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**THE GREAT TAPESTRY OF SCOTLAND – CONSIDERATION OF  
PERMANENT LOCATION IN THE SCOTTISH BORDERS**

Report by the Corporate Transformation & Services Director

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**SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL**

**29 May 2014**

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**1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the possibility of locating the Great Tapestry of Scotland in the Scottish Borders on a permanent basis and to seek authority to prepare a detailed business case in respect of this proposal.
- 1.2 The report sets out the background of the Great Tapestry of Scotland. It explains that the Tapestry's Trustees are considering a permanent location in Scotland. The Council has completed initial work in respect of a possible permanent location in the Borders with Tweedbank being the most likely viable option.
- 1.3 An initial feasibility assessment has been completed and this indicates that there is merit in proceeding to evaluate the costs and benefits of the proposal via a full business case. This business proposition would include a new building to house the Tapestry along with ancillary facilities for an exhibition of such national importance. Consequently it is being recommended that a detailed business case should now be prepared and that a short life Member Officer Group is established to oversee the completion of this business case.
- 1.4 This is a unique opportunity for the Borders to obtain an exhibition of national significance with strong ties to the textile heritage and wider history of the Region.

**2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

**2.1 It is recommended that Council:**

- (a) requests Officers to prepare a detailed business case for locating The Great Tapestry of Scotland in the Scottish Borders at Tweedbank and brings a further report back to Council on this matter; and**
- (b) Agrees to the establishment of a short life Member Officer Group and nominates two Members to join the Group.**

### **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Great Tapestry of Scotland (the Tapestry) is a unique project to stitch the entire story of Scotland from pre-history to modern times. The Tapestry was the brainchild of renowned writer, Alexander McCall Smith, historian Alistair Moffat, and artist Andrew Crummy. They formed a team to mastermind the production of the world's longest tapestries through one of the biggest community arts projects ever to take place in Scotland. The aim was to create a series of over one hundred and fifty panels that told the key stories in Scottish history – everything from Duns Scotus to the formation of Rangers FC. Produced by over 1000 volunteers, each panel focuses on a specific historical chapter, and interwoven through each are tales of the time.
- 3.2 The tapestry design consists of 160 panels, each measuring either 100 × 100 cm or 100 × 50 cm. The successful creation of the tapestry initiated a legacy project that tells Scotland's history.
- 3.3 The first exhibition of The Great Tapestry of Scotland took place at the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh in September 2013. The exhibition opened to the public on Tuesday, 3 September and remained in the Parliament's Main Hall until 21 September 2013. All 143 metres of the tapestry were on display, in series, for the first time and more than 50,000 people came to view the artwork.
- 3.4 The Tapestry was then displayed in Aberdeen where more than 50,000 people visited the exhibition. The Tapestry is now on display in Paisley until 8 June 2014 where 10,000 visitors are expected. The exhibition returns to the Parliament over the summer months before travelling to New Lanark in October. At each of these exhibitions, visitors have been staying for approximately 4 hours. This means use of cafe and shop facilities is high. There is no doubt that the Tapestry is proving to be a very attractive exhibition and the visitor numbers are impressive. It is likely that the Tapestry will continue to be moved around Scotland and potentially beyond Scotland in the coming years.

### **4 PERMANENT LOCATION**

- 4.1 The Trustees of the registered charity who own and manage the Tapestry are now considering a permanent location for the Tapestry. The Council has been in discussion with the Trustees since last year to consider the possibility of locating the Tapestry in the Borders.
- 4.2 Looking forward, it is likely the tapestry will be a major tourist and visitor attraction. In time it is very likely that the Tapestry will become a treasured historical Scottish artefact and wherever it finds a permanent home it will receive many visitors annually.
- 4.3 The Trustees are very clear about how they want the Tapestry treated and it must be a visitor attraction in its own right, in a location very close to a significant public transport link. They also feel that a purpose built home with a "visually striking, conceptually rich" fabric and design in which to house and exhibit the Tapestry would be the most fitting solution. It is already clear that other Councils as well as other public and private sector organisations would be very keen to host the Tapestry on a permanent basis.

- 4.4 Given the history of textiles in the Borders, the very close proximity to Abbotsford and also to Bowhill and the reintroduction of the Borders Railway in 2015, there is a real possibility of the Council securing the Tapestry on a permanent basis at a location in the Borders. This is an outstanding opportunity for the Borders to further enhance its tourist offer and secure a potentially world class attraction

## **5 INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND FEASIBILITY ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1 Following the initial discussions with the Trustees, consideration has been given to possible locations. Given the Trustees' wish for the location to be very close to a significant public transport link, the only viable options in the Borders would appear to be Galashiels and Tweedbank. An initial desk top assessment suggested that land availability with good access for both public transport and private cars was very restricted at Galashiels. The work undertaken in recent years in Galashiels town centre has focussed on the through routes for the A7, access to new developments, enhancing public space and the transport interchange for the new railway station. It was concluded from even a brief initial review that to introduce a new building and associated parking in close proximity to the railway station was simply not viable on the basis of existing land uses with no available site identifiable. In considering Tweedbank there is both adjacent land available and it is in the ownership of the Council. It was concluded that at least for the purposes of the initial feasibility assessment that Tweedbank was a more viable option.
- 5.2 The Council commissioned Jura Consultants to complete an initial feasibility study. The study considered the potential of the Scottish Borders as a permanent home for the Tapestry, with a particular emphasis on the village of Tweedbank, given the new railway terminus there. The outcome of the study was informed by a detailed consideration of the visitor experience, a desk-based review of the visitor market, an assessment of the potential capital costs and funding, and consideration of the projected income and expenditure.

### **The Building**

- 5.3 In completing the initial study, a range of accommodation for the Tapestry was considered; the study concluded with three options "Comprehensive", "Enhanced" and "Core".
- 5.4 To allow for enough room to accommodate the Great Tapestry of Scotland exhibition, supplementary exhibition space, conservation area, workshops areas and café/ entertainment areas, it is anticipated that a building of approximately 1300 m<sup>2</sup> ("Comprehensive") would be required.
- 5.5 In the event that some ancillary elements are not included (such as the conservation and workshop facilities), a building of 650m<sup>2</sup> (Core) could accommodate the Tapestry with a modest supplementary exhibitions area.
- 5.6 A third option could involve a building of 850m<sup>2</sup> (Enhanced). The additional space, 200m<sup>2</sup> greater than the smaller option, would provide a larger area for exhibitions. This appears to be the most viable option presented within the study.

- 5.7 Initial estimates place the Capital cost of these options between £2.6 and £5 million. The initial estimates in respect of revenue income and expenditure suggest a broadly balanced position at circa £450k. However these figures all require refining with further detailed work. Importantly borrowing costs also require to be assessed and incorporated into the revenue projections.
- 5.8 The key conclusions of the initial study were as follows:
- a. The large scale of the Tapestry itself makes it difficult to envisage it as an element of another attraction. If it was to be incorporated as part of an existing attraction, it would be difficult to maximise the financial and economic return because the achievable increase in both visitor numbers and associated admission would be constrained.
  - b. In assessing the potential location of the Tapestry, it is considered that the majority of visitors will arrive by car or by train. The new Borders Railway will provide a useful increment in visitors. A location adjacent to the station is advantageous but not necessarily essential, as long as direct transport links are available between the station and the attraction. This conclusion is supported by the Tourism Impact Assessment within the initial study, which is cautious in forecasting the volume of additional tourism the railway will bring to the area.
  - c. Melrose and Galashiels could provide alternative locations; however, the Great Tapestry of Scotland would then have to compete with other attractions and more importantly with other visitor services, e.g. cafes and restaurants.
  - d. The construction of a building at the proposed site adjacent to the railway station at Tweedbank would, in contrast, provide the opportunity to create a destination. Though co-location with Abbotsford could be considered a possibility for the certain efficiencies and avoidance of facility duplication which it would provide, it would not allow for the potential of creating a new attraction for the area in this way.
  - e. The performance of other visitor attractions in the Scottish Borders demonstrates that there are a number of popular historical attractions already existing in the Borders, and the subject and nature of the Tapestry renders it potentially well-placed in terms of both being an additional complementary attraction.
  - f. Regular refreshment of the visitor experience could be achieved by smaller scale supplementary exhibitions, updated on an annual basis. This accords with the concept of the Trustees for the attraction. It is considered that this refreshment is of paramount importance in ensuring the Tapestry is able to meet and sustain the medium visitor penetration rate, and potentially achieve the high estimate, of visitor numbers detailed in the visitor penetration rate analysis.
  - g. The importance of the refreshment of both central and complementary exhibitions is borne out by the experiences of the comparator attractions: those with largely static exhibitions, such as the Quaker Tapestry Exhibition, have seen a decline in visitor numbers.

## **Summary**

- 5.9 As a consequence of these key conclusions it is evident that there is a basis to move to a detailed business case for this proposal and it is recommended that the Council requests officers to prepare a detailed business case for locating The Great Tapestry of Scotland in the Scottish Borders at Tweedbank and brings a further report back to Council on this matter.

## **Detailed Business Plan**

- 5.10 There are a range of detailed and practical issues that are identified within the initial feasibility study as requiring to be developed. In addition Officers have considered some of the wider issues around the Tweedbank site that require further assessment, notably public utility provision, wider road network management implications and funding. The funding issue is addressed further under the financial implications. There may be further issues identified by the full business case, but at this stage there are no substantive issues identified that would lead Officers to believe that the key conclusions of the initial feasibility study are incorrect or that there is not a sound basis for proceeding with development of a detailed business case.
- 5.11 Given the profile of this project and the range of issues to be addressed in completing the detailed business case it is recommended that a short life Member Officer Working Group is established. This group should oversee the completion of the detailed business case and the preparation of the report for Council. It is recommended that two Members are nominated to join the group.
- 5.12 Officers will procure external support to complete the development of the Detailed Business Plan. The estimated costs of this advice are circa £15-20k. An additional cost of circa £20k will also be required to undertake a desktop survey of the site, sufficient preliminary design work and cost planning (requiring an architect, engineer and quantity surveyor) and specialist advice on both the environmental systems and exhibition display to ensure that the capital cost estimates and revenue running costs are robust.

## **6 IMPLICATIONS**

### **6.1 Financial**

The development of a facility to house the Tapestry will be a significant undertaking for the Council both in terms of the costs and the revenue generating potential of such a facility.

The business case will set out the capital construction costs including site acquisition and preparation, revenue running costs and income generating potential of the facility and will apply both optimism bias to the capital costs and sensitivity analysis to revenue expenditure. The cost drivers will vary with,

- a. the structure chosen to develop the business case, for example a trust model could be eligible for relief from non-domestic rates, and will have implications for VAT
- b. the size and specification of the building
- c. the availability of grant funding, and
- d. decisions over whether or not to charge visitors an entrance fee to view the Tapestry.

The assumptions used to derive the financial business case will be clearly set out in the full business case along with a risk commentary. A sensitivity analysis will be developed to provide comfort with regard to the revenue and capital budgetary implications of the recommended scope of the project.

## **6.2 Risk and Mitigations**

The report describes all the potential risks that have been identified in relation to this project, no specific additional concerns need be addressed at this stage pending the completion of the full business case.

## **6.3 Equalities**

There are no immediate matters that require to be addressed in respect of equalities. The detailed business case will address equalities issues pertaining to the project.

## **6.4 Acting Sustainably**

Any new project that requires a new building offers a range of opportunities for more sustainable action. The detailed business case will address this issue.

## **6.5 Carbon Management**

There will be carbon management implications from this project given both travel and building implications. The detailed business case will address this.

## **6.6 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

No changes are required to the Scheme of Administration as a consequence of this report.

# **7 CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Service Director Strategy and Policy, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Chief Officer HR, the Service Director Interim Capital Projects and the Clerk to the Council have been consulted. Their comments have been incorporated in the final report.

**Approved by**

**Corporate Transformation & Services Director Signature .....**

**Author(s)**

Name	Designation and Contact Number
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**Background Papers:** None

**Previous Minute Reference:** None

**Note** – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Rob Dickson can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

Contact: Rob Dickson, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA,  
Tel: 01835 825155 email [eitranslationrequest@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:eitranslationrequest@scotborders.gov.uk).

## **SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL**

MINUTE of MEETING of the SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL held in the TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, HAWICK on 29 May 2014 at 10:30 a.m.

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Present: Councillors G Garvie (Convener), S. Aitchison, W. Archibald, M. Ballantyne, S. Bell, C. Bhatia, J. Brown, J. Campbell, K. Cockburn, M. J. Cook, A. Cranston, G. Edgar, J. A. Fullarton, J. Greenwell, B. Herd, G. Logan, S. Marshall, J. G. Mitchell, D. Moffat, S. Mountford, A. J. Nicol, D. Parker, D. Paterson, F. Renton, S. Scott, R. Smith, R. Stewart, G. Turnbull, T. Weatherston, B. White

Apologies: Councillors V. M. Davidson, I. Gillespie, J. Torrance

In attendance: Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (People), Depute Chief Executive (Place), Corporate Transformation and Services Director, Chief Financial Officer, Joint Director of Public Health, Democratic Services Team Leader.

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### **WELCOME**

1. Councillor Stuart Marshall, Hawick Provost welcomed Scottish Borders Council to Hawick and expressed his pleasure in providing the venue for the meeting in the recently refurbished Hawick Town Hall. In adding his gratitude for the Council's support for the refurbishment project he commented on the quality of the work that had been carried out and drew attention to the iconic clock designed and made for the hall by local jeweller Hamish Smith.
2. The Convener welcomed newly elected Councillor McAteer to his first Council meeting.

### **DECISION NOTED.**

### **MINUTE**

3. The Minute of the Meeting held on 24 April 2014 was considered.

### **DECISION**

**AGREED that the Minute be approved and signed by the Convener.**

### **COMMITTEE MINUTES**

4. The Minutes of the following Committees had been circulated:-

Community Planning Strategic Board	3 April 2014
Local Review Body	14 April 2014
Planning & Building Standards	14 April 2014
Audit	21 April 2014
Teviot & Liddesdale Area Forum	22 April 2014
Selkirk Common Good Fund	24 April 2014
Education Committee	29 April 2014
Eildon Area Forum	30 April 2014
Planning & Building Standards	6 May 2014
Peebles Common Good Fund	7 May 2014



**DECISION**

**APPROVED the Minutes listed above subject to paragraphs 5-7 below.**

**AUDIT COMMITTEE**

5. With reference to paragraph 11 of the Audit Committee Minute of 21 April 2014, it was recommended that the HM Treasury Green Book Checklist be used in a range of projects within the Council.

**DECISION**

**AGREED to approve the recommendation of the Audit Committee.**

**PLANNING AND BUILDING STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

6. With reference to paragraph 7 of the Minute of the Planning and Building Standards Committee of 6 May 2014, it was recommended that the new arrangements for the committee be continued on a permanent basis.

**DECISION**

**NOTED that this formed part of a report later on the agenda.**

**TWEEDDALE AREA FORUM**

7. With reference to paragraph 8(c) of the Tweeddale Area Forum meeting of 7 May 2014, it was recommended that the review of the Council's Scheme of Administration include consideration of deputations, in certain defined circumstances, be allowed to address Council Committees re local concerns in relation to recommendations within reports.

**DECISION**

**AGREED that this recommendation be included in the review.**

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE INTEGRATION SHADOW BOARD**

8. The draft Minute of the Health and Social Care Integration Shadow Board meeting of 28 April 2014 had been circulated.

**DECISION**

**APPROVED the Minute.**

**THE GREAT TAPESTRY OF SCOTLAND**

9. There had been circulated copies of a report by the Corporate Transformation and Services Director to inform Council of the possibility of locating the Great Tapestry of Scotland in the Scottish Borders on a permanent basis and to seek authority to prepare a detailed business case in respect of this proposal. The report set out the background of the Tapestry, a legacy project which told the story of Scotland from pre-history to modern times. This was the brainchild of author, Alexander McCall Smith, historian, Alistair Moffat, both of whom were in attendance and of artist Andrew Crummy. The Trustees of the registered charity who owned and managed the Tapestry had made their wish known that the Tapestry should be a visitor attraction in its own right in a location very close to a significant transport link. Having completed initial work in respect of a possible permanent location in the Borders, with Tweedbank being the most viable option, the Council commissioned Jura Consultants to complete an initial feasibility study. The Consultants' representative Paul Jardine gave Members a review of the study and of the key conclusions reached. The assessment had indicated that there was merit in proceeding to evaluate the costs and benefits of the proposal via a full business case. The business proposition would include a new building to house the Tapestry along with ancillary facilities. The report recommended that a short life Member Officer Group be established to oversee the completion of the business case. In the ensuing debate the majority of Members strongly

supported the report's conclusion that this was a unique opportunity for the Borders to obtain an exhibition of national significance with strong ties to the textile heritage and wider history of the region. Its value was recognised both as a visitor attraction in its own right as well as the potential for generating economic inward investment. However, some concern was expressed with regard to revenue running costs in relation to the attraction's income generating potential. With respect to the remit for the business case, several Members made cases for locating the Tapestry in other towns in the Borders and also pointed out advantages of linking it with other visitor attractions. However, the merits of Tweedbank as a location were generally recognised in terms of its centrality to the Borders and potential transport links associated with the Railway.

#### VOTE

*Councillor Parker, seconded by Councillor Bell, moved that the recommendations in the report be approved subject to the number of Members nominated to join the Member Officer group being amended from two to three and that the Members nominated be Councillors Archibald, Davidson and Parker.*

*Councillor Ballantyne, seconded by Councillor Fullarton, moved as an amendment that:-*

*(a) the words 'at Tweedbank' be omitted from part (a) of the recommendation; and*

*(b) four Members be nominated to join the Member Officer group, these being one Member elected from each political group.*

*On a show of hands Members voted as follows:-*

*Motion - 21 votes*

*Amendment - 7 votes*

*The motion was accordingly carried.*

The Chairman thanked Alistair Moffat and Alexander McCall Smith for their attendance.

#### **DECISION**

##### **DECIDED:-**

- (a) that officers be requested to prepare a detailed business case for locating the Great Tapestry of Scotland in the Scottish Borders at Tweedbank and to bring a further report back to Council on this matter;**
- (b) that a short life Member Officer Group be established and that three Members be nominated to join Group; and**
- (c) to appoint Councillors Archibald, Davidson and Parker as the Members to serve on this Group.**

#### **OPEN QUESTIONS**

10. The questions submitted by Councillors Mountford, Turnbull, Scott, Logan and Weatherston were answered.

#### **DECISION**

**NOTED the replies as detailed in Appendix I to this Minute.**

#### **MEMBERS**

Councillors Marshall and Stewart left the meeting.

### **EQUALITIES REVIEW GROUP – FINAL REPORT**

11. With reference to paragraph 9 of the Minute of 25 October 2012, there had been circulated copies of a report by the Director of Strategy and Policy seeking approval of the report and recommendations of the Equalities Review Group and of the proposals for taking these recommendations forward. It was explained that the Equalities Review Group was given the remit to assess and put forward recommendations to Council in terms of the approach, governance and engagement on equalities matters. The Group's Chairman Councillor Greenwell referred Members to the report of the Review Group which set out its findings and recommendations. He emphasised the importance of ensuring that equality impact assessments were carried out on the various aspects of the Council's work. The report advised that the Equalities Officer Group (EOG) had a crucial role to play in embedding equalities across Council services. It was considered that the EOG could take forward the recommendations of the Equalities Review Group and outline the progress on these in the formal progress report of the Mainstreaming Report and Equality Outcomes 2013-2017, which required to be approved by Council in April 2015. One of the recommendations of the report was that an Equalities Champion be designated to provide stronger political leadership on equalities. Members unanimously agreed that Councillor Greenwell should be appointed to this role.

#### **DECISION**

##### **AGREED:-**

- (a) the recommendations in the report of the Equalities Review Group and that the Equalities Officer's Group be given the remit to take these forward;**
- (b) that progress on these recommendations be included in the formal progress report of the Mainstreaming Report and Equality Outcomes 2013 – 2017 which would require Council approval in April 2015; and**
- (c) that Councillor Greenwell be appointed as Equalities Champion for the Council.**

### **CHAMBERS INSTITUTION TRUST**

12. The Convenor advised that consideration of this report would be deferred.

#### **DECISION**

##### **NOTED.**

### **PLANNING REFORM AND GOVERNANCE OF THE PLANNING SYSTEM**

13. With reference to paragraph 10 of the Minute of 25 September 2013 and paragraph 3 of the Minute of 31 October 2013, there had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Regulatory Services. The purpose of the report was to review the Planning and Building Standards Committee and public speaking arrangements introduced on 1 November 2013 and to consider whether those arrangements should be made permanent. Members were advised that the report had been presented to the Planning and Building Standards Committee on 6 May 2014 and the Committee's recommendations had been incorporated. The report referred to the key changes which had been approved and which were now subject to review. As part of the review to establish how effective the new arrangements had been, short questionnaires had been sent to relevant parties including Committee Members, other Members, applicants and agents as well as supporters and objectors who had spoken at Committee. The main findings from the returns to the questionnaires were summarised in the report. It was concluded that the revised Committee arrangements, including the arrangements for public speaking, appeared to be working satisfactorily and were supported by the majority of Members and public speakers. However it was agreed that investigations should be undertaken with a view to improving acoustics in the Chamber. With regard to concerns about the volume and quality of paperwork presented to the Local Review Body, proposals and opportunities to streamline paperwork and information presented to both Committee and Local Review Body meetings were set out in an appendix to the report. In respect of the requirement, which was

questioned by Members, for any Member to retire from the meeting room after making representations to Committee on behalf of constituents the Service Director Regulatory Services advised that this was required by the Standards Commission Code of Conduct. He would, however, raise Members' concerns with the Standards Commissioner and report back his findings to the Planning and Building Standards Committee by September 2014.

#### **DECISION**

**AGREED to approve the continuation of the Planning and Building Standards Committee and Public Speaking arrangements agreed in September and October 2013 on a permanent basis.**

#### **COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

14. This item was withdrawn.

#### **DECISION NOTED.**

#### **MOTION BY COUNCILLOR COCKBURN**

15. Councillor Cockburn, seconded by Councillor Tumbull, moved approval of his Motion as detailed on the agenda in the following terms:-

"In the light of the ongoing changes to the energy subsidies, this Council instructs the Leader to write to the Scottish Government expressing concern over the sustainability of the Scottish Government's targets, and the impact on the Scottish Borders countryside, of the current energy policy"

Councillor Cockburn spoke in support of his motion.

Councillor Aitchison moved that the wording of the Motion be amended as follows:-

"Council instructs the Leader to write to Scottish Government expressing concern over the conflict between the sustainability of Scottish Government energy targets and their impact on Scottish Borders Landscapes, being mindful of the present impact of wind turbines in this area. This Council reaffirms that Scottish Borders Council Planning Policy is the best mechanism for balancing protection with appropriate developments."

Following Councillor Cockburn's agreement with the amended wording it received unanimous approval from Members.

#### **DECISION**

**AGREED that amended Motion be approved.**

#### **PRIVATE BUSINESS**

16. **DECISION**

**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 Appendix II to this Minute on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 6, 9 and 10 of Part I of Schedule 7A to the Act.**

#### **SUMMARY OF PRIVATE BUSINESS**

#### **Minute**

1. The private section of the Council Minute of 29 April 2014 was approved.

#### **Committee Minutes**

2. The private sections of the Committee Minutes as detailed in paragraph 3 of this Minute were approved.

**Waste Treatment Project**

3. Members approved a report by the Corporate Transformation and Services Director.

*The meeting concluded at 1.05 pm*

**SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL**  
**29 MAY 2014**  
**APPENDIX I**

**Questions from Councillor Mountford**

To Executive Member for Environmental Services

1. How many tonnes of waste is the Council expecting to send to landfill this year and how does this compare with totals for previous years?

Reply from Councillor Paterson

The historic and future projections of Municipal Solid Waste sent to landfill by the Council are publicly available within the Integrated Waste Management Strategy. The Council sent 38,206 tonnes of Municipal Solid Waste to landfill in 2012/13. The 2013/14 figure has not been verified but we expect it to be in the region of 38,500 tonnes. It is projected that the Council will send approximately 41,000 tonnes of Municipal Solid Waste to landfill in 2014/15.

2. What proportion of waste collected by SBC is expected to be recycled this year and how does this compare with previous years?

Reply from Councillor Paterson

The historic and future projections of household recycling performance are publicly available within the Integrated Waste Management Strategy. The Council achieved a recycling rate of 7.8% in 2004/05 rising to 41.1% in 2012/13. Figures for 2013/14 have not yet been verified but we would expect them to be similar to that achieved in 2012/13 i.e. approximately 41%. The Council's projected recycling performance for 2014/15 is 35.8%, which is a decrease of 5.3%. The reduction is related to the removal of the garden waste service.

**Questions from Councillor Turnbull**

To Executive Member for Environmental Services

1. Due to the number of complaints that are being made to the locally elected Councillors, can the Executive Member advise this Council as to when the extended opening hours at the Hawick Community Recycling unit will come into force?

Reply from Councillor Paterson

The review of Community Recycling Centre operating hours is outlined as 'Action 20' within the Integrated Waste Management Strategy. Action 20 was identified as a high priority with completion of the review within 1 year (i.e. December 2014). Implementation would take place thereafter, following approval from the appropriate Council Committee. Officers are currently undertaking a review of resources, priorities and project delivery timelines associated with the Integrated Waste Management Strategy to determine if it is possible to accelerate delivery of Action 20. Officers will be discussing the outputs from this review with Members.

2. Can the Executive Member advise what arrangements are in place for gardening contractors and what gate charges are made either annually or on a casual basis?

Reply from Councillor Paterson

We currently accept garden waste from contractors at Hawick and Eshiels Waste Transfer Stations. A garden waste bay has recently been installed at Hawick Waste Transfer Station to increase garden waste storage capacity. The Waste Transfer Stations are open to contractors between 9:00am and 12:00pm Monday to Friday. The gate fee is currently £35.17 per tonne plus VAT with a minimum 1 tonne charge per month. The minimum 1 tonne charge is to cover administration fees. As highlighted the transfer

stations are closed to contractors in the afternoon. This is for operational reasons to support the refuse collection service. Officers are currently assessing the ability to extend the contractor opening hours but at this point it is not possible to provide an update as to the viability.

It is also worth mentioning that Fourth Resource Management accept garden waste directly from contractors at their composting facility at Pavilion between Galashiels and Gattonside

#### To Executive Member for Planning and Environment

Can the Executive Member advise how many applications were made in response to the current advertisement for a Dog Control Officer, and what priority will be given to those on the redeployment register?

#### Reply from Councillor Smith

A total of 34 applications were received in response to the advertisement for this post. In accordance with the Council's Retention and Redeployment Procedure, prior to the post being advertised consideration was given to whether any suitable candidate(s) were available from the redeployment register. This was undertaken by comparing the nature and grade of the new post and considering whether any employees requiring redeployment met the essential criteria of the new post. In this case no matches were identified. It remained open to anyone on the redeployment register to apply for the new post. Any applications received will be assessed alongside all other applicants.

#### To Executive Member for Roads and Infrastructure

Can the Executive Member advise when we will be given an update on the CCTV provision and when the upgrade will take place and at what cost?

#### Reply from Councillor Edgar

Work is ongoing to assess the future provision of CCTV within the Borders, including the adoption of new technology. In doing so it is recognised that a strategic decision will need to be made by the Council regarding its policy for use of CCTV in town centres. It is anticipated that the outcome of this work together with a proposed policy would be ready for implementation in the autumn of 2014.

In the meantime, in consultation with the Police, measures have been taken to keep existing CCTV systems operational where practicable, including the system in Hawick.

#### **Question from Councillor Scott**

#### To the Leader

Is the Scheme of Administration going to be debated at the June Council meeting?

#### Reply from Councillor Parker

A report reviewing the current Committee Structure is currently being prepared but is unlikely to be available for consideration by Council at their June meeting and will be presented at a suitable future meeting.

#### **Questions from Councillor Logan**

#### To the Executive Member for Social Work

With reference to the summit of 23 April on Pay Day Loans and Gambling and the invitation from the Minister of Local Government and Planning in which he stated that he was keen for interested elected members to attend and contribute, can you tell us any specific contribution made by you on behalf of the Scottish Borders Council?

### Reply from Councillor Renton

The Ministerial Summit on Pay Day Loans and Gambling held on 23rd April involved a number of keynote speakers on the impacts of debt, and a range of workshops ranging from ethically responsible financial services to current regulation and measures.

As Executive Member for Social Work and Housing my specific contribution to the event was by way of representing the Council through attending and actively contributing to discussions in the various workshops that took place.

Specifically, I attended a workshop on Young People's perspective whose social and financial wellbeing are impacted by lax credit checks being carried out. I believe that the legislation around checks on young people borrowing should be tightened to prevent them falling into serious debt.

Turning to the potential to block access to payday websites I have, following the summit, requested a report from Officers to determine the actual impact of web site blocking to enable the Council to look into whether this is something that SBC should be doing and this work is progressing".

### To the Leader

With reference to your answer to my question at the Council meeting of 27 February on the Innerleithen Gap Site, can you tell us if Scottish Borders Council have a contract in place with Waverco given that in your answer you stated that it was hoped to have a start made to redevelopment by May of this year?

### Reply from Councillor Parker

I would like to thank Cllr Logan for raising this question. As he and other local councillors are aware, the Innerleithen gap site has been a complicated and challenging redevelopment project.

The project itself is being procured via a design and build building contract route, which involves liaison with both internal Council Departments, external consultants and the developer who has just established a joint venture company.

Unfortunately, owing to the nature of the project, the partners involved, as well as ensuring that all of the inherent project risks for the Council are minimised within the contract; it has taken slightly longer than officers initially anticipated.

However, I am sure that Cllr Logan will agree that minimising risk to the Council outweighs the short time delay for tender issue.

I can confirm that these issues have now been resolved and the Invitation to Tender is in final sign off stage and will be issued by Friday 30 May.

### **Questions from Councillor Weatherston**

#### To the Executive Member for Environmental Services

1. Were you aware your department made a promise to Kelso Councillors that temporary measures would be put in place to help move 690 tonnes of garden waste and avoid a 40 mile round trip for residents?

#### Reply from Councillor Paterson

The minutes to the Council meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> December 2013 makes no reference or commitment to the delivery of an interim garden waste service in Kelso. The Director did make a commitment to investigate an interim solution.

2. Can you explain how you could give details of the Kelso garden waste proposal to the Hawick News on 11<sup>th</sup> April and slam our plans when no details were known until a meeting with officers from your department on 16<sup>th</sup> April?



Reply from Councillor Paterson

An approach was made by the Hawick News for a comment and I advised that it would be unfair on other communities in the Borders if they did not receive this service.

3. Were your efforts to stop Kelso Councillors trying to help their constituents based on specific operational issues in their Ward or was it around setting a precedent?

Reply from Councillor Paterson

The agreement was made by Council at their meeting on 12 December.