

Building a Successful Borders

The Administration's Programme 2007 to 2012



End of Term Report



In May 2007 the two largest parties on Scottish Borders Council, the Scottish Conservatives and the Scottish Liberal Democrats, together with Aligned Independent members came together to establish a strong and experienced team committed to working together to deliver excellent services and strengthen local communities.





The new Administration set out a clear and comprehensive policy programme to help create and build a successful Scottish Borders for our people, our communities and our Businesses

The 4 years of this Administration has been characterised by success, delivery, achievement and the implementation of our ambitious programme. All against the backdrop of a global recession, increasing demand for services, a considerable real reduction in available resources and some of the severest winter conditions experienced in Scotland.





At the same time we have maintained a strong record of sound financial management and governance. Council Tax has not been increased since 2008 and we continue to have one of the highest collection rates in Scotland. We have set balanced revenue and capital budgets each year and maintained an appropriate level of reserves consistent with our Financial Strategy. We have also delivered over £16m of cash efficiencies as part of a far reaching and comprehensive Business Transformation Programme and this has enabled us to maintain and invest in front line services in the current challenging financial climate. As a result of this programme, Scottish Borders Council is well on the way to becoming a modern, responsive and customer focussed organisation delivering the excellent public services that our communities need.

Some of the key priorities that have been delivered are summarised below. We have made significant progress which demonstrates the strength and effectiveness of this Administration and the commitment we have had to listening and delivering for local people and to Building a Successful Borders that our communities deserve.





1) Delivering for Our People

Invest in our school buildings	
Continue to improve safe travel to and from school	
Provide £100,000 per year for Borders wide Youth Projects	
Improve support for young carers	





2) Delivering for Our Communities

Increase European funding of Borders projects	
Improve health and social outcomes in partnership with NHS Borders	
Achieve better outcomes for older people through engagement and involvement in care services	
Provide more enforceable road safety measures	

3) Delivering for Our Business






Create a climate in which local business can flourish and grow	
Enable local business to bid for and win Council and other public sector contracts	
Improve information on the Council web-site on how business can access all sources of grant funding	
Seek to improve the mobile phone and broadband networks throughout the Borders	





4) Delivering for Our Borders

Deliver value for money and minimise Council Tax increases	
Drive up attainment and achievement levels in our schools	
Deliver affordable homes to meet the needs of people of the Borders	
Support the development of Abbotsford as a major heritage tourist attraction	




Further detail of all our priorities and progress is set out on the following pages. It demonstrates a strong record of delivery and what has been achieved will provide a sound platform for the incoming Council following the elections in May 2012.




I) Delivering for Our People




Priority	Status	Work Completed
Invest in our school buildings		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three new high schools have been delivered – Earlston, Berwickshire and Eyemouth • A major £20m new build and renovation programme is well underway for primary schools. This has delivered new schools at Kingsland, Lauder, Denholm, and major refurbishments at Halyrude and Tweedbank. Clovenfords is currently under construction and West Linton is due to commence in May 2012
Continue to improve safe travel to and from school		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All schools have signed up to having travel plans in place, which identify issues and concerns around the whole journey to school and promote walking, cycling or alternatives to the car for travelling to school
Provide up to £100,000 per year Borders wide for Youth Projects		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A dedicated £100,000 has been provided each year to fund various Borders wide youth projects
Create opportunities for all children to receive two years nursery or pre-school education prior to commencing formal education at age 5		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From August 2010 all children received a nursery place on reaching their 3rd birthday • Considerable progress has been made in partnership with private and voluntary sectors and this area continues to be assessed in light of available resources and also as a result of the growing national priority being put into early years. An Early Years Strategy has been approved by the Council and now moving towards implementation.
Increase the range of opportunities for young people entering further and higher education and apprenticeships, in collaboration with local colleges and universities		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of our Determined to Succeed programme with the 16+ Learning Choices and Employability Skills Programme has resulted in 91% of school leavers receiving an offer of a positive destination in education, employment or training. However a lot of further work is required to fully achieve this priority






Priority	Status	Work Completed
Increase participation in sport and health promoting activities for all age groups		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport Development programmes are operating across the Borders for nine target sports • Ten Sports Festival programmes and the Active Schools Programme Schools are fully supported ensuring that the rich Borders sporting heritage is maintained
Modernise sport facilities across the Borders		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Scottish Borders Sports Facilities Strategy has been developed • Construction of the first full size third generation (3G) football/rugby pitch in the Borders at Netherdale in Galahsiels has been completed with the pitch ready for use by the end of January 2012 • Modern Sports facilities at the 3 new High Schools are all available for community use • Sports development has been transferred to Borders Sports and Leisure Trust enabling a holistic approach to the provision and development of sport and sports facilities across the Borders
Improve the provision of children's play areas		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements have been made but on an opportunistic basis when funding has become available or through developer contributions as part of new housing developments • A programme for investment has now been developed and is ready for implementation
Improve support for young carers		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The young carer's strategy has been approved and is being implemented

2) Delivering for Our Communities




Priority	Status	Work Completed
Increase European funding of Borders projects through partnership and cooperation with other regions		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent progress has been made over the last four years to maximise the level of European funding coming into the Scottish Borders by working in partnership with businesses, communities and other UK regions. The Scottish Borders is benefiting from European funding investments from LEADER, the European Regional Development Fund, the Scotland Rural Development Programme, and the European Fisheries Fund. Over 500 projects have been allocated over £47 million of competitive EU funding since 2007.
Improve health and social outcomes in partnership with NHS Borders		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The groundbreaking Cheviot project is an integrated approach between the Council NHS Borders and voluntary services for the management and delivery of services to older people. This has seen improvements in day care, local hospital and other care services for older people in the Cheviot Area • Joint work with the Drug and Alcohol Partnership has seen the review and development of services for people with drug and alcohol dependencies • A joint strategy and management structure for mental health services is in place which is a significant step towards full integration of mental health services in the Borders
Implement the actions recommended in the Scottish Borders Poverty Strategy		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the actions in Tackling Poverty and Financial Inclusion Strategy is almost complete




Priority	Status	Work Completed
Achieve better outcomes for older people through better engagement and involvement in care services		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With an increasing elderly population, improving outcomes for elderly people has been a priority of our Administration. The ‘Transforming Older Peoples Services’ programme is a forward thinking plan of action to modernise the provision and delivery of social care services for older people . By implementing these changes we are re-balancing care for older people in the Borders and giving a greater choice and increased range of personalised services. These include more care and support at home or in Housing with Care, along with the delivery of the right kind of support to assist individuals in settling back into home after a hospital stay
Support communities and businesses by assisting them to access and develop alternatives to expensive banking and lending arrangements		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has supported the take-up of Capital Credit by working in partnership with the financial inclusion officer and community support workers, who work closely with financially excluded, vulnerable and homeless people to help them access affordable credit
Introduce more effective neighbourhood management of our environmental services		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The neighbourhood pilot in Berwickshire is complete and has shown significant benefits in terms of delivering improved service standards and outcomes whilst at the same time using fewer resources • The strong commitment to delivering locally responsive services with a locality focus has seen the former Council departments of Technical Services and Planning & Economic Development rationalised and combined into one single department of Environment & Infrastructure. This has not only delivered efficiencies but will provide a joined up approach and better outcomes in terms of the development of the Borders, its regeneration, the environment, transport and the economy. Importantly it will see the delivery of more local and responsive parks, cleansing and roads services through the current roll-out of a neighbourhood approach across the Borders


Priority	Status	Work Completed
Progress flood prevention works in Galashiels, Selkirk, Hawick and Newcastleton		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ring fenced funding in the capital programme has allowed the progression of a number of flood protection works in Hawick, Galashiels, Selkirk, and Newcastleton, with a number of schemes completed and more planned. Part funding has also been provided by the Scottish Government for the flood scheme in Galashiels. • Flood Orders are in place for Galashiels and Selkirk • A range of community support and resilience measures has also been introduced in towns, such as the provision of sand bags so that communities are better prepared for any flooding event.
Encourage communities to create and take ownership of their own community development plans		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A baseline assessment of which communities have development plans has been completed. Work is now ongoing with specific communities to determine the resources required to put these plans in place • The Council has proactively engaged in a Community Asset Transfer Project as part of a national initiative for public bodies to assist local communities to take responsibility for their own futures. This has included the development of a Community Asset Transfer Policy in consultation with the Development Trusts Association Scotland. The policy provides a framework for transferring Council-owned property assets to community groups and organisations for them to deliver public services, where there is a genuine case for doing so. Alongside this, discussions and negotiations have commenced with community groups for the transfer of facilities such as public halls, community centres and sports facilities
Provide more enforceable road safety measures		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of people killed on Borders roads has decreased • Accident Investigation & Prevention sites have been identified • A speed limit review of A and B-class roads has been completed. • A Road Safety Plan for the Scottish Borders has been agreed and is now in place.

Priority	Status	Work Completed
Improve safety measures on main arterial A-routes in the Borders		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Route based weather forecasting in conjunction with the met-office has been trialled on priority winter routes
Support the establishment of allotment sites		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allotment sites have been established and supported across the Borders - Kelso have negotiated an allotment site at the race course, Eyemouth have leased an area at the rear of the new high school and in Selkirk screen planting has been undertaken in partnership with the allotment committee
Introduce pilot schemes of using motion detectors and solar power in street lighting		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LED lights have been trialled in Clovenfords and Galashiels as an option for reducing power consumption. A report on the trial will be brought forward in early 2012
Modernise public transport		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation arrangements for construction of the Waverley Railway have been successfully passed to Transport Scotland who are taking construction forward with Network Rail. This should see trains operating by 2014 Over £5m has also been approved within in our Capital Plan to deliver a Transport Interchange as part of the future phases of the Galashiels Inner Relief Road. The Interchange project is currently in its design phase and will not only promote improved connections between all means of sustainable transport but will also help realise the full benefits of the Borders Railway A review of the Passenger Transport service is currently underway and includes a comprehensive review of Bus Services
Promote car-sharing schemes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There has been significant promotion of car sharing within the Council, through internal publications and also external promotion through SBConnect and local press. There are now over 300 members of Tripshare Borders the web-site promoting car sharing Priority parking has been established at Council HQ for staff who car share






3) Delivering for Our Businesses





Priority	Status	Work Completed
Create a climate in which local businesses can flourish and grow		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of business support programmes have been successfully delivered including the national Business Gateway services, £125,000 in Scottish Borders Business Fund grants, a pilot of retail support grants and two European Regional Development Fund business projects approved • The Council has worked closely with the Chamber of Commerce, Export Association and Social Enterprise Chamber to better understand local business issues and promote business opportunities, including access to funding. The turnover of Social Enterprise Chamber members has increased from £43m in 2007 to £65m in 2010
Promote the Borders as a business friendly destination for inward investment		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Inward Investment Project is almost complete. Inward Investment Website has been delivered and is live and is a key part of promoting Inward Investment to the area. Promotional brochures have been delivered and contacts established with UK Trade & Investment and Scottish Government. Targeted marketing will continue throughout 2011/2012
Enable local businesses to bid for and win council and other public sector contracts		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A supplier development programme has been developed and delivered to enable local business to be better positioned to win Council work. In 2010/11 there were 7 events with 725 attendees which was a significant rise from 141 attendees across 5 events in 2009/10. • At its meeting on 26 January 2012 the Council endorsed the continued support given to local businesses and local suppliers to enable them to bid for and win Council contracts. Almost a third of Council spend on goods, services and works is now with local suppliers.



Priority	Status	Work Completed
Improve information on the Council web-site on how business can access all sources of grant funding		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The business section of the Council website refreshed in 2010 to provide better information for business including information on grant funding. There are links to The Our Scottish Borders website which is the Inward Investment website. This information was carried through into the Council's new website launched in October 2011.
Support the creative industries including encouraging the development of Borders based digital broadcasting and production companies		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South of Scotland Creative Enterprise Initiative project has been completed. This has seen the recruitment of creative industries posts in Scottish Borders and Dumfries and Galloway and the delivery of a programme of activity to support the creative industries sector. Funding has been secured to carry out sectoral research. No real progress on the development of Borders based digital broadcasting and production companies has been made.
Encourage tourists to stay in the Borders and promote outdoor tourism and events		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A programme of international, national and regional events continues to be delivered including 3 Scotland A rugby matches at Netherdale, the Tour of Britain Grande Depart and Tour of Britain ride events, the Jim Clark Rally and the Borders Music & Comedy Festival. The core path network continues to be maintained and developed and significant promotional and marketing activity is being carried out about the network. Overall Tourist numbers are remaining constant over the last 2 years with a slight downward longer term trend.

Priority	Status	Work Completed
Seek to improve the mobile phone and broadband networks throughout the Borders		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As one of the most access deprived areas in Scotland improving digital and communications infrastructure has been a priority as a means of helping address Social and Economic issues. We have fully implemented the South of Scotland Broadband Pathfinder project, providing faster high capacity communication facilities allowing the Council to give a better, more responsive and accessible service to local people and communities. • Through the South of Scotland Alliance we have also approved an ambitious plan to deliver next generation broadband to every home and business in the south of Scotland. The project, which is currently with the Scottish Government to seek a share of UK funding, is one of the single largest infrastructure projects for the south of Scotland and its importance to the future of the region cannot be underestimated.

4) Delivering for Our Borders


Priority	Status	Work Completed
Deliver value for money and minimise Council Tax increases		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Tax has not increased since 2008 and the Council continues to have one of the highest collection rates in Scotland • Over £16m of cash efficiencies have been delivered as part of a comprehensive Business Transformation Programme which has enabled the Council to maintain invest in front line services.
Guarantee that the Council Tax will not be increased to pay for the Borders Railway		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Tax has not increased since 2008 and the Railway is moving forward into its construction phase with Transport Scotland and Network Rail
Drive up attainment and achievement levels in our schools		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attainment level for S4, S5 and S6 pupils has continued to increase • The Curriculum for Excellence is currently being implemented across all our schools. There has also been an improving trend in inspection reports across our schools
Protect our rural schools		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small schools policy has been developed and is in place
Deliver affordable homes to meet the needs of the people of the Borders through effective joint work with local Housing Associations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As an area with some of the lowest wages in Scotland, providing good quality affordable housing is essential. In 2010/11, a total of 174 affordable houses were delivered in partnership with RSL's, which is a significant increase on the totals for previous years • A decision has been made to provide on-lending to Borders Alliance RSL's which will enable them to progress the development of affordable housing • A localised mortgage scheme is being developed with a Building Society. Under the scheme the Council will act as a guarantor which will enable people to obtain mortgages where they would previously not have been able to.

Priority	Status	Work Completed
Defend the character of the Borders by raising standards of building design, including renewable requirements		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to protect and enhance the character of our built environment the Scottish Borders Design Forum has been established and 'Place-making and Design' planning guidance has been produced including training for Elected Members and Officers • The Scottish Building regulations regarding improved renewable energy use have been implemented
Promote locally the use and generation of renewable energy		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work has been ongoing and continuing in partnership with Community Energy Scotland (CES), Energy Saving Trust, and Scottish Government on increasing awareness and uptake of renewable energy (RE) opportunities amongst householders and businesses. • Energy Fairs and workshops have been run to increase awareness of RE options for community groups and individuals. Information on RE is being included as part of the delivery of Home Insulation Schemes and Universal Home Insulation Schemes • The establishment of the Borders Renewable Energy Agency is in its early stages and when up and running will provide a resource to promote and deliver RE solutions across the Borders
Continue to improve our recycling rates		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our commitment and investment in reducing waste and the amount going to landfill has seen waste recycling rates increase from 8% in 2005 to 40% in 2011. The next stage of this commitment is the construction and operation of a state of the art Waste Treatment Facility which will further reduce waste going to landfill. The contract for the facility was signed in April 2011 and with construction due to commence in March 2012.
Simplify the Council web-site to make it more user-friendly		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new Council website was launched in October 2011. The site is designed around how customers want to access services, gain information about the Council and its services and do business with the Council.

Priority	Status	Work Completed
Support the development of Abbotsford House as a major heritage tourist attraction		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding has been awarded to support the development of Abbotsford House as a major heritage tourist attraction for the Borders. The Abbotsford Visitor Centre is currently being constructed and SBC are designing and developing a number of associated tourism products linked to Abbotsford.
Improve our success rate in winning lottery and other grant funding for Borders projects		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With the Council's continued support, there has been success for Borders projects through People's Millions for projects such as Cardrona Pump'n'Jump track, and Selkirk Rugby Club Synthetic Outdoor Training Pitch. These successes are promoted via a range of local events and the media. Our Community Grant scheme continues to be actively promoted and supported awarding over £100,000 each year to support numerous local community projects. However, whilst the number of community groups accessing lottery or community grant funding is above our target the overall trend is downwards.

Key

 - Priority complete

 - Priority not complete but some work has been progressed

 - Little or no progress with the priority