

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL EILDON AREA FORUM

MINUTE of Meeting of the EILDON AREA FORUM held in Selkirk Parish Church Hall, Selkirk on Thursday, 5 November, 2015 at 6.30 pm

Present:- Councillors B. White (Chairman), S. Aitchison, M. Ballantyne, V. Davidson, G. Edgar (from para 2), I. Gillespie, B. Herd, J. Mitchell, J. Torrance.
Community Council representatives:- R. French (Newtown and Eildon), J. MacKenzie (Stow), J. Paton-Day (Earlston), I. Purvis, R. Kenney (Galashiels). W. Shaw, Head of Delivery Support, Estates and Facilities (NHS Borders).

Apologies:- Councillors D. Parker

In Attendance:- Chief Financial Officer, SBC Neighbourhood Area Manager (Eildon), Democratic Services Officer (F. Walling).

1. ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chairman varied the order of business as shown on the agenda and the Minute reflects the order in which the items were considered at the meeting.

2. MINUTE

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of 20 August 2015.

DECISION

APPROVED for signature by the Chairman.

MEMBER

Councillor Edgar arrived during the following presentation.

3. HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP

With reference to paragraph 3 of the Minute of 14 May 2015, Mr Warwick Shaw, Head of Delivery Support, Estates and Facilities (NHS Borders), was in attendance to give a presentation on the second draft of the Health and Social Care Integration Strategic Plan which was currently out for consultation. Copies of the Draft Strategic Plan and a shorter summary of the Plan were available for distribution at the meeting. Mr Shaw explained that the Draft Strategic Plan set out why there was a need to integrate health and social care services; how this would be done; and what was expected to be seen as a result. The way health and social care services were delivered needed to change due to the increasing demand for services; increasing pressure on limited resources; and the desire to improve services and outcomes. Mr Shaw commented that the integration of services was potentially the biggest change in health and social care since the formation of the NHS in 1948. It was explained that by shifting just 1% of the total spend of approximately £250m from Unplanned Inpatient Care and Institutional-Based Social Care towards Community-based NHS and Social Care and Planned Inpatient Care, resources would be used more effectively. This would help investment in new integrated ways of working particularly in terms of early intervention, reducing avoidable hospital admissions, reducing health inequalities, supporting unpaid carers and independent living. The presentation went on to list the Plan's local objectives. One of these objectives 'to improve support for unpaid carers to keep them healthy and able to continue in their caring role' was added as a result of responses to the last round of public engagement earlier in the year. Following the local objectives a list of key priorities was developed for 2016/17 based on what had been learned from listening to local people, service users,

carers, staff and partner organisations. These priorities included the development of integrated accessible transport; the integration of services at a local level; coordination to provide a single point of access to local services; and work with communities to develop local solutions. The presentation highlighted six questions as part of the current consultation and which were set out in the consultation document. Responses to these questions could be submitted through the Scottish Borders Council website or by post. In outlining the timescales Mr Shaw advised that the public engagement period would end on 11 December with a final draft of the Strategic Plan being finalised in February 2016. Health and Social Care Integration would go live in April 2016. In response to questions Mr Shaw gave assurance that the proposed integrated transport service should be able to maintain flexibility in that there would be a daytime permanently staffed 0300 number as a single point of contact. Members welcomed the support for unpaid carers indicated in the Strategic Plan. The value of the involvement of the third sector in the provision of services was discussed and Mr Shaw agreed to follow up a point made about engagement with the more mature charities. In a conclusion to the discussion the importance was emphasised of taking the opportunity to respond to the current consultation. The Chairman thanked Mr Shaw for his attendance and presentation.

DECISION

NOTED the presentation

4. FINANCIAL PLANNING CONSULTATION

Chief Financial Officer, David Robertson, was in attendance to give a presentation about a consultation currently taking place on Financial Planning for the Council over the period 2016/17 to 2020/21. Copies of a leaflet about the consultation were handed out at the meeting. Mr Robertson highlighted the many financial challenges facing the Council. He explained that the forthcoming financial year 2016/17 represented the 4th year of the original 5 year Financial Plan established in 2013/14. Around £1.3 billion in revenue budgets would be spent between 2016/17 and 2020/21. The Council also had a capital budget of £352m for the next ten years to invest in infrastructure. The longer term approach to financial planning had allowed significant pressures to be managed and delivered solutions to bridge these gaps in ways which were least damaging to services. Across the first 3 years of the 5 year Financial Plan the Council was on track to deliver £15.6m in savings. Over the period the Council could demonstrate significant performance improvements in some areas. However due to ongoing pressures on public funding the financial challenge would be there for several years to come. If the Council were to continue delivering services in the same way there would be a funding gap of approximately £27.8m over the next 5 year period. To help meet the funding gap, a Corporate Transformation programme was underway with the aim of transforming the way the Council worked to become more efficient and effective. There were 17 areas of work that had been identified as part of the programme, each being led by a member of the Council's Corporate Management Team. Essentially the budget was about priorities, meeting the challenges faced and spending taxpayers' money in the most efficient and effective way possible. To assist the process the views of the Borders public were being requested about where resources should be prioritised or whether the Council could do things differently to save money. Mr Robertson explained that a new way of engaging with local people had been launched. This was a community engagement tool, known as 'Scottish Borders Dialogue', which could be accessed through the Council's website. This was a quick and easy way to submit views and ideas. However responses to the consultation could also be submitted by post, email, Twitter and by telephone. All the feedback received would be put forward to the Council's Administration Budget Working Group for consideration as part of the financial planning process.

DECISION

NOTED the presentation

5. NEIGHBOURHOOD SMALL SCHEMES AND QUALITY OF LIFE FUND

The Neighbourhood Area Manager, Craig Blackie, updated members of the Area Forum on the programme for approved Small Schemes and Quality of Life Schemes for the Eildon area. There were circulated at the meeting copies of appendices listing the approved schemes and indicating the stage of their implementation. Mr Blackie highlighted that there remained £27,754 in the Small Schemes budget for 2015/16. With regard to the Quality of Life budget there was a balance of just in excess of £14,000 still to be allocated. However it was noted that there were a number of additional schemes which had been put forward for consideration. In response to a question Mr Blackie confirmed that the identification and management of large open areas of grassland for the creation of diverse habitats was part of the Neighbourhood Services review, and as such costs relating to the preparation of specific areas identified by Members within the Area Forum could be met from the Quality of Life budget.

DECISION

NOTED the update

6. PARTNER UPDATES

There were no updates to consider.

DECISION

NOTED

7. OPEN QUESTIONS

There were no open questions.

DECISION

NOTED

8. COMMUNITY COUNCIL SPOTLIGHT

Galashiels Community Councillor Ian Purvis was pleased to inform members of the Forum that the early indications were that the opening of the Borders railway would be highly successful for Galashiels, with increased footfall in the town and reports of increased takings by shops and businesses.

DECISION

NOTED

9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The following items were suggested for future meetings:-

- Report from Abellio Scotrail on first 5 months of operation of the railway;
- Presentation on the Education Estate; and
- Report from the Timber Transport Forum.

In view of the low attendance at the meeting there followed a discussion about how to ensure representation from all Community Councils and how to attract members of the public to Area Forum meetings. Community Council representatives in attendance gave confirmation that they had received notification of the meeting and been able to access the agenda through the recently updated Committee software system Modern. Gov. Although the dates and content of meetings were advertised via press releases issued by Corporate Communications this was obviously not proving to be effective. It was recognised that unless there was a specific issue that directly affected a large number of people in a specific area there would be a lack of interest and a degree of apathy. Also pointed out was the fact that issues specific to a locality would commonly be raised and discussed at Community Council meetings, which were also attended by local Councillors, rather than at meetings of the Area Forum. It was agreed that other ways be explored of attracting a higher attendance at meetings of Eildon Area Forum.

DECISION

- (a) **NOTED** the suggestions for future agenda items.
- (b) **AGREED** that other ways be explored of attracting a higher attendance at meetings of Eildon Area Forum.

10. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be held on Thursday 18 February 2016 at 6.30 pm in Galashiels, the exact venue to be confirmed.

The meeting concluded at 7.55 pm