
Report by Chief Executive

**Scottish Borders Low Carbon Economic Strategy 2023 –
Action Plan Update**

13 February 2014

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 **This report updates the Board on progress against the actions set out in the Scottish Borders Low Carbon Economic Strategy 2023 which was agreed in October 2013.**
- 1.2 The Scottish Borders Low Carbon Economic Strategy 2023 sets out a series of strategic aims and initiatives which form the first steps in the transition towards a low carbon economy for the Scottish Borders. The strategic aims and objectives are aligned to the priorities identified by the Community Planning Partnership and Single Outcome Agreement.
- 1.3 Good progress has been made in delivering the actions set out in the Action Plan (Appendix 1), but some areas of activity require additional partner focus, and in some instances, significant additional resources.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **I recommend that the Community Planning Partnership :-**
 - (a) **Note the positive progress made in relation to the Low Carbon Economic Strategy Action Plan;**
 - (b) **Discusses and agrees how to realign partner's resources to deliver these priorities; and**
 - (c) **Considers how best to embed low carbon economy issues within partner's strategies and operating plans.**

3 LOW CARBON ECONOMIC STRATEGY 2023 - BACKGROUND

3.1 The Scottish Borders Low Carbon Economic Strategy 2023 sets out the context for the transition to a low carbon economy at international, national and local levels. Movement towards a Low Carbon Economy is a key feature of European, United Kingdom and Scottish Parliaments' policy frameworks and the development of a Scottish Borders Low Carbon Economic Strategy is central to the future of the area's economy. By acting now, the area can begin to secure the benefits of this transition and prepare for the challenges which will be faced by our businesses and communities.

3.2 The strategy outlines a series of strategic aims and initiatives to deliver the key priorities identified by the Community Planning Partnership. The agreed vision is:

'By 2023 the Scottish Borders will have a more resilient low carbon economy. By supporting businesses and communities to reduce their carbon footprint our business competitiveness and quality of life will be improved.'

3.3 In order to achieve this vision, the Scottish Borders Low Carbon Economic Strategy is framed around a series of strategic aims, which will contribute to the national aspirations set out by the Scottish Government:

1. Improve business competitiveness – by addressing resource efficiency and costs within local businesses, and by exploiting low carbon business opportunities in supply chains and new markets.

2. Improve residents' quality of life – by addressing fuel poverty and encouraging behaviour to change towards lower carbon lifestyles, supporting individuals to develop new low carbon related skills and localisation of service access.

3. Adapt our infrastructure – to encourage a low carbon built environment that will reduce carbon emissions and is better prepared for changing weather patterns including extreme weather events.

4. Increase Community Resilience – by working with our communities to meet future climate related challenges.

The Scottish Borders Low Carbon Economic Strategy is aimed at any organisation operating in the Scottish Borders which wishes to take part in the transition to a low carbon area. It is hoped that these partners will include businesses, community and voluntary organisations, and individuals, as well as government bodies. The process of driving forward implementation of the strategy will be led by the Economy and Infrastructure Theme within the Community Planning Partnership.

4 ACTION PLAN – PROGRESS UPDATE

4.1 The Action Plan acknowledged the challenge of how to demonstrate ambition and aspiration whilst at the same time recognising the resource constraints in the public sector, now and in the future. The Action Plan achieved this by setting out those actions which had resources and were part of planned activity by CPP partners (covered by a 'tint') and separating those actions which were part of a 'Project Pipeline' where resources had

still to be identified. Since the Strategy was published in October 2013, some progress has been made on the 'resourced' actions and all of the 'Project Pipeline' actions have also been progressed to some extent.

- 4.2 Officers have used a simple Red/Amber/Green marking on the attached Action Plan Update (Appendix 1) to highlight the status of the action. The categorisation is subjective, but Red equates to no progress, or concerns about the level of resources required; Amber equates to some progress, but not as anticipated; and Green equates to 'on track'.
- 4.3 Overall, there is a sense of progress against the resourced actions with progress being made against all of these actions. Examples of good progress include the Business Gateway Plus action around low carbon advice for businesses; good progress with domestic energy efficiency measures through the Home Energy Efficiency Programme Scotland; and significant activity being delivered by the Registered Social Landlords.
- 4.4 The Community Planning Partnership agreed that there were five 'Strategic Initiatives' that should receive a particular focus. Although there is progress to report on all of these, officers are aware that these are major initiatives that will require significant additional resources in future. The partners will have to work even more closely together in future to identify creative ways of successfully securing these additional resources.

5 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council, and its Community Planning Partners, will need to continue the dialogue around which of the actions identified in the Project Pipeline will be highest priority and where they will be able to justify targeting resources towards them. 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 in October 2014 to allow it to reflect shifting priorities and resources.

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