
SOUTH OF SCOTLAND ENTERPRISE AGENCY – CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Report by Executive Director

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

31 May 2018

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this Report is to agree the Council's response to the current Scottish Government pre-legislative consultation on a new Enterprise Agency for the South of Scotland. A proposed consultation response is attached to this Report as Appendix 2.
- 1.2 The consultation on a new Enterprise Agency for the South for Scotland will close on 7 June 2018. Given the importance of the consultation and its proposals to the Scottish Borders, it is vital that Scottish Borders Council submits a considered and comprehensive response before that deadline.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 I recommend that Scottish Borders Council:

- (a) **Notes the significance of the current Scottish Government pre-legislative consultation on the proposed South of Scotland Enterprise Agency; and**
- (b) **Agrees that the draft consultation response set out in Appendix 2 is submitted to Scottish Government as the Council's formal response to the consultation on a new Enterprise Agency for the South of Scotland.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In 2016 Scottish Government launched an Enterprise and Skills Review with the aim of ensuring public agencies deliver the joined-up support that young people, universities, colleges, training providers, businesses and the workforce needs. The first phase of the review was concluded in October 2016. A fundamental recommendation was to establish an 'Enterprise and Skills Vehicle' for the South of Scotland that would address the exceptional combination of challenges faced by the region, enable it to drive forward its economy, create opportunities for all its citizen and deliver an increase in shared prosperity.
- 3.2 Phase 2 of the Enterprise and Skills Review was completed in March 2017 with a commitment by the Scottish Government to create a new South of Scotland Enterprise Agency, covering Dumfries and Galloway and the Scottish Borders. The Programme for Government published by the Scottish Government on 5 September 2017 confirmed legislation would be introduced to the Scottish Parliament in 2018 to establish the new Enterprise Agency. The aim is to ensure that the new South of Scotland Enterprise Agency is operational by 1 April 2020.

4 PRE-LEGISLATIVE CONSULTATION

- 4.1 On 15 March 2018, the Scottish Government launched a formal public consultation (Appendix 1 and at: <https://consult.gov.scot/economic-policy-unit/new-enterprise-agency-for-the-south-of-scotland/>) on the creation of the new South of Scotland Enterprise Agency. The purpose of this pre-legislative consultation is to gather views on how the new South of Scotland Enterprise Agency can make the difference in delivering Inclusive Growth, increasing competitiveness, and tackling inequality across the South of Scotland.
- 4.2 The deadline for the consultation is 7 June 2018. An engagement process across the South of Scotland with businesses, communities and the wider public is underway to complement the written consultation process. This involves 28 events being held right across the South of Scotland, and is being carried out in conjunction with consultations on the role and work of the South of Scotland Economic Partnership and the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal.
- 4.3 A draft consultation response has been prepared and is set out in Appendix 2. It is recommended that this is submitted to Scottish Government as the formal consultation response from Scottish Borders Council. It is intended that the South of Scotland Alliance will also make a formal response to the consultation. Its response will be informed by the Council's agreed response.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

No costs directly attach to the recommendations contained in this report, but to deliver the shared ambition of the consultation for a step change in

the region's economic performance, the Council will need to play a full and active role in partnership with the new Agency. This will require the Council to deploy, invest and potentially to transfer resources to the Agency to enable it to deliver its strategic plan.

5.2 **Risk and Mitigations**

The Council's response to the Consultation ensures that the Council's vision for the new Enterprise Agency is publicly communicated, helping to inform future direction and ensure that the benefits for the Scottish Borders are realised. This mitigates the risk that the direction does not benefit the Scottish Borders as much as it could. Though the exact nature and extent of Council support is yet to be determined, the partnership between the Agency and Council and the alignment of their objectives is expected to fully validate the contributions that the Council will be expected and eager to make to delivery of common objectives.

5.3 **Equalities**

There is no requirement for an Equalities Impact Assessment as the report relates to a consultation response. However, it should be noted that the express purpose of the Agency to drive inclusive growth means driving economic growth, and creating opportunities for all. The Agency will be expected to develop a robust equalities policy of its own which delivers against the general duty placed on it by the Equality Act 2010.

5.4 **Acting Sustainably**

The Agency is expected to have positive transformative economic, social and environmental effects on the South of Scotland and the Scottish Borders. It is important that the Agency's approach and operations are governed by principles which support positive community and environmental outcomes. It is expected that the Agency will become a relevant authority under Schedule 3 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 and under the Fairer Scotland Duty Interim Guidance. The Agency should also be governed by principles of Sustainable Development, such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

5.5 **Carbon Management**

No effects on carbon emissions flow directly from this Report. However, it is expected that the activities of the Agency will have an impact on carbon emissions. Accordingly, it is essential that the Agency's activities and its support of the activities of others are guided by principles of Sustainable Development, as noted above.

5.6 **Rural Proofing**

The proposed creation of the Agency is an acknowledgement of the challenges in providing equality of access and opportunity in rural areas. It is important that the Agency consistently assesses the effects of its policies and activities on rural areas and inhabitants. This can be achieved by ensuring that rural proofing is embedded within the Agency's own Equality Impact Assessment process.

5.7 **Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

No changes to the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation are required to be made as a result of the proposals in this Report.

6 CONSULTATION

6.1 The Corporate Management Team, the Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Service Director Strategy and Policy, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Chief Officer HR, and the Clerk to the Council have been consulted and their comments incorporated into the report.

Approved by

Rob Dickson
Executive Director

Signature

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Background Papers:

Previous Minute Reference: Scottish Borders Council, 29 March 2018

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

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