In 2012 the Administration of Scottish Borders Council launched its partnership agreement, Ambitious for the Borders. We are only two-years into this five-year programme and over 70% of our commitments have either been achieved fully or significant progress has been made. Our headline commitments were:

- Promoting Economic Development as a Key Driver for the Administration
- Investing in Our Children and Young People
- Improving Life in the Scottish Borders

This document provides an update on our commitments. The Independent, SNP and Liberal Democrat Administration remains committed to this partnership agreement and will work hard to implement all aspects of it. There is still work to be done to further enhance the quality of life in the Scottish Borders but sound financial management is in place to support the remaining commitments and to make sure they are fully achieved and delivered.
PROMOTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AS A KEY DRIVER FOR THE ADMINISTRATION

WE SAID... we would set up a business loans fund within six months.

WE DID... Launch the pilot Business Loan Fund in November 2012. It attracted 22 applications and we approved eight loans worth £74.5k. It’s forecast that this will create at least five and safeguard 34 jobs.

WE SAID... we would develop plans to revitalise our high streets.

WE DID... Invest in major town centre improvement schemes in Kelso, Selkirk and Galashiels. Make grants available to improve shop fronts across the region.

WE SAID... we would work with businesses to identify and resolve barriers to growth and development.

WE DID... Put a ‘fast track’ planning application process in place for businesses. Offer expert advice on business property and inward investment. Advocate for Assisted Area status, now approved, and set to benefit businesses in parts of the Borders.

WE SAID... we would build on opportunities provided by the Borders Railway.

WE DID... Commit £100k over the next two years to help realise the economic opportunities arising from the new railway.

WE SAID... we would work with partners to ensure businesses and households across the Borders have access to the best next generation broadband and mobile phone coverage.

WE DID... Commit £8.4m into the Superfast Broadband programme, with 93% of premises set to have access by the end of 2017. Work closely with South of Scotland Alliance to lobby for better mobile phone coverage, and we’ll continue to do so.
AMBITIOUS FOR THE BORDERS

INVESTING IN OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

WE SAID...
we would guarantee work experience, apprenticeships, or college places for every Borders school leaver.

WE DID...
Work to ensure positive destinations for school leavers continue to exceed 90%.
Introduce a Work Opportunities Scheme in the Council itself, targeted at those further from the work place.
Work with Community Planning partners to ensure that our guarantee is targeted to helping young people in our most deprived areas gain employment.

WE SAID...
we would restructure Early Years provision to support schools and ensure delivery of additional hours.

WE DID...
Agree to plans to implement an additional 600 hours of provision for all 3 and 4 year olds to commence in August 2014.
Target resources to families and communities in most need by agreeing to develop Early Years Centres in Philiphaugh, Langlee, Eyemouth and Burnfoot by March 2016.

WE SAID...
we would prioritise support and extra funding to implement the Borders Youth Strategy.

WE DID...
Provide additional £75k of funding for focussed youth work in Kelso and Jedburgh.
Provide third sector youth work organisations with additional £100k per year match funding through Children and Young People’s Planning Partnership (CYPPP).
IMPROVING LIFE IN THE SCOTTISH BORDERS

WE SAID... we would continue to freeze council tax.
WE DID... Just that – agreeing to freeze levels for the seventh straight year in 2014/15.

WE SAID... we would create a sports hub in each high school catchment area.
WE DID... Commission Borders Sport and Leisure Trust (BSLT) to set up hubs as part of our Commonwealth Games Legacy Plan, and almost £3m has been committed to 3G pitches for Peebles, Jedburgh and Hawick.

WE SAID... we would provide flexible services to support and respect Borderers in later life.
WE DID... Introduce a rapid reaction care at home service. Create a team that’s working in local communities to increase the range of activities older people can take part in which assist those in later life to remain healthy and active.

WE SAID... we would prioritise dementia care.
WE DID... Launch a specialist dementia team to support people with dementia and their carers.

WE SAID... we would continue to campaign for the re-opening of Reston Station.
WE DID... Commit £1.28m, and made a bid to the Scottish Government’s Stations Fund to replace the station, our contribution representing 40% of total project costs.

WE SAID... we would deliver 100 affordable homes per year.
WE DID... Deliver 185 affordable houses in the last two years, with 161 more expected to be delivered in 2014-15.

WE SAID... we would continue to prioritise major roads projects and maintenance.
WE DID... Agree a Roads Asset Management Plan this year, committing more than £57m over the next 10 years to roads, bridges, and lighting.

WE SAID... we would provide 100 affordable homes per year.
WE DID... Deliver 185 affordable houses in the last two years, with 161 more expected to be delivered in 2014-15.