

MINUTE of Meeting of the EILDON AREA PARTNERSHIP held remotely by Microsoft Teams on Thursday, 22 June 2023 at 6.00 pm

Present:- Councillors E. Thornton-Nicol (Chair), C. Cochrane, L. Douglas, E. Jardine, D. Parker, J. Paton Day and H. Steel together with 10 representatives of Partner Organisations, Community Councils, and members of the public.

Apologies:- Councillors J. Linehan, N. Mackinnon and F. Sinclair.

In Attendance:- Community Co-ordinator, Community Engagement Officer (E. Coltman), Democratic Services Officer (D. Hall)

1. **WELCOME**

The Chair 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.

2. **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION DOCUMENT**

There had been circulated copies of an additional information document with the agenda.

3. **FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION FROM MEETING OF 23 MARCH 2023**

The Minute of the meeting of the Eildon Area Partnership held on 23 March 2023 had been circulated and was noted.

3. **SCOTTISH BORDERS CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION NETWORK UPDATE**

The Chair welcomed Ms Louise Cox of Scottish Borders Council to meeting to provide an update on the Scottish Borders Climate Change Action Network. Ms Cox explained that work on climate change had been reviewed over the preceding years and that it had become clear that one of the elements lacking across the region when it came to climate change action was peer support and collaboration. It was hoped that by establishing an umbrella organisation a joined-up approach could be established across the region that would help interested parties and groups link up and get support. The Southern Uplands Partnership was already an established Group supporting communities, and it had been decided that setting up a new organisation would not be necessary. An application was expected to be submitted to the Scottish Government for support in the near future, which would allow the creation of dedicated posts to help undertake key work. It was expected that agreement for the Southern Uplands Partnership to host potential staff would take time. Discussions with the Scottish Government on community led climate change action were ongoing. As part of phase 1, mapping and evaluating current capacity would take place, and it was hoped that engagement activities would be undertaken with local communities, in particular young people. In response to a question regarding the timescales involved, Ms Cox explained that there would be lead time for approval, and then recruitment. Attendees welcomed that work was ongoing behind the scenes in addition to the public facing elements and encouraged the good work to continue.

4. **COMMUNITY PLAN PRIORITIES CONSULTATION – NILE ISTEPHEN**

4.1 The Chair welcomed Mr Nile Istephen of Eildon Housing Association to provide a presentation on the refreshed Community Plan Priorities. Community planning was the process by which councils and other public bodies such as Health Boards and Police Scotland worked with local communities, businesses, and community groups to plan and

deliver better services and improve the lives of people who live in Scotland. Community Planning Partnerships was the name given to the group of organisations who deliver community planning. Initially the responsibility for leading CPPs sat with LAs. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 changed the responsibility to sit equally with five public sector bodies: LAs, NHS, Police Scotland, SFRS and Enterprise companies – in the Borders those lead partners were:

NHS Borders
Police Scotland
SBC
Scottish Fire & Rescue Service
South of Scotland Enterprise
Other partners include:
Borders College
Borders Community Action (Third Sector)
Health & Social Care Integration Joint Boards
Live Borders
Berwickshire Housing Association
Eildon Housing Association
Scottish Borders Community Councils' Network
Scottish Borders Housing Association
Waverley Housing

- 4.2 There was a CPP in each local authority area. It was further explained that under the Community Empowerment Act, Community Planning Partnerships were required to develop a ten-year Plan that set out the priorities for improving people's lives and reducing inequalities. A lot had changed over the last five years since the previous Community Plan was agreed in May 2018. There were new priorities, and it was important that the plan included those and like a lot of CPPs, there was an opportunity to completely review the plan to focus on what was most important for the area now. There would be a review of the new Plan at least twice in the next 10 years to ensure that it remained relevant. In putting together, the draft priorities for the new Plan, the data had been analysed to get an understanding of what was working well and what needed to be improved. The views of the public had been sought through other surveys and community-based meetings, including the Council's Community Conversations and 16 priority areas had been identified and arranged under the five themes; Economy, Skills, and Learning; Enjoying Good Health and Wellbeing; Good Place to Live, Grow Up and Enjoy a Full Life and Community Empowerment. Views were being sought on which priorities were the most important to those living in the Eildon Area Partnership and whether the themes were the right ones. The consultation was available online on SBC's website and available as a paper copy for those who would prefer to respond that way. The consultation would close on 16 July 2023. In response to a question regarding rural areas, Mr Istephan acknowledged that rural areas faced higher incidences of fuel poverty and stressed that digital connections were key to ensuring that people living in those areas were not disadvantaged. An effective public transport network would also be key to ensuring that people living in rural areas were not disadvantaged, and technology, through initiatives such as demand responsive transport, would be key in the future. Mr Istephan confirmed that the plan did not replace the Local Development Plan, which was focused on planning matters. The plan under discussion was focused on bringing partners together to approach broader issues and to co-ordinate action in a joined up and effective manner. Mr Harrow acknowledged that there were a considerable number of different plans under way, and that the plan under discussion was focused on avoiding duplication of work in very important sectors. The Chair encouraged attendees to fill out the consultation and ensure that their voices were heard.

5. **LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY CONSULTATION PRESENTATION**

The Chair welcomed Ms Donna Bogdanovic to the meeting to provide a presentation on the Local Housing Strategy Consultation which was ongoing. Ms Bogdanovic explained

that the consultation on the Draft Local Housing Strategy 2023-28 was available online. The consultation was expected to conclude on 21 July 2023. It was stressed that this was the public's chance to express how they feel about housing in their area and to influence the provision of housing in future years. Ms Bogdanovic provided the link to the consultation and encouraged attendees to respond and to encourage others to complete the consultation. In response to a question regarding community buildings and spaces, Ms Bogdanovic explained that the Local Housing Strategy would be fed into the wider Local Development Plan and would form part of the wider picture of allowing communities to achieve their aspirations.

6. **EILDON AREA PARTNERSHIP ACTION TRACKER – UPDATE**

Mr Harrow explained that officers were keen to develop an action tracker that would be brought to future meetings of the Area Partnership. The action tracker would focus on ensuring that work was reported back to attendees following discussions and ensure that momentum was maintained in key areas. Members welcomed the idea.

7. **EILDON FUNDING TABLE 2023/24**

Copies of the Eildon Funding Table 2023/24 had been circulated with the agenda. The opening balance of the Neighbourhood Support Fund (NSF) had been £86k, and £1949 had been awarded since April 2023. Applications totalling £31.1k had been assessed and were awaiting decision. Mr Coltman explained that more detailed updates would be presented as awards were made and the year progressed.

8. **NEIGHBOURHOOD SUPPORT FUND**

8.1 There had been circulated copies of the Eildon Assessment Panel's recommendations as a supplement to the agenda. The Chair welcomed Ms Jenny Mushlin of the Eildon Assessment Panel to provide an overview of each of the recommendations.

8.2 **Melrose in Bloom**

Melrose in Bloom had applied for £5.75k to replace a wooden fence between the Boat Brae footpath and Melrose Bowling Club. The fence would follow the line of, and replace, an extant fence which had fallen into disrepair. The Assessment Panel had expressed concerns regarding a lack of clarity on land ownership and future maintenance obligations. Melrose in Bloom additionally had financial reserves. The Panel recommended not to fund the project as a result of those concerns. Members unanimously agreed not to fund the project.

8.3 **Live, Learn, Earn**

The application from Live, Learn, Earn was for £3.8k for a project which would support eight individuals over a twelve week period. The project would involve attendees undertaking one metal work session per week. The Panel were concerned at an overall lack of clarity with the application. It was not clear where the sessions would take place, quotations were not fully detailed and the breakdown of overall project costs had also been deemed vague. The Panel recommended not to fund the project. Members unanimously agreed not to fund the project.

8.4 **Hike and Bike Hub**

A £6.1k application from the Hike and Bike Hub had been received to cover ongoing rental costs for 9 months. The Eildon Area Partnership had previously approved funding for a project which provided affordable bike hire, servicing and maintenance as well as led cycles and guided walks. The Panel felt that the project had delivered positive outcomes in the area, and that the applicants had established strong partnership working with local community groups and businesses. It was highlighted that income generation by the Hike and Bike Hub had increased month and month, and the Panel felt that the funding applied for would the group to continue to move towards sustainability. The Panel had recommended that the application be approved in full. The Chair invited the applicants to address the meeting. Mrs Angela Crow thanked the Area Partnership for its support and

explained that she was happy to provide progress reports in the future. Members unanimously agreed to fund the project in full.

8.5 **Go Wild Scotland**

Go Wild Scotland had applied for £9,992.78 to support the ongoing employment of one full-time member of staff, paid at the national living wage for 6 months. The role would be to develop the group's community engagement activities at Mauldsheugh Wood in Selkirk; continue its work with local schools; expand its volunteering programme; develop nature-based activities; and develop a programme of ranger-led walks and wildlife tours in the region. The Panel were supportive of work which Go-Wild had undertaken to date and acknowledged the excellent work they had done at local schools. However, the Panel were concerned that Go-Wild had received a Neighbourhood Support Fund grant for staff costs in the previous year and felt that Go-Wild should seek other sourcing of funding to help meet their staffing costs. The Panel had recommended not to fund the application. The Chair welcomed Mr Gethin Chamberlain of Go-Wild to the meeting to discuss his application. In response to a request to play a video prepared by Go-Wild, the Chair explained that in the interests of fairness, and in line with standard orders, a late submission could not be accepted. Mr Chamberlain explained that Go-Wild had delivered an excellent outdoor nature education service, with particular focus on 6 local schools. In the region of 250 pupils had taken part in nature activities. Discussions had been held with a business expert, who believed Go-Wild could become self-funding based on sales and other factors. Mr Chamberlain explained that the funding applied for would allow Go-Wild to survive until it reached a more secure position and highlighted that they were a social enterprise, not run for profit. Following extensive discussions regarding whether it was appropriate to provide repeat funding to a single group, in particular for salary costs, consensus could not be reached on the application. Councillor Parker, seconded by Councillor Thornton-Nicol proposed that the recommendation of the Assessment Panel be upheld, and the application for funding be rejected. Councillor Jardine, seconded by Councillor Cochrane proposed that the recommendation of the Assessment Panel be overturned, and the application for funding be granted.

VOTE

Councillor Parker, seconded by Councillor Thornton-Nicol moved that the application for funding be denied.

Councillor Jardine, seconded by Councillor Cochrane moved as an amendment that the application for funding be approved.

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

The amendment was accordingly carried, and the funding application for £9992.78 was approved.

8.6 **Galashiels Bowling Club**

Galashiels Bowling Club had applied for £10k to replace the existing felt covering on its pavilion roof. The Assessment Panel were unsure whether the Neighbourhood Support Fund was the most appropriate fund for the project and had recommended not to fund the application. Members unanimously agreed not to approve the application.

8.7 **Ettrick and Yarrow Community Development Company**

The application from Ettrick and Yarrow Community Development Company sought £10k for salary costs for a community forest ranger, so that the group could continue their work maintaining access and improving the Ettrick Marshes. The outdoor nature area at the

old Ettrick school would also be improved. The group was including 12 days of additional ranger help to assist jobs where two people were required. There was no vehicle access to the marshes, so all materials needed to be carried. The Panel felt that the application was similar to the application discussed at paragraph 8.5, and in the interests of consistency they had recommended not to fund. Members unanimously agreed not to fund the application.

8.8 **Lauder Larder**

Lauder Larder had applied for £5.4k of funding to help purchase a freezer, laptop, shelving, cookery books, and a years' worth of core products. The purchase of the freezer would allow the group to freeze food for its customers. The laptop would allow recipes to be typed up and printed. The Panel had recommended to approve the application in full. Members welcomed the project and encouraged the group not to purchase cookbooks given the availability of free recipes.

9. **NEXT AREA PARTNERSHIP – 7 September 2023**

Attendees agreed to hold the next meeting of the Eildon Area Partnership in person at Eildon Housing Associations Headquarters. It was expected that the meeting would be blended to allow digital and physical attendees to take part.

The meeting concluded at 7.50 p.m.