

# Public Document Pack



## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TUESDAY, 3 NOVEMBER, 2015

A MEETING of the EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE will be held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS, NEWTOWN ST BOSWELLS, TD6 0SA on TUESDAY, 3 NOVEMBER 2015 at 10.00 am

J. J. WILKINSON,  
Clerk to the Council,

27 October 2015

| <b>BUSINESS</b> |  |         |
|-----------------|--|---------|
| 1.              | <b>Apologies for Absence</b>   |         |
| 2.              | <b>Order of Business</b>   |         |
| 3.              | <b>Declarations of Interest</b>  |         |
|                 | <b>Education Business</b>  |         |
| 4.              | <b>Hobkirk Primary School</b> (Pages 1 - 6)<br><br>Consider report by Service Director Children & Young People proposing changes to the status of Hobkirk Primary School (copy attached).  | 10 mins |
|                 | <b>Education Theme additional Membership of Committee:- Mr G. Donald, Mr J. Walsh, Mr G. Jarvie, Jeanette Aitchison (Parent Representative), Alison Ferahi (Parent Representative)</b>   |         |
|                 | <b>Economic Development Business</b>   |         |
| 5.              | <b>Economic Development Update</b> (Pages 7 - 12)<br><br>Presentation on recent Economic Development progress by the Chief Officer Economic Development. (Briefing note attached.)   | 20 mins |
| 6.              | <b>VisitScotland Information Centres - Review of Operations 2014/15</b> (Pages 13 - 18)<br><br>Consider report by Corporate Transformation and Services Director outlining how VisitScotland is responding to the way visitors are now accessing information and making holiday decisions and how this is impacting on the performance of the manned visitor information service throughout Scotland. (Copy attached.) | 20 mins |

|     |  |         |
|-----|--|---------|
| 7.  | <b>Business Gateway Progress Report 1 April 2015 - 30 September 2015</b><br>(Pages 19 - 30)<br><br>Consider report by Corporate Transformation and Services Director on the performance of the Business Gateway in the Scottish Borders, covering the period 1 April 2015 to 30 September 2015. (Copy attached.)   | 20 mins |
| 8.  | <b>South of Scotland Rural Regional Economic Development Programme Progress Report</b> (Pages 31 - 46)<br><br>Consider report by Corporate Transformation and Services Director on progress in implementing the South of Scotland Rural Regional Economic Development Programme, in partnership with Scottish Enterprise and Dumfries & Galloway Council. (Copy attached.) | 10 mins |
| 9.  | <b>Any Other Economic Development Items Previously Circulated</b>  |         |
| 10. | <b>Any Other Economic Development Items which the Chairman Decides are Urgent</b>  |         |
| 11. | <b>Minute</b> (Pages 47 - 50)<br><br>Minute of meeting of 20 October 2015 to be approved and signed by the Chairman. (Copy attached.)  | 2 mins  |
|     | <b>Economic Development theme additional membership of Committee:-<br/>Mr J Clark, Mr G Henderson</b>  |         |
|     | <b>OTHER BUSINESS</b>  |         |
| 12. | <b>UK Landfill Communities Fund</b> (Pages 51 - 56)<br><br>Consider report by Chief Executive recommending reallocation of unused UK Landfill Communities Fund to BCCF Environmental – Duns Rugby Football Club. (Copy attached.)  | 5 mins  |
| 13. | <b>Any Other Items Previously Circulated</b>   |         |
| 14. | <b>Any Other Items which the Chairman Decides are Urgent</b>   |         |

#### NOTES

1. Timings given above are only indicative and not intended to inhibit Members' discussions.
2. Members are reminded that, if they have a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest in any item of business coming before the meeting, that interest should be declared prior to commencement of discussion on that item. Such declaration will be recorded in the Minute of the meeting.

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**Membership of Committee:-** Councillors D. Parker (Chairman), S. Aitchison, S. Bell, C. Bhatia, J. Brown, M. J. Cook, V. M. Davidson, G. Edgar, J. G. Mitchell, D. Moffat, D. Paterson, F. Renton and R. Smith

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## **HOBKIRK PRIMARY SCHOOL**

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### **Report by Service Director Children & Young People**

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## **EDUCATION EXECUTIVE**

**3 November 2015**

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### **1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1 **This report proposes changes to the status of Hobkirk Primary School in that it is proposed the school be mothballed for a temporary period and that the decision to do so be reviewed within 12 months.**
- 1.2 The report outlines the background to the falling pupil roll at Hobkirk Primary School, which has resulted in placing requests from parents of the last 7 pupils attending the school being granted, leaving no pupils at the school. Arrangements for accommodating the pupils within Denholm Primary School are described and include transport, staffing and the educational and social benefits to be achieved through the process.
- 1.3 The Statutory Guidance issued pursuant to the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010 recognises that on occasions a Local Authority might consider it appropriate to mothball a school. This decision does not need to be subject to the formal requirements of that Act. However, the guidance emphasises that mothballing is temporary and any decision to do so must be kept under review.

### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **I recommend that the Executive Committee agrees:-**
  - (a) **To recommend to Council that Hobkirk Primary School be mothballed with immediate effect for a temporary period; and**
  - (b) **To review the status of the school within the next 12 months.**
  - (c) **In the interim that a decision be taken to provide transport to Denholm Primary School for any new pupils who move into the area.**

### 3 BACKGROUND

3.1 In January 2010 the roll at Hobkirk Primary was 39 pupils in 2 classes plus a nursery. The number of children in nursery reduced and by August 2012 the nursery was accommodated within the Primary 1-4 class; and in August 2013 the nursery ceased to operate as there were no nursery aged children.

3.2 In June 2014, 7 pupils left the school and none were enrolled. The reduced roll of 21 meant that the children were accommodated in a Primary 1-7 class and the teaching staff was reduced to 1. In June 2015, 5 Primary 7 pupils transferred to High School and additional placing requests to other schools resulted in the school opening with 7 pupils in August 2015.

#### 3.3 Pupil Roll

(a) The roll at Hobkirk Primary School is currently 7 pupils:

|           |          |
|-----------|----------|
| Primary 3 | 1 pupil  |
| Primary 5 | 2 pupils |
| Primary 6 | 3 pupils |
| Primary 7 | 1 pupil  |

(b) One of the Primary 5 pupils is leaving the area by Christmas reducing the roll to 6.

(c) 4 of these pupils are currently transported into Hobkirk Primary School from Southdean and Chesters, the other 3 live within the 2 mile walking radius of the school.

(d) 17 further primary age pupils who live in the Hobkirk catchment currently attend other schools following placing requests. These schools are Denholm (11), Parkside (5), and Drumlanrig (1).

(e) There are two 4 year olds living in the existing catchment area. In the last 3 years no children have started Hobkirk Primary School, but chose to enrol in other schools. Consultation with the pre-school parents intimates that the children will enrol at Denholm and Trinity Primary Schools for school session 16/17.

#### 3.4 Staffing

The staffing complement in Hobkirk School is currently 0.5 Headteacher, 1.07 FTE class teachers, 1FTE cook/cleaner and 42 hours of support staff time comprising playground supervision, Classroom Assistant and Administration shared by 2 part time members of staff.

#### 3.5 Community Use

Hobkirk Primary School building is not used by any other groups or organisations.

#### 3.6 **Consultation**

(a) Following concerns raised by parents about their children's learning experiences at Hobkirk Primary this school session, a meeting took place between Council Officers and all existing parents.

- (b) Parents identified a number of concerns relating to the size of Hobkirk and the effects on their children's education. These include: difficulty for children to find a wide friendship group with similar interests, anticipated difficulties with transition to High School, lack of opportunities for games and team sports and lack of links into wider network of clubs and activities. The Parents also identified a number of educational benefits, should their children be able to attend Denholm Primary School: greater opportunities to experience the skills and abilities of a wider staff group, greater opportunities for socialisation and collaborative learning and greater opportunities for participation in team activities.
  - (c) There was also an acceptance from parents that their children were not able to participate fully in the Curriculum for Excellence due to the requirement for collaboration and peer working among learners and this is difficult to achieve with very small numbers at each stage.
  - (d) During discussions with parents the following options were considered:
    - i. Status quo
    - ii. Responding to individual parental placing requests to any school
- 3.7 (a) As a result of discussions, all families from Hobkirk Primary School made placing requests to Denholm Primary School and these were granted by the Service Director, Children & Young People Services, under delegated authority. The Service Director recognised the educational benefits for the children. Moreover Section 28A of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 required that a placing request be granted unless specific grounds detailed in S.28A (3) apply. There were no grounds for refusing the placing requests.
- (b) The majority of parental placing requests (65%) out of Hobkirk Primary School are to Denholm Primary School, therefore parental preference is being responded to in granting places requested for Denholm Primary School.
  - (c) Hobkirk Primary School became partner school to Denholm Primary School under Transforming Children's Services and as such the Headteacher works across the 2 schools. Pupils from Hobkirk already access facilities and activities in Denholm Primary School on a regular basis. The distance between the 2 schools is 9.7 miles on main routes.
  - (d) Both schools are in the same secondary catchment area and work in the same Learning Community. Improvement plans are aligned across the 2 schools, as are curricular programmes and teaching plans. This will support an easy transition for the Hobkirk pupils into classes in Denholm with continuity and progression in learning effectively supported.

(e)

| Class | Year groups | Total | With New Placing Request Pupils |
|-------|-------------|-------|---------------------------------|
| P1/2  | 8+7         | 15    | 15                              |
| P2/3  | 10+8        | 18    | 19                              |
| P3/4  | 5+13        | 18    | 18                              |
| P5/6  | 15+8        | 23    | 25                              |
| P6/7  | 6+17        | 23    | 27                              |

(f) The pupils from Hobkirk Primary School will transfer into the classes for their individual year groups. Transport has been arranged for the pupils transferring.

(g) A meeting took place with the parents of the P6/7 class of Denholm Primary School. The proposed arrangements were explained, which would have two teachers working with the class for the remainder of the school year. The remaining parents in the school were informed by letter of the addition of 7 new children enrolling in the school. The parents were supportive of the new arrangements. It is normal practice for children to move between schools during the school session as places are granted within Placing Request Legislation.

(h) After the Placing Requests were granted, 1:1 meetings were arranged for all staff with the Headteacher and a Human Resource Business Partner. The meeting with one staff member has still to take place, but will occur in the week commencing 26 October. Alternative roles have been found for the majority of staff and discussions are continuing with the other staff members.

## 4 PROPOSAL

4.1 As a result of the granting of Placing Requests to all of the children who were on the Hobkirk Primary School roll, the school roll has fallen to zero with no pre-school children expected to enrol for August 2016. Scottish Borders Council being in this position has considered the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010 and proposes that Hobkirk Primary School be mothballed with immediate effect. The Statutory Guidance states that "mothballing" is a 'temporary closure which does not lead to a consultation under the 2010 Act'.

4.2 In accordance with the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010 Statutory Guidance, the decision to mothball the school will be formally reviewed within a 12 month period of this arrangement being implemented.

## 5 IMPLICATIONS

### 5.1 Financial

Whilst there may be slight financial implications relating to transport, it is anticipated that this be offset by savings relating to utilities at Hobkirk.

### 5.2 Risk and Mitigations

#### (a) Building Deterioration

There is a risk that the empty building falls into a state of disrepair when unoccupied. To mitigate this, there will be a caretaking arrangement undertaken to provide regular checks on the building and maintain it to appropriate standards.



- (b) Transport  
The rural location of the journey to Denholm will be mitigated through the use of approved providers and journeys being undertaken on main routes.
- (c) Financial  
As an interim measure this does not present any financial pressures. Longer term finances would be considered as part of any future statutory consultation process.
- (d) Staff  
The majority of staff have been redeployed to roles in Denholm Primary School. Discussions are ongoing with the other members of staff. Scottish Borders Council policies on redeployment are being followed. However, if mothballing is approved that creates a redundancy situation in terms of the Employment Rights Act, and if staff cannot be successfully redeployed the Council's Redundancy Policy will be followed. There is a risk of increased travel expectations or staff not having access to transport, however Scottish Borders Council policies on Disturbance Allowance will be followed where applicable.
- (e) Stakeholders  
Parents and pupils at Denholm Primary School have been fully informed in respect of additional pupils attending the school. Parents were invited to a meeting to discuss proposed changes in the Primary 6/7 classroom, as the teacher allocation for Hobkirk would be going into this class. The parents recognised a number of educational benefits for their children at Denholm in the new arrangements. The children responded positively to the news of 7 new children joining their school. Staff will ensure that regular contact is made with the parents of the transferring children to ensure a smooth transition.
- (f) The existing grandparent helpers who currently support children at Hobkirk Primary School have intimated their continuation of support as part of the Denholm Primary School Community.
- (g) We will advise the Community Councils in both communities of the new arrangements.

### 5.3 **Equalities**

It is anticipated that there are no adverse impact due to race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation or religion/belief arising from the proposals in this report.

### 5.4 **Acting Sustainably**

There are no significant impacts on the economy, community or environment.

### 5.5 **Carbon Management**

There are no significant effects on carbon emissions arising from the

proposals contained in this report. We expect a carbon neutral position. Although there will be travel to the new school for all children there will be significant reduction of existing travel activities eg Headteacher visits between schools

#### 5.6 **Rural Proofing**

While this report does not propose any new Policy or Strategy the Service Director Children and Young People has considered the impact of the proposal in light of the Council's rural proofing policy. The school has a roll of nil, so no current pupils are being displaced as a result of the mothballing. Nor are there any children living in the area who intend to enrol in Hobkirk Primary 1 Class in August 2016. No community groups make use of the school facilities. It is therefore considered that the proposal does not create any negative rural impact.

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

There are no changes to be made to either the Scheme of Administration contained in this report.

### 6 **CONSULTATION**

6.1 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 have been incorporated into the final report.

6.2 A meeting has taken place with the Ward Councillors for Hawick & Denholm.

#### **Approved by**

**Donna Manson**  
**Service Director Children & Young People**

**Signature .....**

#### **Author(s)**

| Name         | Designation and Contact Number             |
|--------------|--|
| Donna Manson | Service Director Children and Young People |

#### **Background Papers:**

#### **Previous Minute Reference:**

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

Contact us at Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells TD6 0SA, Tel 01835 824000.

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 3 NOVEMBER 2015

### Economic Development Update

#### 1. Business:

- For the 2-month period from 1 August 2015 to 30 September 2015 the **Business Gateway team worked with 98 businesses and individuals**, and assisted 37 business start-ups, of which 15 have the potential to be high growth. The advisers have delivered 6 start-up workshops and 10 local workshops with 95 attendees.
- Each month from April to September the advisers ran half-day **outreach surgeries** in Hawick, Kelso, Duns, Eyemouth, Galashiels and Peebles. This increased our presence in each of these towns but attendee numbers were low. From 27 half days the advisers spoke with only 16 clients. The decision has been made not to continue these sessions. Instead Business Gateway will be running additional start-up seminars each month in a different town in the area.
- Business Gateway ran a series of **5 Masterclass and networking events** in 2015, on Marketing, Social Media, Motivation, Innovation and Sales. They were held in locations across the Borders. There were nearly 400 attendees at the 5 events. Feedback from the Masterclasses has been excellent and we intend to continue these in 2016.
- **Scottish Borders Business Month** is running from 1 October until 6 November 2015 with over 20 events scheduled across the area and ending with the Scottish Borders Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards. Cllr Stuart Bell launched the month with Phil Morris, founder of Kukri Sports as the keynote speaker. There were 70 attendees at that event which got the month off to a strong start. Events during the month have covered subject areas such as Exporting, Innovation, Business Efficiency, Employment, Skills Development and Finance. To deliver this, Business Gateway has partnered with Scottish Enterprise, Skills Development Scotland, Creative Arts Business Network and private companies such as Douglas Home, RBS and Davidson Chalmers.
- In 2015-16, the **Scottish Borders Business Fund** has received 21 applications and approved 19 grants to date valued at £56,712 supporting projects with a value of £138,020. These projects are forecast **to create 23 jobs and safeguard 38.5 jobs** with a forecast **economic impact of £583,000 GVA**.
- The **Scottish Borders Business Loan Fund** offers loans of between £1,000 and £20,000 over terms of up to three years. In 2015-16, the **Scottish Borders Business Loan Fund** has so far received 5 applications and approved 3 loans valued at £42,500. These loans are forecast **to create 5 jobs and safeguard 20.5 jobs** with a forecast **economic impact of £242,000 GVA**.
- **Property** – 99 property enquiries have been received to date in 2015/16 which has resulted in 20 new property leases which will generate £88k in annual rental income. The current occupancy level is **93%** for the portfolio of industrial units,

yards and shops. The following sales are in hand: four units (Duns, Eyemouth and Jedburgh); plus one EU funded plot at the extension to Whitlaw Road Industrial Estate, Lauder, and one plot at the extension to Pinnaclehill, Kelso.

- **Scotland's Employer Recruitment Incentive - SERI Scheme** – The SERI Scheme funded by the Scottish Government via Skills Development Scotland will offer 33 placements in the Scottish Borders until March 2016. The support takes the form of grants to local businesses to take on a young unemployed person for an apprenticeship opportunity. The funding covers 50% of wage costs for a full 12 months. The wage element of SERI Scheme is fully funded by the Scottish Government. The Council is funding the contractor support, provided by Barnardo's Works.

## 2. Regeneration:

- **Galashiels Town Centre** - The Galashiels Town Centre Coordinator has progressed a number of actions:
  - **22 Shop front improvement grants** totalling £41,950 have been approved to date, supporting 24 properties. Works to buildings are now beginning to make a difference to the town centre.
  - The **Galashiels Town Trail Map** - is now in use and available to visitors in the Transport Interchange. Support is being given to the Chamber of Trade in developing a 'Shoppers Map'.
  - **Borders Railway Ambassadors** have been successfully operating at The Galashiels Transport Interchange and the Tweedbank terminus on steam train days and Fridays to Sundays.
  - A successful **Doors Open Day** as part of the Heritage Festival was held in the town the week after the opening of the railway.
- **Selkirk Business Improvement District (BIDS)** – The project is currently being reviewed as the project manager has recently resigned. The Steering Group is currently undertaking a recruitment process for a new contractor/ project manager. Timescales for the BIDS development will be reviewed accordingly but the timescale for the ballot may be delayed.
- **Scottish Government Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (SGRCGF)**  
The Communities and Partnership Team are currently managing the following SGRCGF awards/applications:

**SGRCGF Round 1:** The Burnfoot Community Hub capital phase is now complete and the SGRCGF award of £585k has been fully drawn down from the Scottish Government. The Hub Manager, Café and Caretaking staff are all in place with the building opened to the public on 5 October 2015. The next three years will see the delivery of the revenue stages of the Business Plan and the delivery of a range of new, income generating services.

**SGRCGF Round 2:** The Newlands Rural Business Hub is progressing. Procurement of the design team is complete and they are currently awaiting planning and Building Warrant. They expect to commence tendering for the works contract by end of October 2015 and be on site by November.

**SGRCGF Round 3:** The Crook Inn project was successful at Stage 1 of Round 3 and have been invited to submit a Stage 2 submission for £1m. The deadline was 30 October 2015, with a decision expected in March 2016.

### 3. Tourism & Events

#### • **Tourism support –**

- Abbotsford House and local transport operators engaged with the **Steam Train** operator to deliver a local package for the duration of the six week pilot. All Steam-Train journeys were sold out, including the addition of extra carriages. 'Selkirk Means Business' group also successfully organised a link to the steam trains to encourage visitors to experience Selkirk.
- **Border Weaver service** - Supporting the opening of the railway, two hop-on hop-off buses are available seven days a week for visitors between, Galashiels, Abbotsford, Tweedbank, Gattonside, Darnick, Melrose, Dryburgh, St Boswells and Bowden. The weekend service is a new contract and will only operate until the end of November 2015 and then start up again in March 2016.
- **Data is currently being gathered** on increased footfall during normal rail service and Steam-train days in Galashiels and at Abbotsford House and Tweedbank/Melrose Area. In addition, details of the origin of visitors have also been recorded by the Tourism Ambassadors. Initial reports are that Abbotsford and a number of Galashiels businesses have seen a marked increase in footfall which has been reflected in sales. A full report will be developed once the Ambassadors have finished.
- Economic Development officers have been working with Business Gateway on the new **Borders Railway Tourism Business Opportunities Guide** which is due to be launched on 28 October 2015. This document will be available to all businesses in the Scottish Borders as a download and in print.
- Five new **interactive visitor information screens** are scheduled to be installed. These will be at Stow, Abbotsford, Melrose, Hawick and Tweedbank. These will all be in place by March 2016. These are in addition to the Kelso, and Gala TI screens.

#### • **Event support –**

- The **Borders Railway opening celebration programme** ran successfully with Golden Ticket day on Saturday, 5 September 2015 being a resounding local success and the official royal opening on 9 September providing major media coverage and an international profile for the opening of the new railway. All the UK nationals covered the opening, while there were TV stations from Australia, France and America among others at Tweedbank. The PR and feedback since then has been mainly positive, with continuing public interest and very high usage figures for the new services.

- **Borders Railway Waverley Market** – Duration - 8 days.  
This was coordinated by Scottish Borders, Midlothian and City of Edinburgh Councils. There was a notable presence from Borders producers; food and drink and crafts. The objective was to highlight and sell Scottish Borders produce. Traders included Whitmuir, Tempest Brewery and Thistly Cross Cider. There was also a strong business contingent with Floors Castle / Traquair / Born in the Borders and the County Hotel amongst those being present. The market show cased over three weekends to tie in with the steam train experience.
- **Sunday 6 Sept – first public service day.**  
The trains were busy all day, with Scotrail running strengthened services. The Railway Ambassadors played a key role offering information and support to visitors and travellers. The Border Weaver was part of the support service that the Council facilitated, carrying passengers in on a loop route. A guide for businesses had been circulated to businesses to highlight the potential for additional customers on the key railway opening days.
- The **Tour of Britain** passed through the Scottish Borders on 8 & 9 September 2015. The Stage Finish on 8 September was successfully held at Floors Castle, Kelso. The Tour of Britain debrief and economic impact reports are due in December 2015.
- The **Scottish Borders Walking Festival** started 6 September and was based in and around Galashiels. Participants were encouraged to arrive by train. Tickets for the event sold out quickly this year. A total of 487 walk places were filled by 205 different individual walkers.
- **Tweedlove /Enduro World Series** was successful and the Enduro World Series (EWS) attracted 612 competitors. In 2016 the organiser is creating a new event 'Tweedlove International Enduro' which will be run without the EWS governing body's involvement.
- **Selkirk MTB Marathon** reported an economic impact of £69k and the average number of visitor attendance as 1.82 (there were 639 participants).

#### **4. Funding:**

- The LEADER Local Action Group is preparing to launch the new **LEADER Programme**. A Facilitator has been appointed and a LEADER Coordinator is being recruited, both to be based in the Economic Development team. The Programme is now open to 'Expressions of Interest' and formal application deadlines should be announced in December 2015. The launch programme will include a public event and a series of funding workshops which will be delivered in rural communities in 2016.
- The new **Scottish Borders, East Lothian and Fife Fisheries Local Action Group** is still awaiting an announcement of the value of funding allocated to Fisheries Local Action Groups in Scotland. The new Group will be the decision-

making body for local European Maritime Fisheries Fund (EMFF) applications, in line with the joint Local Development Strategy for EU rural and fisheries local development funding.

#### **5. Low Carbon Economic Strategy**

- **Domestic Heat Pump Training** - Economic Development has been working in partnership with Borders College and Skills Development Scotland to deliver a 4 day BPEC training course covering the installation and maintenance of both air and ground source heat pump systems. The course costs include both registration with the awarding body, certification and training materials which are required to assist in the delivery of the course. The courses will be run on the Friday/Saturdays of 20/21 and 27/28 November 2015 at the Borders College Hawick Campus. Up to 50% of the costs for businesses can be supported by the Low Carbon Skills Fund, accessed through Skills Development Scotland.
- **Business Gateway to support resource efficiency in local businesses** – a new partnership approach between Business Gateway and Resource Efficient Scotland has been agreed in principle. This will provide a more proactive and streamlined process to increase the uptake of low carbon advice and support.

**Bryan McGrath**, Chief Officer Economic Development, tel 01835 826525.

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## **VISITSCOTLAND INFORMATION PROVISION – A NEW APPROACH**

**Report by Corporate Transformation & Services Director**

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### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**3 November 2015**

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#### **1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1 **This report outlines how VisitScotland is responding to the way visitors are now accessing information and making holiday decisions and how this is impacting on the performance of the manned visitor information service throughout Scotland.**
- 1.2 VisitScotland currently operates and manages five VisitScotland Information Centres (VICs) in the Scottish Borders, providing face to face information services, including an accommodation and ticketing service. The VisitScotland Information Centres are partially funded via an annual Minute of Agreement (MOA) between Scottish Borders Council and VisitScotland.
- 1.3 The report provides information on the performance of the VICs in the Scottish Borders. Visitors are accessing information from a wide range of sources when they are in Scotland. Trends indicate that online usage for visitor information and booking will continue to rise. In line with this trend, Scottish Borders VisitScotland Information Centres have experienced an overall decline in footfall in recent years while there has been a significant rise in website visits and digital referrals to Scottish Borders businesses. Recognising the change in consumer behaviour and demand, VisitScotland is undertaking a national review of information provision and the overall customer experience, looking at the best way to ensure that information is delivered to more people in more places using the channels that visitors use the most.

#### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **I recommend that the Executive Committee:-**
  - (a) **Agrees to invite senior managers from VisitScotland to provide a special briefing for all elected members on the new VisitScotland Customer Experience Strategy and its developing approach to information provision in the Scottish Borders and the rest of Scotland; and**
  - (b) **Request that a further report on tourism information is brought to the Committee in 2016 once VisitScotland has finalised its review.**

### **3 VISITSCOTLAND INFORMATION CENTRES – BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

- 3.1 VisitScotland currently operates five “VisitScotland Information Centres” (VICs) in the Scottish Borders. The centres are located in Jedburgh, Peebles and Hawick operate all year round, while centres at Melrose and Kelso operate on a seasonal basis. In addition, VisitScotland works in partnership with Scottish Borders Council to deliver an “Information Point in Partnership” in Selkirk at Halliwell’s House Museum, and with Eyemouth Museum Trust to deliver an “Information Point in Partnership” in Eyemouth Museum.
- 3.2 Tourism is a key sector of the local economy, contributing £187 million of direct expenditure annually, and supporting approximately 5000 jobs (2014). 1.8 million people visited the Scottish Borders in 2012, spending 3.5 million days in the area. Of these, 1.21 million were day visitors. The 2013-2020 National Tourism Strategy and the Scottish Borders Area Tourism Partnership’s new Tourism Strategy and Action Plan aim to grow visitor spend by 20-30% to contribute to sustainable economic growth.
- 3.3 VisitScotland Information Centres play a role in helping to enhance visitors’ stays in Scotland, connecting them to memorable experiences, encouraging them to do more, spend more and return again. However, the way in which visitors access information has changed, and VisitScotland has recognised it needs to change the way it provides information to visitors to reflect these changes. Rather than cutting back on information provision, VisitScotland, in partnership with Scottish Borders Council, is aiming to provide more information, to more visitors through even more outlets than at present.

### **4 REVIEW OF OPERATIONS**

- 4.1 Changing patterns of visitor behaviour have led to a decline in footfall at VisitScotland Information Centres across the country. In response to this, VisitScotland is developing a completely new approach to its information provision which looks across all channels – including face-to-face and digital provision, in line with visitor trends and demand.
- 4.2 Visitors are accessing information from a wide range of sources when they are in Scotland. The use of new technology has grown to become one of the most innovative and integral parts of modern consumer behaviour. Trends indicate that online usage for visitor information and booking will continue to rise.
- 4.3 VisitScotland has provided an updated set of visitor figures for the VICs in 2014/15. Overall, Scottish Borders VisitScotland Information Centres have experienced a decline in footfall in 2014-15. The specific results and analysis for the Scottish Borders are set out in Appendix 1, Table 1 and are summarised below:

#### **Jedburgh**

An annual visitor footfall of 30,558, indicating a fully performing centre with good footfall, although there has been a decline in numbers over the past 3 years.

#### **Kelso**

An annual visitor footfall of 15,611, the footfall to this site is very low based on the national picture with little demand for core services.

#### **Melrose**

An annual visitor footfall of 8,117, the footfall to this site is very low based

on the national picture with little demand for core services.

### **Hawick**

An annual visitor footfall of 15,105, the footfall to this site is very low based on the national picture with little demand for core services.

### **Peebles**

An annual visitor footfall of 26,193, indicating a fully performing centre with good footfall, although there has been a decline in recent years.

- 4.4 In addition to the VIC provision, there are now a number of "Interactive Screens" available for use by visitors. By Spring 2016 these will be available in Tweedbank, Melrose, Hawick, Abbotsford and Stow, complimenting those already installed in Kelso and Galashiels Transport Interchange. It is anticipated that further "Interactive Screens" could also be installed in future in Peebles, Eyemouth, Coldstream, Selkirk and Lauder if funding can be secured. The Information Points in Partnership in Selkirk and Eyemouth will continue to be reviewed on an annual basis.

## **5 NEXT STEPS**

- 5.1 The growth of online channels for visitor information has led VisitScotland to a review how they provide information through all of their channels. Combined with a proposal to review Information Centres on a case-by-case basis in line with visitor demand, their plan includes a commitment to provide high quality information and inspiration to more visitors than ever before, through the channels that they use the most. This will include investment in, and development of, its digital channels to ensure that visitors can find, click on, and spend more in the local economy. They are aiming for closer working with local businesses so that visitors can access great information from local experts.
- 5.2 It is likely that changes will be made to the delivery of visitor information in the Scottish Borders in line with the current national review being undertaken by VisitScotland. In order to provide elected members with a more detailed briefing on that VisitScotland work, it is proposed that a special briefing should be arranged. This would allow senior managers from VisitScotland to provide an outline of the new strategy that is being developed and would also cover the options for future visitor information provision that are currently being considered. It is proposed to hold this special briefing session for all Elected Members in early December 2015.

## **6 IMPLICATIONS**

### **6.1 Financial**

- (a) The VisitScotland Information Centres in the Scottish Borders are funded via an annual "Minute of Agreement" between VisitScotland and Scottish Borders Council. This details the delivery of regional VisitScotland marketing and visitor information expenditure for the Scottish Borders. The 2015/16 Minute of Agreement committed £108,000 from Economic Development budgets towards regional marketing and visitor information activity. This provides an annual commitment of £61,000 towards the Information Centres and £47,000 towards the regional marketing budget.
- (b) A further £13,000 was spent in Kelso and Galashiels Transport Interchange in the previous year to install interactive Visitor Information screens. More screens are planned using Smarter Choices sustainable transport funding in 2015/16 for screens in Tweedbank, Stow, Melrose, Hawick and Abbotsford. There will be additional expenditure required to supply any new information



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Contact us at [insert name, address, telephone number, fax, e-mail]

## Appendix 1, Table 1 "Scottish Borders VIC User Numbers"

### Scottish Borders

| <b>FOOTFALL</b>        |                |                |                |                |                |
|------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>VIC</b>             | <b>2014/15</b> | <b>2013/14</b> | <b>2012/13</b> | <b>2011/12</b> | <b>2010/11</b> |
| Jedburgh               | 30,558         | 33,646         | 32,153         | 32,536         | 29,373         |
| Hawick                 | 15,105         | 14,872         | 15,157         | 14,201         | 13,778         |
| Peebles                | 26,193         | 26,251         | 27,385         | 27,594         | 36,984         |
| Melrose                | 8,117          | 15,312         | 16,431         | 14,975         | 23,498         |
| Kelso                  | 15,611         | 15,261         | 14,943         | 15,968         | 18,026         |
| <u>Total</u>           | 95,584         | 105,342        | 106,069        | 105,274        | 121,659        |
| <b>BOOKING NUMBERS</b> |                |                |                |                |                |
| <b>VIC</b>             | <b>2014/15</b> | <b>2013/14</b> | <b>2012/13</b> | <b>2011/12</b> | <b>2010/11</b> |
| Jedburgh               | 162            | 131            | 147            | 225            | 270            |
| Hawick                 | 57             | 47             | 41             | 72             | 64             |
| Peebles                | 35             | 141            | 63             | 107            | 169            |
| Melrose                | 30             | 88             | 55             | 115            | 192            |
| Kelso                  | 27             | 14             | 21             | 45             | 43             |
| <u>Total</u>           | 311            | 421            | 327            | 564            | 738            |

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## **Business Gateway Progress Report – 1 April 2015 to 30 September 2015**

**Report by Corporate Transformation and Services Director**

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### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**3 November 2015**

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#### **1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1 **This report presents an update on the performance of the Business Gateway in the Scottish Borders, covering the period 1 April 2015 to 30 September 2015.**
- 1.2 Service delivery is aligned to the National 2012-2017 Business Gateway Service specification, with additional local services funded through EU Projects that add value to the “core” Business Gateway service. This funding ran out on 30 September 2015 and a new round of ERDF funding is expected to start before the end of 2015. The Business Gateway Business Plan 2015/16 was approved in May 2015, and incorporated a Performance Improvement Plan to further enhance the service.
- 1.3 By the end of September a total of 331 businesses have accessed advisory services through Business Gateway with a further 635 businesses attending a workshop or event. Performance is good in relation to business starts with 108 recorded showing 109% of year to date (YTD) target. Focus has been put on Potential (PHVSU) and High Growth (HVSU) starts with the appointment of a part time adviser specialising in these areas, this has meant the best ever achievement in these are with 17 PHVSU and 8 HVSU clients representing 189% and 114% of YTD targets respectively. This provides an excellent pipeline of growth clients for future years. LGAS clients are also ahead of target at 18 which is 117% of YTD target. There has been a slower than expected start for higher growth clients and these are below target for the year. Whilst not satisfactory, plans are in place to counter this and annual targets are not a concern at this point.
- 1.4 Progress against key performance targets is detailed in Table 1 in section 3.2, and an update on the Performance Improvement Plan is in Appendix 1. Following on from a successful Business Week in 2014, the Scottish Borders Business Month is being held in October 2015 with 24 events across the Scottish Borders. This is in conjunction with a range of public and private sector partners. These events are expected to reach a large number of businesses and help to feed new clients into the segmentation model.

#### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **I recommend that Executive Committee:**
  - (a) **Notes the improving performance of the Business Gateway Service to date and the actions planned for the future; and**

- (b) Continues to receive regular progress reports to monitor performance; and**
- (c) Requests that the Business Gateway provides an update to Committee in February 2016.**



### 3 BUSINESS GATEWAY PERFORMANCE

- 3.1 The service specification for the 2012-17 Business Gateway Service was developed nationally. Each local authority responsible for the delivery of Business Gateway services across Scotland is obliged to deliver to a consistent standard and to report in a consistent manner.
- 3.2 Table 1 below indicates the performance against target for the first five months of this financial year to 30 September 2015.

| <b>Table 1 – 1 April 2015 to 30 September 2015</b>   |                       |                                 |                               |                                 |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Service Output Targets</b>  |                       |                                 |                               |                                 |
| <b>Start-up Advisory Service</b>   | <b>Target 2015/16</b> | <b>Forecast to 30 Sept 2015</b> | <b>Actual to 30 Sept 2015</b> | <b>% of forecast to 30 Sept</b> |
| Total number of start-up customers who have begun trading  | 220                   | 99                              | 108                           | 109%                            |
| Number of higher value start-up customers with agreed actions identified in Action Plan for Growth | 20                    | 9                               | 17                            | 189%                            |
| Number of higher value start-up customers with completed Action Plans for Growth                   | 10                    | 7                               | 8                             | 114%                            |
| Number of start-up workshops/seminars held   | 72                    | 24                              | 24                            | 100%                            |
| Number of customers attending start-up workshops/seminars  | 360                   | 120                             | 174                           | 145%                            |
| <b>Growth Advisory Services for start-up and existing businesses</b>                               |                       |                                 |                               |                                 |
| Number of growth customers with agreed actions identified on their Action Plan for Growth          | 20                    | 9                               | 6                             | 67%                             |
| Number of growth customers accepted into growth pipeline relationship with SE                      | 10                    | 5                               | 0                             | 0%                              |
| Number of growth customers accepted into account management relationship with SE                   | 2                     | 1                               | 0                             | 0%                              |
| Number of growing business workshops/seminars held   | 25                    | 16                              | 25                            | 156%                            |
| Number of clients attending growing business workshops/seminars                                    | 125                   | 80                              | 151                           | 189%                            |
| <b>BG Local Services</b>   |                       |                                 |                               |                                 |
| Number of growth customers accepted into Local Growth Advisory Service                             | 45                    | 18                              | 21                            | 117%                            |
| Number of customers accessing local expert help services   | 30                    | 23                              | 3                             | 10%                             |
| Number of workshops/seminars held  | 50                    | 16                              | 13                            | 81%                             |
| Number of customers attending workshops/seminars   | 250                   | 180                             | 310                           | 172%                            |

- 3.3 As can be seen from Table 1, the **Start-Up** figures are in line with the target for the period to the end of September. This is a good result as summer months tend to be quieter with the number of start-ups rising again from the Autumn onwards. Looking at the higher value starts: the appointment of a dedicated (part time) adviser working on potential and actual higher value

starts has proved successful. The added focus has helped identify more businesses than ever before in this traditionally difficult segment. This provides a good number of businesses in the pipeline for further growth in the coming years. The next round of ERDF funding has not yet been finalised and this will result in a delay of that funding until at least January 2016. Additional activity and support will not be available to businesses during the period from 1 October 2015 until funding is in place. This will have a negative impact on Expert Help and consequently higher level growth target figures.

- 3.4 To help stimulate demand for the start-up service Business Gateway has held outreach surgeries in Kelso, Duns, Eyemouth, Galashiels, Peebles and Hawick between May and September 2015. This has been made possible with the use of ERDF funding. Unfortunately these surgeries have not been successful with a total of 30 adviser days over this period only generating 12 enquiries. These will not be continued past September but instead resource will be put back into running start-up workshops in locations around the area. Four will be held in Peebles in October 2015 and 4 in Hawick (at the new Burnfoot Community Hub) in November. A different location will be identified each month with the exception of December.
- 3.5 With the exception of Local Growth Advisory Service, the growth targets continue to be challenging. At the upper end for Account Management referrals to Scottish Enterprises, two businesses have already been identified that will be accepted into this service, this will meet the annual target, possibly before the end of November 2015. Growth Advisory Service and Growth Pipeline are more difficult to forecast as it relies on businesses increasing turnover by £200k and £400k respectively. These are high targets for businesses in the area.
- 3.6 Business Gateway is taking a "localities" approach and has identified 5 advisers to work in each of the identified areas. The aim of this approach is to address to reduced numbers of growth businesses in the region. The first task is to map businesses in the areas and identify those that do not have a current working relationship with BG or Scottish Enterprise. This will identify businesses that the advisers will contact with a view to placing these in growth business segmentation.
- 3.7 Finally within the **Local Services**, performance is strong. The overall total number of clients contacting and working with an adviser remains very robust. The total number of businesses accessing a service, either one to one or as part of a workshop or event is very high and ahead of this time last year. The "expert help" service continues to be a challenge. The pipeline for the service was strong but clients were reluctant to spend their contribution (each business having to meet 50% of the costs), leading to a number of projects being cancelled. When the ERDF funding is forthcoming it will again include a budget for "expert help" and an internal review of how this is delivered locally will be undertaken. As explained above, the delay in this funding will have a detrimental impact on meeting this target.

#### **4 PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2015/16**

- 4.1 The Business Gateway Business Plan 2015/16, approved by the Economic Development Group at its May 2015 meeting, included an 11-point Improvement Plan for the service.
- 4.2 Appendix 1 sets out the Performance Improvement Plan and progress to date. Key highlights to note are as follows:
  - (a) The implementation of a Client Management system to identify and highlight the progress of top performing businesses; and

- (b) The delivery of 5 Masterclasses attracting more than 300 businesses to attend the events

### **Business Competitiveness Project**

- 4.3 In addition to the core activity noted above, the Business Gateway also participates in the delivery of the EU supported South of Scotland Business Competitiveness Programme, which ran from January 2012 to September 2015. This programme provided additional support to businesses in the tourism, food and drink and renewables sectors. The activities and outputs for this programme are delivered by staff based at the Business Gateway and in the Economic Development Team but due to the funding sources involved are recorded separately.
- 4.4 The key performance indicators and achievements for the Scottish Borders to end of September 2015 are noted in Table 2 below. These are the final figures for the project:

| <b>Table 2 – South of Scotland Business Competitiveness Project Progress</b> | Programme Target (Sep 2015) | Actual to end Sep 2015 | % against target |
|--|-----------------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| Business Assists   | 240                         | 448                    | 186%             |
| QA Scheme Support  | 52                          | 61                     | 117%             |
| Marketing Support  | 60                          | 194                    | 323%             |
| Marketing Projects   | 20                          | 22                     | 110%             |
| Support for e-commerce   | 20                          | 41                     | 205%             |
| e-commerce Projects  | 10                          | 10                     | 100%             |
| Ecommerce strategies   | 5                           | 3                      | 60%              |
| New Business Starts  | 10                          | 65                     | 650%             |
| Environmental audits   | 5                           | 7                      | 140%             |
| Green Tourism Support  | 25                          | 3                      | 12%              |
| Support for Energy Saving  | 20                          | 51                     | 255%             |
| Number of Jobs   | 64                          | 126                    | 197%             |

- 4.5 This project has been a resounding success and allowed a range of additional projects to be carried out in the area bringing benefit to many businesses and individuals. Green Tourism Support and E-commerce strategies were difficult to implement as is seen by the failure to reach target in these areas. The Green Tourism project through VisitScotland was unattractive to businesses due to the cost and limited perceived benefit. This has now been recognised by VisitScotland, which is amending this scheme, but this has come too late for the benefit of the project.

## **5 IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 Financial**

- (a) Scottish Borders Council receives funding to deliver Business Gateway in the Scottish Borders from the Scottish Government. The additional "local services" are funded through EU funding, matched to the funding from the Scottish Government.

- (b) The in-house delivery costs of Business Gateway (£294,506 for 2015/16) are based on the budget available within the Council's five year Financial Plan agreed by Council.

## 5.2 Risk and Mitigations

- (a) As noted above, performance against some key indicators is lower than expected, and should this underperformance continue, whilst not being a financial risk, it does create potential for a reputational risk. These risks are being addressed by a number of projects within Business Gateway to help identify businesses with growth potential. Included in this is the allocation of an adviser to take responsibility for each of the 5 localities in the Borders.
- (b) A risk workshop was undertaken in March 2015 and an Action Plan developed and implemented to mitigate the key risks. This Risk Register is reviewed quarterly. This is a continuous process to ensure that the service continues without incident.

## 5.3 Equalities

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was carried out in March 2015 and the findings were incorporated in the Improvement Plan. A key aspect of the Council's Economic Development Team's work is to reduce barriers to economic inequality and information on service delivery to equalities groups is monitored. This is incorporated into the operations of the Business Gateway and is required by the Scottish Government through COSLA.

## 5.4 Acting Sustainably

The Business Gateway Service has a number of targeted outputs and outcomes that deliver economic benefit: these relate to the number of businesses assisted, new business start-ups, growth and local service priorities as defined by the Council.

## 5.5 Carbon Management

There is no net increase in carbon emissions at a Scottish Borders level as this is the continuation of an existing service delivery.

## 5.6 Rural Proofing

Rural Proofing is not required as proposals do not relate to new or amended Council policy or strategy.

## 5.7 Changes to the Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

There are no changes to be made.

## 6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Service Director Regulatory Services as 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**

**Corporate Transformation and Services Director**

**Signature .....**

**Author(s)**

| Name           | Designation and Contact Number                 |
|----------------|--|
| Jim Johnstone  | Principal Officer - Business, tel 01835 826727 |
| Phil McCreadie | Business Gateway Manager, tel 01835 825605     |

**Background Papers:**

None

**Previous Minute Reference:**

Item 6, Executive Committee, 12 May 2015

**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.

Contact us at Jacqueline Whitelaw, Environment and Infrastructure, Scottish Borders Council, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA, Tel 01835 825431, Fax 01835 825071, email [eitranslationrequest@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:eitranslationrequest@scotborders.gov.uk).

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## Business Gateway – Performance Improvement Plan – 2015/16

| Improvement Action   | Responsibility  | Timeline                               | Cost/Resource   | Update Oct 2015  |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| 1). Create and deliver a series of 5 Master Class and Networking events across the region, to trial effectiveness for businesses and Business Gateway  | BG Manager & BG Advisers                                | April 2015 – September 2015            | Staff Time; Budget of £10k for delivery and marketing from budget | The 5 Masterclasses were held across the region in the subject areas of Marketing, Social Media, Motivation, Innovation and Sales. In total over 300 business people booked on the Masterclasses and feedback for these was excellent. Another series will be run over the winter if ERDF funding is forthcoming   |
| 2). Identify suitable contact centres and use these for delivery of Business Gateway across the region. Research opportunities to apply branding and provide leaflets and further information. Timetable and market the adviser attendance at these venues | BG Manager and BG Advisers. SBC Contact centre managers | May to September 2015 as initial trial | Staff Time  | 6 venues were identified in the towns of Kelso, Duns, Eyemouth, Galashiels, Peebles and Hawick. Marketing was carried out in each venue, in local press, through councillors, social media and on SBC website. Attendance was very poor with around a dozen attendees. This will not be repeated and instead start-up workshops will be delivered across the region. |
| 3). Establish a Client Management system of operation for Growth Advisory Service clients. Identifying businesses with greatest potential and formally allocating them to a client manager.  | BG Manager  | April 2015                             | Staff Time  | Each Growth Adviser has been allocated a number of businesses and is now responsible for managing the growth of these clients ensuring that they move through the segmentation model. Progress has been slow at the higher end. Portfolios are monitored on a monthly basis with the BG Manager and the adviser.   |

| <b>Improvement Action</b>  | <b>Responsibility</b>            | <b>Timeline</b>       | <b>Cost/Resource</b>                                     | <b>Update Oct 2015</b>  |
|--|----------------------------------|-----------------------|--|---|
| 4). Proactive delivery of service and workshops to harder to reach areas and communities in the region. Working with our colleagues in Equality and Diversity to identify prospects  | BG Manager and BG Advisers       | May 2015              | Staff Time   | Workshops have been delivered in Langlee and are due to be delivered in the new Burnfoot hub in November. Following the localities workshop conversation is also being held with the Fire Service who host workshops in Eyemouth and Duns for residents who do not have English as first language. BG will try and deliver a Business workshop to this group. |
| 5). Identify opportunities for businesses to take advantage of the new Borders Railway. Ensure where possible that support is given to those businesses that want to provide a service linked to the railway and that we promote this in our marketing activity. | BG Advisers                      | Ongoing               | Staff time   | BG continue to deliver advice specifically to Tourism businesses who want to take advantage of the railway. There have been some great examples so far. There has been an appointment of a Tourism Adviser who will specifically look at railway tourism opportunities in Midlothian and Scottish borders and reports to BG Manager in Scottish Borders       |
| 6). Radio Borders advertising for both the service provided by BG but also linked to case studies supporting some of the businesses we work with.  | BG Manager and BG Marketing team | May 15 – September 15 | Staff Time, Budget of approx. £5k using existing budgets | The aim of these radio adverts has been met along with increased press advertising and press releases BG profile has been significantly raised in the region leading to more introductions and better understanding of the service delivered  |
| 7). Provision of a dedicated Broadband line to Business Gateway offices in Selkirk.  | BG Manager and SBC IT            | May 2015              | £250 installation and £25 per month rental               | This was not required following an upgrade of the line to the BG offices  |



| <b>Improvement Action</b>   | <b>Responsibility</b>  | <b>Timeline</b>            | <b>Cost/Resource</b>  | <b>Update Oct 2015</b>  |
|---|--|----------------------------|---|---|
| 8). Introduction of CRM 2 as a recording and data base system for the department  | BGNational; PO (Business), BG Manager and roll out team and SBC IT | May 2015                   | Staff time, cost is covered centrally   | The latest date given for implementation of this is 23 Oct 2015. This has been subject of many delays.  |
| 9). Link with workshop delivery in Dumfries and Galloway to look at provision of additional IT and tax related workshops for businesses                 | BG Manager   | May 2015 to September 2015 | £200 per workshop paid from existing budgets  | IT workshops have been delivered externally at a higher cost due to a limit in the number of providers available, HMRC workshops were delivered by a trainer from D&G. IT workshops will be delivered internally by the adviser providing maternity cover and HMRC workshops may continue depending on ERDF funding |
| 10). Research and introduce diagnostic reviews for businesses in Growth Advisory Service and operating in the Client Management system                  | BG Manager and BG Advisers   | October 2015               | Staff time. Any additional costs coming from existing budgets                             | A suitable system is still to be identified for this.   |
| 11). Delivery of Scottish Borders Business month extending the period of focus from Business week in 2014, reacting to feedback taken during that week. | BG Manager and BG Marketing local team                             | Up to October 2015         | Staff time, marketing and delivery costs within a budget of £10k – source to be confirmed | There are 25 events planned for Business Month in association with a number of public and private sector partners. This has been organised in the main by a student placement over the summer months.   |

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## **SOUTH OF SCOTLAND RURAL REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME – PROGRESS REPORT**

**Report by Corporate Transformation and Services Director**

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### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**3 November 2015**

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#### **1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report updates Members on progress in implementing the South of Scotland Rural Regional Economic Development Programme, in partnership with Scottish Enterprise and Dumfries & Galloway Council.**
- 1.2 The South of Scotland Alliance presented a programme of strategic projects to Scottish Government and Scottish Enterprise in the summer of 2014. The programme aims to build on the opportunities that are available in the South of Scotland.
- 1.3 Four strategic projects were identified at the heart of the programme, Borders Railway/Central Borders Business Park; Mountain Biking – refreshing a world-class product; M74 Corridor Strategic Development Masterplan; and Stranraer Waterfront. The programme was presented to Mr Swinney MSP, Depute First Minister, in June 2014. Since then, the partners have been taking forward the four strands of work and progress against each of these is set out in the report. Progress on the actions will be reported to the Depute First Minister when the South of Scotland Alliance meets him in December 2015.

#### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **I recommend that Executive Committee:**
  - (a) Notes the progress made in implementing the four strategic projects that make up the South of Scotland Rural Regional Economic Development Programme; and**
  - (b) Requests that the South of Scotland Alliance seeks ongoing support from the Scottish Government for this strategic programme when it meets the Depute First Minister in December 2015.**

### **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Following a meeting with the Depute First Minister, Mr John Swinney MSP, at the end of 2013, the South of Scotland Alliance agreed to produce a persuasive programme of strategic interventions that would influence the Depute First Minister and the senior management team of Scottish Enterprise. It was to focus on a limited number of strategic projects and build on priorities in each Council area.
- 3.2 Officers from Scottish Borders Council, Dumfries & Galloway Council and Scottish Enterprise worked to develop the Programme, with links made to the Government Economic Strategy as well as the local economic strategy in each area. The Programme focuses on the opportunities that are on the near horizon in the South of Scotland. This focus on opportunities demonstrates to the Government that the partners are aiming to be proactive and move the area forward in a positive way. The policy message to Government, and to Scottish Enterprise, was that we want to maximise the opportunities that are available to us.
- 3.3 The opportunities identified include the opening of the Borders Railway in the Scottish Borders; the roll-out of Superfast Broadband across the South of Scotland; the development opportunities in the M74 corridor down to the Anglo/Scottish border; the coverage of parts of the region with Assisted Area Status; and the opportunities that arise from the world-class mountain biking assets that have been developed in the area over the last decade. Overall, the Programme aims to be ambitious for the South of Scotland and to demonstrate that the area can play a more significant role in the Scottish economy.

### **4 RURAL REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

- 4.1 Four strategic projects that link to the opportunities were put forward. The first project focuses on the Borders Railway and the Central Borders Business Park. This project is crucial in helping to deliver the economic potential of the new Borders Railway. Through a number of phases, the Central Borders Business Park will provide new employment sites and new business units to facilitate the growth of local businesses and to encourage inward investment.
- 4.2 The second project focuses on Mountain Biking and developing our world-class mountain biking products. Although the mountain biking market is continuing to grow, the South of Scotland, and particularly the Upper Tweed Valley, has seen visitor numbers level off. Without investment in facilities and trails the area could lose its status and attraction to visitors, with a resulting drop in tourism impact.
- 4.3 The third project area is an M74 Corridor Strategic Development Masterplan, to better understand and plan for the opportunities in this major transport corridor running through Dumfries & Galloway. The final project area focuses on Stranraer Waterfront and the regeneration opportunities that have been identified in the far west of the region.
- 4.4 A section on related strategic initiatives was also included in the Programme. This recognises that there is ongoing work with our local businesses that needs to happen in addition to the strategic projects which are the main focus of the Programme. It focused on leadership, innovation and internationalisation.

- 4.5 These major projects provide a strong example of Community Planning in action at a strategic level and will contribute to the achievement of the Community Planning Partnership's Single Outcome Agreement targets if successfully delivered.

## **5 PROGRESS ON STRATEGIC PROJECTS**

- 5.1 Good progress has been made with regard to all four of the projects in the Programme, with positive engagement from Scottish Government and Scottish Enterprise taking a positive lead for a number of strands of work. For instance, the Borders Railway/Central Borders Business Park project has received significant officer and financial input from the Scottish Government, Scottish Enterprise and VisitScotland. A range of projects are being supported including tourism activity to exploit the opportunities created by the opening of the Borders Railway and a building project to house the Great Tapestry of Scotland.
- 5.2 The opportunity to deliver new serviced land and new, modern office space is being taken forward on land at Tweedbank owned by the Council, with Scottish Enterprise developing a business case to fund that work. A vision/masterplan, funded by the Council and Scottish Enterprise has been developed by Page Park architects to provide a framework for the future development of the Central Borders Business Park. This includes the potential long term redevelopment of the existing industrial area to better meet the needs of modern businesses. Finally, work to enhance the promotion of the area for inward investment has also been delivered with a new online "Prospectus" that promotes the Borders Railway corridor, developed in conjunction with Midlothian and City of Edinburgh Councils.
- 5.3 In terms of mountain biking and developing a world class product, a number of actions have been taken forward. Work to establish the viability and fundability of the AIMUp uplift project at Innerleithen is under way. This work is also considering the broader mountain biking opportunity and a Tweed Valley Mountain Biking Stakeholder Group has been formed to ensure that all relevant partners are involved. Reinvestment in the mountain biking product is also being considered by the Group as the ongoing maintenance of trails and the development of new trails for a range of aptitudes has been identified as key to the future success of mountain biking in the area. The positive involvement of Scottish Enterprise and Forestry Commission Scotland has been crucial in this work.
- 5.4 Forestry Commission Scotland has also taken forward the work on Glentress Masterplan, with support from the Council and Scottish Enterprise, and the Supplementary Guidance is currently out for consultation. Positive work has also been undertaken with regard to attracting new investment in visitor accommodation linked to the forest estate and mountain biking.
- 5.5 With regard to the projects in Dumfries and Galloway, a Strategic Masterplan Study to evaluate development opportunities along the corridor, led by Scottish Enterprise, has been completed. The final report confirmed the biggest opportunities around the Energy, Active Aging/Care Services and Tourism sectors. At Stranraer waterfront, an outline business case for Marina Infrastructure has been completed and a number of key studies have been taken forward with regard to the Site Servicing for a key area of brownfield land.
- 5.6 Finally, Council officers have been working with Scottish Enterprise to develop the leadership, innovation and internationalisation strands of activity that could boost the competitiveness of the area. In order to keep momentum behind the Programme, it is intended that a new South of

Scotland Competitiveness Strategy will be agreed by the Alliance. Work is already under way to produce this document, which will form the basis for a further programme of actions that will be presented to the Depute First Minister in December 2015. It is anticipated that this will focus on three aims, fostering a culture of innovation; inspiring enterprise and entrepreneurship; and the work already under way around creating resilient, future-proof enabling infrastructure.

## **6 IMPLICATIONS**

### **6.1 Financial**

- (a) The Council, and its Community Planning Partners, will need to ensure that the projects identified in the Programme are given high priority and that appropriate staff and financial resources are made available to secure their successful delivery. If these projects can be delivered and make the expected impacts, then it will strengthen our case for similar interventions in future.
- (b) The ongoing financial implications of the Programme will require to be considered alongside other priorities and be reflected in future capital and revenue plans. It should be noted that future public spending reviews could constrain the delivery of the Programme. In view of this it is expected that the Programme will be reviewed and updated to reflect shifting resources.

### **6.2 Risk and Mitigations**

There is a reputational risk to the Council of not ensuring that it has lobbied as effectively as possible for additional investment for the Scottish Borders. The Programme mitigates that risk by presenting a strategic, coordinated programme to the Scottish Government and Scottish Enterprise.

### **6.3 Equalities**

There are no direct equalities impacts from the Programme. Specific Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken as appropriate for each of the strategic projects contained in the programme.

### **6.4 Acting Sustainably**

The Rural Regional Economic Development Programme has sustainable economic growth at its core. The programme is intended to help the rural economy in the South of Scotland be more sustainable in the long term.

### **6.5 Carbon Management**

There are no direct implications for the Council's carbon emissions from this proposal.

### **6.6 Rural Proofing**

This report does not propose a new or amended policy or strategy.

### **6.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

No changes are required to either the Council's Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the proposals in this report.

## **7 CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 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, the Service Director Interim Capital Projects and the Clerk to the Council have been consulted and their comments have been incorporated into the report.

**Approved by**

**Rob Dickson**

**Signature .....**

**Corporate Transformation and Services Director**

**Author(s)**

| Name          | Designation and Contact Number   |
|---------------|--|
| Bryan McGrath | Chief Officer Economic Development, Scottish Borders Council, 01835 826525         |
| Douglas Scott | Senior Policy Advisor, Policy and Strategy, Scottish Borders Council, 01835 825155 |

**Background Papers:** None

**Previous Minute Reference:** Item 12, Executive Committee, 10 June 2014

**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.

Contact us at Bryan McGrath, Policy and Strategy, Scottish Borders Council, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA, Tel 01835 826525, Fax 01835 825071, email [bmcgrath@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:bmcgrath@scotborders.gov.uk).

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## South of Scotland Alliance

### Rural Regional Economic Development Programme – 2014-2016

#### The Programme

The Programme consists of four key strategic projects, primarily focused on ‘capital’ related activity. A fifth area for action is also identified that relates to some of the key strategic themes that are at the heart of Scottish Enterprise’s strategy. The four strategic projects are:

- **Project 1 - Borders Railway / Central Borders Business Park**
- **Project 2 – Mountain Biking – Refreshing a World-Class Product**
- **Project 3 –Economic Development Strategy for the M74 Corridor Area**
- **Project 4 - Stranraer Waterfront**

## Project 1 - Borders Railway / Central Borders Business Park

|  | Resource         | Lead (Support)                        | Target (activity/ output)  | Timescale   | Outcome Measured by:  | Progress to August 2015   |
|--|------------------|---------------------------------------|--|-------------|---|---|
| <b>Project 1 – Borders Railway/ Central Borders Business Park</b>  |                  |                                       |  |             |   |   |
| <p>In early October 2014 the First Minister requested that Scottish Enterprise convene and chair a leadership and working group encompassing Scottish Borders, Midlothian and Edinburgh Councils, Transport Scotland, Visit Scotland and Scottish Government colleagues to bring together all the ongoing work around the Borders Railway. The request was to develop an “ambitious and compelling” Borders Railway Blueprint document and Action Plan to align and enhance existing plans to ensure full realisation of economic benefits of the project.</p> <p>The Blueprint encompasses the Central Borders Business Park amongst other interlinked strands, which are now included here.</p> <p>The First Minister published/launched the Borders Railway Blueprint on 17 November. The Leadership and Working Groups continue to work on the detailed Action Plan (due for completion at the end of November). It is understood that these groups will evolve into a governance structure into which all project strands will report/feed until at least the opening of the Railway in September 2015.</p> |                  |                                       |  |             |   |   |
| Tourism - Rail Exploitation Initiative   | To be quantified | MDC, ECC and SBC with VS & SE support | To maximise tourism opportunity/exploitation by businesses up and down the line from Waverly to Tweedbank arising from Steam; Tapestry; Abbeys, Abbotsford; etc via development of “packaged” propositions, and tourism business development | Summer 2015 | Maximise Economic impact; tourism package opportunities, business engagement.<br><br>1 million railway passengers per annum by 2020 | SE/CEC/MDC/SBC/VS work with tourism businesses & attractions to scope out activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business engagement.</li> <li>• Business collaboration / development</li> <li>• Product development / enhancement</li> <li>• Proposition/destination development;</li> </ul> Project now at commissioning stage (SE lead) |
| The Great Tapestry of Scotland Building  | £6m              | SBC / SG                              | Build and Establishment of Great Tapestry of Scotland attraction at Tweedbank  | 2017        | Maximise economic impact and tourism opportunities to link to other attractions.  | Following the Feasibility Stage Proposals, completed back in December 2014, Scottish Borders Council have commenced with the next stage of the design process. Page Park have been working on detailed designs for the building and associated site surveys   |

|                                    | Resource         | Lead (Support)                   | Target (activity/ output)   | Timescale  | Outcome Measured by:  | Progress to August 2015   |
|------------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|---|--|---|---|
|                                    |                  |                                  |   |  |   | including, Topographical, Ecology, Geo Physical, Site Investigation & Ground Investigation are also under way.<br><br>A planning application has been submitted and is currently being processed.   |
| Tweedbank New Build                | To be quantified | SE / SBC<br><br>Public / Private | Development Appraisal. Design Vision and Technical Briefs.<br><br>Access and site servicing to produce development plots.<br><br>New build multi-occupancy office pavilion, | Sept 2015<br><br>Early 2016<br><br>Late 2016<br><br>2017 | Creation of 3/4 serviced plots and road infrastructure for new offices.<br><br>Creation of high quality employment locations next to Station<br><br>Units Created / Occupied.<br>Inward business relocations. | SBC completed the purchase of the necessary land in December 2014.<br><br>The Page\Park vision / masterplan reached practical completion in March 2015.<br><br>As currently envisaged the project would deliver an access roadway with serviced plots with an initial provision of approx 900m <sup>2</sup> net of business space on one plot. The remaining plots would be marketed for private sector / business development.<br><br>Revised target for completion of SE internal approvals October 2015 dependent on issues being resolved by SBC. |
| Tweedbank Ind Estate Refurbishment | To be quantified | SBC / SE                         | Tenant/Owner Engagement<br><br>Building Condition Audit / Options<br><br>Development Appraisal. Design Vision &   | 2015<br><br>2015/16<br><br>2016                          | Quality of units refurbished<br><br>Number of units created / occupied.<br><br>Inward business  | A vision / masterplan, funded by SBC and SE has been developed by Page Park architects to provide a framework for the future development of the Borders Business Park. This includes the potential long term redevelopment of the existing industrial area to better meet the needs of modern businesses.   |

|                             | Resource              | Lead (Support)                             | Target (activity/ output)   | Timescale       | Outcome Measured by:  | Progress to August 2015  |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--|---|-----------------|---|--|
|                             |                       | Public / Private                           | Technical Briefs.<br>Development Vehicle Upgrading, demolitions and Phased Redevelopment – in partnership with Private Sector | 2016/17<br>2017 | relocations.  |  |
| Inward Investment Marketing | Officer time<br>£100k | EEC, MDC, SBC (SDI expertise and channels) | Number of targeted marketing campaigns.<br>Number of resulting enquiries.<br>Enquiry conversion.                              | September 2016  | New business investment in Scottish Borders Railway corridor.<br>Measured by:<br>Housing Developments Undertaken<br>No. of business relocations.<br>GVA / jobs created. | A new online 'Prospectus' that will promote the Borders Railway corridor has been developed in conjunction with Midlothian and City of Edinburgh Councils. The Prospectus will go live before the end of August and there will be a business event held in Edinburgh in September (after the Railway opening) to raise its profile.<br><br>A funding bid is also being made to the Railway Blueprint Leadership Group for a dedicated project manager to act as the key contact for investors, as well as funding for marketing. |

## Project 2 – Mountain Biking – Refreshing a World-Class Product

|   | Resource | Lead (Support)        | Target (activity/ output)   | Timescale      | Outcome Measured by:  | Progress to August 2015  |
|---|----------|-----------------------|---|----------------|---|--|
| <b>Project 2 – Mountain Biking – Developing a World-Class Product</b> |          |                       |   |                |   |  |
| 7stanes mountain biking / Innerleithen Mechanical Uplift              | £5.5m    | SBC / Community Group | Development Appraisal. Design Vision and Technical Briefs.<br><br>Site / Product Development (phased) | September 2016 | New mountain biking products and experiences are developed.<br><br>Measured by:<br>No. of visitors.<br>GVA / jobs created | <p>A consultant's report has now been drafted with opportunities identified;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• for business collaboration delivering "customer packages"</li> <li>• reinvestment/refreshment in trails</li> <li>• trail "gaps".</li> </ul> <p>The report suggests that the AIMUp proposals are not currently financially sustainable or deliverable, but that there are opportunities to make smaller scale enhancements at Innerleithen/Traquair.</p> <p>A sub-group of the Stakeholder Group met on the 29 July to discuss in more detail the consultant's key findings as a basis for a draft Action Plan for the future of MTB in the Tweed Valley. A follow-up meeting is planned for later this month with a view to identifying key project opportunities in the short, medium &amp; longer term.</p> <p>The consultant's report will be released once the MTB Stakeholder Group has also agreed an accompanying Tweed Valley Action Plan.</p> |
| Reinvestment in Mountain Biking                                       | TBC      | SE , VS, SG, FCS      | To enable and lever   | 2018           | Continued growth in MTB   | SE has held three positive meetings with FCS who have set out their plans and  |

|                                 | Resource | Lead (Support)                 | Target (activity/ output)   | Timescale      | Outcome Measured by:  | Progress to August 2015   |
|---------------------------------|----------|--------------------------------|---|----------------|---|---|
| Product                         |          |                                | ongoing public investment in refreshing and maintaining MTB trails<br><br>No. of MTB routes.<br>Creation of new routes<br>Number of MTB attractions |                | visitors across centre.<br><br>Increasing Scottish share of all MTB visits  | ambitions for further development of the offering at Glentress.<br><br>Scottish Borders Council has recently approved a draft Glentress Masterplan which will now be subject to a statutory 3 month consultation period before it is brought back to SBC for final approval.<br><br>The report noted above identifies a range of opportunities that can be built on to further develop mountain biking and tourism in the Tweed Valley.   |
| Tweed valley resort development | £5m      | Private sector / Joint venture | Caerlee Mill redevelopment Velotel (or similar)<br><br>No. of Bed spaces.   | September 2016 | New tourism business investment in the Tweed Valley<br><br>Measured by:<br>No. of business relocations.<br>GVA/ jobs created. | A key element which FCS are looking to progress in Glentress is the provision of new visitor accommodation. SDI may take a proposition out to the market place on behalf of FCS. However, in the first instance, FCS is required to explore the opportunities with Forest Holidays and will report back.<br><br>Positive meeting has taken place – further discussions between FCS and Forest Holidays are ongoing in tandem with the Glentress Masterplan consultation period. The Caerlee site was purchased by a local developer and a planning application for a mix of uses is being processed by the Council. |

### Project 3 –Economic Development Strategy for the M74 Corridor Area

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|   | Resource | Lead (Support) | Target (activity/ output)  | Timescale   | Outcome Measured by:   | Progress to August 2015  |
|---|----------|----------------|--|-------------|--|--|
| <b>Project 3 – M74 Corridor Strategic Development Masterplan</b>                    |          |                |  |             |  |  |
| Strategic Masterplan Study to evaluate development opportunities along the corridor | £130k    | SE, DGC        | A quasi-Strategic Development Plan spanning the cross border region. | Spring 2015 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assets and opportunities defined</li> <li>Supplementary Planning guidance adoptable by the respective authorities.</li> </ul> | <p>ARUP has completed their investigative work and is in the process of finalising their recommendations report. Detailed proposals will be the subject of further work between SoSA partners but 4 main opportunity themes have been focused on, namely:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Transport and logistics – development of this sector would appear to most likely be anchored around the emerging Longtown plans.</li> <li>2. Tourism – there is scope for marginal improvement by better co-ordination and marketing of existing facilities, but transformational change would require focus on a new major visitor attraction.</li> <li>3. Care Services – there is an opportunity to link with academia and industry to explore new models of active retirement and assisted living.</li> <li>4. Energy – anchoring new renewable energy and energy storage technologies around Chapelcross has potential but will require public agency collaboration, deep pockets and persistence to secure investment.</li> </ol> <p>Finalised report from ARUP is expected by end April 2015.</p> <p>The final report confirmed the biggest</p> |

|  | Resource                        | Lead (Support) | Target (activity/output)  | Timescale | Outcome Measured by:                      | Progress to August 2015  |
|--|---------------------------------|----------------|---|-----------|---|--|
|  |                                 |                |   |           |   | opportunities around the Energy, Active Aging / Care Services and Tourism sectors. Coupled with evidence from a separate site development framework study for Chapelcross, proposals to launch an Energy Park project are being worked up with Scottish Government, the NDA, academia through the Energy Technology Partnership, and private sector interests. The other two topics are at earlier stage discussion with potential stakeholders. |
| Energy sector developments at Chapelcross and / or Eastriggs | TBC; but potentially multi £m's | Private Sector | Transnational scale, Centre of Excellence in multiple sustainable energy storage and generation technologies. | 2020      | Installed generating and storage capacity | As above.  |

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## Project 4 - Stranraer Waterfront

|                                      | Resource | Lead (Support)         | Target (activity/output)  | Timescale      | Outcome Measured by:   | Progress to June 2015   |
|--------------------------------------|----------|------------------------|---|----------------|--|---|
| <b>Project 4A – Stranraer Marina</b> |          |                        |   |                |  |   |
| Marina Infrastructure                | £3.8m    | DGC, SE, Crown Estates | Development of Business Case<br><br>Design and delivery of additional breakwater<br><br>Phased expansion of | September 2016 | Creation of high quality marina and marine leisure base.<br><br>Investment in essential marine | Outline Business Case has been completed and, following agreement with Partners, it is intended to move to Full Business Case in September 2015.<br><br>Economic Impact Assessment has been completed and this includes the |



|                | Resource | Lead (Support)          | Target (activity/output)  | Timescale      | Outcome Measured by:  | Progress to June 2015  |
|----------------|----------|-------------------------|---|----------------|---|--|
|                |          |                         | 180 additional marina berths / pontoons   |                | infrastructure<br><br>Measured by:<br>No. of Marina Users<br>No. of new businesses<br>Jobs created<br>Increased visitor spend   | aggregated impact of both the Marina and East Pier.  |
| Site Servicing | £2m      | DGC, SE, Private Sector | Improved access to the site.<br><br>Improved physical linkages to the town centre and marina<br><br>Provision of essential services | September 2015 | Redevelopment of a brownfield former industrial site<br><br>Inward Investment.<br>Measured by:<br>Number of new business start ups<br>GVA/ jobs created.<br>Level of private sector leverage<br>£ | Preferred Bidder has been announced and a 12 month Exclusivity Period has been agreed with Stena Line and the Council<br><br>Economic Viability Assessment (Report on Market Failure) has been completed to draft stage and final report will be informed by the development appraisal as part of the above.<br><br>Outline proposal seeking Scottish Government support to be developed with a view to meeting Deputy First Minister in September 2015<br><br>Full contaminated land investigation has been commissioned and is on site. Site access at design and traffic modelling stage.<br><br>Study to assess potential for the development of new vocational training / D&G College facility as part of the |

|  | Resource | Lead (Support) | Target (activity/output) | Timescale | Outcome Measured by: | Progress to June 2015             |
|--|----------|----------------|--------------------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
|  |          |                |                          |           |                      | redevelopment has been completed. |

**SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL**  
**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

MINUTE of MEETING of the EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Newtown St. Boswells on Tuesday, 20 October 2015 at 10.00 a.m.  
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Present:- Councillors S. Aitchison (Chairman - Education Business), S. Bell (from para 3), C. Bhatia, M. J. Cook, V. Davidson (from para 3), G. Edgar, J. Mitchell, D. Moffat, D. Paterson, F. Renton, R. Smith.,  
Also Present:- Councillors G. Logan, S. Mountford, T. Weatherston.  
Apologies:- Councillors D. Parker, J. Brown.  
In Attendance:- Depute Chief Executive – People, Service Director Children and Young People, Chief Officer - Education, Democratic Services Team Leader, Democratic Services Officer (F. Henderson).  
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**EDUCATION BUSINESS**

Present:- Mr G. Donald, Mr. J. Walsh, Mr. G. Jarvie, Mrs J. Aitchison, Ms A. Ferhai, Lauren Cardwell, Eilidh Page.

1. **CHAIRMAN**

Councillor Aitchison chaired the meeting for that part which considered education business.

2. **WELCOME**

The Chairman welcomed Lauren Cardwell (Jedburgh Grammar School) and Eilidh Paige (Hawick High School) to their first meeting as Pupil Representatives on the Executive (Education) Committee and hoped the experience was beneficial and interesting for them.

3. **HOME SCHOOLING: SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL SCRUTINY REPORT**

With reference to paragraph 2 of the Scrutiny meeting of 20 August 2015 and paragraph 3.2 of the Scottish Borders Council meeting held on 7 October 2015, there had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Children and Young People which proposed that the Executive (Education) Committee consider the decision of the Scrutiny Committee of 20 August 2015 in relation to Home Schooling. The report explained that Home Schooling had been considered at the Scrutiny Meeting providing facts on the numbers of children and young people currently home schooled in the Scottish Borders and the guidance and legislation around governance arrangements. Scrutiny Members had expressed concern around national legislation and agreed to recommend that Scottish Borders Council write to the Scottish Government requesting that the 1980 Education Scotland Act be amended to give Local Authorities the power to enforce Section 36 of the Act in order to ensure that children who were being home schooled received a satisfactory education appropriate to their age and aptitude. Scottish Borders Council had referred the matter to the Executive (Education) Committee for consideration. The view of the Scrutiny Committee was that Scottish Borders as a Local Authority had no method of exercising the powers set out in the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, Section 37(1). For parents who had never sent their children to a Scottish Borders School, officers were unable to acquire any information as to whether the children who were being home schooled received a satisfactory education appropriate to their age and aptitude. The report detailed to duties of the Local Authority under the legislation and the Service Director Children and Young People confirmed that there were situations where it was beneficial to the child to be home schooled and Education would engage with these children and work with the Parents. Members discussed the report and while it was noted that the Education Department tried where possible to work in partnership with parents who were home schooling their children, concerns were expressed regarding

those children who were not being reached. The Chairman invited Councillor Logan as Chairman of Scrutiny to address the Committee. Councillor Logan reinforced the discussion by the Committee and asked that a copy of the letter sent to the Scottish Government be circulated to all Councillors and other members of the Committee for information.

#### **DECISION**

**AGREED that an appropriate letter be sent by the Leader to the Scottish Government expressing concern about existing guidance and request consideration of an amendment to the 1980 Education Scotland Act, ensuring that children who are home schooled receive a satisfactory education appropriate to their age and aptitude.**

#### **4. COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT: STRATEGIC PLAN FOR CLD IN SCOTTISH BORDERS 2015-18**

- 4.1 There had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director for Children and Young People recommending approval by the Community Planning Strategic Board of the Community Learning and Development (CKLD) Strategic Plan for 2015-18. The report explained that the CLD Strategic Guidance for Community Planning Partnerships (2012) set out expectations on Community Planning Partnerships (CPP) to use CLD approaches to public service reform and to develop a clear framework for the planning and delivery of CLD by the Local Authority and partners. The CLD Regulations of 2013 required a three year partnership plan for CLD to be developed by the Education Authority by 1 September 2015 and would be subject to scrutiny through the Local Area Network. Local CLD partnerships had been developed in each of the seven learning communities. They had mapped current CLD activity, consulted with learners and community groups and developed action plans to address local priorities. There was clear synergy between the identified CLD priorities and those of the CPP's Reducing Inequalities profile. The CLD Strategic Plan would be instrumental in achievement of key Borders priorities of developing Scotland's young workforce and empowering communities.
- 4.2 Mr Kevin McCall, Lead Senior Education Officer was present and gave a background to the development of the Plan, explained how the plan had been developed, the monitoring and evaluation, building capacity and further development. Mrs Clare De Bolle, Chief Officer (YouthBorders) circulated at the meeting copies of the YouthBorders Impact Report for 2014/2015 and advised that YouthBorders was a membership organisation whose objective was to provide the best youth work possible and be the voice of youth work which was reducing the attainment gap and providing informal out of school education. Funding from the Scottish Government had enabled an evaluation of training being provided throughout the Borders and had highlighted similar priorities and possible projects. In response to a question about the difficulties in attracting adult helpers for voluntary groups the Service Director explained that Volunteer Borders was looking at strategies to make volunteering more attractive. It was highlighted that young people were much more aware of the need for a broad education and being involved in youth work could help to identify future careers and there was collaboration with Borders College. Councillor Bhatia sought clarification regarding the financial resources which would be available, as there were no details within the draft report, and asked whether they would be provided wholly from Scottish Borders Council. The Lead Senior Education Officer advised that there had been a shift in resources approximately 18 months previously and there would be partnership funding, although all available resources had not yet been identified. Councillor Bhatia requested that financial information be included in the report prior to approval.

#### **DECISION**

**(a) AGREED:-**

- (i) that Scottish Borders Council receive a report on the Community Learning and Development (CLD) Strategic Plan for 2015-18, which would include financial information regarding the delivery of the services to be provided; and**

- (ii) **to support the CLD Strategic Partnership to engage effectively with key CLD partners, facilitating contribution to the annual planning process with members taking an active role within the local area partnerships.**

(b) **NOTED the issues requiring further action during the lifetime of the Plan.**

#### **MEMBER**

Mr Walsh left the meeting during consideration of the following item of business.

#### **5. CLOSING THE GAP**

The Chief Education Officer explained that the Authority was committed to reducing the inequalities link between attainment and areas of deprivation. The Chief Education Officer referred to a report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation on why closing the gap was extremely urgent. It was highlighted that children from higher-income households significantly outperformed those from low-income households at ages 3 and 5. By the age of 5, there was a gap of 10 months in problem solving development and 13 months in vocabulary. This gap continued throughout Primary and a clear literacy gap in primary 4 (ages 7-9) widened by Primary 7 (ages 10-12). By S2 (ages 12-14), more than twice as many students from the least deprived areas performed well in numeracy as those from the most deprived. The gap continued throughout Secondary Education and on leaving School, those from deprived families were consistently less likely to go into further/higher education, employment, training, or voluntary work. The Chief Education Officer went on to explain what was being done to reduce barriers within the Scottish Borders. Also present was Sandra Davidson, Headteacher at Langlee Primary School. She advised that 80% of pupils attending Langlee Primary School were in 1-3 deciles, although she emphasised the need to look beyond the deciles as some pupils were achieving very well. Following an HMIE inspection in November 2013 where the school scored satisfactory in terms of Improvement in performance, the school's own data showed that across the school, while many children were performing less well than their peers, almost all were making some progress in reading and writing, and a few were making good progress. The results of a P6 screening in January 2013 illustrated the age of the child compared with their spelling age. Langlee Primary School was then selected to take part in the Scottish Government Raising Attainment for All Project. In January 2015 50% of pupils from P2 – P7 were at or above chronological age for reading and the Staff set themselves a target to increase this by 10% (17 pupils) by May 2015. It was reported that this had not been achieved, however they had achieved an increase of 1% (6 pupils) at or above expected levels; 5 children were only 1 month behind chronological age; a reduction in the number of children 2 or more years behind chronological age and 47% of children had made more than 4 months progress since January 2015. Mrs Davidson explained that the next steps were to continue with reading – use CfE data as well as standardised test data; encourage parents to come into school and work alongside the pupils so that they could assist with homework and use 1-1 coaching with more pupils. The reputation of the school was growing and the school roll had increased by 40 pupils. There was a discussion about the need to change and modernise the methods of engagement with families which might include mediums such as Facebook. In response to a question on the work being done with children before they reached school it was noted that the Early Years Centres were having a very positive impact on learning as this allowed engagement from pre-birth, with antenatal classes being offered.

#### **DECISION NOTED.**

#### **MEMBER**

Councillor Renton left the meeting.

The Education Business concluded at 11.40 a.m. and there followed a short adjournment.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

6. **CHAIRMAN**

On the resumption of the meeting, Councillor Bhatia took the Chair for the remaining business.

7. **MINUTE**

The Minute of meeting of the Executive Committee of 29 September 2015 had been circulated.

**DECISION**

**APPROVED for signature by the Chairman.**

## **SUMMARY OF PRIVATE BUSINESS**

**MINUTE**

1. The private section of the Minute of the Executive Committee held on 29 September 2015 was approved.

**SOCIAL WORK COMPLAINTS REVIEW SUB-COMMITTEE**

2. The Minute of the Social Work Complaints Review Sub-Committee held on 17 September 2015 was approved.

*The meeting concluded at 12.45 p.m.*

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## **UK LANDFILL COMMUNITIES FUND**

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### **Report by Chief Executive**

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## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**3 November 2015**

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### **1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report recommends the reallocation of unused UK Landfill Communities Fund to BCCF Environmental – Duns Rugby Football Club.**
- 1.2 Executive of 10 March 2015 approved a grant of £27,451 to BCCF Environmental – Earlston Community Development Trust. This project, the Adventure Playpark Project, is no longer going ahead and the grant award has been terminated.
- 1.3 As a consequence, £27,451 of unallocated funds is held by BCCF Environmental of which £25,536 is available funds and £1,915 is fees.
- 1.4 An application from BCCF Environmental – Duns Rugby Football Club – Clubhouse and Community Facility is currently held by SBC awaiting UKLCF funds.
- 1.5 It is recommended that the funds awarded to the Earlston Community Development Trust project be reallocated to Duns Rugby Football Club. This will enable the Club to complete its funding package and its project.
- 1.6 Members should note that the Duns Rugby Football Club project started in July despite full funding not being in place. While it is unusual to award funds after the project start date, this is allowable under the UKLCF.

### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 I recommend that the Executive Committee approves a grant of £25,536 to BCCF Environmental – Duns Rugby Football Club.**

### **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Tax on landfill waste was introduced in 1996 as a means to reduce the amount of landfill waste and to promote a shift to more environmentally sustainable methods of waste management. The tax credit scheme enables operators of landfill sites (the Council) to contribute money to enrolled Environmental Bodies (such as BCCF Environmental) to carry out projects that meet the environmental objects contained in the Landfill Tax Regulations.
- 3.2 The UK Government saw the UKLCF as a way for Landfill Operators and Environmental Bodies to work in partnership to create significant environmental benefits and jobs, to promote sustainable waste management and/or to undertake projects which improve the lives of communities living near landfill sites.
- 3.3 Landfill Operators can contribute up to 5.1% of their landfill tax liability to Environmental Bodies and reclaim 90% of this contribution as a tax credit. The Council contributes the remaining 10% contribution from identified budgets within the Place Directorate - Neighbourhood Services. The UKLCF budget is notified quarterly based on waste tonnage returns submitted by Place Directorate – Neighbourhood Services to the Chief Executive’s Department – Financial Services. The returns and budget figures within this report include the Council’s 10% contribution.
- 3.4 As a condition of the UKLCF, enrolled Environmental Bodies submitting applications must firstly obtain the approval of ENTRUST for the works associated with individual projects. This is to ensure compliance with all the conditions of the National Scheme and to confirm eligibility of the projects being recommended for funding. (ENTRUST is the Regulatory Body of the UK Landfill Tax Credit Scheme).
- 3.5 Members should note that the Revenue Scotland and Tax Powers Act 2014 were given Royal Assent in September 2014. This, together with the Landfill (Scotland) Act 2014, gives Scotland the framework to collect and manage Scottish Landfill Tax (SLFT) and to operate a Scottish Landfill Communities Fund (SLCF) scheme.
- 3.6 The SLCF will continue to allow landfill operators (the Council) to contribute a capped proportion of their tax liability to be used for environmental and community projects. This rate is expected to be 10% higher than the UKLCF rate at introduction (UKLCF rate currently 5.6%). The SLCF will be regulated by SEPA (rather than ENTRUST).
- 3.7 A two year UKLCF transitions period will run from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2017 during which time the Council will continue to monitor all project awards to ensure full spend of allocated funds has been achieved by 31 March 2017, or where necessary reallocated to other projects. This report fulfils this element of this transitional responsibility by reallocating unused funds.
- 3.8 Members should note that the SLCF processes are still being developed. In addition to the regulator changing from ENTRUST to SEPA, the Approved Distributive Body for the Scottish Borders has been confirmed as BCCF Environmental. A SLCF process and budget is expected to be available by December 2015.



## 4 UK LCF APPLICATIONS

4.1 One application is recommended for approval as follows:

### 4.2 Project 1

**Applicant:** BCCF Environmental  
**Project:** Duns Rugby Football Club – Clubhouse and Community Facilities  
**ENTRUST No:** 711138.072  
**Project Costs:** £264,087  
**LCF Request:** £25,536

- (a) Duns Rugby Football Club was founded in 1887 and is a fully constituted voluntary sports group. It is a full member of the SRU and plays in East League 1. The Club runs mini sections for 8 to 12 years and runs S1, S2, S3 and under 16s teams from both Eyemouth and Berwickshire High Schools. It employs a Development Officer who works in the Primary and Secondary School in the Berwickshire area. The Club has a 40 year lease from SBC and have extensively redeveloped the playing fields.
- (b) This project will result in all aspects of the Duns Rugby Football Club being pulled together, on one site, for the first time in its history. The project will redevelop the old High School gymnasium block which the Club now owns following transfer from SBC. The project will create two large changing rooms with showers, match official changing room (with separate shower and WC), a dedicated medical room, new entrance with disabled access, new toilet facilities (ladies, gents and disabled), kitchen and dining area, education and learning suite, function room to hold 200 people.
- (c) The project links in very well with the overall conversion of the former Berwickshire High School site and contributes to securing the future of this category B listed structure. A grant will allow the construction work to be completed before the primary school relocation to the site.
- (d) The total project cost is £264,087. Match funding will come from own funds (£72k secured), In-kind (£39K secured), sportscotland (£58k secured), SRU (£53K secured), Rank Foundation (£4k secured). The project has already started but has a shortfall of £38,087. £25,536 is requested from the UKLCF and the remaining shortfall will be covered by the project contingency. BCCF Environmental and ENTRUST fees have been paid as part of the original award to the Earlston Community Development Trust project. The project contributes to Corporate Priorities 2, 4, 5, 7 and 8.

## 5 IMPLICATIONS

### 5.1 Financial

- (a) Funds of £25,536 have been identified following the grant termination of the BCCF Environmental – Earlston Community Development Trust project.
- (b) No balance will remain in the UKLCF.

## 5.2 Risk and Mitigations

- (a) The Club was advised by its main funder to start the project despite the full funding package not being in place. There is a risk that if Executive does not approve the recommendation of this report that the Duns Rugby Club project will not be completed or the Club will end up in financial difficulty.
- (b) There is a funding shortfall of £38,087. The recommendation of this report will mitigate the risk by approving the award of the full UKLCF balance of £25,536 with the remaining shortfall being covered by part of the project contingency.

## 5.3 Equalities

There are no apparent equality impacts on the Council. The UKLCF is operated by Customs and Excise and regulated by ENTRUST. The applicant, BCCF Environmental, is responsible for ensuring that funded projects are fully compliant with Landfill Tax Regulations, including equality of access. SBC holds BCCF Environmental Equal Opportunities Policy.

## 5.4 Acting Sustainably

The project impacts positively on the built heritage or local environment by enabling the reuse of key community building.

## 5.5 Carbon Management

The project will make use of renewable energy and its insulation will be improved. The reuse of the building will prevent any potential of demolition and possible increase in landfill tonnage.

## 5.6 Rural Proofing

N/A.

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

There are no changes to be made to either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the proposals contained in this report.

## 6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Service Director Regulatory Services as 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 have been incorporated into the final report.

### Approved by

**Tracey Logan**  
**Chief Executive**

**Signature .....**

### Author(s)

| Name           | Designation and Contact Number           |
|----------------|--|
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### Background Papers:

**Previous Minute Reference:** Executive minute 10th March 2015

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

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