

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MINUTES of Meeting of the EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE held Via Microsoft Teams on
Tuesday, 14 September, 2021 at 10.00 am

Present:- Councillors S. Haslam (Chairman), S. Aitchison (Vice-Chairman), G. Edgar, C. Hamilton (from paragraph 3), S. Mountford, M. Rowley, R. Tatler, G. Turnbull and T. Weatherston

Also Present:- Councillor H. Scott

Apologies:- Councillors S. Hamilton and E. Jardine

In Attendance:- Chief Executive, Executive Director Finance & Regulatory, Service Director Assets & Infrastructure, Democratic Services Team Leader, Democratic Services Officer (W. Mohieddeen)

1. **MINUTE**

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the meeting of 17 August 2021.

DECISION

APPROVED for signature by the Chairman.

2. **STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN 2022-2027**

2.1 There had been circulated copies a report seeking approval of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2022-2027 so that it could be submitted to the Scottish Government as required by 31 October 2021 deadline. Local Authorities were required by the Scottish Government to produce a rolling five-year SHIP submission to the Scottish Government annually. It was highlighted that 107 homes were built in the period 2020-2021, falling short of the target of 128 due to the impact of the UK lockdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and for the period 2021-22, 312 homes were projected to have been built exceeding annual targets. The report also highlighted that around 1213 homes could be delivered in the Scottish Borders in the five year period of the SHIP. It was noted that the SHIP was the first Council document to reference the Regional Economic Strategy.

2.2 Members commended the scale of work in the SHIP, noting the achievements of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). It was noted that each RSL was progressing with a programme of activity. The Cheviot Area Partnership had invited the RSLs to come along and give a presentation on the activity in that area. Members commented on the need for more 4-bedroom housing and the amenity needs for housing outside of town centres, noting the connectivity, recreation and anti-social behaviour issues at Melrose Gait, Galashiels. In response to a question on Town Centre development, the Chief Planning Officer advised that this was already under consideration with meetings to take place on regeneration of Galashiels town centre and housing solutions in Innerleithen.

DECISION

AGREED to approve the SHIP 2022-2027, as contained in Appendix 1 to the report, for submission to the Scottish Government - More Homes division.

3. **2020-21 ANNUAL PROCUREMENT REPORT/STANDING ORDERS AMENDMENT**

- 3.1 There had been circulated copies of the report by the Executive Director Finance & Regulatory presenting the 2020/21 Annual Procurement Report. The report was mandatory required by the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014. It was noted that the recommendation should refer to the 2020/21 report. The report included a dedicated section noting the support and service provided in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The key areas of support included payment and reporting of all relevant business support, managing financial sustainability support for Social Care Providers and working as part of a cross functional team on the sourcing, supply and distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE). The report also included the adjustment of Procurement and Contract Standing Orders to amend the process of approving the appointment of consultants. It was proposed that individual Directors undertake this approval, rather than the current process by the Corporate Management Team.
- 3.1 The report highlighted that £70 million in business grants were made to around 5,000 local businesses with specific support payments made to early years, childcare and transport services. Social Work contract facilitated payments in excess of £1.5 million to support long-term sustainability of key social care providers. There had been a 357% increase in PPE use with £1.2 million spent for staff during the pandemic. Payment performance highlighted that 95% of invoices were processed within 30 days, 60% of invoices were processed within 10 days and 98% of payments were processed by BACS payments. The report further highlighted that £178,830,146 in total was spent in procurement with £106,355,721 being spent on micro, small and medium sized-businesses. The work on the Hawick Flood Protection Scheme was included as part of a case study which showed that to protect 900 homes in Hawick, 6km of flood defence work took place that supported the employment of 59 people where 44% of the workforce on the scheme were from the Hawick area and £1.2 million of sub-contract activity was spent on local businesses.
- 3.2 Members thanked Ms Dickson and her team for their hard work and were pleased to note the improved performance in the payment of invoices. With regard to the proposed changes to standing orders, the Executive Director Finance & Regulatory confirmed that the appointment of consultants would still be subject to strict controls managed by the Procurement Service. Members noted the summary of community benefits and hoped these would continue to increase.

DECISION

- (a) **AGREED to approve the Annual Procurement Report 2020-21, as contained in the Appendix to the report**
- * (b) **AGREED TO RECOMMEND to Council the amendment of the Procurement & Contract Standing Orders to provide for the approval by Directors of the appointment of consultants.**

MEMBER

Councillor Rowley left the meeting.

4. **PRIVATE BUSINESS**

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 the Appendix to this Minute on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 8 and 9 of Part I of Schedule 7A to the Act.

SUMMARY OF PRIVATE BUSINESS

5. LANGLEE ROUNDABOUT

The Committee approved a report by the Service Director Assets and Infrastructure on the provision of a roundabout at the junction of the C77 Langshaw Road and the B6374 Melrose Road.

The meeting concluded at 10.55 a.m.