
HAWICK ACTION PLAN – UPDATE

Report by Executive Director EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

17 April 2018

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 **This report provides a progress report on key activities within the Hawick Action Plan following the last update in December 2017.**
- 1.2 The Hawick Action Plan is structured around three key themes which were identified and agreed by the key stakeholders for the town. The themes are making Hawick a 'Great Place for Working and Investing'; a 'Great Place for Living and Learning'; and a 'Great Destination to Visit'.
- 1.3 There has been progress within the themes and the priority actions identified. Completed actions and areas of progress are set out in Appendix 1. A number of key areas of progress are highlighted within this report.
- 1.4 Some of the key areas of activity include the progress of work for the industrial units at Galalaw Business Park; and the design work for the Former Armstrong's building as part of the Hawick Business Growth project with £3.625million of Scottish Government funding; progress on the design and consultation of Hawick Flood Protection Scheme; funding support for tourism marketing activity and new signage; feasibility study funding to progress a film initiative; and further research for a Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme.
- 1.5 Officers continue to work in partnership with the Scottish Government, the new South of Scotland Economic Partnership, local agencies and Elected Members to develop the Hawick Action plan and key projects identified within it.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **I recommend that the Executive Committee:**
 - (a) **Notes the progress made in taking forward key actions within the Hawick Action Plan since December 2017, as set out in Appendix 1;**
 - (b) **Agrees to support further work with businesses and stakeholders in Hawick in 2018/19 as outlined in Appendix 1; and**
 - (c) **Asks the Executive Director to present a further progress report on the Action Plan to Committee by the end of 2018.**

3 HAWICK ACTION PLAN

3.1 The Hawick Action Plan is structured around three key themes which were identified and agreed by key stakeholders in 2016. The themes are:

(a) Theme 1: 'Great Place for Working and Investing'

- Make Hawick a 'Connected Place' ready to do business in the modern economy.
- Create an Environment to Encourage Economic Growth
- Create an Innovative Flood Protection Scheme

(b) Theme 2: 'Great Place for Living & Learning'

Provide a suitable environment to retain school leavers and to attract new workers into the area.

(c) Theme 3: 'Great Destination to Visit'

Make Hawick a great place to visit and stay.

3.2 The Initial Hawick Action Plan was approved by Council in June 2016. Since then Council officers have been working to take forward the actions in the Plan in conjunction with other key stakeholders, local businesses and other local organisations in Hawick.

4 PROGRESSING THE ACTION PLAN

4.1 There has been progress within the themes and the priority actions identified, with completed actions and areas of progress set out in Appendix 1. The key areas of progress are highlighted below.

4.2 **Hawick Business Growth Project:**

The Project is split into two phases. The first phase focuses on specific property development of sites in the town.

Former Armstrong's Building – The Council has acquired the site and is seeking to demolish elements which are beyond repair and redevelop it as a business incubator hub providing small office units. The development is anticipated to provide up to 17 business incubator units and potentially create up to 25 FTE additional jobs. Work is progressing on the building design stage with a planning application due to be submitted in Spring 2018.

Galalaw Business Park – work is progressing well on the building, with local contractors on site since December 2017. This new build development will provide 4 industrial units, potentially creating up to 10 FTE jobs. Work is expected to be completed by May 2018.

Tower Mill, Heart of Hawick - Minor alterations have been completed and LiveBorders continues to market these offices in order to attract new business tenants.

4.3 The second phase includes feasibility study work focused on key sites and buildings in the town. Research is currently progressing on key sites in the town centre linked to the research required for the potential Hawick Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme funding application.

4.4 **Film Town Pilot Project:**

Funding has been provided to an off-shoot of the Borders Alchemy Film project to carry out a feasibility study into whether a film project can be progressed in the town that will provide production studios, innovative film making and skills training for school leavers.

4.5 **Borders Railway Extension Feasibility Scoping Study:**

Transport Scotland is leading the Borders Corridors Study which includes the potential for an extended rail link towards Hawick and beyond. The study due to report shortly

4.6 Hawick Flood Protection Scheme:

The detailed design and advanced works are progressing and the Project Team continues to proactively engage with the public in relation to both elements. A report was presented to Council at the end of March 2018, requesting delegated authority to commence the land purchase negotiations; to use the appropriate Compulsory Purchase Order powers required; and to allow entry to land for the construction of the Scheme. The completion of the Scheme, currently scheduled for March 2022, will enable further regeneration and development opportunities for the town.

4.7 Digital Boost:

The Scottish Government has provided additional funds to continue the successful Digital Boost programme for a further year. The majority of the Digital Boost workshops will be run from Business Gateway's base at Tower Mill in Hawick

4.8 Tourism Marketing & Signage:

The Council has provided funding support to FutureHawick to engage BrightLight Marketing to carry out the next stage of the tourism marketing plan activity project. Work progressed in October 2017 with a branding concept of "Made in Hawick" developed and agreed by local businesses and stakeholders. This marketing concept is to promote Hawick on the basis of quality goods manufactured in the town. The aim is to implement the brand and promote Hawick to visitors and businesses. The Council has provided funding to progress a range of marketing activity including Brand Development; Print and Distribution; Photography and Video; and Online Marketing. In addition, a sign audit and declutter exercise has been completed to remove old tourism signage. New signage for the upgraded Wilton Lodge Park and upgrading of existing tourism signage will be carried out once branding has been agreed as part of the tourism marketing project above.

4.9 Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS):

The Council commissioned a heritage consultant in October 2017 to undertake initial research on the feasibility /options for a townscape heritage based scheme for Hawick town centre. Council officers have also progressed discussions with potential funders including Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and Historic Environment Scotland (HES). Although there are no specific funding programmes currently open, the Council is aiming to progress a CARS Project with a potential application to HES in Sept 2018. This could provide a 5-year programme of targeted delivery and support. Research is currently progressing on key buildings and properties in the town centre to gather evidence required for a potential funding application.

5 SOUTH OF SCOTLAND ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

- 5.1 Officers continue to work in partnership with the Scottish Government, the new South of Scotland Economic Partnership, local agencies and Elected Members to deliver the Hawick Action Plan and key projects identified within it. A number of the projects and actions identified in the Hawick Action Plan have been put forward for additional support within the South of Scotland Economic Partnership's initial workplan. Decisions on this additional support will be taken in Spring 2018 and reported in the next Action Plan update.

6 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

There are no direct financial implications with this report. However, the development of key activities within the overall Action Plan will require potential further financial commitment from the Council and other partners. This will be dealt with in future reports, as appropriate.

6.2 Risk and Mitigations

The Council has been taking a proactive approach towards progressing the Hawick Action Plan, in conjunction with stakeholders and local partners. The development of the business growth/ property development activity and corresponding funding application to Scottish Government has been a significant positive step forward. The Council will continue to work with stakeholders, partners, local businesses and the community, to engage in appropriate projects and provide positive support for the Hawick Action Plan. There are a range of projects to deliver the Hawick Action Plan. To help ensure successful delivery and positive outcomes, risks are managed at individual project level, following the Corporate Risk Management Policy and framework. Significant risks are escalated when necessary, in line with policy.

6.3 Equalities

It is anticipated that Equalities Impact Assessments will be required in relation to the individual projects as they are developed in order to ensure that there are no adverse impacts due to race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation or religious/belief arising.

6.4 Acting Sustainably

The Hawick Action Plan aims to make the economy of the town more sustainable by improving its connectivity, its business infrastructure, the level of local skills and the tourism offering. The Action Plan will help to secure additional economic activity and growth to improve the sustainability of the local economy and the community.

6.5 Carbon Management

Some of the actions contained in the Hawick Action Plan could have a positive impact on carbon emissions, particularly those actions noted above that lead to the development or redevelopment of ageing or vacant industrial properties.

6.6 Rural Proofing

The Hawick Action Plan focuses on the town of Hawick but it is acknowledged that some of the actions, especially relating to digital connectivity, could have a positive impact on the surrounding rural areas.

6.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

There are no changes to be made to the Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation arising from this report.

7 CONSULTATION

7.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Service Director HR and the Clerk to the Council are being consulted and any comments will be reported verbally at the Committee meeting.

Approved by

**Rob Dickson
Executive Director**

Signature

Author(s)

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Background Papers: None

Previous Minute Reference: Scottish Borders Council, 5 December 2017

Note – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Bryan McGrath can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

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