Mr Jim Fraser, one of the Council's Emergency Planning Officers, was in attendance to advise on the Council's response to the flood damage caused by Storm Dennis at the weekend. Mr Fraser explained that prior to Storm Dennis, Storm Kiera had caused 7ft snowdrifts in some parts of the higher ground in the Scottish Borders, and the ground was already very saturated. Last Tuesday, the Met Office and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) issued an alert that Storm Dennis was anticipated to strike the Scottish Borders at the end of the week. By Friday the Met Office had issued an amber warning for rain. On Saturday there were 17 flood warnings issued across the Scottish Borders including for Jedburgh, Kelso, Newcastleton, Peebles, and Hawick. The Council's Emergency Bunker was opened and staffed by the Emergency Incident Team, including officers from Police Scotland, Housing Associations and the Fire and Rescue Service. As the day went on, the Met Office issued three severe flood warnings. The Council established rest centres at the Teviotdale Leisure Centre in Hawick and in Newcastleton for residents who might need to be evacuated.

2.2 Mr Fraser went on to explain, that the flooding had severely affected Newcastleton. The Council had reacted quickly and by 0800 hrs on Sunday, had deployed staff, road sweepers and JCBs to tidy up the roads and footpaths in Newcastleton. In response to questions, Mr Fraser advised that SEPA had acted correctly in their predictions and timings of their warnings. However, the water levels did spike extremely quickly. Regarding Saturday's warning times he advised that the first warning for the River Teviot was issued at 1855 hrs, River Slitrig was 1856 hrs and Liddle Water was 1625 hrs, with another at 1900 hrs. Regarding the support given by the emergency services, Mr Fraser advised that Police Scotland had declared a major incident in Newcastleton and had deployed, in addition to a number of local officers, five police vans from their operational reserve, including officers from Glasgow. In addition, 30 coastguard personnel were mobilised, along with Fire and Rescue Service personnel and specialist Water Rescue

Teams from both Galashiels and Carlisle. There was also a drop-in centre opened on Monday to offer support to local residents and this would remain open for most of the week. With regard to the flooding at Bonchester Bridge, he explained that the Fire Service had attended as a rescue service and were unable to pump water out of affected properties until there was a certain level of water and they had somewhere to pump the water. Mr Fraser went on to advise that SBC had a Flood Protection initiative and flood products were available to be purchased via a grant scheme; properties could be protected by installing these flood products. Following Storms' Desmond and Frank in 2016, between 200 to 300 flood gates were purchased by residents in the Scottish Borders. Regarding the lack of communication response from the Emergency Bunker during the weekend, Mr Fraser explained that staff were in attendance but had been dealing with an extremely high number of calls from the emergency services for support, and from residents in Hawick, Newcastleton, Peebles, Kelso and Jedburgh. The Chairman thanked Mr Fraser for his attendance and the update.

3. **FEEDBACK FROM MEETING ON 19 NOVEMBER 2019**

The Minute of the Meeting of the Area Partnership held on 19 November 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 advising that themes included improving communication through promotion of What Matters' Hubs, a directory of services and activities available in the area and creation of a small network to bring small groups together. Using the Community Fund to pay for transport costs to bring people to community events and increasing numbers on public transport had also been highlighted. The Chairman then welcomed Mr Timothy Stephenson and Mr Gordon Grant, Scottish Borders Council's Passenger Transport Managers who were in attendance to update on the transport plan.

4. **TRANSPORT UPDATE**

4.1 Following the presentation given to the meeting of 19 November 2019, Mr Stephenson explained that as part of the review, a number of underperforming bus routes had been identified where passenger numbers were declining and subsidies per passenger were high. Services reviewed in Hawick were the evening service (H1 and H2) at a cost of £30k per annum; Nos 46, 47 and 49 town service at a cost of £12k, and X95 at a cost of £58k. Also reviewed were the Newcastleton 128 and Bonchester Bridge 910 at a cost of £42k and £3.5k respectively. Mr Stephenson continued that with regard to the Bonchester Bridge's 910 service, the Council were carrying out a leaflet drop to promote the service and encourage people to 'use it or lose it', and/or give suggestions to improve this service. With regard to the Newcastleton 128 service, he explained that following discussions with Newcastleton Community Council, this service would now be reduced to one journey in the morning and one in the afternoon (reduced from three). Travellers could also access the School bus on school days at 0750 hrs and 1355 hrs return from Hawick. A connection with the 127 service was also being considered, with the possibility of a local operator providing a direct service, to Carlisle on a Saturday. Mr Grant went on to discuss the Hawick H1 and H2 evening town service and the X95 evening and Sunday service. Six months of passenger data had been analysed before revising the timetable for these services. The new proposed timetable had been published for consultation and he encouraged feedback.

4.2 In response to questions, Mr Stephenson advised that with regard to size of buses, operators tended to purchase vehicles of a similar size, as they were required for various routes throughout the day with differing passenger numbers to accommodate. Regarding extension of the Borders Railway to Carlisle, transport links would be reviewed when this happened. Regarding the X95, which was joint funded by Dumfries and Galloway, this service was currently being reviewed to determine passenger numbers and possible alternative services. It was proposed to divert the evening X95 via Burnfoot shops to mitigate for the withdrawal of the H1 and H2, Mr Stephenson advised that Burnfoot Community Council might wish to organise their own shuttle from the terminus to parts of the estate which would offer more choice and greater flexibility, and he could offer his

expertise to assist them with achieving this. It was noted that Mr Stephenson would discuss with Denholm Community Council out with the meeting, funds available to organise their own community led transport project. The Chairman thanked Mr Stephenson and Mr Grant for their attendance and update.

5. **TEVIOT ELECTRIC CAR CLUB**

The Chairman then welcomed Mr Andy Maybury who was in attendance to provide an overview of the establishment of the Teviot Electric Car Club, which was set up to provide affordable personal transport in Hawick, with a low carbon footprint. Mr Maybury advised that SP Energy Networks had set up a Green Economy Fund to encourage green projects. The Teviot Electric Car Club had been awarded funding from this Fund, and had set up as a community owned Car Club. Mr Maybury explained that 20.5% of households in the area had no access to a car or van, 34.2% of households owned two or more vehicles, with 15% reporting public transport as an accessibility issue. With a third of households owning more than one vehicle, this might be the opportunity to encourage shared use of a vehicle which would mean a more efficient use of resources. Mr Maybury then went on to discuss climate change which could be tackled by reducing emissions and how this was transforming the energy sector. He explained that there was no point in charging a car from electricity produced from coal power stations and explained smart charging with cleaner energy from nuclear, solar, hydro and wind sources. Mr Maybury then went on to advise that in terms of the Car Club's vehicles these were fully electric - a Nissan and a BMW - fitted with telematics which enabled self-service by members of the cooperative to book online, turn up with their smart card to unlock and use the vehicle. In response to questions, Mr Maybury advised that membership was £25.00 per year. Hire of cars was £4.75 per hour or £34.00 for a day. There was no charge per mile. Regarding smart charging information this would be received from the booking system. With regard to chargers, Mr Maybury advised that these were fast chargers rather than rapid chargers. The Chairman thanked Mr Maybury for his attendance and his presentation on the Teviot Electric Car Club. It was noted that the launch of the Teviot Electric Car Club was scheduled for Friday, 21 February 2020.

6. **HAWICK FLOOD PROTECTION SCHEME COMMUNITY BENEFITS**

Mr John Mallin, Sustainability Officer, then gave a brief update on the Community Benefits Clause. An update had been circulated with the agenda which explained that the contract to Hawick Flood Protection Scheme would be awarded in the coming weeks. The contract included a Community Benefits Clause (CBC) which required the successful bidder to deliver a range of community benefits including new jobs, apprenticeships, school activities and the provision of support to local community groups and projects. A range of community groups in Hawick would benefit from the requirement for the main contractor and their supply chain to provide support/sponsorship to community groups or projects. This was likely to be in the way of surplus material donations, small financial contributions to community groups/projects or undertaking some form of work for a community group. Hawick Community Council, Burnfoot Community Council and other local community groups might wish to consider developing a register of local groups or projects interested in taking advantage of this community benefit requirement. Providing a register 'wish list' would create an opportunity for early dialogue with the main contractor, which in turn, would maximise community benefit realised over the full duration of the project. Mr Mallin gave, as an example, a community garden as a potential project, whereby the contractor would be able to provide assistance in the form of staff and or equipment. In response to questions, he suggested that groups combine to submit their 'wish list'. With regards to the types of projects applicable, Mr Mallin explained that it would depend on contractor availability and type of project. Further information on CBC would be circulated via social media.

7. **HAWICK CONSERVATION AREA REGENERATION SCHEME**

It was noted that the update on the Hawick Conservation Area Regeneration scheme would be deferred to the next meeting.

8. **TEVIOT AND LIDDESDALE LOCALITY PLAN & ACTION PLAN**

There had been circulated copies of the Locality Plan and Action Plan. Ms Jardine advised that the layout had been enhanced by graphics to provide an easier to read document which showed clearly the priorities of the partnership. The Action Plan would be continually updated to reflect ongoing work in this area. Both Plans would be available on the Council's website. Ms Jardine welcomed feedback on progress and success of activities.

9. **TEVIOT AND LIDDESDALE COMMUNITY FUND**

9.1 There had been circulated for information copies of the Interim Community Fund Overview Map 2019-20. The total budget allocation for the Teviot and Liddesdale Community Fund was £174,308, after committed allocations, £132k remained in the Fund. Ms Jardine advised that this did not include the VE Celebration Fund to be launched on 24 February, of which £9,359.67 was Teviot and Liddesdale's contribution. Application forms were on the Council's website. The closing date was 31 May 2020, a maximum of £2.5k was available per application.

9.2 There had been circulated copies of an application from Future Hawick with a funding request of £5,166.00. The amount would be used for the printing of 6,000 promotional brochures and tick pad surveys which would be used by Hawick Welcome Hosts to promote Hawick and the surrounding area and evaluate visitor experience. There would also be a small contribution to the Hawick Welcome uniforms. It was agreed to approve the application for £5,166.00 from Future Hawick. It was noted that a fast track application had been approved from Hobkirk Community Council for £1,352.00 for a display board.

10. **COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT ACT UPDATE**

There had been circulated copies of the Scottish Borders Council Participation Requests received during 2018/19. Ms Jardine highlighted that nine participation requests had been received, of which five had been agreed, three refused, with one pending. The Council had received three formal valid asset transfer requests, of which one had been agreed, one refused and one was pending. Ms Jardine explained that they had also received seven asset transfer requests which did not progress beyond initial discussions. Enquiries about participation requests, asset transfer or anything else to do with the Community Empowerment Act was available on the Council's website or email: communityengagement@scotborders.gov.uk.

11. **CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL IN PUBLIC PLACES**

Following the presentation given to the meeting on 16 April 2019, Ms Jardine advised that 491 responses had been received to the consultation - 44% of those who took part did not think the consumption of alcohol in a public place was causing a problem; 36% though it was, with 20% unsure. As a result the Council had agreed to hold a consultation that asked people how they felt about a byelaw to ban the consumption of alcohol in public places being introduced in any or all of the following towns for a pilot period: Eyemouth, Galashiels, Hawick and Peebles. The consultation would open this week and be available on the Council's Consultation Hub (<https://scotborders.citizenspace.com>) or through search 'consultations and surveys' from the Council's website. Public consultation events were being arranged in each of the four towns. The team would be attending the Hawick Community Council meeting on 9 March at 6.30 pm in Hawick High School, to discuss what a potential byelaw could look like in Hawick and answer questions.

12. **OPEN FORUM**

12.1 Area Partnership/Community Fund consultation – It was requested that an update be presented at the next meeting.

12.2 CCTV - It was requested that any monies remaining in the community fund be transferred to the next financial year. If this was not approved, it was requested that consideration be given to allocating any remaining monies to CCTV.

12.3 Flooding - A number of points were raised:

- Consideration should be given to better communication with farmers regarding field run-off.
- Who is responsible for maintaining and clearing the road ditches and gullies – was this the Council?
- The connection between deforestation and flooding should be discussed.
- Further discussion required on dredging rivers.
- Improvement of flood defences.

12.4 Scottish National Planning Framework - It was noted that the Scottish National Planning Framework would be attending Hawick Town Hall on 25 February. There would be a drop-in sessions for anyone interested in attending.

13. **DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

The next meeting of the Teviot and Liddesdale Area Partnership was scheduled for Tuesday, 21 April 2020. The Chairman thanked all those who had attended the meeting for their participation and input.

The meeting concluded at 8.45 pm