

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL TWEEDDALE AREA PARTNERSHIP

MINUTE of Meeting of the TWEEDDALE
AREA PARTNERSHIP held via Microsoft
Team on Tuesday, 19 January 2021 at 7.00
p.m.

Present:- Councillors R. Tatler (Chairman), H. Anderson, S. Bell, K. Chapman, S. Haslam, E. Small together with 28 representatives from Partner Organisations, Community Councils and members of the public.

In Attendance:- Service Director Customer & Communities, Communities and Partnerships Manager, Locality Development Co-ordinator (K. Harrow), Democratic Services Team Leader.

1. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the second meeting of the Tweeddale Area Partnership held via Microsoft Teams and outlined how the meeting would be conducted and how those both in the meeting and watching via the Live Stream could take part.

2. **FEEDBACK FROM MEETING ON 3 NOVEMBER 2020**

- 2.1 The Minute of the meeting of the Tweeddale Area Partnership held on 3 November 2020 had been circulated and this was noted. Councillor Tatler advised that the Parking Working Group had not been able to progress due to the current Covid-19 restrictions but would recommence its work as soon as circumstances allowed.
- 2.2 Kenny Harrow gave an update on the work of the Community Hub and advised that the Hub had become busier again with mental health issues being a major problem.

3. **FIT FOR 2024: REVIEW OF AREA PARTNERSHIPS & COMMUNITY FUND AND ACTIONS FOR TWEEDDALE AREA PARTNERSHIP**

- 3.1 There had been circulated a summary of the main points in the report which had been considered by Council. Councillor Tatler advised that he had held 3 drop in sessions via zoom and had also received some feedback via email. He shared the responses that he had received, a copy which are appended to this Minute. Councillor Tatler also commented on the ideas which had been drawn up by the Teviot & Liddesdale Area Partnership and asked those present for any comments either at the meeting or to be submitted to him by the end of March.
- 3.2 In response to questions regarding the group set up to review the Community Council Scheme it was explained that representatives had been drawn from each area and the Group was due to meet again later this week.
- 3.3 With regard to the Community Fund it had been suggested that each area should set their own criteria and set their own local priorities. Shona Smith explained the short-listing process and the timescale needed to bring requests forward for consideration. The need for equality between communities of different populations was highlighted. It was explained that at present all applications were brought forward for consideration and those present were asked if there was any other information or supporting documents they would like to see as part of the application process. It was considered that the current information provided was sufficient with a statement regarding whether or not the criteria had been met.

4. **TWEEDDALE COMMUNITY FUND**

- 4.1 With reference to paragraph 3.2 of the Minute of the meeting held on 3 November 2020, there had been circulated copies of the funding request from Peebles Community Trust on behalf of Peebles Railway Heritage seeking funding of £6,615 to fund consultancy costs and building repairs. The additional information requested at the last meeting had now been provided and Malcolm Bruce spoke in support of the application and answered questions regarding community engagement and the need to treat wet rot in the building. It was agreed that the request for funding be approved.
- 4.2 A paper showing the current position of the Tweeddale Fund had also been circulated and in response to a question Shona Smith advised that a decision had been taken regarding the position of any underspend and if it would be carried forward into the next financial year. She encouraged groups to submit applications and the Chairman advised that he would be able to clarify the budget position at the next meeting.
- 4.3 An evaluation form in respect of previous grants to the Newlands Community Development Trust and information on the Tweeddale Youth Action Cookery sessions had been circulated for information. Dave Hodson advised that the Cookery Session project was still ongoing and he would provide further detail in due course. On-line cookery session had proved very popular during lockdown with 35-40 ingredient bags being issued each week and this would continue until the funding ran out. In response to a question he confirmed it was mainly high school age children and following a social work referral was able to help with a particular case of social isolation. The Chairman suggested that a further funding application could be made and asked that Dave get in touch with Kenny Harrow.
- 4.4 In response to a question if any unspent funds could be used to provide better digital connections as home learning was totally dependent on a good wi-fi connection. Councillor Haslam advised that mi-fi hubs were being provided for those with a poor connection and asked anyone with difficulties to get in touch. It was noted that Scottish Government had provided funding to some Tweeddale Groups to help with this issue for older and disabled people.

5. **CURRENT CONSULTATIONS**

The Chairman highlighted the following consultations which were currently open:-

- Scottish Borders Budget Challenge - closes 31 January 2021:
<https://scotborders.prioritysimulator.com/>
- Licensing of Sexual Entertainment Venues – closes 14 February 2021
<https://scotborders.citizenspace.com/regulatory-services/licensing-of-sexual-entertainment-venues/>

6. **OTHER INFORMATION AND NEWS FOR NOTING**

The agenda detailed the following updates since the last meeting:-

- The Tweeddale Community Fund for 2020/21 is open - guidance and application form is on SBC website:
https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20076/community_grants_and_funding/261/community_fund
- Tweeddale Locality Plan & Action Plans - these plans are now published and outline the priorities of the Tweeddale area and could be the focus of a future Area Partnership meeting:
https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/download/1310/locality_plans
- Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 – There are no formal Participation Requests being considered within Tweeddale. The two Asset Transfer Requests reported at the last meeting are progressing but are yet to be validated. Further information can be found here:
https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20062/strategies_plans_and_policies/357/com

The updates were noted.

7. DATE OF NEXT TWEEDDALE AREA PARTNERSHIP

The next meeting was scheduled for 30 March 2021.

8. ANY OTHER FORMAL BUSINESS

No items were raised.

9. OPEN FORUM

- 9.1 Kenny Harrow reminded everyone to submit any funding applications by mid-February to allow time to assess before the next meeting.
- 9.2 Kirsty Peebles asked for an update on the appointment of a project manager in respect of the provision of a multi-use path between Eddleston and Peebles. Lawrie Hayworth advised that the Sustrans funding was being reassessed with discussions at Board level between Sustrans and SOSE. Once the outcome was known the project could proceed as it was “shovel ready”
- 9.3 Esther Daborn raised, with reference to the future of Area Partnerships, that Community Councils did not know each other and asked if there could be stronger links which would allow better contributions at these meetings. Shona Smith advised that there was a community council network and she would provide information on this. Councillor Tatler advised that there had previously been a Tweeddale Community Council Network. Kenny Harrow suggested the use of on-line platforms and that this could be discussed at the next meeting. Lorna McCullough highlighted that the Teviot & Liddesdale Area already had a community council group to deal with windfarm applications in their area. With regard to wind farm applications Malcolm Bruce advised that there were currently 2 pending which could have the potential to provide funding for the community of £0.5m per year and he was hoping to achieve a joint Community Council voice on this. Kirsty Peebles suggested speaking to community councils who already had experience in this area. This was considered a suitable item for further discussion at a future meeting.
- 9.4 Chris Lewin asked for an update of the site owned by the Council in Broughton which was earmarked for affordable Housing and Councillor Chapman undertook to check on this.
- 9.5 Lawrie Hayworth asked for a future agenda item to provide an update on Fit For 2024 and the impact on service delivery.

The meeting concluded at 8.50 p.m.

Appendix

Area Partnership - response

- We need to find subjects and speakers that will attract the community to engage.
- Consider meeting timings – remember people work.
- Find topics that are relevant to people across all communities.
- Area Partnerships should be Council Committees.
- There needs to be a clearer picture of the purpose of the Area Partnership.
- It is important that larger communities are not able to dominate decision-making over smaller communities.
- The Community Assistance Hub is a very successful and effective model at providing a sense of community
- Most people do not know about the Area Partnership.
- What are the outcomes of discussions and decisions? Good ideas need to be translated into actions.
- Community Councils have differing roles and priorities across the locality – dependent on the size of the community they represent.
- Area Partnership meetings need to be better advertised and should feature a major speaker to attract interest – not necessarily linked to Council business.
- There is a need to make the APs more representative of the local community. Increased representation of local groups and more diverse in all aspects. Business representation, local festivals and organisations.

- There is a need for the APs to be able to practically influence decisions affecting service delivery by the Council and other Partners.
- There is a need by the community to have a better understanding of how services are delivered to their locality by the Council and Partners. In relation to Council services it should be able to provide enhanced information on Council spending and service delivery by locality. When this information is put alongside statistical information relating to need this should mean that APs can have informed discussions about priorities and make suggestions for improvements – including the ability to supplement SBC services with community directed initiatives using additional funding (Community Fund).

Community Fund - response

Criteria for funding – Each Area Partnership should agree its own criteria for funding from the Community Fund. These should be established by contribution and discussion at an Area Partnership meeting dedicated to this process.

The process

- It is vital that people feel they are being involved in the assessment of each application and that the process more transparent – consider a shortlisting process
- Short-listed applications should be advertised and information provided in advance of the AP meeting
- Concern that bigger communities secure more funding than smaller ones. Need a mechanism to make sure distribution is fair.
- Giving a proportion of what is asked for (where fund is over-subscribed for example) is not always a good solution – need to check what effect this would have on the viability of the project.

Decision-making – as is currently the agreed process, where there is consensus for an application it will be approved by an Area Partnership meeting without any vote. Short-listing would help to provide consensus as would providing information in advance.

- The key is to educate the community on budgeting priorities and the effects of decision-making. This is what **real** Participative Budgeting is about.

- Meetings need to have a focus and be more specific. Debates could be held on major changes to Council policy as a stage in the process.
- Resource should be provided to increase community engagement – “meaningful listening”
- Resources should be provided to assist Community Councils with projects