

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

TEVIOT AND LIDDESDALE AREA PARTNERSHIP

MINUTES of Meeting of the TEVIOT AND LIDDESDALE AREA PARTNERSHIP held in Via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday, 12 January 2021 at 6.30 pm

Present:- Councillors N Richards (Chairman), S Marshall, W McAteer, D Paterson, C Ramage, G Turnbull.

22 representatives of partner organisations, Community Councils, and members of the public

In attendance:- Service Director Neighbourhood Services, Clerk to the Council, Communities and Partnerships Manager, Locality Development Co-ordinator (G Jardine), Democratic Services Officer (J Turnbull).

1. **WELCOME AND MEETING PROTOCOLS**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Teviot and Liddesdale Area Partnership held remotely via Microsoft Teams, which included Elected Members, guests attending and those watching the live stream.

2. **FEEDBACK FROM MEETING OF 17 NOVEMBER 2020**

The Minute of the meeting of the Teviot and Liddesdale Area Partnership held on 17 November 2020 had been circulated and was noted.

3. **URGENT BUSINESS**

Under Section 50B(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the Chairman was of the opinion that the item dealt with in the following paragraph should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency, in view of the need to keep Members informed.

4. **COVID-19 UPDATE**

Jenni Craig, Service Director Customer and Communities gave an SBC update on the Covid-19 current position. Mrs Craig explained that Covid-19 had recently accelerated significantly with an increase in positive cases, partly due to the highly transmittable variant of the virus which was present in the Borders. Mrs Craig emphasised that it was essential that everyone followed the current guidelines to stay at home and minimise face to face contact. Referring to Covid-19 testing, Mrs Craig advised that due to the high case numbers, particularly in the Hawick area, a Mobile Testing Unit had been deployed to the Teviotdale Leisure Centre. In addition, a walk-in test facility had been opened at the Langlee Complex in Galashiels for symptomatic testing. Booking for tests was via the UK Government online portal. The Council was also involved in discussions with partners about the potential for asymptomatic community testing facilities in the Scottish Borders. In terms of SBC services, there was currently no direct impact over those already in place from the Level 4 period. However, the need to continue to deliver essential frontline services and give support to communities might result in staff being deployed to support other areas, for example the care service, which would result in other services having to scale back operations. Mrs Craig then discussed the Community Assistance Hubs (CAHs) explaining that they remained operational to co-ordinate support with community groups and partners within localities. Mrs Craig then advised that there had been changes to education provision with online remote learning being provided for all pupils. In-school support was still available to support key workers and vulnerable children. Mrs Craig advised that any teacher or key worker's child testing positive would

have a major impact on the school setting, therefore places had to be booked online and applications were considered on an individual basis. Mrs Craig further advised that any planned Senior Phase Assessments would be postponed and carried out when possible with appropriate preparation time provided. With regard to Live Borders, their facilities were closed. Live Borders membership had been kept updated and digital services ranging from online fitness classes to online library access continued to be offered and could support home learning. Regarding support to businesses, there was a range of funds available and the Council continued to work closely with South of Scotland Enterprise (SoSE) to ensure support was made available to businesses. Information was available on the Scottish Government website at 'Find Business Support'. Mrs Craig concluded her presentation by advising that anyone within the community requiring assistance should contact 0300 100 1800 to access support through the CAHs. In response to questions, Mrs Craig advised that she would investigate the lack of acknowledgements for business grant applications submitted through the SBC website. Mrs Craig would also feedback to NHS colleagues publicising Mobile Testing Unit availability, the Teviotdale Leisure Centre as a suggestion as a venue for testing and the access limitations at Hawick Town Hall. She would also feedback concerns that people were not abiding by the Covid-19 guidelines and that clarity on travel and a visible police presence was required to stop cross border visits for example at the Seven Stanes. The Chairman thanked Mrs Craig for the informative presentation.

(Note: Following the meeting the presentation slides were forwarded to the Area Partnership circulation list)

5. FIT FOR 2024: REVIEW OF AREA PARTNERSHIPS & COMMUNITY FUND AND ACTION FOR TEVIOT & LIDDESDALE AREA PARTNERSHIP

- 5.1 With reference to paragraph 4 of the Minute of 17 November 2020, the Chair advised that the Area Partnership needed to build on the findings of the Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) report and consider how to strengthen community engagement and participation. He welcomed Barbara Elborn, Newcastle & District Community Council and Philip Kerr, Southdean Community Council, who provided a pilot proposal for a new way forward based on feedback and discussion with Teviot and Liddesdale Community Councils, Elected Members and officers. Introducing the presentation, Mrs Elborn explained that the proposed model would level up rural communities, create a new forum that met community needs, whilst working with the Council and partners in terms of provision of services at a local level, acknowledging strategic development requirements and funding. The model would build on core values established under the Community Empowerment Act and Participatory Budgeting Charter, be flexible, transparent, accountable and engage more widely with communities. 2020 learnings had shown that working collaboratively with key partners achieved more and it was important that the Community Assistance Hubs continued as they were indispensable in delivering services to the community. Administrative support would also need to be retained. Mrs Elborn went on to explain the three common elements from feedback were: more transparency and say; greater influence in service provision that impact each of us in different ways; and, community sustainability through economic growth, developing what we have, maximising its uses and attracting new investment. Shared learnings and experience, for example with access to a community council website, would increase confidence and expand community engagement. Mrs Elborn suggested that the remit for the Area Partnership going forward should include: budgets and funding; service provision and local delivery; and strategic issues impacting on place. It was also suggested that regular engagement with police, fire, health, education, waste services and the road services should be reintroduced. Sub-groups could be established which would be easier to manage and expand expertise in terms of learnings, for example to discuss bigger issues such as extending the railway line into Carlisle. Based on the principles of the Participatory Budgeting Charter, the fundamentals in developing the new vision and objectives should include: Community – reflecting the needs of the community it served; Participatory – consultative not imposed; Deliberative – beneficial to the wider community; Accessibility – everyone has the opportunity to have a say.

- 5.2 Mrs Elborn then referred to the management of the Community Grant Fund. To ensure transparency and accountability the model suggested that all applications should be scored and assessed against criteria and that scorecards be published so the applicants knew why they had been awarded points. More information was required in terms of project assessment and why those decisions were being made. This would give a more considered view for each application before discussion at the Area Partnership. In the future, consideration could be given to allow communities to vote online for projects. Representation proposed for the new forum would be each community council, elected Members with a Chair and Vice Chair as well as administrative support. A Panel of 14 would consider applications and this would ensure a wider understanding of community needs and shared learnings. The balance of the Fund was to be split into two pots (one share for smaller communities and two shares each for Burnfoot and Hawick) to decide on smaller projects at a local level. The larger fund would be based on criteria measured on scoring and assessment on which the Area Partnership would vote. Mrs Elborn concluded the presentation by advising that the next step was for a report to go to Council in March where Area Partnership proposals would be considered. A separate report detailing Community Fund proposals would also go forward in March. The proposed model would work alongside the CAHs as their role was integral in solving issues in crisis situations. Working together, the Area Partnerships could be a force for change and help deliver community empowerment.
- 5.3 The Chair thanked Mrs Elborn for the comprehensive presentation. During discussion it was noted that the suggested model would tie in with Fit for 2024 and fully engage with the principles of community engagement, particularly with rural communities. The model was considered a positive way forward that would need further exploration and involvement with other partners such as the police, fire service and RSLs. In response to a question regarding the legality of Community Councils allocating Council money, Mrs Craig advised that further exploration and discussion was required to be clear on what was proposed going forward and how this would work. Ms Wilkinson added that one of the options that Council could consider was that Area Partnerships no longer be Council committees. The Council could grant the Community Fund to a community body with parameters on what and how the funding could be allocated and the decision making process. This was one model for consideration and through the public consultation other models might be suggested.

(Note: Following the meeting the presentation slides were forwarded to the Area Partnership circulation list.)

6. **TEVIOT AND LIDDESDALE COMMUNITY FUND 2020/21**
- 6.1 Gillian Jardine, Locality Development Co-ordinator advised that since the last meeting the Fund had received a further allocation which meant that the total Community Fund was £66,837.00 If the application to be considered tonight was successful the balance remaining would be £42,541.66.
- 6.2 Hobkirk Community Council
The application for consideration was from Hobkirk Community Council which was seeking £3,064.34 for the purchase of shrubs, trees, compost and material to plant shrubs at Bonchester's War Memorial and Village Hall. Mr Phipps from Hobkirk Community Council was in attendance and explained that the intention was to make the village look more vibrant and appeal to visitors travelling to the area. The pruning and maintenance of the shrubs would be undertaken by volunteers in the community. The Area Partnership approved the application for grant funding of £3,064.34 to Hobkirk Community Council.

7. **COMMUNITY FUND PROJECT EVALUATIONS**

With reference to paragraph 6.2 of the Minute of 19 November 2019, the Chair welcomed Rachael Disbury from Alchemy Film and Arts who was in attendance to give an evaluation

of the £9,925.00 funding they had received for the 'Once upon a time in Hawick' project. Ms Disbury explained that despite Covid-19, they had managed to deliver some of the proposed project and also a digital version of their Festival. This had received 15,000 online visits, many from international visitors, which they hoped in future years would generate in actual visits to Hawick. Alchemy's original proposal had also included community activities and they had been able to assist community groups to stay connected and transfer their content to digital means. Ms Disbury advised that they had delivered digital workshops to groups such as Interest Link; outdoor film workshops with Branching Out; partnered with Hawick Archaeological Society to produce online screenings of their lectures and digitally streamed Santa for Cherrytrees Nursery. Ms Disbury went on to advise that Alchemy had won an Inspire Award and had been nominated for a Scottish Charity Award through their work with community groups. Towards the end of 2020, they had launched Borders Community Archive which was designed to secure Hawick's history on film. They had also continued to coordinate the Border Screen Network and research and development on local themes for projects in 2021 including artist Andy Mackinnon and Natasha Ruwona who was working on a project surrounding Tom Jenkins: <https://alchemyfilmandarts.org.uk/natasha-ruwona/>. To conclude, Ms Disbury advised that it had not been the year Alchemy had expected but they had delivered a digital festival, research projects, established a community archive and responded to community needs by providing digital support and this would continue. In response to a question, Ms Disbury advised that they were one of the first film festivals to go online. The Chair thanked Ms Disbury for the interesting project and the Area Partnership congratulated Alchemy on their achievements during this difficult time.

8. OTHER INFORMATION AND NEWS FOR NOTING

8.1

The Chairman, Councillor Richards, advised that the Teviot and Liddesdale Community Fund for 2020/21 guidance and an application form was available on the Council's website. Any group wanting to submit an application should do so by the start of February for consideration at the March 2021 meeting.

https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20076/community_grants_and_funding/261/community_fund

8.2

Referring to the Teviot & Liddesdale Locality Plan & Action Plans, he advised that these plans were now published and outlined the priorities of the Teviot & Liddesdale area and suggested these could be the focus of a future Area Partnership meeting:

https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/file/7595/teviot_and_liddesdale_locality_plan

8.3

With regard to the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, currently there were no formal Participation Requests and no formal Asset Transfer requests being considered within Teviot & Liddesdale. Further information could be found here:

https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20062/strategies_plans_and_policies/357/community_empowerment_scotland_act_2015

8.4

Councillor Richards further advised that Fit for 2024 proposals for community engagement had been circulated with the agenda. Mrs Elborn raised concerns that the proposals did not identify engagement with local rural communities. It was hoped that the new proposed model would be a way of engaging with local communities in the Teviot and Liddesdale area. Ms Wilkinson advised that this was the start of the engagement, the wider public consultation would involve Area Partnerships. Ms Batsch raised that the Third Sector should be resourced to support engagement with Fit for 2024.

9.

ANY OTHER FORMAL BUSINESS

Regarding the Community Council Scheme Review Group it was noted that John Scott was to be replaced by Cameron Knox.

10.

OPEN FORUM

- 10.1 Mrs Elborn advised that Newcastleton and District Community Trust had started its first outreach learning project for women in business who needed support. There was a limited number of free places.
 - 10.2 Regarding campervans at the Common Haugh, it was advised that this would be considered at the next Hawick Common Good Fund Sub-Committee.
 - 10.3 Mr Kerr advised that Keltbray were offering vouchers for households disrupted by recent power outages and he would follow up. Severed phone lines had recently been repaired by Open Reach. SBC's emergency planning team did not have BT or Open Reach on their preferred contact list and Ms Jardine would discuss this with emergency planning.
11. **DATE OF NEXT TEVIOT AND LIDDESDALE AREA PARTNERSHIP - 9 MARCH 2021**
The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, 9 March 2021. Suggestions for agenda items could be sent to the Locality Development co-ordinator at gillian.jardine@scotborders.gov.uk. It was agreed that the next meeting should start at 6.00 pm.

CHAIRMAN

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 8.40 pm.