

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL
EILDON AREA FORUM

MINUTE of the MEETING of the EILDON
AREA FORUM held in the Corn Exchange,
Melrose on 20 August 2015 at 6.30 p.m.

- Present:- Councillors B. White (Chairman), S. Aitchison M. Ballantyne (from para 4), V. Davidson, G. Edgar, B. Herd, J. Mitchell, D Parker, J. Torrance.
Community Council representatives:- P. Docherty (Oxton and Channelkirk), R. French (Newtown and Eildon), A. Smith (Lauderdale), A. Pattullo (Selkirk), Inspector C. Wood (Police Scotland), K. Langley (Scottish Fire & Rescue), J. McLaren (NHS Borders).
- Apologies:- Councillor I. Gillespie, M. Crausaz (Ettrick and Yarrow Community Council), I. Purvis (Galashiels Community Council), R. Kenney (Galashiels Community Council).
- In Attendance:- Democratic Services Officer (F. Henderson).

Members of public – 5

MINUTE

1. There had been circulated copies of the Minute of 14 May 2015.

DECISION

APPROVED for signature by the Chairman.

INVESTING IN BORDERS RAILWAY – ‘A CATALYST FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY’

2. The Chairman welcomed Mr John Yellowlees, ScotRail External Relations Manager to give a short presentation on the Borders Railway. In March 2015 the Scottish Government Economic Strategy stated – Invest in Scotland’s infrastructure to help create good quality employment opportunities ‘. In 2014 there was a population of 5.3 million and nearly 90 million journeys every year on 2,700 miles of track and 351 stations. The vision for 2020 that there would be nearly 105 million journeys every year. The Abellio Scotrail approach was that a safe, punctual and sustainable rail network was vital to the success of any modern economy. Value was not simply the journey from A to B, but ‘door-step to destination’ achieved from positive working with customers, stakeholders and each other to recognise the ‘bigger role’ the rail network played and the wider economic and social objectives built into Business processes. Abellio had operations in UK, Germany and the Netherlands, with a clear focus and commitment to Scotland with the UK HQ based in Glasgow. The Economic Development Approach was to engage in economic and community activity that addressed the social and economic exclusion, investment in new services and infrastructure to maximise wider benefits for the Business, passengers and communities, unlock new income generation opportunities through the development of key locations and assets and increase passenger numbers through the identification and development of both strategic and localised initiatives. There would be Strategic Investment with major intercity improvements and a fully refurbished fleet from December 2018 which would include enhanced Wi-Fi, catering (selling Scottish produce), on-board services, proper business traveller services, additional toilets, luggage and bicycle accommodation and improved journey times. A £17.3million Station Improvement Fund for Flagship Stations to improve CCTV in 78 stations, 41 new waiting shelters, the roll-out of Bike’n’Go Programme and additional bike facilities and £1 million investment in accessibility improvements in year one.

In terms of investment in the Borders to revitalise the economic prosperity of the Borders Region there was 30 miles of new track, seven new stations, six new car parks and nearly £300million investment. Galashiels transport interchange and new depot at Tweedbank bringing well paid jobs to the Borders. Mr Yellowlees answered questions and the Chairman thanked him for his very informative and engaging presentation.

DECISION

NOTED the presentation.

LOCAL ACCESS AND TRANSPORT STRATEGY (LATS)

3. The Chairman welcomed Graeme Johnstone, Lead Officer, Scottish Borders Council to the Forum to give a presentation on the Local Access and Transport Strategy (LATS). Mr Johnstone explained that a new Strategy Document was required as the existing Strategy was out of date, access and transport were key issues in the Scottish Borders, and it would provide strategic direction and could be a valuable bidding document. The main issues to be covered by the Strategy would include:-

- The route to markets;
- Public transport;
- Walking, cycling and horse riding;
- Road maintenance;
- Forestry;
- Road safety;
- Parking; and
- Low carbon.

The consultation which would end on 23 October 2015 would be undertaken through an electronic questionnaire, key consultees, presentations to Area Forums, and written information available through Libraries, contact centres and council departments. Following the closure of the consultation process, consideration would be given to all responses received and the main strategy document would be developed for presentation to the Development Working Group and Committee before finalisation of the Strategy Document. Mr Johnstone concluded his presentation by advising where to send responses and answering Members questions.

DECISION

NOTED the presentation.

EARLSTON CATCHMENT AREA YOUTH SERVICES

4. The Chairman welcomed Sean Crichton (6th Year Pupil - Earlston High), Susan Law, Development Officer based at Langlee and Chris Donnelly (EYCB). It was explained that the Earlston catchment area covered Earlston, Oxton, St Boswells, Melrose, Lauder, Newtown, Gordon and Newstead. Within the catchment area there were 2,328 young people, with a school roll of 1041 of which 85% stayed on at school until 6th year. From the 1231 leavers in 2014, 93% went onto positive destinations. In comparison to the Scottish average, those within the Earlston catchment area were relatively low and geographical access for cars, bike and walking was a major contributing factor to the lack of youth opportunities. The aims of the Voluntary Youth Work Services were to increase and support youth services within the Earlston catchment, to give direction to the part time Development Worker and newly appointed Sessional staff, to submit, monitor and review funding applications for salary; core costs and service development; to provide educational and recreational opportunities for all young people in the area where they live, play and learn and to give continued support to the volunteers through training and face to face support. In order to develop Youth Work it was essential to work in partnership with other organisations

to bring more opportunities to young people. The main concentration of youth work had been based in Earlston and there was a need to develop new opportunities cascading to other villages, however the expense and availability of community spaces as well as lack of ownership made this an unattractive proposal to young people. The proposal was to link nearby villages such as Newtown St Boswells and St Boswells and to advertise and open up youth work opportunities to a larger audience from 10- 18 years. A Youth Survey would be conducted yearly followed up with a small short life working group, to ensure that targets were being met and that the Youth Workers were responsive and reactive when required, matching the responses to the needs of young people in each community. In terms of funding it was reported that Scottish Borders Council (CYOKG) investment of £8,719 had been extended until September 2016, although a reduction was expected after that, this was match funded with the Robertson Trust at £10k and both funding sources were used to fund the Development Worker Post. Funding was difficult to secure due to the lack of deprivation in the area and Earlston in some areas matched or exceeded the Scottish average. A Local Volunteer Coordinator for the catchment area had been secured through a joint partnership bid with YouthBorders to increase local support and involvement and £10k from the Moffat Trust to employ a sessional youth worker at 15 hours per week. There was Partnership working with VOMO to ensure that the voices of the young people were heard through producing video work through their new TV station and radio program. The Members acknowledged that Voluntary Youth Work services were essential and urged everyone to support them. The Chairman thanked those present for their attendance.

DECISION

NOTED the presentation.

THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL TEXTILES COLLECTION (SCOT)

5. The Chairman welcomed Alisdair Lockhart, Trustee of SCOT to the meeting to brief the Area Forum on the proposals. It was explained that the Scottish National Textiles Collection was the organisation and operation of a partnership between the Scottish Centre of Textiles Limited, the School of Textiles & Design of Heriot-Watt University and other parties to set up the Scottish National Textiles Collection in Galashiels for the benefit of the textile industry in Scotland. It was further explained that at a meeting at Borders College on 13th February 2015 it was agreed between the leaders of the textile industry and the educationalists to seek to set up the Scottish National Textiles Collection on the Netherfields campus in Galashiels, adjacent to the School of Textiles & Design of Heriot-Watt University on a location to be agreed. The National Collection would protect, record and seek to acquire archive material from throughout the textile industry in Scotland as it became available and before it was lost through neglect, sale outside Scotland or discarded. It would also seek to acquire related archive from other Scottish Institutions as well as from a global search. The legal vehicle for the National Collection would be a Company Limited by Guarantee with Charitable Status. SNTC Limited would have Members who would be the Trustees of the National Textile Collection and, who would, in turn, appoint Directors to a Board of Directors responsible for the management of the National Collection. The financial liability for each Member of SNTC Limited would be £1.00. The primary responsibility of both Trustees and Directors would be the maintenance, conservation, promotion and development of the National Textiles Collection, based on archive material donated, lent or temporary available to form the National Textiles Collection. The SNTC would receive no direct grant from Government agencies for the operation of the National Collection of Textiles, but would derive income from its educational activities, from the services provided to the Textile Industry and from tourism, both by specialist interest parties and the general public. The Financial Model showed the basis for the operation of the National Collection, including rental of appropriate premises of up to some 1,500 sq. metres of quality office space adjacent to the Netherdale campus at a commercial rental. SNTC was strongly supported by the major textile manufacturers based in Scotland, the Scottish Borders Council, the Scottish Textile & Leather Association, Scottish Enterprise, Energise Galashiels, Visit Scotland and

the National Museum of Scotland. The Chairman thanked Alisdair Lockhart for his presentation.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

OFF STREET PARKING PLACE, MELROSE – TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER

6. There had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Commercial Services seeking approval to amend the Traffic Regulation Order for Melrose Off Street Parking. The report explained that the Melrose Off Street Parking Order restricted parking in The Abbey Car park between the months of April and November only. Concerns had been raised from local businesses through the Community Council and Local Members that outwith the charging period the Abbey Car Park was used for long stay parking. The proposal was to extend the existing charging day from 1 April to Easter (whichever was earlier) until 30 November to all year round with exemptions at Christmas and New Year. During consultation with Historic Scotland, joint owners of the car park, it was agreed that the current profit-sharing was to be extended to cover the whole year period. There were no comments or objections received during the statutory consultation period or following advertisement.

DECISION

AGREED to APPROVE the proposed amendment to the Scottish Borders Council (Off Street parking Places (Melrose)) Order 2000 as detailed in appendices A and B of the report.

SMALL SCHEMES

7. There had been circulated papers detailing the programme of Small Schemes and Quality of Life projects which had been funded from these budgets through delegated powers. With regard to the Quality of Life budget, there had been circulated a list of works agreed which included white lining in Heriot and other sites in Galashiels and District at a cost of £1,000 and planning application fees for the Mikhail Lermontov bust at The Green, Earlston at a cost of £202.

DECISION

AGREED to approve the following new Neighbourhood Small Schemes for implementation:-

(i)	Park Benches, Lauder;	£3,100
(ii)	Provide six running boards, Skate Park, Public Park, Galashiels	£2,800

PARTNER UPDATES

Police Scotland

8. Inspector Wood advised that the Eildon Area continued to enjoy being a safe place to live, work and visit and an area of relatively low crime. Police Scotland were pleased to announce that recently published crime figures supported this continued trend. Also pleasing to announce was that during the year to date there had been a significant reduction in minor assaults, disturbance and anti-social behaviour across the Eildon Area. This was in no small part due to hard work and dedication of the local officers who continued to work pro-actively to deter, disrupt and detect the catalysts for such crimes, these being alcohol, drug and substance abuse and supply. In relation to drugs in particular, which was often the trigger for these types of crimes, officers in the Eildon Area had removed drugs with a value of almost £70,000 from the community. This illustrated the intention of Police Scotland to

leave no stone unturned in their commitment to fighting this scourge on society. In relation to Common Ridings, Gatherings and local festivals, Inspector Wood announced that, with a few exceptions (namely a couple of medical incidents resulting from spills from the saddle) events in the Eildon Area passed without any significant incidents of note which was as a direct result of considerable work and input from a number of agencies and individuals working together. Police Scotland along with the SBC Emergency Planning Team were pleased that all the main events were subjected to the Safety Advisory Group or SAG process this year, with obvious rewards. The Licensing Officers, working with the Councils Licensing Dept, reported that having carried out proactive work prior to and during events Licensees responded in a positive manner, resulting in a safe and trouble free environment.

9. The protection of property had seen a slight rise in the number of reported break-ins to both business and domestic properties and as was usual when a trend emerged, Police Scotland reacted to address this by targeting it with resources and local initiatives. As a result of analysis carried out, the local Community Policing Teams were out in the community engaging on a one-to-one basis with householders, distributing information on the security of property and possessions, as well as offering crime prevention surveys on properties by specialist officers. The response officers for their part had been tasked as part of their routine patrols, to give special attention to business premises out-with normal working hours and report any concerns they had in relation to the security of buildings, yards, outbuildings etc. Any such concerns reported results in a letter being sent to the business, outlining the issue noted and again giving crime prevention advice and offering a full premises survey to enhance security. Inspector Wood went on to report that as of the 17th of August, Police Scotland were promoting the National Hate crime campaign. This was scheduled to run for four weeks and would cover different strands. The purpose was to raise awareness on what hate crime was, how it affected victims, families and communities and would include information on the methods available for reporting such instances/crimes. The campaign would run on social media platforms and posters would be distributed in public areas and within schools and more information would be contained on the Police Scotland website. The Safer Communities Dept based within SBC had secured funding to purchase forensic marking kits and these would be distributed in the main to farms throughout the Borders and assistance given to farmers in utilising these kits to mark their property. Scottish Fire & Rescue Service community officers would work alongside police community officers to carry this out. The opportunity would also be taken to give prevention and fire safety advice during these visits. During week commencing Monday, 24 August there was an initiative throughout the Borders to give attention to 'vulnerable road users', which would focus on children, cyclists and pedestrians travelling to and from school, including in a vehicle and involved the community and schools officers working together to carry out patrols around schools at the beginning and end of the school day. The student safety campaign would be launched on 31 August 2015 and more information would be circulated and publicised via the social media sites and would include a film and quiz.

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

10. Mr Langley referred to the five priorities within the Local Fire and Rescue Plan 2014-2017 for the Scottish Borders and gave details of recent activity within the area. He advised that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) community action team (CAT) core work centred on the on-going delivery of the SFRS Home Fire Safety Visit (HFSV) policy. The team continued to expand its partnership working with the key agencies including Police Scotland, Health, Social Care and Housing in order to focus on members of local communities at high risk from fire and achieve positive outcomes in helping to reduce overall numbers of accidental dwelling fires. Mr Langley went on to give details of how this partnership working was operating. This included work with the local Domestic Abuse Advocacy Service and involvement in the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). Staff in all local stations provided home fire safety visits all year round. Smoke detectors with a 10-year battery life were provided as part of this free service. The Make It Or Break It programme

which targeted 16 to 20 year old drivers with the aim to reduce road accidents and deaths in the age group continued to run in the Scottish Borders with the latest input in July at Scottish Borders College, Galashiels. Wendy Cameron, Employment Development Officer, was working with Galashiels Blue Watch to support the EVOLVE programme which provided personal development opportunities to enable individuals aged 15 to 17 years of age to maximise their full potential in reaching their career choices. SFRS Scottish Borders staff were highly active and effective during the SFRS Week of Action which took place in June and was an initiative targeting resources at those identified as at risk from fire. Fire safety audits provided a targeted examination of business premises and their relevant documents to ascertain how the premises were being managed regarding fire safety. The enforcement officer also engaged with members of staff to confirm their level of fire safety awareness. Unwanted fire signals were being addressed by phased intervention actions which identified premise which were producing 'false alarms' and provided guidance on how to reduce a reoccurrence, and could also evoke legislation if occurrences fail to reduce in number (Borders General Hospital had been identified as a high offender through the UFAS Policy. SFRS were working with hospital staff to look as ways of reducing the number of false alarms generated at the premises. SFRS Safeguarding Policy and Procedure for Protection of Children and Adults at Risk of Harm was implemented to link into adult and school protection. The policy had created closer ties with Social Services within Scottish Borders and ensured those people and families which fire crews identified as at risk were brought to the attention of Social Services and had resulted in joint visits to homes to reduce risk to those occupiers. Moving into Autumn the seasonal community safety calendar and thematic action plan would focus SFRS activities on Older/Vulnerable Persons, Student safety/Electrical safety/Chimney safety and Bonfire safety. He advised that a national recruitment campaign was on-going for RDS firefighters at identified stations within the Scottish Borders. Galashiels and Lauder stations were currently recruiting staff. A local initiative was run in partnership with Radio Borders that included acknowledgement to local employers for release of employees to serve their local community. The Multi Ward Operating Plan for Eildon 2015/16 was complete and available within the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Web page.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

NHS Borders

11. An update on current activity was given by NHS Borders Employee Director, John McLaren. He referred to the media interest in the ongoing review of inpatient services and that NHS Borders would develop a full and robust engagement process. The outcome of a consultation with Community Councils on the Out Of Hours service in NHS Borders had been shared with the Scottish Health Council and was awaiting their feedback. This would result in the business continuity plan approach being put in place permanently. In the meantime a national Review of Out Of Hours service provision was being carried out. Mr McLaren reminded members of the Forum that Accident and Emergency figures were available on the NHS Borders website presented on a weekly basis.

**DECISION
NOTED the partner updates.**

OPEN QUESTIONS

12. A Member of Newtown and Eildon Community Council requested an update on road re-surfacing work which had been scheduled for Newtown but diverted to Tweedbank. Councillor Edgar advised that funding would be available October/November for the road re-surfacing work in Newtown St Boswells.

DECISION

NOTED.

13. A Member of Selkirk Community Council queried whether the extension to the railway had been built into the Business Plan for the Tapestry and was advised that the Tapestry and Railway were two different projects with no guarantee that the railway would be extended.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

COMMUNITY COUNCIL SPOTLIGHT

14. There was nothing reported.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

15. It was agreed that, for future meetings, Abellio ScotRail be invited to present feedback on the usage of the new railway to Tweedbank and VisitScotland be invited to present their future plans for the Scottish Borders.

**DECISION
NOTED**

URGENT BUSINESS

16. 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, to keep Members informed.

SESplan - JOBS, HOMES AND INVESTMENT: WHERE, WHY AND HOW ?

17. There were circulated at the meeting copies of a briefing paper SESplan: Jobs, Homes and Investment: Where, Why and How ?. It was explained that SESplan covered the City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, the southern half of Fife, Midlothian, Scottish Borders and West Lothian Council areas with the purpose of creating a Strategic Development Plan for the region. Strategic Development Plans set the direction for development over the next twenty years and shape Local Development Plans. A new Strategic Development Plan required to be submitted to the Scottish Government by June 2017, within four years of the approval of the first plan. SESplan was at the first stage of preparing of the second Strategic Development Plan – the Main Issues Report. SESplan launched the public consultation on Main Issues report on 21 July 2015. The consultation aimed to get as many people as possible interested in the future of the region and commenting on the issues. The Main Issues Report asked key questions, the answers to which would shape the way the region looked, felt and functioned for decades to come. The briefing detailed Community Events arranged which were aimed at Community Councils, Community Groups and anyone looking to engage in discussions about the Main Issues Report. The events featured an introduction on what SESplan was and what the Main Issues were followed by workshop based discussion.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

18. The next meeting would be held on Thursday 5 November 2015 at 6.30 pm.

DECISION

NOTED.

The meeting concluded at 8.20 p.m.