

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL TWEEDDALE AREA PARTNERSHIP

MINUTE of Meeting of the TWEEDDALE
AREA PARTNERSHIP held via Microsoft
Team on Tuesday, 30 March 2021 at 7.00
p.m.

Present:- Councillors R. Tatler (Chairman), H. Anderson, S. Bell, S. Haslam, E. Small
together with 25 representatives from Partner Organisations, Community
Councils and members of the public.

Apologies:- Councillor K. Chapman

In Attendance:- Communities and Partnerships Manager, Locality Development Co-ordinator
(K. Harrow), Portfolio Manager (J. Lamb), Adult Learning Worker (M. Smail),
Localities Transport Officer (D. Cathcart), Democratic Services Team Leader.

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the third 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 19 JANUARY 2021

The Minute of the meeting of the Tweeddale Area Partnership held on 19 January 2021 had been circulated and this was noted.

3. PLACE MAKING APPROACH

- 3.1 Portfolio Manager, James Lamb, gave a presentation providing an overview of the Place Making Approach. The aim of this initiative was to facilitate a more joined-up, collaborative and participative approach to services, land and buildings, across all sectors within a place. This aimed to enable better outcomes for everyone and increased opportunities for people and communities to shape their own lives. The intention was to build on learning from the operation of the Community Assistance Hubs and Resilience Teams which had worked effectively during the Covid-19 pandemic. The presentation detailed the scope of the Place Making approach in terms of links with relevant strategies, reviews, programmes and frameworks which were operating in the Scottish Borders and South of Scotland. Phase 1 of the programme, Preparation and Planning, had already started with initial awareness raising taking place in March and April through forums such as the Area Partnerships. Work would be carried out in June to shape the framework with Phase 2 taking place late summer to develop initial High Level Locality Place Briefs through workshops and identification of priorities and needs. Phase 3 in the autumn would focus on agreeing and developing Place Programme workstreams with delivery being started in Phase 4 at the end of the year and on into 2022. James Lamb outlined the role of the Area Partnership in the process and invited feedback which could be sent to him via the email address communityengagement@scotborders.gov.uk
- 3.2 In response to questions James Lamb confirmed that this would become part of the locality plan which needed to be refreshed. Community Councils would be involved at all stages with community council areas being the unit of geography for place planning. Unfortunately there was not sufficient resource to visit each community council individually but he encouraged them to provide feedback. Councillor Anderson suggested that as all Councillors attended Community Council meetings it would be helpful if they were provided with the presentation and some accompanying notes. James Lamb also confirmed the importance of involving the 3rd Sector and commented on discussions he

had already had with BAVS in Berwickshire. It was agreed that the presentation slides be circulated to everyone present at the meeting. James Lamb would also discuss with Councillors what they could present at Community Council meetings.

4. **FIT FOR 2024: REVIEW OF AREA PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY FUNDS**

The Chairman advised that reports in respect of both the Review of Area Partnerships and the future of the Community Fund had been approved at Council the previous week. Kenny Harrow advised that the public consultation on Area Partnerships would run from April to June with a report back to Council in the autumn. With regard to Community Grants there would be changes from 1 April with an Assessment Panel to be set up. The Chairman suggested that the Area Partnership establish a working group to agree how funding requests for the Tweeddale Area would be dealt with and that their recommendations would be considered at the next meeting in June. In response to a question regarding the level of budget falling short of the 1% required to be available for participatory budgeting, the Chairman advised that a paper on this had been considered at the Council's budget meeting. Community Funds were only a part of participatory budgeting with other areas including the money set aside for road improvement and the "Build a Better Borders" Fund. With regard to the working group it was agreed that it comprise Councillor Anderson, Lorna McCullough, Chris Lewin and a young person to be identified. Kenny Harrow advised that he hoped to arrange the first meeting next week. The Chairman confirmed that everyone was welcome to submit their views for consideration by the Working Group. The draft process for dealing with the Community Fund would be circulated in advance of the next meeting. While the working group would consider changes to the community fund for Tweeddale it was agreed that from 1st April the Community Fund would remain open and all applications would continue to be assessed under the current criteria.

5. **AWARENESS RAISING – HINTS AND TIPS FOR POSITIVE COMMUNICATION AND MAKING VIDEO CONFERENCING ACCESSIBLE**

The Chairman welcomed Clare Wildsmith, a lip reading tutor in Tweeddale and advocate of positive communication. Her aim was to reach all businesses in the area to speak to them about positive communication. Mask wearing presented communication difficulties and with the increasing prevalence of online video streaming, which would only increase in use, she felt it useful to create general best practice guidance for those embracing the technology. The Positive Communication tips applied not only to Microsoft Teams and Zoom, but also as consideration to those publishing videos on YouTube, Facebook and other platforms. She commented on the importance of good lighting, the correct camera angle, keeping hands away from your face, being eye level with the camera and not having glare behind which could all assist with those who relied on lip reading. It was agreed that the quality of captions was not sufficiently reliable and often missed words. The Chairman thanked Clare for the work she was doing in this area.

6. **LOCALITY PLAN PRIORITY: IMPROVE THE ACCESSIBILITY AND RELIABILITY OF TRANSPORT SERVICES, IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY AND REDUCE RURAL ISOLATION**

6.1 Dan Cathcart, Localities Transport Officer gave a presentation on the current position in Tweeddale. Services were currently operating at 80% of the pre-Covid timetable with 25-30% of the pre-Covid passenger numbers. Funding was available from the Bus Partnership Fund and he was looking at speeding up the X62 service by stopping at a fewer locations within Peebles which would also have a positive impact on diesel usage and bus miles. The provision of electronic charging points for buses was also being investigated. The current free transport from the Borders General Hospital operated by Borders Buses would be given more publicity once lockdown ended. He also commented on the impact of schools returning and the impact of changed work patterns which were likely to continue post Covid. The funding application for the changes to the X62 had to be submitted within 15 days but a full consultation would be carried out if he was successful in achieving funding. If the funding was not received there would be no change to the current service. In response to a question on how people were going to be encouraged

back onto buses, Dan Cathcart outlined the various procedures Borders Buses had in place to ensure the safety of passengers. Bus operators were also increasing the availability of Wi-Fi and charging points on their buses as it was important to make bus travel attractive to young people.

- 6.2 Thurston Hodge, Development Worker with the What Wheely Matters Project gave a presentation on the work of the project. The purpose of the project was to work with communities and groups across the Scottish Borders to identify and develop solutions to rural transport needs. This could be anything from lack of bus routes, car ownership and rural migration. Some solutions were already underway and included Community Bus routes (Demand responsive transport), Safe cycleway pathfinding, growing Volunteer Car Schemes and Transport integration. The Project wanted to work with as many people and groups from as many backgrounds as possible. Meetings were all being conducted digitally at present but there was an online diary where anyone could book a meeting with the Development Worker, either 1-1 or as part of a group. He outlined the type of help that could be given and listed the groups and organisations across the Borders that he had worked with so far. He encouraged everyone to get in touch.

7. **LOCALITY PLAN PRIORITY: REDUCE OUR IMPACT ON THE LOCAL (AND GLOBAL) ENVIRONMENT BY RAISING AWARENESS OF WHAT LOCAL COMMUNITIES CAN DO IN TERMS OF THEIR HOMES, THEIR BUSINESSES, THEIR SCHOOLS, THEIR TRAVEL ETC.**

The Chairman introduced Ruby Finn, a 6th year pupil at Peebles High School, who was a Youth Ambassador for Sustainability. A short film was shown entitled "A Climate Emergency – our future in the Borders". The video gave examples of how the Scottish Borders was not yet equipped to deal with global warming and challenges to address such as litter damaging local green spaces, too many diesel and petrol vehicles, too few public transport links and too few electric charging points. Councillor Anderson commented on the presentation given by Ruby at the Council's Sustainable Development Committee and suggested that they should be accountable to the Youth Ambassadors and it was agreed that a Q&A would be arranged following the forthcoming Scottish Parliament Elections in May. Pam Rigby, Youth Engagement Worker highlighted the campaign named "Our promise to the planet" which asked for everyone who lived in the Borders to make one promise to the planet and she published the contact details to allow everyone in the meeting to take part.

8. **LOCALITY PLAN PRIORITY: STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIP WORKING BETWEEN LOCAL SERVICES**

Margaret Smail, Tweeddale Community Hub Lead gave an update on the work of the Community Assistance Hub. It had now been in operation for 1 year to firstly help those who were shielding. They had worked closely with the voluntary sector and had received an excellent response from volunteers. Requests for assistance were now decreasing but they were working with Test and Protect, helping with cases of fuel poverty and assisting with transport to vaccine appointments. Hubs were now to be a permanent feature of local level solutions. They wanted to be useful and the model would continue to evolve. The Chairman thanked her for her good work.

9. **TWEEDDALE COMMUNITY FUND**

- 9.1 The Chairman asked Kenny Harrow to go through each of the applications. It was noted that the number of applications exceeded the funding left for the financial year. The Chairman pointed out that the application from the Men's Shed did not meet the criteria for the community fund as it did not specify what all of the funding would be used for and on that basis he suggested that it should not be granted. Malcolm Bruce, representing the Men's Shed advised that he would be disappointed if the application was not considered. Their current accommodation needed significant works and they were the only Borders Men's Shed who had not qualified for any of the Covid support grants. Les Turnbull, Peebles Community Council Chairman, supported the application. Following

discussion of the application the Council Members agreed that the current application be refused but they would support consideration of a new application in the 2021/2022 financial year.

9.2 The other applications were from:-

- Outside the Box
- Tweed Togs
- Peebles Lawn Tennis Club
- Go Tweed Valley
- Peeblesshire Youth Trust

Kenny Harrow outlined what each group wished to use the funding for. Both Councillors Tatler and Haslam declared an interest in the application from Peeblesshire Youth Trust and took no part in the decision on that application. Councillor Bell declared an interest in the application from Go Tweed Valley and took no part in the decision on that application

9.3 The applications were discussed in detail and those present representing the various group answered questions and provided more details on their applications. Given that there was insufficient funding to cover all applications it was suggested that Peebles Lawn Tennis Club could reapply in the next financial year as they still had significant funds to raise. Anne McKinnon from the Tennis Club advised that it would be helpful to their other finding applications if they already had some funding in place but accepted that they could reapply. Councillor Bell suggested that Outside the Box only be given £7k rather than the full £12k they had applied for but this was not supported by the other Councillors.

9.4 Following the above discussion it was agreed to deal with the applications as follows

- Outside the Box – awarded £12,903
- Peebles Men’s Shed – asked to reapply in 2021/2022
- Tweed Togs – awarded £5934.60
- Peebles Lawn Tennis Club – asked to reapply in 2021/2022
- Go Tweed Valley – awarded £13,747.50
- Peeblesshire Youth Trust – awarded £4966

10. **CURRENT CONSULTATIONS**

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

- Updated Supplementary Planning Guidance – Planning Brief – Former Borders College Galashiels: Closes 31 March 2021 - https://scotborders.citizenspace.com/regulatory-services/updated_spg_former_borders_college_gala/
- Public opinion sought on proposed trial of one-way system on Chiefswood Road in Melrose - <https://scotborders.citizenspace.com/assets-and-infrastructure/chiefswood-road-questionnaire/>
- Public consultation on the asset transfer request made in relation to Jedderfield Farm, Peebles. Closes 11 April 2021 - <https://scotborders.citizenspace.com/customer-communities/jedderfield-farm-asset-transfer-request/>
- Public opinion sought on trial of reduced speed limit on backroads between Peebles and Peel. Closes 31st March - <https://scotborders.citizenspace.com/assets-and-infrastructure/peebles-to-peel-backroads-questionnaire/>
- Scottish Borders Council have appointed Alan Jones Associates to work with the Peebles Skate Park project to deliver a Feasibility Study which will look at creating a

new Skate Park \ Wheeled Sports Park at Victoria Park in Peebles. -

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/peebleswheeledsports>

- Accessing and using Scottish Borders Council Services -
<https://scotborders.citizenspace.com/customer-communities/accessing-council-services/>
- Draft Anti-Poverty Strategy had been published today.

11. **ANY OTHER FORMAL BUSINESS**

11.1 The Chairman advised that Alison Wilson from Clovenfords Community Council had been appointed as the substitute Tweeddale Representative to the Community Council Review Group.

11.2 Brian McBride from Peebles Tennis Club asked if they could receive a commitment for funding from the 2021/2022 budget. The Chairman advised that while most people were supportive no guarantee could be given.

12. **OPEN FORUM**

No items were raised.

13. **DATE OF NEXT TWEEDDALE AREA PARTNERSHIP**

The next meeting was scheduled for 15 June 2021. Councillor Anderson suggested that there be fewer items on the next agenda. Clare Wildsmith advised that she was happy to help make the meetings more accessible. The Chairman thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting concluded at 9.30 p.m.