

MINUTES of Meeting of the EILDON AREA
PARTNERSHIP held Via Microsoft Teams on
Thursday, 8 September 2022 at 6.00 pm

Present:- Councillors E. Thornton-Nicol (Chairman), C. Cochrane, L. Douglas, J. Linehan, N. Mackinnon, J. PatonDay and F. Sinclair, together with 10 representatives of Partner Organisations, Community Councils, and members of the public.

Apologies:- Councillors E. Jardine and D. Parker

In Attendance:- Community Engagement Officer (E. Coltman), Climate Change Officer (J. Fausset), Sustainability Manager (L. Cox), Youth Engagement Officer (P. Rigby), Democratic Services Officer (D. Hall)

1. **WELCOME AND MEETING PROTOCOLS**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Eildon Area Partnership held remotely via Microsoft teams, which included Elected Members, guests attending within the meeting and those watching via the Live Stream. The Chairman explained that viewers on the live stream would be unable to see or hear the discussions when the attendees went into breakout rooms and encouraged people to join the meeting.

2. **FEEDBACK FROM MEETING OF 30 JUNE 2022**

The Minute of the meeting of the Eildon Area Partnership held on 30 June 2022 had been circulated and was noted. The Community Engagement Officer, Mr Erin Coltman, highlighted that the previous meeting had been positive. The Build Back a Better Borders Recovery Fund project evaluation from the Selkirk Baptist Church was well received, attendees in particular enjoyed their slide presentation. The Low and Slow project had been delivered in Galashiels, and there was a desire to invite the organisers of that event to the Area Partnership to provide their evaluation.

3. **PLACE MAKING - PROGRESS REPORT**

Mr Coltman highlighted that at the previous meeting of the Area Partnership it was agreed to proceed with a Place Making Working Group for the Eildon Locality. The Working Group was open to any person or group interested in Place Making, and Mr Coltman encouraged people to get in touch with the Communities and Partnership Team if they wished to get involved.

4. **CLIMATE CHANGE - LOCAL ACTION**

4.1 The Chairman welcomed Ms Louise Cox, Sustainability Manager and Ms Jenny Fausset, Climate Change Officer, to the meeting. Ms Cox explained that the key legislation in Scotland which concerned climate change was the Climate Change Act (Scotland) Act 2009. The Act had set emissions targets, which had subsequently been amended with stronger targets and annual and interim targets to reach net zero. A just transition was embedded into the legislation to ensure that the transition would be fair and that the future would be better for everyone. At a Local Government level, there was considerable work ongoing, with the Climate Change Route Map published in September 2021, and a Climate Emergency and Priority Action Plan in March 2022. There were 5 themes and an additional Climate Change Officer, Ms Fausset, had been recruited. All of the Council's activity needed to be addressed, and there was a need to undertake massive changes.

4.2 Ms Fausset introduced herself to the meeting and explained that she had joined Scottish Borders Council in June 2022. She stressed that whilst her job exclusively focused on climate change, there were a considerable number of staff across the whole Council involved in responding to climate change. As part of the Climate Change Route Map, a carbon baseline was being established, which would allow the Council to understand where it stood with regard to its emissions. Ms Fausset explained that two questions had been circulated prior to the meeting, namely “Thinking of your local community within Eildon, what projects/initiatives would you like to see thriving?” and “To realise these aspirations, what key tasks do we need to do? Who are the key players to drive these tasks?” Breakout rooms were held, with attendees divided into three groups to hold individual discussions for 35 minutes.

4.3 Following the breakout rooms, each group was asked to share the top 2 priorities from their discussions. Those present in room one stated that they had difficulty selecting only two priorities, but suggested that electric car clubs and better public transport as projects they would like to see thriving. Room two stated that projects involving energy generation such as the use of rivers to generate electricity, and food, particularly community orchards and projects which explored food production with young people, were the two areas they would like to see thriving. Room three had held similar conversations regarding local energy generation opportunities, and food access and food waste. Additionally, education and access to the key information needed to allow communities to make informed decisions had been highlighted. The Chairman thanked attendees for their input and suggested that the simple, everyday actions that people did to try and reduce their impact on the environment could be shared in the meeting chat.

5. **OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY FUNDING**

Copies of the Eildon Funding Table 2022/23 had been circulated with the agenda. Mr Coltman advised that the opening balance of the Neighbourhood Support Fund (NSF) had been £147k, and that the balance remaining prior to the meeting was £113k. If all of the applications considered at the meeting were awarded funding, the remaining balance of the NSF would be £82k. At the point when the agenda was issued, a Fast Track application from Oxtan Community Development Ltd for £948 was outstanding, which had subsequently been approved by Members. Mr Coltman explained to the meeting that a member of the Assessment Panel had resigned at the start of the year, and that he had subsequently contacted interested members of the community, two of whom had completed an application form to join the Panel. Given the level of enthusiasm of the applicants, and the desire to have suitable representation on the Panel, Ms Judith Cleghorn and Mr Ian King were both successful and were formally welcomed as members of the Eildon Assessment Panel.

MEMBER

Councillor Linehan left the meeting during the discussion of the item below.

6. **NEIGHBOURHOOD SUPPORT FUND**

6.1 There had been circulated copies of the Eildon Assessment Panel’s recommendations. The Chairman welcomed Ms Jenny Mushlin of the Eildon Assessment Panel to provide an overview of each of the recommendations.

6.2 **Live Learn Earn**

The application from Live Learn Earn was for £11,150 to help fund the Selkirk Community Garden Art Project, a cross-generational initiative which aimed to create artistically designed pieces within Selkirk High School Horticultural and Selkirk Community Shed garden areas. A consultant would be commissioned to provide training on metal working skills to the attendees, who would design and produce their own pieces. Marginalised pupils would be selected to take part. The Panel had expressed their opinion that the consultancy fees involved were very high, and were not justifiable given the expected outcomes of the project. The project would have an impact on a relatively small group of pupils at the High School, and would not necessarily benefit the wider community. The

Panel had recommended not to fund the project, and invited the group to submit a new application if the consultancy fees could be reduced and wider community benefit could be evidenced. Mr Aegir MacIver of the group was present at the meeting and explained that the consultancy fees referred to in the Assessment Panel recommendations were in fact for tutoring provided directly to attendees. Mr MacIver stressed that the group had a genuine desire to promote intergenerational collaboration on the project, with work ongoing with Selkirk Shedders. In response to a question regarding other sources of funding, Mr MacIver explained that no other funding had been sought. Regarding research carried out to ascertain demand for the project, and whether the project would duplicate work already carried out at the high school, Mr MacIver outlined that the key aim of the project was to teach young people the practical skills that they were not taught in school, including the use of power tools. In response to a question regarding the formal qualifications which would be attained by those who attended the course, Mr MacIver clarified that a workbook was used through the academic session which recorded what skills were attained and an official SQA-recognised qualification would be gained. Members in attendance expressed that the project had a commendable aim, and that teaching young people real world practical skills was a good project. The lack of wider community benefit was highlighted, in particular due to the high sum of money involved. There was a lack of consensus amongst Elected Members, and a vote was held to decide whether the application for funding was approved or rejected:

VOTE

Councillor Paton Day seconded by Councillor Douglas moved that the application for funding was approved.

Councillor Cochrane, seconded by Councillor Sinclair moved as an amendment that the application for funding was rejected.

As the meeting was conducted by Microsoft Teams members were unable to vote by the normal show of hands and gave a verbal response as to how they wished to vote the result of which was as follows:-

Motion – 3 votes

Amendment – 4 votes

Absent – 1 vote

The amendment was accordingly carried.

The application for funding was consequently rejected. The Chairman expressed hope that the Group would work on their application to address the issues raised, and seek support from the Communities and Partnership Team.

6.3 Channelkirk Primary School Parent Council

The application from the Channelkirk Primary School Parent Council was for £5,616 to address the lack of after-school childcare at Channelkirk Primary School. The funding would be used to provide a free transport service between Channelkirk and Lauder Primary School during term time, which would allow the children to attend Lauder Out-of-School Club. Peter Hogg of Jedburgh would operate the service between their Earlston School runs, which would reduce the cost to £108 per day. The planned project was a pilot. The Panel felt that the project was well researched and would help working parents in a rural area, with benefits to the children. The application was unanimously approved.

6.4 Stable Life

Stable life had applied for £15,000 to deliver a structured programme for at least 100 referred young people, 51% of whom would be based in the Eildon locality. The programme involved equine assisted therapy, riding lessons and psychological based interventions, as well as work placements and volunteering opportunities. The Panel had

recommended to defer the decision on the application to seek additional information, which was unanimously agreed.

6.5 **The Heartland Market**

The application from The Heartland Market was for £13,360 to purchase 20 market stalls to ensure that a monthly market in Galashiels could continue to run. The market operated using rented stalls, which had been deemed to be financially unviable. The Panel stressed that if the stalls were owned by the group, then the Community Interest Company (CIC) would be able to provide access to the stalls to charities and groups based in Galashiels. The CIC would build a website to manage bookings, and would promote the stalls as a community asset. The Assessment Panel expressed that the market had been popular in Galashiels and had recommended to approve the application. There had been confusion regarding funding which had been awarded to the group from a separate organisation for the purchase of stalls. Mr Coltman explained that The Heartland Market had experienced difficulties securing stalls on a consistent basis from their supplier. They had approached Galashiels Community Council and Energise Galashiels Trust (EGT) for assistance, and it had been agreed that EGT would purchase and own the stalls, on the condition that the Heartland Market would purchase the stalls prior to the end of the current financial year. Mr Coltman stressed that the approach was within the criteria of the Neighbourhood Support Fund, and that EGT would be acting as a supplier. Members expressed their concern that the market took place on the same day as the market in Selkirk. In response to a question regarding the necessity of developing a booking system, Mr Coltman explained that the funding applied for did not relate to the booking system, and would be used solely to purchase market stalls. The application for funding was unanimously approved in full.

7. **PROJECT EVALUATION - UPDATE/PRESENTATION**

7.1 With reference to paragraph 5.2 of the Minute of the meeting held on 11 November 2021, where The Abbotsford Trust had been awarded £15,000 from the Build Back a Better Borders Recovery Fund, the Chair welcomed Ms Sandra McKenzie to provide an evaluation. There had been circulated copies of a final report by the Abbotsford Trust with the agenda. Ms McKenzie expressed thanks to the Area Partnership for the grant, and explained that the project had allowed the Trust to run a pilot project with adults living with mental health conditions. The project had been led the Heritage Engagement Officer at the Trust, and had involved group activities at Abbotsford House in 7-week blocks. The groups focussed on different work areas each week and allowed participants to experience a range of activities such as practical working in the gardens and estate, and undertaking front of house roles. The Trust had partnered with the Local Area Co-ordination (LAC) Mental Health Team at Scottish Borders Council to ensure that participants and those managing the project were able to gain as much positive benefits as possible. The Trust had hoped to engage with up to 20 individuals, however due to the need to provide a greater degree of support to participants, 11 adults in the Eildon Area had taken part over the duration of the project. Ms McKenzie explained that the feedback from participants had been extremely positive, with 9 of the 11 attendees providing feedback. 5 of the participants had expressed their hopes that they could take part in future initiatives, and the report outlined that the desired outcomes identified prior to the project commencing had been achieved to a high degree. In response to a question regarding the initial scoping of the project with regards to mental health considerations, Ms McKenzie acknowledged that her team had no formal mental health training, and highlighted the excellent assistance provided by the LAC team as key to the success of the project.

7.2 Ms McKenzie explained that there had been an £1,800 underspend related to travel costs for participants. Participants had mostly travelled to Abbotsford via private vehicle, with one small claim submitted. Additional underspend from the project related to the inability to source materials due to Covid-19 related supply chain issues. The total amount of money underspent on the project was £3,436. Members thanked Ms McKenzie for her presentation, highlighted that it was unusual for a project to have funds remaining

following a project, and unanimously agreed that The Abbotsford Trust could retain the unspent £3,436 to meet a proportion of salary costs. Mr Coltman explained that he required confirmation of the underspend via email, and how it would be deployed.

8. **NEXT AREA PARTNERSHIP - THURSDAY, 17 NOVEMBER 2022 AT 6PM**

The Chairman explained that the meeting on the above date would be carried out via Microsoft Teams, but plans were being made to hold a face-to-face meeting in the spring.

9. **PUBLIC FORUM**

Mr Donald McPhillimy of Greener Melrose requested that a summary of the proposed Borders Greenway was included in the Minute, which was agreed. The proposed Borders Greenway would run from Galashiels to the Coast at Eyemouth via Tweedbank Station, Melrose, Earlston, Gordon, Greenlaw, Duns, Chirnside and Reston Station. The Greenway would allow people to safely walk, cycle, wheel and ride between those communities, with benefits for health, the environment, and the wider economy. The route had been surveyed by Greener Melrose and members of various community groups. Scottish Borders Council, using funding from South of Scotland Enterprise had commissioned a feasibility study, which had reported favourably. A Community Collaboration Group (CCG) had been formed from a number of groups, and was supported by a steering group. The CCG welcomed all of the 16 Community Councils along the route to endorse and contribute to the project.

10. **MEETING EVALUATION VIA MENTI**

The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday 17 November 2022. Suggestions for agenda items, in particular the next theme, could be sent to the Communities and Partnerships team.

The meeting concluded at 8.15 pm