

Date: 18 November 2021 from 2.00 to 3:25 p.m.

Location: Via Microsoft Teams

Attendees: Councillor Rowley (Chair), Ms A. Cox (Borders College), Mr S. Gourlay (Fire & Rescue Service), Prof. R. Griggs (SOSE), Councillor C. Hamilton, Mrs K. Hamilton (NHS Borders), Mr R. Hill (RSL representative), Mr A. Hirst (Third Sector), Dr T. Paterson (Public Health), Councillor R. Tatler, Councillor G. Turnbull.

Also in attendance: Chief Executive, Director Resilient Communities, Communities and Partnership Manager, Clerk to the Council (all SBC); Mr J. McDougall (Scottish Government), Mr C. Myers (Health & Social Care Partnership).

MINUTE AND ACTION POINTS

1. **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

Councillor Rowley welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies had been received from Councillor Bell (SBC), Mrs Hume (Third Sector) and Mr R. Roberts (NHS).

2. **MINUTE**

Copies of the Minute of 9 September 2021 had been circulated.

DECISION

AGREED to approve the Minute.

3. **COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP REVIEW PROGRAMME**

With reference to paragraph 3 of the Minute of 9 September 2021, copies of an update paper on the Community Planning Partnership Review had been circulated. SBC Chief Executive, Netta Meadows, advised that a lot of work was happening behind the scenes, including discussions with the Improvement Service and it was hoped to hold a workshop in January 2022. This workshop would be facilitated by the Improvement Service and would focus on capturing and reflecting the learning from Covid-19, the strengths and weaknesses of the current arrangements, resources, priorities, performance monitoring and would also consider the refresh of the Community Plan and Action Plan. To put in place a framework to support this workshop, the Improvement Service was assisting with a self-assessment questionnaire for all CPP members. This would be issued in the next few weeks and it was hoped responses would be returned prior to Christmas to allow the Improvement Service to undertake analysis and develop the agenda for the workshop to focus the discussions and maximise the opportunities for participants. The proposed outcome of the workshop would be a draft Scottish Borders CPP Improvement Plan that would be brought back to the Board for approval.

DECISION

NOTED that the self-assessment questionnaire would be sent to the members of the CP Strategic Board and the CP Programme Board.

4. **FOOD GROWING STRATEGY**

4.1 Copies of a report by SBC Director Infrastructure & Environment on the Scottish Borders Community Food Growing Strategy had been circulated. The report proposed that the Community Planning Partnership endorsed the Scottish Borders Community Food Growing Strategy and Action Plan, attached as an appendix to the report, and actively supported this within both the Community Planning Partnership and within each partner's own organisational plans. The Strategy "Cultivating Communities" was adopted by SBC in March 2021. While the Strategy was a legislative requirement, it was also a vehicle for nurturing and developing community food growing across the Scottish Borders, in line with the national food growing agenda. Community food growing was increasingly recognised as a valuable model for supporting sustainable, resilient, healthy communities. The impact of Covid-19 had increased awareness around the role of local access to community food growing in supporting health and wellbeing. John Curry, Director Infrastructure & Environment introduced Amy Alcorn, SBC Green Space Programme Officer who presented highlights of the Strategy, which had been developed in response to requirements within the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. Ms Alcorn gave a presentation which covered Part 9 of the Act; the aims and objectives of the Strategy; what that looked like in terms of community gardens, community orchards, allotments, social prescribing, "garden share/lend & tend" schemes, guerrilla gardeners /Incredible Edible; and resources available – information, contacts, local growing sites, community planning support through SBC, 3rd Sector/SBCommunity Food Growers networks, and CPP key staff. The next steps were to consider the following 5 years and beyond and how to embed the Strategy

4.2 Councillor Rowley referred to the amount of activity taking place across the Borders and asked that the 2 newsletters be shared with the partners. It was hoped that the members of the Community Planning Partnership would get behind this and help make it a success. Councillor Tatler commented that while it had been a requirement to produce the Strategy and Action Plan, we had gone way beyond that and were really moving forward. Thanks were offered to all the officers for putting this together and also to Ms Alcorn who had recently joined the Council but was putting in a huge amount of work. The Food Growing Network Group had met 3 times and had great discussions, with responses from all groups and the Sharepoint site was really good for sharing information. It was hoped that this format could be used for other groups. Mrs K Hamilton praised the whole process, in particular the newsletter which was very well received. Ms Alcorn advised that feedback was to be collected at the end of each meeting and the newsletter was available to view on the Food Growers network. It was hoped to broaden the network. Shona Smith, SBC Communities & Partnership Manager, confirmed that the number of volunteers was one of the measures used to show success and Ms Alcorn could also be included in the "Menti" team which was a useful tool for feedback. Ms Alcorn further advised that she had visited the Eildon Housing allotments in Kelso and the RSLs were keen to develop land and community gardens. RSLs could contact Ms Alcorn and then "Lend and Tend" arrangements could be set up with volunteers to tend gardens of tenants who maybe struggled to keep them now due to ill health or infirmity. Jenni Craig added that this was a hugely topical subject with lots of enthusiasm being shown. Anything any of the partners could do to support community groups with their ambitions and aspirations would be helpful e.g. if there was a demand for volunteers, it would be really useful to get a sense of that. Any land suitable for growing would be most welcome so if any of the partners had space which could be used for growing should contact Ms Alcorn, who would be carrying out a land audit soon, looking at all available land, so that a land bank was there when community groups wanted to take up growing. Ms Alcorn had been out to a few schools and created a pdf resource for schools which had links to lesson plans and funding for schools for growing projects. Angela Cox, Principal of Borders College, advised that the College had a dedicated land-based site and offered to connect in with Ms Alcorn. The College was working with a number of schools e.g. providing support of the growing curriculum, bees and land management to Kelso High School.

DECISION

AGREED:

- (a) to endorse the Community Food Growing Strategy “Cultivating Communities” 2021/2026;**
- (b) that Partner members reflected the Strategy and Action Plan within their own organisational plans and considered how this could contribute to community planning objectives in relation to land use, climate change, health and wellbeing, and community resilience;**
- (c) to collaboration between CPP partners to identify resources (land, utilities, funding streams, skills development) to develop community capacity and enable access to community food growing;**
- (d) to receive an annual report and also an interim report in 6 months, on the progress of the Food Growing Strategy and Action Plan; and**
- (e) to consider the longer term evolution of the Community Food Growing Strategy and how shared objectives may be reflected in the next refresh of the CPP Community Plan.**

Note: Mr Robin Hill (RSL representative) and Professor Russel Griggs (SOSE) joined the meeting during the above discussion.

5. COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP - KEY PRIORITIES AND ACTION PLAN 2020/21

With reference to paragraph 4 of the Minute of 9 September 2021, copies of progress with CPP Key Priorities and Action Plan 2020/21 had been circulated. Mrs Jenni Craig, SBC Director Resilience Communities, thanked all partners for feeding in to the update and gave some highlights. The aim now was to prioritise on the back of Covid and move away from the existing Community Planning Plan. Through the review, those priorities would be identified and the format of the report would fundamentally change to focus on targets and performance. Officers would really value the Board's input to that and establish how collectively we could go forward to work in the best way. Having high partner attendance at the regular community meetings established during Covid was really encouraging in building up networks. Members were asked to consider and advise of any obvious gaps and places needing more emphasis. The slides would be shared with the Board. In response to a question around any increase in unemployment following the cessation of the furlough scheme, Mrs Craig advised that while significant changes had been expected, they had not materialised. This was being monitored closely and there were weekly joint meetings between SBC, SOSE and a number of other partners to establish an understanding of what was going on with redundancy rates, unemployment rates and job opportunities. There was a real shortage of people for the number of jobs that were actually available and a lot of work was going on to try to understand that and match people to jobs and prepare them with the right skills. While a lot of jobs were available, there were not necessarily the people available to fill them. Ms Angela Cox, Principal of Borders College, advised of the balance needed between aspirations and jobs availability. The College had seen a growth of 30% in enrolment in health and social care courses; some of that was because it was currently trendy but people came in at HNC/HND level to go on to higher level education and jobs but this was not addressing the lack of people for lower level care jobs. The Chairman asked if consideration could be given to using blue as part of the RAG analysis to highlight those types of issues. With regard to students in the peripheral areas of the Borders accessing College digitally, work through both Berwickshire and Eyemouth High Schools continued. The College had also teamed up with Eyemouth Marine to have a digital hub thus targeting boat builder apprentices but also recognising that the skills were the same for carpentry. Technical or practical trades

did however require attendance in person. During Covid, digital spokes had been tested in Farne Salmon, Heart of Duns and also piloted a couple of hybrid meetings to see how that worked. The College was working with SBC mapping out opportunities and there were more apprenticeships in the east of region than anywhere else.

DECISION:

AGREED to review the Key Priorities and Action Plan reporting content and format in line with the wider review of the Community Planning Partnership, and for discussion at the workshop in January 2022.

6. **ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN**

Copies of a covering report and SBC's Anti-Poverty Strategy and Action Plan had been circulated. It was proposed that the Community Planning Partnership endorsed the Strategy and Action Plan and supported the delivery of these by ensuring that each member's organisational plans contained references to actions within them. The Strategy set out the steps that SBC and partners planned to take in tackling poverty in the Scottish Borders in relation to economic poverty and income, fuel poverty, housing poverty, food poverty, impact on family and community health and wellbeing, and digital poverty. The Council and partners continued to respond to the current Covid-19 pandemic and work within our communities through the Community Assistance Hubs and other services to help alleviate poverty as a result. The learning from this work and the lived experience of those in hardship would be taken into account in how the ongoing delivery of the Action Plan evolved in partnership. Jenni Craig, SBC Director Resilient Communities, gave a presentation updating the Board on progress since March 2021, the outcome of the Strategy consultation from those with lived experience and lived experience focus groups, implementation and actions undertaken since the Strategy was approved by Council on 23 September 2021. Councillor Tatler, who had chaired the Working Group responsible for developing the Strategy and Action Plan, advised that while work had started on this over a year ago, it was recognised that so much was already going on especially over the pandemic and lockdowns, with partners working together on poverty. The Strategy and Action Plan had brought all that together and given a focus and thanks were expressed to all contributors. The idea was that these were living documents and as circumstances changed across the Borders we would all have to react and tackle poverty. Cllr Tatler had attended the Financial Inclusion Officers networking event attended by such officers from a number of organisations and had been very impressed so was pleased this would be continuing and a network developed. The Members Reference Group would allow an oversight of the anti-poverty work, monitor progress, and partners would be invited to participate.

DECISION

AGREED:

- (a) to endorse the Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy and Action Plan;**
- (b) that members of the Community Planning Partnership reflected the Strategy and Action Plan within their own organisational plans and considered how this contributed to community planning objectives;**
- (c) to collaboration between CPP Partners to identify resources to deliver the Strategy and Action Plan where appropriate; and**
- (d) to receive an annual progress report of the Anti-Poverty Strategy Action Plan.**

Note: Mr Hill and Prof. Griggs left the meeting during the above discussion.

7. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

No other items of business were raised.

8. **NEXT MEETING**

The Strategic Board noted that its next meeting was scheduled to take place on 3 March 2022 at 2pm. This meeting would be held via Microsoft Teams and would be livestreamed.