
SCOTTISH BORDERS ECONOMIC STRATEGY 2023

Report by The Chief Executive, Scottish Borders Council

COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIC BOARD

13 JUNE 2013

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report presents the draft Scottish Borders Economic Strategy 2023 and seeks approval for the Strategy on the basis that it appropriately reflects the Community Planning Partnership's economic development priorities.**
- 1.2 The Economic Strategy has been prepared in order to set direction for the activity of the Council, but also for our Community Planning Partners. The Strategy consists of three documents, an Economic Profile, an Economic Strategy document and an Action Plan. The Strategy sets out the vision, strategic aims and objectives that will provide the focus for our efforts to ensure sustainable economic growth for the Scottish Borders.
- 1.3 The four strategic aims are: Creating the conditions for businesses to compete; Building on our assets; Developing the workforce of the future; and Providing leadership. The Community Planning Partnership will track the progress of the strategy and a range of indicators are set out in the Strategy to enable this.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 I recommend that the Strategic Board:-**
- (a) agrees that the Community Planning Partnership's economic development priorities are appropriately highlighted in the Draft Scottish Borders Economic Strategy 2023 and approves the Strategy;**
 - (b) notes that the financial implications of the associated Action Plan will require to be assessed alongside other priorities before inclusion in future capital and revenue plans; and**
 - (c) notes that limitations on future public spending may place constraints upon the delivery of the Action Plan.**

3 ECONOMIC STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Draft Scottish Borders Economic Strategy 2023 has been prepared based on discussions at Economic Development Group meetings and at the Economy and Infrastructure Programme Delivery Team. A range of business representatives also helped inform the development of the strategy.
- 3.2 There are three key documents that make up the Draft Scottish Borders Economic Strategy 2023. The Economic Profile (which will be available on the Council's website) sets out the evidence base for the current state of the economy. It provides an analysis of that economic snapshot and highlights a range of challenges and opportunities that need to be addressed in the Economic Strategy.
- 3.3 The Economic Strategy (Appendix 1) sets out the vision, strategic aims and objectives that will provide the focus for our efforts to ensure sustainable economic growth for the Scottish Borders. A separate Action Plan (Appendix 2) sets out the detailed actions that need to be implemented in order to deliver our objectives. As well as actions that are already under way, the Action Plan also identifies possible actions that can be delivered if the resources can be identified. The development and make-up of these documents has been informed by the Scottish Local Authorities Economic Development - Improvement Guide 2011.
- 3.4 At the heart of the Strategy are the vision, the four strategic aims and a range of objectives that relate to each of these. The vision that is set out was agreed by the Economic Development Group and the Programme Delivery Team earlier this year, and is:
- “By 2023 the Scottish Borders will be amongst the best performing and most productive rural economies in Scotland. By supporting existing businesses and encouraging higher value economic activity, our quality of life will increase. The Borders will become a location of choice for growing businesses and for people to live and work.”
- 3.5 The four strategic aims are derived from the analysis in the Economic Profile and reflect the particular opportunities and challenges that the economy of the Scottish Borders faces. The four strategic aims are:
- 1. Creating the conditions for businesses to compete** - reflecting our entrepreneurial strength and the need to create the conditions for businesses to grow, and/ or to attract entrepreneurial people;
 - 2. Building on our assets** - attracting and retaining people and growing businesses will be helped by what the Scottish Borders as a place has to offer and by our ability to maximise our assets;
 - 3. Developing the workforce of the future** - fundamental to future prosperity and competitiveness is the supply of, and demand for, a skilled workforce. As there are fewer jobs available here than residents in work, people are travelling outside the area for work and this means economic performance is lower;
 - 4. Providing leadership** - essential for successful economic development to be achieved, leadership will also help deliver other policy and organisational priorities too – around education, health, and the public good.

4 PROGRESS AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- 4.1 The Programme Delivery Team will track the progress of the strategy in three main ways; monitoring progress against the Single Outcome Agreement indicators; measuring the economic wellbeing of residents and businesses; and assessing the impact of our activities against key high level performance indicators. A range of indicators is set out in the Strategy document, and these have been aligned with nationally agreed indicators developed by the SLAED network (Scottish Local Authorities Economic Development). They also align with the Single Outcome Agreement.
- 4.2 It is intended that the indicators in the Strategy (and also any additional indicators that appear in the Council's Corporate plan) will form the basis of reports to the Economy & Infrastructure Programme Delivery Team. Progress update will also be fed back to the Strategic Board.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

- a) The business plans of the Community Planning Partners include resources that will contribute to achievement of some of the objectives of the Scottish Borders Economic Strategy 2023, for example, transition to a Low Carbon Economy and South of Scotland Next Generation Broadband. The Action Plan (Appendix 2) has been laid out to highlight which projects are currently resourced (those highlighted by a tint) and which are currently in the 'Project Pipeline' (no tint) and are not currently funded.
- b) At this stage, it is only possible to provide broad cost estimates for the projects that are in the Project Pipeline (see Appendix 2). The Community Planning Partners will need to decide which of the actions identified in the Project Pipeline will be of a high enough priority to justify targeting resources towards them. The financial implications of the Action Plan will require to be considered alongside other priorities and be reflected in future capital and revenue plans. It should be noted that limitations on future public spending may place constraints on the delivery of the Action Plan. In view of this it is expected that the Action Plan will be reviewed and updated annually to allow it to reflect shifting priorities and resources.

5.2 Risk and Mitigations

There is a risk to the Community Planning Partnership of not ensuring there is an up to date Economic Strategy in place for the Scottish Borders because it helps guide the activity of the Community Planning Partners. It also provides a strong basis for future lobbying and funding bids to various external sources. This risk is mitigated by approving, and regularly reviewing the proposed strategy.

5.3 Equalities

The Scottish Borders Economic Strategy 2023 is undergoing an Equality Impact Assessment.

5.4 Acting Sustainably

The Scottish Borders Economic Strategy 2023 has sustainable economic growth at its core. It also highlights the development of a Low Carbon

Economic Strategy as one of its Objectives, supporting one of the key Scottish Government targets over the long term. As a key strategy for the Scottish Borders the document has been considered in relation to the Strategic Environmental Assessment regulations.

5.5 Rural Proofing

The Scottish Borders Economic Strategy 2023 will not have an adverse impact on the rural area. The strategy has been informed by the work and knowledge base of the 'A Working Countryside' partnership.

Approved by

Chief Executive

Signature

Author(s)

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Background Papers: None

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

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