



**COMMUNITY PLANNING STRATEGIC
BOARD
THURSDAY, 9TH SEPTEMBER, 2021**

**Please find attached additional papers in respect of
Items 8 and 9 on the agenda for the above meeting**

8.	Regional Economic Partnership (Pages 3 - 6) Update on the Work of the South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership. (Briefing paper attached)	15 mins
9.	Any Other Business (Pages 7 - 10) Borderlands City of Culture 2025 – Expression of Interest. (Report attached)	15 mins

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Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership

Update on the Work of the South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership' for Meeting on Thursday 9 September 2021

Introduction

This paper provides an update on the work of the South of Scotland Economic Partnership.

South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy Partnership (REP)

In brief the South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership (REP) has a collective ambition to deliver a clear and compelling vision and direction for the economic success of the South of Scotland which harnesses the efforts of all its partners. The REP has 31 members and they come from the community, third sector, social enterprise, business, Higher and Further Education and joint Elected Members appointed from both Councils (D&GC and SBC) and South of Scotland Enterprise Board members. The Chair of the REP rotates between Dumfries and Galloway Council and Scottish Borders Council on an annual basis based on financial years. The current chair is Councillor Mark Rowley, Executive Member for Economic Regeneration and Finance, Scottish Borders Council.

At the initial meeting on 18 September 2020 the REP agreed its immediate focus would be on the development of a South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy and that this work should be done as quickly as possible. However the REP was also clear that although it wanted the Strategy to be delivered at pace, this should be done without compromising its robustness and quality of outputs.

The REP indicated that the purpose of the Strategy should be to shape the future economic direction of the South of Scotland, by tackling key issues and challenges and making the most of opportunities, and focusing on long term outcomes with a rolling forward delivery plan.

Development of the Draft South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy

Following a lot of preparatory work, the production of the Strategy commenced in early December 2020 with the appointment of consultants to bring in additional capacity, expertise and external challenge. The first stage involved comprehensive analyses of economic, social and other data and other studies pertaining to the South of Scotland. This was followed by a public and stakeholder consultation exercise through February, March up to mid-April 2021. This comprised direct interviews with key public and private partners, and on-line surveys and drop-ins aimed at businesses and communities.

A smaller Reference Group of the South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership chaired by Councillor Rowley met weekly from mid-April to the early June 2021 to consider these responses and feedback from the themed

workshops. This Group continued to meet frequently, often weekly, to maintain momentum to achieve the finalised Strategy and Delivery Plan.

Members of the Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership have contributed strongly to the development and the production of the Strategy through input at REP meetings, and through responses to the consultations and participation in workshops.

Scottish Borders Council's REP members have provided advice into each stage of the work on the Strategy and officers have provided considerable input into the planning, analyses, meetings and consultations that have been required to produce the Strategy.

The draft Regional Economic Strategy was presented and agreed by the REP at its meeting on 8 June 2021 and then endorsed by Dumfries and Galloway Council, Scottish Borders Council and the SOSE Board at their meetings at the end of June 2021. The Scottish Borders Community Planning discussed the draft Strategy at its meeting on 10 June 2021 and agreed to encourage and support engagement in the planned consultation on the document.

Finalising the South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy.

Consultation on the Draft Strategy

The consultation on the draft South of Scotland Economic Strategy began on the 2nd July 2021 and finished on the 16 August 2021. It was well publicised via social media and digital/web means, radio, newspaper and select publication adverts and an on-line public survey was hosted on 'Citizen Space' by Scottish Borders Council. There were around 100 responses to the consultation.

A small group of REP members is taking forward the work of producing an Integrated Impact Assessment for the Strategy. It is recognised this will be an ongoing process to ensure the needs of equality and other groups are fully taken into account as part of the implementation of the Strategy.

The Strategy with amendments was agreed by the REP at its meeting on Thursday 2 September 2021 and is now in the process of being finalised. It will be submitted for approval to Scottish Borders Council at its meeting on 23 September 2021. It is intended to bring the final Strategy to the next meeting of the Scottish Borders Community Planning Board.

Development of the Initial Delivery Plan for the Strategy

In tandem with the consultation exercise the REP worked on the development of an initial delivery plan. This plan will have a three year focus. It aims to identify actions that are:

- Strategic and high-level and collaborative,
- New or add value to what is already happening,
- Able to demonstrate a tangible impact across the themes of the Strategy, and are
- Stretching and ambitious but ultimately deliverable within the timeframe of the delivery Plan (3 years).

Six advisory workshops aligned to the draft Strategy's six key themes were held at the end of July 2021 and first week in August 2021 with officers and representatives from local and national partner bodies. The aim of these was to generate ideas and advise on potential actions for each of the priorities defined for each of the key themes. An initial draft of possible delivery actions was discussed by the South of Scotland's REP at its meeting on Thursday 2 September.

Conclusion

In conclusion the REP has made considerable efforts to ensure the South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy is robust and that there has been effective public and stakeholder engagement and co-production in the production of the Strategy. The Strategy is intended to be ambitious for the short, medium and long term and been developed by the South of Scotland for the South of Scotland with an emphasis on transforming place and communities in an inclusive and sustainable way. It is planned to bring the final Strategy to the next meeting of the Scottish Borders Community Planning Board. The next phase of the work of the REP is finalising the delivery plan for the Strategy and then ensuring its effective implementation.

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Expression of Interest for Borderlands City of Culture 2025

Report by Service Director Customer & Communities

SCOTTISH BORDERS COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

9 September 2021

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 **The purpose of this report is to seek The Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership's endorsement of a City of Culture 2025 Expression of Interest (EOI) to the UK Government for the Borderlands area. To comply with bid timescales, an EOI has been submitted by SOSE on behalf of the Borderlands' five partner Local Authorities. The outcome should be known by the end of September. If successful considerable work will be required by officials to take a bid to the next stage by January 2022.**
- 1.2 The UK City of Culture is a UK Government programme. It is administered as a competition by the Department of Digital, Culture, Media, and Sports (DCMS). The competition has been run every four years and the current one is for the UK City of Culture 2025. For the first time, the competition is open to areas and places joining together to apply for the title to be awarded to their local area. There are three stages to the competition with the first one being the submission of an expression of interest with a decision made on a 'long list' of six at the end of September.
- 1.3 In late June 2021, South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE) identified the opportunity to submit a South of Scotland expression of interest for the City of Culture 2025 with the deadline for applications being 19 July 2021. Following deliberations it was considered the most effective approach was to submit a bid for the Borderlands area. This led to an expression of interest being submitted by SOSE on behalf of the five Local Authority areas of Dumfries and Galloway, Scottish Borders, Carlisle City, Cumbria, and Northumberland who make up the Borderlands Partnership.
- 1.4 The bid is aligned to the theme of a Just Transition to Net Zero. By using the Borderlands region's heritage, culture and creativity, the bid will aim to create opportunities for future development and hopefully bring investment into the region. The UK Government is providing £40,000 to each bid that makes the 'long list' of six applicants for the next stage of the competition. It is considered that more resources are likely to be required in addition to this award to develop an exciting and innovative plan of cultural activities for the year that will be a key feature in the longer application required for the next stage.

2 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that:

- a) The Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership endorses the Expression of Interest for the Borderlands to be UK City of Culture 2025 (as described in section 4) that was submitted to the UK Government by SOSE on behalf of the five local authority areas of Dumfries and Galloway, Scottish Borders, Carlisle City, Cumbria and Northumberland which make up the Borderlands Partnership**

- b) Scottish Borders Community Planning Partners begin to consider what they might contribute by way of time, resources and activities to the Borderlands UK City of Culture 2025 if the bid were to be successful.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The UK Government's City of Culture is a UK-wide programme and takes the form of a competition administered by the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sports (DCMS). Derry/Londonderry was the inaugural UK City of Culture 2013 and the competition has been run every four years since, with Coventry as the UK City of Culture 2021.
- 3.2 It is apparent from cities that have entered the competition, even those that have not been successful in getting through the various stage in the competition such as Paisley and Dundee, have gained a lot in terms of national and internal promotion and profile, and from investments in culture, tourism and wider economic development.
- 3.3 The current competition is for the UK City of Culture 2025. For the first time, the competition is open to areas and places joining together to apply for the title to be awarded to their local area.
- 3.4 The first stage in the competition was an expression of interest to be submitted by the 19 July 2021. Six applicants will be identified for the second stage which will involve the development of a longer application and an award of £40,000 to support this work. The announcement of this 'long list' is early September 2021 and they will be asked to submit the application in January 2022. Once this is submitted a third stage will involve three shortlisted places being visited in March/April 2022 by an expert advisory panel and invited to present its plan. The panel will then submit its recommendation for the winner of UK City of Culture 2025 to DCMS Ministers and the Secretary of State for DCMS will make the final decision in May 2022.

4 SUBMISSION OF EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

- 4.1 At the end of June 2021 the South of Scotland Enterprise Agency (SOSE) identified the opportunity to make an expression of interest for the City of Culture 2025 with the deadline for applications being 19 July 2021. Following deliberations it was considered the most effective approach to submit a bid for the Borderlands area. This led to an expression of interest being submitted by SOSE on behalf of the five local authority areas of Dumfries and Galloway, Scottish Borders, Carlisle City, Cumbria and Northumberland who make up the Borderlands Partnership. The expression of interest involved the completion of an application form with a limited word count per question. A letter of support to accompany the expression of interest was submitted by each of the five Councils. There have also been letters of support for the bid from a range of other organisations across the Borderlands area.
- 4.2 The main theme of the Expression of Interest is a [Just Transition to Net Zero](#) and tackling of climate change and promoting bio-diversity. The Borderlands is a large rural area the size of Wales with a range of strong, vibrant and diverse towns, villages and communities which will make a major contribution to meeting this challenge. The transition to net zero was recognised as a major strategic theme in the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal.
- 4.3 The Borderlands City of Culture 2025 bid aims to contribute to a positive transformational cultural, economically and socially inclusive and environmental shift across the Borderlands area by celebrating the region's

heritage, culture and creativity, helping recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, and ultimately bringing investment into its places and communities. It seeks to maximise the full potential of the region's rich natural capital, historic, scientific and cultural assets. These are under recognised nationally and internationally. It is hoped that the bid will lead to the development of a range of innovative and creative proposals based on the border connections and flows within the Borderlands area.

- 4.4 The Expression of Interest promotes the Borderlands as the right place for the City of Culture in 2025 because of its wealth of natural capital that have crafted its cultural identities and are integral to the area's economic and social development. It has talented people who contribute to, and are involved in developing and promoting its rich cultural heritage, and organising programmes of outstanding creative activities. It is also considered to be the right time for making the bid with COP26 coming to Glasgow in November 2021 as the world looks for leadership to deal with the twin issues of biodiversity loss and climate change, and the UK and Scottish Governments are committed to Net Zero.
- 4.5 The UK Government is providing £40,000 to each bid that makes it to the next stage 'long list' of six applicants of the competition. This is to be used to develop the application with a cultural programme of activities for the year together with the economic, social and environmental outcomes that will be achieved by the plan. There will likely be a need to provide more resources on top of this £40,000 award to ensure that an exciting and innovative application is completed.