

# Place Making - Proposal for creation of BAP Working Group

## Purpose of the Paper

The purpose of this paper is to propose the formation of a BAP Place Making working group (PMWG), charged with making recommendations on the way forward concerning the development and implementation of Place Making / Planning in Berwickshire. The recommendations of the PMWG will be presented to the BAP meeting on 3rd February 2022.

A PMWG will have two benefits. Firstly, it will strengthen the role of the BAP as a key community engagement platform. Secondly, it will help clarify all issues concerning Place Making and Place planning in Berwickshire.

It is envisaged that this WG will operate on a short-term basis, albeit it may subsequently prove appropriate to form a Sub-committee of the BAP to take responsibility for the oversight of place-making in Berwickshire over the coming years.

## Background

There have been a number of policy initiatives in the area of community involvement and Place Making. Place being described as where people, location and resources combine to create a sense of identity and purpose.

- SBC's Fit for 2024 Transformation strategy has empowerment as a key theme and recognises that there must be a greater focus on supporting communities to participate.
- The Council say they are committed to respond to the obligations in the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, particularly in relation to Community Planning, and SBC believe that all bodies which can contribute to community planning should be able to do so in an effective way.
- More recently the Place Principle has been promoted by the Scottish Government as a way to focus many of these policy aims in a flexible localised approach to community needs and services.
- The review of Area Partnerships undertaken by the Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC)

The proposal for a PMWG fully recognises these policies and SBC's commitment to Place Planning. However, the question remains "How can all of this be effectively delivered?".

Concerns were raised during the discussion of the "Place Making -Next Steps" paper at the BAP meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> September. A number of contributors commented on the absence of prior consultation with those communities whose contributions will be vital to the future success of place planning. Others spoke of what they believed to be flaws in the proposed methodology. Yet other community development organisations and community councils expressed difficulty interpreting the proposal due to the approach and language used.

Overall, there was a feeling that there was insufficient time to discuss the paper in any meaningful way and therefore it was unclear how we could reach a well-considered view on the way forward. Evidence of the apparent disconnect between SBC and non-SBC members of the BAP can be seen from the feedback on the "Place Making -Next Steps" paper. Feedback was sought from 570 people across the Borders, but unfortunately only 21 responses were received. The numbers for

Berwickshire were 90 invitations and just 3 replies. It is well recognised that although of some value, this level of feedback cannot form the basis of any real “agreement” to the proposals made by SBC.

### **Creation of a BAP Place Making Working Group**

Over the past year, the BAP has made significant strides to improve effective operating arrangements. In many ways BAP is developing into a true partnership. It is now proposed that a BAP working group be created, as detailed below, in order that BAP continues to mature. It is clear that, in relation to the vitally important area of Place Making in Berwickshire, we need to avoid the danger of reverting to what has in the past been perceived as a “top down” approach.

There is clear evidence that working-groups can work successfully with all members from across the BAP having the time to debate issues in detail and deliver recommendations quickly and effectively. Past working group experience shows that within a timescale of 6 weeks, and following 2 or 3 well-structured 2-hour on-line meetings, it is possible to deliver recommendations that have subsequently been fully endorsed by BAP.

Recent working groups of the BAP have comprised 6-8 members with an additional 2/3 SBC councillors. To my knowledge there has always been a place for those who express a wish to be involved. They have been chaired by a non-SBC member of the BAP. The working groups have benefitted from the expertise and support of SBC officers during their deliberations. It is suggested, therefore, that we implement this proven model of success and apply it to the topic of Place Making and Planning.

Much of the agenda for a place-making working group will come from the Place Making – Next Steps paper presented at the last meeting. Amongst other topics it is likely that the following will be considered:

- Place Making and Place Planning – clarification of terminology
- Proposed Joint Principles
- The Proposed Target Place Making Framework
- The methodology for determining which communities to prioritise
- How to best allocate resources available for place planning in Berwickshire
- The Area Partnership – Draft Place Making Role Agreement

### **Recommendations**

**The Berwickshire Area Partnership is asked to agree:**

- 1. to set up a Place Making working group (WG)**
- 2. to the initial WG Agenda (outlined above)**
- 3. to plan a facilitated Place Making workshop, to explore and agree a way forward**
- 4. a Borders wide a good practice workshop (also facilitated)**
- 5. to the proposed timescale for recommendations to the BAP meeting in February 2022**
- 6. a method of recruitment to the working group**
- 7. that appropriate officer support for the PMWG will be made available**

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