

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL
14 DECEMBER 2023
APPENDIX I

OPEN QUESTIONS

Question from Councillor Thomson

To the Executive Member for Estate Management and Planning

Following the review of the Scottish Borders Council Estate and the fact that we cannot afford to maintain/retain so many properties in need of investment has been recognised, has a list of potentially 'at risk' properties been compiled? And if so, at what stage in the process will communities via their respective Community Councils be invited to discuss the impact on, and for, their community?

Reply from Councillor Mountford

The Council's estate comprises of 1656 assets measuring just over 392,000 square metres. To support the Council's long-term sustainability and contribute toward net zero targets, a significant reduction of the estate is necessary.

The first stage in the process is to agree a policy with Members on the criteria for how we classify our estate, and how we prioritise our management and investment of it.

This is one of the core workstreams that is progressing linked to the Target Operating Model. It is expected that this will inform how we identify core, non-core and surplus buildings.

It will include recommendations on how we decarbonise our estate and 5 year targets for carbon reduction.

It is expected that a report will be brought to Council by March 2024 and this report will include proposals for how we engage with communities as we begin to implement the policy.

Question from Councillor Begg

To the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing

30 months ago the first minister said the National Care Service would arguably be the most significant public service reform since the creation of the National Health Service. At the time the Scottish government said it would increase funding for social care by at least £800m. At recent budget briefings we have been advised that the National Care Service may have a significant effect on the Scottish Borders Council budget for next year.

Can I ask the Executive Member responsible:

- i) what Scottish Borders Council knows about the National Care Service plans for 2024
- ii) what has happened to the Scottish Borders share of the additional £800M for social care made in 2021'

Reply from Councillor Parker

There is a much larger answer to this question which I am not going to read out, but I will send all Members the larger answer as it is a helpful briefing. A letter was sent on 06.12.2023 to the Scottish Parliament by Minister Maree Todd regarding proposed revisions to the draft NCS Bill.

This letter provides a response to a series of questions from the Scottish Parliament's Health, Social Care and Sport Committee, and the intention of the letter was to provide MSPs clarity about the changes which will be made to the Bill in Stage 2, following a consultation process, with the broader aim of giving MSPs confidence to approve the Bill in the Stage 1 debate, scheduled for the end of January 2024.

COSLA as the representative body for Local Government in Scotland and SOLACE, the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives, have also made representations on the draft Bill. It is not expected however that a revised or amended Bill will be published until after MSPs have agreed its core objectives in the Stage 1 vote.

The letter is available to read in full on the Scottish Parliament's website: [National Care Service \(parliament.scot\)](#)

The final implications of the Bill for the Health & Social Care Partnership, Scottish Borders Council and NHS Borders will only be known once the final Bill is approved and enacted into legislation.

In respect to part ii) of Cllr Begg's question relating to the Scottish Borders Council share of the £800m made available nationally for Social Care in 2021, the allocation was split into two tranches with £700m of recurring funding allocated nationally in 2022/23 and a further £100m distributed in 2023/2024. The Scottish Borders Share of this funding was £15.967m and has been appropriately reflected in service budgets. Funding was allocated for the following purposes:

£7.392m to support Health & Social Care including the implementation of the Scottish Living Wage

£2.934m to address additional winter care pressures

£4.541m for additional RLW and carers funding

£1.05 m for additional nursing care uplift

£50k for national trauma training

Funding has been deployed across Health & Social Care services in line with the objectives of the funding. If a more detailed breakdown of how the funding has been deployed is required, I will ask Officers to provide this.

Supplementary

Councillor Begg asked if the Executive Member agreed that for the people of the Scottish Borders further integration of health and social care as part of centralisation was akin to using a sledgehammer to crack a nut. Councillor Parker agreed and highlighted that it was positive Scottish Government Ministers had appeared to move away from their original intentions.