

# Public Document Pack



## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TUESDAY, 10TH MAY, 2016

A MEETING of the EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE will be held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS, NEWTOWN ST BOSWELLS, TD6 0SA on TUESDAY, 10 MAY 2016 at 10.00 am

J. J. WILKINSON,  
Clerk to the Council,

3 May 2016

<b>BUSINESS</b>		
1.	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>	
2.	<b>Order of Business</b>	
3.	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
	<b>Economic Development Business</b>	
4.	<b>Economic Development Update</b> (Pages 1 - 4)  Presentation on recent Economic Development progress by the Chief Officer Economic Development. (Briefing note attached.)	20 mins
5.	<b>Business Gateway Annual Report and Business Plan 2016 -17</b> (Pages 5 - 22)  Consider report by Corporate Transformation and Services Director. (Copy attached.)	15 mins
6.	<b>South of Scotland Competitiveness Strategy 2016 - 2023</b> (Pages 23 - 38)  Consider report by Corporate Transformation and Services Director. (Copy attached.)	15 mins
7.	<b>Any Other Economic Development Items Previously Circulated</b>	
8.	<b>Any Other Economic Development Items which the Chairman Decides are Urgent</b>	
	<b>Economic Development theme additional membership of Committee:- Mr J Clark, Mr G Henderson</b>	
	<b>OTHER BUSINESS</b>	

9.	<b>Minute.</b> (Pages 39 - 42)  Consider Minute of Meeting held on 19 April 2016. (Copy attached.)	2 mins
10.	<b>Strategic Housing Investment Plan Progress for 2015-2016</b> (Pages 43 - 58)  Consider report by Service Director Regulatory Services. (Copy attached.)	10 mins
11.	<b>Local Access and Transport Strategy - Consultation Responses</b> (Pages 59 - 80)  Consider report by Service Director Regulatory Services. (Copy attached.)	15 mins
12.	<b>Any Other Items Previously Circulated</b>	
13.	<b>Any Other Items which the Chairman Decides are Urgent</b>	
14.	<b>PRIVATE BUSINESS</b>  Before proceeding with the private business, the following motion should be approved:- “That under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the aforementioned Act.”	
15.	<b>Minute</b> (Pages 81 - 82)  Consider Private Minute of 19 April 2016. (Copy attached.)	2 mins

#### 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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## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 10 MAY 2016

### Economic Development Update

#### 1. Business:

- For the 3-month period from 1 January 2016 to 31 March 2016 the Business Gateway team assisted **77 business start-ups**, of which 9 have the potential to be high growth. The advisers have delivered 23 start-up workshops and 26 Growth workshops with 273 attendees.
- During the period **four Start-up workshops** were held in Peebles, Hawick and Kelso with a total 80 attendees.
- Business Gateway worked with Lyber 2016 Ltd to assist with the part purchase of **Hawick Knitwear**. This has secured temporary premises and new jobs for around 40 employees from the failed company. Business Gateway was involved in formulating the initial Hawick Action Plan, developed in response to the Hawick Knitwear redundancies.
- Business Gateway Advisers have continued to work with businesses in Hawick and Jedburgh that have been **affected by the flooding**, working with colleagues across the Council to ensure they obtain grant funding and return to normal operations as soon as possible.
- In 2015-16, the **Scottish Borders Business Fund** received 43 applications and approved 37 grants valued at £107,960.65 supporting projects with a value of £243,947.02. These projects are forecast **to create 43 jobs and safeguard 57.5 jobs** with a forecast **economic impact of £953,745 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 Loan Fund received 11 applications and approved 7 loans valued at £129,504. These loans are forecast **to create 12.5 jobs and safeguard 29 jobs** with a forecast **economic impact of £393,420 GVA**.
- **Property** – 185 property enquiries were received in 2015/16 which resulted in 35 new property leases which in turn will generate £165k in annual rental income. The current occupancy level is **93%** for the portfolio of industrial units, yards, offices and shops. Three offices of four have been let at the Horsemarket Business Hub, Kelso, and four offices have now been let at Waverley Chambers, Galashiels Transport Interchange.
- **Scotland's Employer Recruitment Incentive - SERI Scheme** – The Scottish Government has confirmed funding for the SERI Scheme in 2016/17. The Scheme was relaunched on 1 April and is targeted at those furthest from the workplace. Eight additional places are available for the Scottish Borders and Barnardo's Works has been contracted to deliver this support.

## 2. Regeneration:

- **Galashiels Town Centre**
  - The **Borders Railway Ambassadors Pilot** has been extended into the 2016 season. A weekend service will be provided in April, Fridays will be added for May and June, whilst Thursdays will also be covered in July and August. The service then tapers off into the autumn and finishes at the end of October.
  - Pedestrian **signage** proposals were taken to the Galashiels Road User Consultation Group with installation now expected mid-May 2016.
  - **Research** into the retail, leisure and office property sectors is underway and will involve approaching operators that are considered inward investment prospects for Galashiels.
  - **Events** - support is being given to the National Archaeology conference in Galashiels on 28 May 2016 and the forthcoming visit of the Flying Scotsman.
  - **Marketing** – support is being given to Energise Galashiels to refine the marketing offer of the town, particularly online. The shoppers map is close to completion following a slight delay. The Council has provided a grant to the Chamber of Trade to support this project.
  - **Footfall** – a footfall counter has been installed on Douglas Bridge to help record pedestrian movements and understand them over time.
  - Town Centre **Vacancies** – monitoring at the quarter end shows a decline in vacancies from 40 in Sep 2015 to 34 in March 2016. Looking solely at Channel Street and Douglas Bridge, the figure has dropped from 16 to 13 vacant units.
  
- **Selkirk Business Improvement District (BIDS)** – The Steering Group has appointed a new Project Manager, who is currently progressing the business plan development and consultation processes. A revised timescales for the BIDS ballot process has been identified, with the ballots now scheduled for November 2016.
  
- **Selkirk Town Centre Streetscape Project** – Led by Council Engineers, an initial consultation group has been established to represent various groups, businesses and stakeholders in the town. The group will agree key objectives for the scheme and progress with design options for a revised town centre streetscape.
  
- **Selkirk CARS Project**
  - Over 70 enquiries have been received seeking information on Selkirk CARS funded grant repairs.
  - 44 grant offers have been issued for repairs to traditional buildings (Priority Buildings and General Repairs) totalling £307,560, supporting 28 properties.
  - An additional £70,000 of funding has been secured from Historic Environment Scotland to support traditional building repairs projects.
  - The design team has been appointed for the phase 1 repairs to the Sir Walter Scott's Courthouse. Estimated site start Sept 2016.
  - 75 Educational events have been organised by Selkirk CARS with over 2,100 people attending.
  - Partnership working and cross funding has been achieved with SBC Archaeologist for a ground penetrating radar survey of Auld Kirk.
  - Support for the development of projects for the national 'Year of Innovation Architecture & Design' and Festival of Architecture 2016 is being provided, with an event being run at The Haining later in the year.

### **3. Tourism & Events**

#### **• Tourism support –**

- Tourism Officers and Business Gateway Officers from Midlothian and Scottish Borders Councils attended EXPO in April 2016 for appointments with 42 International Tour Operators from countries interested in hosting tours in the Scottish Borders. There were enquiries from the US, Canada, India, China, Russia and the Emirates. Officers also met with UK operators who had already created Borders Railway itineraries which were scheduled to be on sale from September 2016 for Summer 2017.
- Timetabling of the Steam train service in August and September 2016 is being finalised by ScotRail. Businesses have been informed of the approximate timings of the trains to develop products and packages for passengers during visits. This information has been promoted via the Area Tourism Partnership, Chamber of Commerce and 'Our Borderland' group. Business engagement has begun in Melrose, Galashiels and Kelso for the arrival of the Flying Scotsman on Sunday 15 May 2016.
- The new walking site [www.walkscottishborders.com](http://www.walkscottishborders.com) is now live. This is the sister site to [www.cyclescottishborders.com](http://www.cyclescottishborders.com) which has been running since 2012. Both sites are now 'mobile friendly' and are available for use by businesses wishing to link to the cycle and walk network or by visitors requiring access to route information and visitor information on tablets and mobile phones.
- A partnership of Midlothian and Scottish Borders tourism groups has applied to the Scottish Enterprise Tourism Innovation Fund to develop a collaborative project around the Railway. The expression of interest was submitted on 15 April and a decision will be made in May 2016. The project will be led by the Midlothian Tourism Partnership with the Scottish Borders Area Tourism Partnership in the chair.

#### **• Event support –**

- A Scottish Borders Tourism Cycling Strategy is being developed by Council officers and this will be consulted on with a wide range of stakeholders within the cycling and tourism sector. The strategy will aim to review activity and look at opportunities using cycling tourism and events as a means to increase economic benefit to the Scottish Borders. It will provide an action plan to ensure the area maintains its position as a key cycling destination for both 'on' and 'off' road.
- Existing events which have been supported;
  - Border Counties Rally - the group is developing crowd spectator areas and will approach EventScotland for event funding in 2017.
  - Melrose Rugby Sevens was supported for marketing activities promoting train travel to this year's event, capturing the Edinburgh market.
  - Riverside Rock Festival, Jedburgh - to increase crowd numbers and support them in a bid to EventScotland for additional marketing funding.

- Hillside Outside run a number of cycling events which are growing year on year, currently they are receiving support for Tweedlove and Tour 'o the Borders
- Development support for new events is being provided, including Race the Train, a new event for 2017. Two new events for 2016 – 'Fonduro' & 'Grinduro' - will compliment Hillside Outside's current events calendar in the Tweeddale area.
- Event management at Tweedbank to compliment the Flying Scotsman Train visit and support for associated events taking place in Galashiels on the day.
- The Safety Advisory Group (SAG) is currently supporting 49 individual events in the Scottish Borders.

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

- The **LEADER Programme** is now open, with application deadlines set for 31 May and 31 August 2016. The Programme Coordinator and Facilitator are continuing to work with a range of potential applicants.
- The new **Forth Fisheries Local Action Group**, covering the Scottish Borders, East Lothian and Fife, has received a funding allocation of just over £1m for the period 2014 – 2020. The new Action Group will make recommendations on European Maritime Fisheries Fund (EMFF) local development applications. Scottish Borders Council is the lead partner for the three areas and has employed an EMFF Programme Coordinator, based in Eyemouth, to support the development of projects, and applications to the fund, from groups and businesses across the whole FLAG area.

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

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## **BUSINESS GATEWAY ANNUAL REPORT AND BUSINESS PLAN 2016-17**

**Report by Corporate Transformation & Services Director**

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### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**10 MAY 2016**

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

- 1.1 **This report summarises the Business Gateway service's performance in 2015/16 and seeks approval of the Business Plan for the delivery of Business Gateway services in the Scottish Borders to 31 March 2017.**
- 1.2 2015/16 saw the majority of national targets being achieved by the Business Gateway team with a particularly good performance with business starts. Over 1500 business people attended Business Gateway events, an increase of 150% on the figure for 2014/15. In addition, Business Gateway advisers were heavily involved in other local actions, most notably the launch of the Borders Railway and the recent flood events.
- 1.3 The Business Plan for 2016/17 fully uses the new European Regional Development Fund confirmed on 31 March 2016. The plan shows a boost to the start-up team as well as a new geographical focus for the Growth Advisers, using the Council's 'Localities' Map. There will be an increase in the number of events delivered across the whole area. Emphasis will be applied in the areas of Exporting and Innovation for local businesses.
- 1.4 In the next 12 months Business Gateway will continue to deliver against the National Service Specification and will aim to achieve the outcomes set out in the new ERDF operation plan. Using EU Funds, the Business Plan will enhance service delivery at the local level by aligning to the priorities in the Local Outcome Improvement Plans (LOIP) and the Scottish Borders Economic Strategy 2023.

#### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **I recommend that the Executive Committee:**
  - (a) **Acknowledges the strong performance and positive impact of the service in 2015-2016;**
  - (b) **Approves the 2016-2017 Business Plan for Business Gateway in line with the national service specification, including the proposed reporting indicators in Table 2; and**
  - (c) **Agrees that an annual review meeting is organised in November 2016 with a range of Business Gateway customers to allow elected members to directly receive feedback on service delivery and areas for further improvement.**

### **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Business Gateway offers information, advice and guidance to people who are considering starting a business or growing their existing business. It is a national service with built-in local flexibilities. It is supported by the national Business Gateway Enquiry Service, the Business Gateway website (bgateway.com) and the national Business Gateway Unit located in COSLA.
- 3.2 The Business Gateway service is managed by lead local authorities and offers a 'one-stop shop' for business support enquiries as well as providing direct support and a conduit to other business support services provided by the Council and its partners, such as Scottish Enterprise and Skills Development Scotland.
- 3.3 The service specification for the 2012-17 Business Gateway service was developed nationally and was approved by the Business Gateway Scotland Board on 21 November 2011. An obligation to deliver to a consistent standard and report in a consistent way is required of all lead local authorities with responsibility for Business Gateway in their area.
- 3.4 The Business Gateway service in the Scottish Borders operates from the Ettrick Riverside Business Centre in Selkirk. The team of 10 consists of 7 full time and 3 part time staff, including the Business Gateway Manager.
- 3.5 The Business Plan for the period up to 2017 is updated on an annual basis. The latest Business Plan is set out in Appendix 1.

### **4 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

- 4.1 The performance against key indicators and targets for 2015/16 is noted in Table 1 below. The targets for 2016/17 are set out later in this report.



**Table 1. Business Gateway Performance figures 2015/16**

<b>Service Output Targets</b>			
	<b>Target 2015/16</b>	<b>Actual 2015/16</b>	<b>%age</b>
<b>Start-up Advisory Service</b>			
Total number of start-up customers who have begun trading	220	219	99%
Number of higher value start-up customers with agreed actions identified in Action Plan for Growth	25	26	104%
Number of higher value start-up customers with completed Action Plans for Growth	10	15	150%
Number of start-up workshops/seminars held	72	74	103%
Number of customers attending start-up workshops/seminars	360	461	128%
<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	14	70%
Number of growth customers accepted into growth pipeline relationship with SE	10	6	60%
Number of growth customers accepted into account management relationship with SE	2	2	100%
Number of growing business workshops/seminars held	25	62	248%
Number of clients attending growing business workshops/seminars	125	350	280%
<b>BG Local Services</b>			
Number of customers accessing local advisory services	400	646	161%
Number of growth customers accepted into Local Growth Advisory Service	45	31	69%
Number of customers accessing local expert help services	7	3	43%
Number of workshops/seminars held	50	37	74%
Number of customers attending workshops/seminars	250	701	280%

4.2 The key points to note in respect of the performance indicators in the table above are as follows:

- (a) Business Gateway continued to be ambitious with its Growth targets for 2015/16 and has met most of these targets. An excellent turnout was achieved at events with an excess of 1500 attendees. The increased focus on higher growth starts produced an excellent result against target. Start-up figures, although just short of target, are significantly better than expected nationally.
- (b) The three Growth targets that were not achieved could be attributed to the delay in European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funding coming on stream; but it is also considered an indication that the number of local businesses which meet the national criteria for growth is fewer than anticipated. The structure planned for 2016/17 will help to investigate this further and will hopefully lead to greater success in 2016/17 and future years.

- (c) The Expert Help figures reflect the fact that this was an ERDF funded project which needed to be completed by 30 September 2015. In practice this meant there was only three months of funding for the year, reflected in the part-year target and result in Table 1.
  - (d) The workshops delivered can be broken down into those aimed at Start-ups and those aimed at Growth Businesses. When the targets were set last year the need to outsource the delivery of the IT workshops was expected. However, a maternity cover business adviser was able to deliver internal workshops. A more accurate reflection of achievement for workshops/seminars is to combine the Growth section and local section figures in Table 1. These measures have been simplified in the targets for 2016/17.
  - (e) The series of five Masterclasses, delivered with ERDF money, were very successful with almost 400 attendees.
  - (f) Business Month was run during October and early November 2015, ending with the Borders Business Excellence Awards. The decision to run this over a month rather than a week was to allow more time for people to attend more events. This was not as effective as expected leading to a number of events being cancelled due to lack of bookings. This year it is intended to revert back to a Business Week. This will start on 31 October 2016 and again will finish with the Business Awards at the end of that week.
- 4.3 There were a number of operational challenges that affected Business Gateway in the previous 12 months. Most notably the introduction of a new nationally procured and implemented Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System. This new system has taken time to become fully operational nationally. Also, the expected ERDF funding approval was delayed at a national level. This led to a break in funding from 30 September 2015 until 1 April 2016. Although Scottish Government permitted the retention of the advisers, the funding position prevented the team from doing any proactive work which is a critical part of the identification of new Growth businesses.
- 4.4 Business start-up numbers and local advisory services are higher than expected. The low rate of unemployment that is currently occurring has caused a downturn in the number of people seeking to start up a business. There is an expected downturn of 20% in start-up numbers across Scotland, but the Scottish Borders has been able to buck this trend locally, almost achieving the annual target.
- 4.5 Survival Monitoring continues to be strong for the Scottish Borders when compared to the rest of the country. Figures show survival rates of 89% for 12 months of trading and 86% for 36 months compared to 77% and 66% respectively for national figures.

## **5 BUSINESS PLAN 2016/17**

- 5.1 The revised Business Plan sets out the opportunities to further develop the Council's in-house Business Gateway service delivery model. This delivers against the detailed national service specification and also provides a range of local services for the period to 31 March 2017.
- 5.2 The Business Gateway service follows a national specification. The Business Plan is set out in Appendix 1. It considers two main categories of business customers: Start-up and Growth (which incorporates all existing businesses).

- 5.3 In addition to providing these services, the Business Gateway service also supports: delivery of local marketing activities; participation in local and national promotional and networking events; and advisory input to future online and other services.
- 5.4 In 2016/17 the Start-up 'team' will be increased in size to have two advisers working on this element. The additional resource will focus on the Potential High Value and High Value Start clients, i.e. those with highest growth potential. Strengthening this service will enable easier identification of new start businesses, a more supportive role with these new businesses and more focussed support on those exhibiting early signs of growth. It will also enable more business development to take place and greater collaboration with further education establishments and careers fairs aimed at school leavers. This will help reinforce the link with the Developing the Young Workforce activities of the Council, Borders College and other partners.
- 5.5 The "Growth" team of five advisers have each been allocated an area of the Scottish Borders, aligning directly with the Council's "localities" approach. Their role will be to get to know the businesses and business people in their area, identify those businesses that do not currently work with Business Gateway and ensure greater profile for the service. They will be the main point of contact for all existing businesses in the area and will pass on information relating to start-ups to the "Start-up" team.
- 5.6 The Service will continue to provide workshops and events on issues that are essential to local businesses. The range and subjects of workshops will increase, to help stimulate new enquiries from businesses. Business Gateway will partner with other organisations to deliver workshops; for example with the Export Association to deliver a range of workshops to encourage Internationalisation in local businesses. With the funding provided by ERDF a series of Masterclasses will be run aimed at larger audiences and bringing in high profile speakers to deliver high quality seminars. This was a very successful part of 2015/16 delivery.
- 5.7 The Business Gateway service fits within a wider range of business support services delivered by the Council. This includes provision of access to finance (loans and grants), economic intelligence, business property, industrial developments, and inward investment activities. The team will work closely with colleagues throughout the Council and help to deliver business services as part of the Economic Development team. This will involve them in continued work on the Borders Railway Blueprint projects and other projects such as the new Hawick Action Plan.
- 5.8 Advisers will retain a specialism in certain key business subjects and sectors. This specialism will be called upon on a team basis as required by their colleagues. The Service will also continue with the implementation of the national Digital Boost Programme which aims to deliver Information and Communications Technology (ICT) advice to businesses across the country. This is a Scottish Enterprise funded project being delivered by COSLA. The Council is acting as a key partner by hosting the staff recruited.
- 5.9 Through the ERDF funded project Internationalisation and Innovation have been highlighted as two of the main business processes that will be improved in the Borders. Operationally this means allocating a part-time member of staff to look at these areas and consider how these can be further developed. The team will also look at opportunities for innovation centres and proactively encourage businesses to investigate exporting for the first time.

5.10 The team were very successful in improving Business Gateway's exposure in the local press last year and will continue to build on that effort in the coming year. A monthly page in the Border Telegraph has been secured, providing business advice. Regular press releases continue to be issued and an internal target has been set to identify business case studies that can be used to promote Business Gateway services. The ERDF funding provided the opportunity to take radio advertising and a number of other adverts in local publications and opportunities to repeat this will be considered. The team will continue to work with partner organisations and also increase its work with intermediaries who can introduce advisers to new clients.

5.11 The service will continue its proactive approach to stimulating business and enterprise in the most disadvantaged communities, working in particular areas including Burnfoot in Hawick and Langlee in Galashiels, and with minority groups. This will contribute to the delivery of the Single Outcome Agreement priority to reduce inequalities in the Scottish Borders.

5.13 **Service Output Targets**

In a bid to rationalise the reporting of Business Gateway activity in the Scottish Borders it is proposed to report on the following activity in future:

**Table 2. Business Gateway Performance Targets for 2016 – 17**

<b>Service Output Targets</b>		
<b>Start-up Service</b>	<b>Target 2016/17</b>	<b>Actual 2016/17</b>
Total number of start-up customers who have begun trading	<b>220</b>	
Potential High Value Start-ups (PHVSU). Businesses expected to start turning over in excess of £70k in the first year or employ at least 1 person	<b>25</b>	
High Value Start-ups (HVSU). Businesses that actually turning over in excess of £70k in the first year or have employed someone	<b>20</b>	
Number of start-up workshops/seminars held	<b>72</b>	
Number of clients attending start-up workshops/seminars	<b>432</b>	
<b>Growth Services</b>		
Local Growth Advisory Service (LGAS) businesses expected to increase annual turnover by £100k on 3 years	<b>30</b>	
Growth Advisory Service (GAS) businesses expected to increase annual turnover by £200k in 3 years	<b>15</b>	
Growth Pipeline (GP) businesses expected to increase turnover by £400k in 3 years, approved by Scottish Enterprise	<b>6</b>	
Account Managed (AM) Businesses who meet SE criteria for acceptance on to national account management structure	<b>2</b>	
Number of workshops aimed at Growing Businesses	<b>60</b>	
Number of clients attending growing business workshops/seminars	<b>360</b>	
<b>ERDF Targets</b>		
Number of Masterclasses held	<b>10</b>	
Number of Scottish Borders Business Fund grants issued	<b>20</b>	
Increase in Employees in assisted companies	<b>40</b>	
Number of businesses assisted to export for the first time	<b>15</b>	

5.14 The revised indicators in the above table simplify the measurement of delivery of the service to start-up and growth. The national targets are the same as previous years. The ERDF figures reflect those additional targets which relate to the EU ERDF funded activity alone.

## **6 PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

6.1 In order to continue to build on the performance of the service, a series of actions will be implemented during 2016/17 as part of a performance improvement plan. These include:

- (a) Increased resource to look at start-ups and early stage growth businesses.

- (b) Allocation of a 'locality' to each of the five growth advisers facilitating achievement of growth targets and providing a better resource for businesses across the Scottish Borders.
  - (c) Development and delivery of a new series of Masterclasses and Networking events across the area.
  - (d) Research into alternative use of buildings across the area for potential business incubation and innovation centres.
  - (e) Proactively encourage local businesses to export for the first time and to seek out new markets.
  - (f) Continuing to promote the benefits of the digital economy to businesses in the Scottish Borders through use of the National Digital Boost Programme.
  - (g) Continue to deliver workshops across the Borders including areas of greater deprivation.
  - (h) Continue to work with national agencies (COSLA and SE) to ensure the improvement and suitability of the new CRM system.
- 6.2 The Committee will receive regular updates on the performance of the Business Gateway service as well as an annual review and presentation of a new business plan each year.

## **7 IMPLICATIONS**

### **7.1 Financial**

- (a) Scottish Borders Council receives funding to deliver Business Gateway in the Scottish Borders from the Scottish Government. The additional services are funded through EU funding, matched to the funding from the Scottish Government.
- (b) The in-house delivery costs of Business Gateway (£314,237 for 2016/17) are based on the budget available within the Council's five year Financial Plan agreed by Council.

### **7.2 Risk and Mitigations**

- (a) As part of the ongoing management of the Business Gateway, a risk workshop was held in February 2016 with support from the Council's Corporate Risk Team. The Risk Register is reviewed quarterly and actions undertaken as appropriate.
- (b) The main risks identified in the risk register relate to accessing the right type and number of businesses across the area and potential changes to future EU funding. The Business Plan has been written to address these risks.

### **7.3 Equalities**

An equality impact assessment (EIA) was written in April 2015 with input from the Corporate Equality & Diversity Officer. A key aspect of the Economic Development Team's work is to reduce barriers to economic inequality and information on service delivery to equalities groups is monitored. Positive action will be taken by Business Gateway during 2016/17.

### **7.4 Acting Sustainably**

The Business Plan for the Business Gateway service contains a number of targeted outputs and outcomes that will deliver economic benefit. These relate to the number of businesses assisted, start-up and growth service priorities as defined by the Council. The service aims to help businesses

and the economy become more diverse and sustainable in the long term.

#### 7.5 **Carbon Management**

By bringing the Business Gateway service in-house and using office space at Ettrick Riverside, Selkirk, there is no net increase at a Scottish Borders level as this is the continuation of an existing service delivery.

#### 7.6 **Rural Proofing**

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

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

No changes to the Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation are required as a result of this report.

### **8 CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, 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 report.

#### **Approved by**

**Corporate Transformation  
& Services Director**

**Signature .....**

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

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Bryan McGrath	Chief Officer Economic Development, Chief Executives, 01835 826525
Phil McCreadie	Principal Officer – Business (Acting), Chief Executives, 01835 825605

**Background Papers:** None

**Previous Minute Reference:** Executive Committee 3 November 2015

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

Contact us at Phil McCreadie, Economic Development, Scottish Borders Council, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA, Tel 01835 825605, email [eitranslationrequest@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:eitranslationrequest@scotborders.gov.uk).

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# **Business Gateway Business Plan**

**April 2016**

## **Purpose of Plan**

This plan is to provide information on the activity planned for Business Gateway Scottish Borders for the year 2016/17. It will be used by the Council, Senior Management team and Business Gateway team to summarise the actions for the year and to provide information to enable monitoring of performance as the year progresses.

## **1. Background**

**1.1** The business plan is for the year 1/4/16 to 31/3/17. The actions fit within the 5 year business plan previously written taking the service up to September 2017. Activity under Business Gateway follows a National Service Specification and locally fits with the Scottish Borders Economic Strategy 2023.

**1.2** Business Gateway (BG) operates from offices at Ettrick Riverside in Selkirk and covers the whole of the Scottish Borders from these offices. The BG team comprise of 1 administrator, 2 start-up advisers (1 full time and 1 part time), 5 growth advisers (4 full time and 1 part time) and a project officer. In addition in the Business Gateway office space is given to the Princes Trust Regional Manager and also a Railway Tourism Business Adviser, contracted under a Borders Railway Blueprint project. The Business Gateway has a manager who is currently acting up into the role of Principal Officer, Business.

**1.3** Within the team there are a number of specialists in the areas of: Tourism, Food and Drink, Renewable Energy, ICT, Social Enterprise and Finance.

**1.4** The BG team are integrating with Economic Development and act as the front face of this team for businesses. Recently this has involved the advisers in providing support to the businesses affected by flooding in Hawick and Jedburgh.

**1.5** Delivery of BG services follows a National Specification with allowances for a local influence. The national specification demands provision of a Start-Up service and a Growth service. Details of how these will be delivered are below.

**1.6** In addition to the core funding provided by Scottish Borders Council the BG service has secured European Regional Development Funding for the period of 1 October 2015 (backdated from 30 March 2016) until 30 March 2019. Details of the targets and activity are also contained in this plan.

## **2. Start-up Team**

**2.1** In recent years the BG team has run with one dedicated start-up adviser and each of the sector specialists have been tasked with finding start-ups from their own sector as well. This has not proved to be effective with a number of new businesses being missed and not effectively reported.

**2.2** In order to counter this and create early identification of higher growth starts this year will see additional resource put into this area. Wilma Norris will join Lyn Galloway on return from maternity leave in May. This will provide an additional 4 days of focussed start-up support aimed at those businesses that fall into the Potential High Value start and High Value Start segments.

**2.3** The start-up team will not have any area boundaries and will cover the whole of the Scottish Borders. They will work with all start-up businesses, being passed referrals from other members of the BG team. This additional resource will also allow us to meet with all start-up businesses and provide them with some extra support. This will enable the identification of higher growth starts.

**2.4** Workshops will continue at the same rate as before i.e. an average of 6 workshops per calendar month. This will be mixed with workshops in the Selkirk office and those taken out across the Borders.

### **3. Growth Team**

**3.1** Nationally the majority of resources go into the Growth targets and support for growing businesses. This is also reflected locally with 5 people being appointed as Growth Advisers. This year the advisers will be allocated one of the Locality areas designated by the Council. The aim of this approach is to identify more businesses that we have not had contact with before and ensure that the BG service is spread across the Scottish Borders. Each of the advisers will be responsible for all activity in their area and they will have a number of tasks to carry out including:

- Identify and introduce themselves to all local intermediaries and potential referrers of business
- Identifying new businesses and passing them to the start-up team to progress
- Identify businesses that have not had a relationship with BG before, or have not been in touch for a while, meet with these businesses and fit them into our segmentation model highlighting opportunities for support
- Highlight problems for businesses in their area and find solutions to these problems
- Network with businesses and other professionals ensuring promotion of the BG brand and themselves as the point of contact
- Find venues for Masterclasses and other workshops and ensure suitability with their client base
- Share intelligence and best practice with other Growth Advisers at a new weekly meeting
- Ensure Growth targets are met
- Work with other members of localities team to help deliver a highly valued public service in their area.

### **4. Workshop Delivery**

**4.1** BG Scottish Borders has an excellent reputation for delivering high quality workshops and seminars. Last year over 1500 people attended our range of seminars. This year this range will be increased and with the help of ERDF funding we will put on more Masterclasses.

**4.2** Seminars are seen as an excellent entry to the services offered by BG. Our 4 start up workshops are delivered each month and bring in a high number of new start and potential start-up businesses. Our range of seminars aimed at Growth businesses will increase this year. We will repeat our successful Tax workshops started last year, we will deliver the range of National Digital Boost seminars regularly and make use of the national funding for this. We have agreed to partner with the Exporters Association to deliver seminars aimed at new and existing exporters and we will look for similar partnerships with other business organisations, again to increase our business reach. The range will be further bolstered by national activity currently looking at new subject areas.

**4.3** Our series of seminars will continue to be run across the Borders including areas with highest deprivation. We will make use of venues in each of the localities to ensure a wide reach and to help us identify a new client base. We will also look for new opportunities to run networking events in these areas to encourage closer working between businesses.

## **5. European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)**

**5.1** We have secured an ERDF grant of £564k using identified match funding of £820k. This grant covers the period to March 2019. This has enabled us to support 2 full time and one part time adviser. The 2 full time advisers are part of the Growth team and this resource allows us to provide focus across the whole of the Borders. The part time adviser will be used for projects relating to Internationalisation and Innovation.

**5.2** Internationalisation will see closer links formed with the Exporters Association and a number of joint seminars. A target of new Exporters has been set and we will aim to encourage businesses to look at exporting for the first time or to research new countries to sell their products to. We will research the barriers to exporting from local businesses and implement projects to overcome these.

**5.3** For Innovation we will work with Scottish Enterprise to deliver their products to businesses relating to Innovation. We will research opportunities for Business Innovation Centres in the Scottish Borders and aim to have a business base that is encouraged to improve business processes and products.

**5.4** We will deliver a range of Masterclasses across the area aiming for 10 per year. These will be on business topics most relevant to our customer base. These sessions will include a high profile speaker and will be followed by a networking session at the end. These sessions were well attended last year and led to some new clients being identified by the advisers.

**5.5** The Expert Help scheme has been started again. This allows businesses to access funding for consultancy projects in their business. This will be available for growth businesses and accessed via their adviser. A framework has been used to find a number of consultants that can advise across six Lots – Business Strategy, Investor Readiness, Marketing and Brand Development, HR, ICT and Innovation Support. The ICT support will not be used until the Digital Boost Programme finishes in March 2017. This fund will allow 100% funding up to £3k on consultancy support.

## **6. Marketing**

**6.1** In order to find new businesses to work with, Business Gateway will again look to market services in the press and also on Radio Borders. Marketing is funded centrally as part of the National budget managed by COSLA but the ERDF funding gives us the opportunity to expand on this.

**6.2** Client case studies are gathered and these are used to promote the service in the press. We will consider running some radio advertising that can also give some local businesses an opportunity to promote themselves.

**6.3** ERDF funding paid for design, printing and delivery of an information leaflet that went out with the Non-Domestic Rates invoices. We will look for other opportunities within the Council to promote our services and use our network to promote the services of other business related Teams in SBC.

**6.4** We have been asked to provide a monthly column in the Border Telegraph giving business advice and providing case studies of businesses that have used our service. This has proved successful in creating leads. Similar opportunities will be sought with other local newspapers.

6.5 Our Intermediary Visits will create new opportunities for us as we start to spread the word on how Business Gateway can help other professionals and their clients.

## 7. Targets and Outputs

7.1 The next page shows the targets that we will be aiming for over the 12 month period. These will be reported internally and nationally on a monthly basis. Those relating to ERDF will be reported on quarterly and we will feed back to Executive Committee after 6 months.

**Table 1. Business Gateway Targets 2016 - 17**

<b>Service Output Targets</b>		
<b>Start-up Service</b>	<b>Target 2016/17</b>	<b>Actual 2016/17</b>
Total number of start-up customers who have begun trading	220	
Potential High Value Start-ups (PHVSU). Businesses expected to start turning over in excess of £70k in yr. 1 or employ someone	25	
High Value Start-ups (HVSU) turning over in excess of £70k in yr. 1 or have employees	20	
Number of start-up workshops/seminars held	72	
Number of clients attending start-up workshops/seminars	432	
<b>Growth Services</b>		
Local Growth Advisory Service (LGAS) businesses expected to increase annual turnover by £100k on 3 years	30	
Growth Advisory Service (GAS) businesses expected to increase annual turnover by £200k in 3 years	15	
Growth Pipeline (GP) businesses expected to increase turnover by £400k in 3 years, approved by Scottish Enterprise	6	
Account Managed (AM) Businesses who meet SE criteria for acceptance on to national account management structure	2	
Number of workshops aimed at Growing Businesses	60	
Number of clients attending growing business workshops/seminars	360	
<b>ERDF Targets</b>		
Number of Masterclasses held	10	
Number of Scottish Borders Business Fund grants issued	20	
Increase in Employees in assisted companies	40	
Number of businesses assisted to export for the first time	15	

## 8. Business Gateway – Performance Improvement Plan – 2016/17

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<b>Improvement Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Cost/Resource</b>	<b>Expected Result</b>
1). Increase activity in the Start-up team ensuring greater focus on business starts with the greatest potential for growth	BG Manager & Start-up Advisers	April 2016	Staff Time	Better service given to all start-ups, individual businesses given adviser time not just in workshop situation. Better identification of growth potential clients, better monitoring of start-ups and achievement of target.
2). Implement 'localities' type approach to Growth service allocating a growth adviser to each area.	BG Manager and Growth Advisers.	April 2016	Staff Time	Greater visibility across the Borders, better service to existing clients, identification of new prospects, closer working with intermediaries and other Council partners, increased networking across the area and achievement of growth targets.
3). Better integration with Economic Development and other business facing Teams in the Council	BG Manager	Ongoing	Staff Time	Meetings to be held to explain more about the service, asking for representatives from each Team to present at BG meetings. Aim is to have better communication between departments and ultimately provide a better service to the business customer.
4). Increase delivery of workshops to harder to reach areas and communities in the area.	BG Manager and BG Advisers	Ongoing	Staff Time plus venue hire approx. £2k per annum	Provision of a better service from BG, carrying out our wider social responsibilities as part of SBC. Discovering new businesses and individuals that we should be working with and who will contribute to our national targets.
5). Research opportunities to increase internationalisation with local businesses. Working in partnership with Exporters Association, hold related workshops, actively seek out businesses who could export their products.	BG Manager, Project officer	From May 2016	Staff time and small budget £5k ERDF funded	Increased number of businesses looking at exporting as an option, closer working with partners, and ultimately greater number of sales from outside the Borders increases local GVA.

<b>Improvement Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Cost/Resource</b>	<b>Expected Result</b>
6). Research opportunities to provide a better service for Innovation to the businesses in the Borders, working with SE colleagues and researching premises that could be used for Business Improvement Bases.	BG Manager and project officer	May 16 – onwards	Staff Time, Budget of approx. £5k ERDF funded	More innovative businesses operating in the Borders, a better understanding by the businesses of what innovation means and why it is so important to their business. Identify future project for a Business Improvement Base.
7). Launch a new series of Masterclasses and networking events.	BG Manager and BG Administrator	May 2016	£10k budget ERDF funded	Knowledge transfer to businesses across the Borders on subjects important to their business. Better informed business owners making their chance of success greater. Networking opportunities will result in potential new collaborative working between businesses.
8). Run a 'Business Week' providing a wide range of seminars with partners.	Business Gateway team	Nov 2016	Staff time, £4k core budget	Knowledge transfer to businesses. Opportunity to promote services and skills on offer from BG. Opportunity to create closer partnerships and working relationships with other organisations.
9). Run a number of retail workshops across the Scottish Borders, in partnership with Retail Mentors and Scottish Business in the Community.	BG Manager	September 2016	£500 per workshop paid from existing budgets	Advice to small retailers on our local High Streets. Providing retailers with some extra focus and new ideas to improve their offering, improve the survival rates of retailers and make our High Streets more attractive to shoppers and tourists.

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## **SOUTH OF SCOTLAND COMPETITIVENESS STRATEGY 2016-2023**

**Report by Corporate Transformation and Services Director**

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### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**10 May 2016**

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

- 1.1 This report seeks approval for the new South of Scotland Competitiveness Strategy 2016-2023 and its associated Action Plan.**
- 1.2 The South of Scotland Alliance agreed to develop a new South of Scotland Competitiveness Strategy for the period 2016 to 2023. Work on the new Strategy has enabled the Alliance to analyse the up-to-date economic data for the region, reflect on the lessons learned from the successes and shortcomings of the last 10 years and consult with the partners and stakeholders on whom the successful delivery of any new Strategy will partly depend.
- 1.3 The finalised Strategy and its Action Plan were agreed by the Alliance on 15 April 2016 and the documents are set out in Appendix 1 and 2 of this report. Approval for the documents is now being sought from Scottish Borders and Dumfries & Galloway Councils.

#### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **I recommend that Executive Committee:**
  - (a) Approves the new South of Scotland Competitiveness Strategy 2016 -2023 and its associated Action Plan as set out in Appendix 1 and 2; and**
  - (b) Requests that the South of Scotland Alliance regularly monitors progress on delivery of the actions set out in the Action Plan (Appendix 2).**

### **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 In 2006 the South of Scotland Alliance (SoSA) adopted its first seven-year South of Scotland Competitiveness Strategy. The Alliance subsequently agreed in 2013 to extend and update the Strategy in order to reflect the progress to date and highlight remaining challenges.
- 3.2 However, the evidence base on which the core of that Strategy rests is now a decade old. It does not reflect the changing national and local policy context or the impact of a financial crisis that was unforeseen when it was first produced. SoSA has also made significant progress towards delivering the key priorities of both the original, and updated, Strategy, especially the expansion of superfast broadband access and the development of a targeted South of Scotland Rural Regional Economic Development Programme.
- 3.3 The Alliance agreed to develop a new South of Scotland Competitiveness Strategy for the period 2016 to 2023. At its meeting on 15 April 2016, the Alliance agreed the final version of the South of Scotland Competitiveness Strategy 2017-2023 and an associated Action Plan. It asked that the Strategy was also presented to Dumfries & Galloway Council and Scottish Borders Council for their approval as well. The Strategy and Action Plan are set out in Appendix 1 and 2.

### **4 WHY THE STRATEGY IS REQUIRED**

- 4.1 Work on the new Strategy has enabled the Alliance to analyse the up to date economic data for the region, reflect on the lessons learned from the successes and shortcomings of the last 10 years and consult with the partners and stakeholders on whom the successful delivery of any new Strategy will partly depend.
- 4.2 Despite the notable successes of the South of Scotland Alliance and other partner agencies, the regional economy has continued to struggle in recent years. Growth has not kept pace with the rest of the country and GVA per head actually fell between 2007 and 2013, from 72% of the national average in 2007 to only 70% in 2013. Average weekly wages have also slipped over the same period, from 89% of the national average to 87% – in monetary terms, a gap of more than £65 per worker, per week.
- 4.3 The entrepreneurial spirit of the region is reflected in high levels of self-employment where 12.6% of economically active adults work for themselves, compared to a national average of 8%. However, levels of business expenditure on research and development indicate the relative absence of cutting edge commercial innovation in the region, with spend per head almost 75% less than the national average.
- 4.4 The economy is relatively reliant on primary industry with over 7% of working adults employed in agriculture or fishing in 2013, compared to a national average of only 1.7%. Despite significant funding reductions in recent years the public sector also remains important, employing one third of working adults.
- 4.5 Many of the challenges reflected in these statistics are indicative of long-term structural weaknesses in the regional economy that will not be easy to address but on which SoSA remains determined to make progress. The new Strategy will therefore enable the Alliance to set the strategic direction for actions it will take to help improve economic competitiveness. It will be a mechanism for improving the lives of local people and ensuring that the region as a whole makes a full contribution to delivering all four core strands of Scotland's Economic Strategy – Internationalisation; Innovation; Investment; and Inclusive Growth.

- 4.6 In October 2015 the SoSA Officers' Group presented an early draft of the Strategy to a panel of local business leaders who provided valuable feedback on its scope, content, and deliverability. Further consultation was also undertaken with local FE and HE providers, as well as Skills Development Scotland, to ensure the Strategy complements and enhances their strategic goals and to generate buy-in.

## **5 STRATEGIC FOCUS**

- 5.1 The new Strategy takes account of the Scottish Government's Economic Strategy together with the Dumfries and Galloway and Scottish Borders economic strategies which are embedded within the Community Planning processes in each area. It sets the strategic direction for actions of the Alliance to help improve economic competitiveness at the South of Scotland level over the next seven years.
- 5.2 The new South of Scotland Competitiveness Strategy, set out in Appendix 1, has three key priorities. The first is "Fostering a Culture of Innovation" which aims to encourage a widespread take-up of innovative processes and approaches to improve business competitiveness but also improve organisations in the public and third sector. The second priority is "Inspiring Enterprise and Entrepreneurship" which aims to ensure more focus on enterprise in cooperation with schools, colleges, universities and business people. The final priority is "Creating Resilient, Future Proof Enabling Infrastructure". This strand focuses on digital and transport connectivity and builds on the strategic projects being delivered as part of the South of Scotland Rural Regional Economic Development Programme.
- 5.3 The Action Plan (Appendix 2) has been devised to accompany the strategy document. This is the initial Action Plan which covers the first two years of the strategy. A further two Action Plans will be produced to cover further periods of the strategy. This provides the opportunity to adapt actions and projects as the strategy develops and also to react to changing economic circumstances.
- 5.4 Work is underway to take forward the Action Plan. This includes the development of the approach to encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship, as well as progress on broadband and mobile phone issues.

## **6 IMPLICATIONS**

### **6.1 Financial**

The new Competitiveness Strategy, and associated Action Plan has been formulated to make effective use of existing partner resources. However, it will also form an important part of the lobbying toolkit that the Alliance uses in its dialogue with Scottish Government about investment and resources to support the economy of the South of Scotland. If the partners can demonstrate effective delivery of some of the projects in the Action Plan, then it will strengthen our lobbying case.

### **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 new Competitiveness Strategy mitigates that risk by demonstrating a strategic, coordinated programme to the Scottish Government and Scottish Enterprise.

### 6.3 Equalities

There are no direct equalities impacts from the new Strategy. Specific Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken as appropriate for each of the actions contained in the Action Plan.

### 6.4 Acting Sustainably

The South of Scotland Competitiveness Strategy has sustainable economic growth at its core. The strategy 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

The strategy is intended to help the rural economy in the South of Scotland be more sustainable in the long term. The actions it includes around digital connectivity, access to broadband and mobile phone coverage are particularly important for both businesses and residents in the rural parts of the Scottish Borders.

### 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 Financial Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Chief Officer HR and the Clerk to the Council are being consulted and their comments will be incorporated into the final report.

### Approved by

**Corporate Transformation  
and Services Director**

**Signature .....**

### Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Bryan McGrath	Chief Officer Economic Development, Chief Executives, Scottish Borders Council, 01835 826525
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**Background Papers:** None

**Previous Minute Reference:**

**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).



# **South of Scotland Competitiveness Strategy**

**2016-2023**

**April 2016**

## Appendix 1

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The South of Scotland Alliance (SoSA) is committed to raising the profile of the South of Scotland, and the positive contribution the region can make to Scotland's future prosperity. The Alliance is a partnership between Dumfries and Galloway Council, Scottish Borders Council, and Scottish Enterprise, and works to highlight the economic challenges facing the region as well as identifying and developing opportunities for growth.
- 1.2 SoSA adopted its first South of Scotland Competitiveness Strategy in 2006 and has made significant progress towards delivering its key priorities, particularly the expansion of superfast broadband access and the development of a targeted South of Scotland Rural Regional Economic Development Programme (RREDP).
- 1.3 However, the evidence base on which the original Strategy rests is now almost a decade old, and reflects neither the changing national and local policy context nor the impact of a financial crisis that was unforeseen when it was launched. Moreover, SoSA's growing reputation for delivering on major projects and strengthening relations between its constituent partners have heightened the Alliance's ambition and drive to bring transformational, long term change to the South of Scotland's economy.
- 1.4 For these reasons SoSA has developed this new Competitiveness Strategy, which sets the strategic direction for actions it will take over the next seven years to deliver transformational economic growth across the South of Scotland. The Strategy will enable the Alliance to build on its past successes and, working alongside partners and stakeholders, help ensure that the region makes a full contribution to realising all four core strands of Scotland's Economic Strategy - internationalisation; innovation; investment; and inclusive growth.

### 2. Why does the South of Scotland need a Competitiveness Strategy?

- 2.1 The South of Scotland has made a vital contribution to national prosperity. Its dairy, meat, and textiles industries have fed and clothed communities for generations, both at home and abroad, and continue to make an important contribution to our national economy.
- 2.2 We know however that the area could deliver so much more. The regional economy is underperforming, but the assets we have at our disposal – both in terms of people and place, and increasingly enabling infrastructure – could if fully utilised transform it into an exemplar for other rural economies across the country.
- 2.3 In developing this Competitiveness Strategy SoSA aims to support the Scottish Government's plans to deliver inclusive economic growth, enabling the South of Scotland to realise its full economic potential and empowering businesses to seize new opportunities.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A full overview of the regional economic landscape and the wider strategic context in which this Strategy sits is available at Annex 1.

## Appendix 1

### 3. Our vision

3.1 In delivering this Competitiveness Strategy, SoSA's vision is that:

***'By 2023 the South of Scotland will be a thriving rural economy, transformed by a growing core of innovative, ambitious businesses ,and sustained by a renewed culture of entrepreneurship.'***

### 4. Our priorities

4.1 SoSA is committed to realising its strategic vision by tackling the long term, structural challenges that have restricted economic growth in the South of Scotland. It has therefore agreed three highly focused priorities, each of which requires a mixture of short, medium, and long term action. These are:

- Fostering a culture of innovation;
- Inspiring enterprise and entrepreneurship; and
- Creating resilient, future-proof enabling infrastructure.

4.2 The Alliance will of course remain agile and flexible enough to respond to new opportunities, as these emerge. However, the majority of SoSA activity over the coming years will aim to deliver on these three overarching priorities, in order to deliver maximum sustainable impact.

#### ***Fostering a culture of innovation***

4.3 We know businesses that have a track record of innovation are more likely to grow and to trade internationally than those that do not. Research has also shown that almost two thirds of productivity growth over the last decade resulted from innovation, and that innovative companies grow twice as fast - in both turnover and headcount - than firms that do not innovate.

4.4 Innovation can take many forms - from cutting edge R&D to new production processes or customer engagement strategies - and there are multiple products and services on offer to companies seeking to try new things. For example, over the past two years approximately 10% of SE's account managed companies in the South of Scotland have received an innovation support grant, enabling them to explore a wide range of innovative development activity. Whilst this is a relatively high level of uptake compared to other parts of Scotland, it represents too small a range of companies - spread over too wide a geographical area - to have a pronounced impact on the regional economy, or to foster a business culture in which innovative practices and informed risk taking become the norm.

4.5 We know that businesses can be reluctant innovators for many different reasons, from high costs and skills gaps to the perceived difficulty and risk involved. SoSA will tackle these issues head on by taking action to realise the long term cultural change needed to make innovation a core activity for every ambitious South of Scotland business.

## Appendix 1

- 4.6 By working with our public and private sector partners, we will foster a culture of innovative thinking and practice across all sectors of the economy, whilst engaging particularly closely with those that have the greatest potential to deliver sustainable, high value growth. Action will focus on all parts of the innovation journey, from inspiring businesses that are not currently innovation active to delivering specialist support for established innovators with the potential to realise the most promising new ideas.

### ***Inspiring enterprise and entrepreneurship***

- 4.7 The South of Scotland is rightly proud of its industrial heritage and continues to nurture world-class companies, particularly in sectors such as textiles and food and drink. However, whilst Scotland's business base has grown by 5% since 2010, the number of firms operating from the South of Scotland has remained static.
- 4.8 We do not believe that the South of Scotland is inherently less ambitious than any other part of the country. Indeed, high levels of self employment reflect the region's strong entrepreneurial spirit. However, it is equally clear that the area needs many more successful, dynamic businesses, particularly in high value sectors, to significantly increase its GVA output and create the sustainable and well paid jobs on which long term prosperity depends.
- 4.9 We will help deliver this long term change by working with our partners in education and in the business community to inspire a new culture of entrepreneurship in the South of Scotland. We will reach out to our schools, Further Education and Higher Education providers to explore new ways of promoting and supporting a culture of enterprise amongst young people, whilst at the same time removing the barriers that can prevent nascent entrepreneurs from realising their business ambitions.
- 4.10 Equally important in the shorter term, we will take action to ensure our existing businesses have the confidence and support they need to both develop and realise ambitions for growth. Research has shown that perception - of risk, of difficulty, and of cost/benefit calculations - can have a significant impact on business ambition, as well as more objective concerns such as skills shortages.
- 4.11 We know that competent and confident leadership is essential to overcoming these barriers, and that targeted support can deliver real results. For example, 90% of participants in SE's Rural Leadership Programme considered it to have had a positive or strongly positive impact on their personal ambition and level of motivation, and 83% felt it had been effective in helping them to motivate others.
- 4.12 However, we also know that too few businesses are engaging in similar initiatives. SoSA will work with as wide a range of public and private sector partners as possible to engage the business community, promote the benefits of strong leadership, and if necessary develop new and innovative responses to business need, where this will help achieve the step change in business growth and ambition that we seek.



## Appendix 1

### *Creating resilient, future-proof infrastructure*

- 4.13 The South of Scotland's remote rural beauty is one of its greatest assets - one that can act both as a catalyst for and a barrier to economic growth. We know that continuing investment in infrastructure, both physical and virtual, is essential to the region's long term sustainability. SoSA will continue to seek new opportunities - working alongside local, regional, and national partners - to enhance the region's infrastructure, so that it meets current and future expectations both within the wider populace and most particularly amongst the business community.
- 4.14 However, it is equally important that we take action to fully exploit what we already have. The rollout of superfast broadband to at least 95% of premises by the end of 2017 creates new possibilities for business and enterprise. SoSA will champion these opportunities, whilst at the same time continuing to press for coverage to be extended to the 'excluded 5%'. We will also work with partners to ensure that the South of Scotland is well placed to trial emerging ultrafast technologies, ensuring that a new 'digital divide' does not open in future years that could again leave rural areas like the South of Scotland at a significant competitive disadvantage.
- 4.15 The full implementation of SoSA's transformational Rural Regional Economic Development Programme will also deliver significant new assets in the South of Scotland, particularly in the tourism and energy sectors. We will extract full value from the Programme over the coming years by completing delivery of all four core projects and by working with partners to ensure every opportunity is taken to develop complementary business activity.

## **5. What will success look like?**

- 5.1 This Strategy is highly ambitious - deliberately so. We know that a step change is needed in the South of Scotland economy, and that only long term, sustainable yet radical action will deliver it. In implementing our plans, by 2023 SoSA will have delivered increases in:
- The % of the business base classed as active innovators.
  - The % of businesses trading internationally.
  - The % of employers engaged in leadership and workforce development.

## **6. Measuring progress**

- 6.1 SoSA will create a series of action plans to accompany this Strategy, which will set out the specific initiatives partners will develop in the short, medium, and long term in order to achieve our aims. The Alliance will take full ownership of these plans and monitor progress closely, taking further action where needed to ensure progress is made at the pace and on the scale needed to transform the South of Scotland economy.

# Appendix 1

## Annex 1

### Economic overview and strategic context

- 1.1 The South of Scotland is one of the most remote parts of lowland Scotland. The region stretches over more than 4300 square miles, but has a population density almost two thirds lower than the national average.
- 1.2 The area is home to 13,220 businesses, but has struggled economically in recent years - growth has not kept pace with the rest of the country and GVA per head actually fell between 2007 and 2013, from 72% of the national average to only 70%. Average weekly wages also slipped over the same six-year period, from 89% of the national average to 87% - in monetary terms, a gap of more than £65 per worker, per week.
- 1.3 84.5% of South of Scotland businesses are 'micros' employing fewer than 5 people, almost 5% more than the national average, and primary industry is a dominant force. The agriculture, forestry, and fishing sector accounts for 25% of economic activity, almost three times the Scotland average. However, the sector contributes only c.6% to regional GVA, suggesting that relatively low value activity predominates. Conversely, higher value occupations including professional, scientific and technical (PST), information and communication (I&C), and finance and insurance (F&I), are under-represented. These three sectors make up only 11% of activity in the area - half the Scotland average.
- 1.4 The region is home to several innovative, industry-leading businesses, but spend per head on research and development (R&D) is almost 75% less than the national average. Moreover, whilst almost two thirds of SE account managed companies trade internationally, this regional average hides significant differences between the two local authority areas - 82% of account managed firms in Scottish Borders export directly, compared to only 44% in D&G.
- 1.5 Many of the challenges reflected in these statistics are indicative of long term, structural weaknesses in the regional economy, which multiple agencies are working to address. There are for example clear complementarities between the D&G Regional Economic Strategy (2014-2020), the Scottish Borders Economic Strategy (2013-2023), and the SE Business Plan (2015-2018). All three recognise the need to foster the right conditions for businesses to compete nationally and internationally, strengthen both public and private sector leadership, and invest in key strategic assets.
- 1.6 SoSA will exploit these synergies by focusing on a small number of priority interventions where activity at the South of Scotland level can bring genuine additionality and deliver nationally-significant outcomes. In doing so it will take into account and where appropriate work closely with wider regional partnerships that are equally committed to delivering sustainable economic growth, including the Edinburgh City Deal authorities and cross-border Borderlands Initiative.

# **SOUTH OF SCOTLAND COMPETITIVENESS STRATEGY**

**2016 – 2023**

## **ACTION PLAN 2016-2017**

**April 2016**

DRAFT

## Appendix 2

### Priority 1 – Fostering a culture of innovation

PROJECT	CORE ACTIONS	TIMESCALE	MEASUREMENT	OUTCOME
<b>1A - Unearthing Innovators</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Repurpose, reprioritise and align existing resources (BG, LA, SE, business organisations, intermediaries) to identify the 100 most promising unengaged/under engaged businesses with potential to deliver growth through innovation (inc. internationalisation)</li> <li>2. Engage intermediaries and align activity/effort to engage businesses</li> <li>3. Assess growth opportunities and associated barriers/challenges</li> <li>4. Work with partners to develop bespoke support packages</li> <li>5. Identify future pipeline (e.g. 10 new companies each year)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review existing and allocate dedicated LA, BG, SE frontline resources to task by autumn 2016</li> <li>2. Engagement strategy developed with partners (SDS, Further Education, Higher Education) by winter 2016</li> <li>3. Businesses identified and approached by end 2016</li> <li>4. Support packages delivered from early 2017.</li> </ol>	<p>Short term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of companies actively engaged</li> <li>• Number of products and services delivered to supported companies</li> </ul> <p>Medium term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth amongst supported companies – turnover and employees</li> <li>• % of supported companies trading overseas/in new international markets</li> <li>• % of supported companies taking up innovation support</li> </ul>	Stronger economy with more innovative businesses
<b>1B - Innovation for every business</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review and mapping of current innovation offer</li> <li>2. Development of major campaign to inspire wider business base to access support and become innovation active</li> <li>3. Engagement with as wide a range of organisations (particularly private sector) as possible, to help engage businesses and promote the offer</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Define and describe the offer by autumn 2016</li> <li>2. Identify and engage partners during autumn 2016</li> <li>3. Launch campaign at Economic Summit</li> </ol>	<p>Short term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased take up of innovation (inc. internationalisation) support</li> </ul> <p>Medium term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustained increase in uptake of innovation support at all stages on the innovation journey (entrant through to more specialised support)</li> <li>• Good understanding of support available and access points amongst the wider business community (survey evidence)</li> </ul>	<p>Stronger economy with more innovative businesses</p> <p>Culture of continuous improvement amongst the business community</p>

## Appendix 2

### Priority 2 – Inspiring enterprise and entrepreneurship

PROJECT	CORE ACTIONS	TIMESCALE	MEASUREMENT	OUTCOME
<b>2A - Inspiring a new generation of entrepreneurs</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage emerging Developing Scotland's Young Workforce (DSYW) groups, to understand their emerging priorities and act as a champion for entrepreneurship activity</li> <li>Work with DSYW to develop joint activity as appropriate</li> <li>Work with FE / HE to further develop student entrepreneurship programme's</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage and begin discussions with DSYW groups summer 2016</li> <li>Begin discussions with FE colleges on entrepreneurship programme in autumn 2016</li> <li>Develop a programme of new activity by spring 2017</li> <li>Launch pilot programme in autumn 2017</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be determined – dependent on outcome of DSYW discussions, and the shape of the proposed FE entrepreneurship programme</li> </ul>	<p>Greater levels of ambition and entrepreneurship instilled in the local population</p> <p>Higher retention rates of skilled young people</p>
<b>2B - South of Scotland Business Leaders Network</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify key leaders in strategically important businesses across the region</li> <li>Facilitate delivery of opportunities in D&amp;G and Scottish Borders to bring business leaders together, with input from IoD, enabling networking, discussion, collaboration and organic growth of the network</li> <li>In turn, encourage key leaders to self-support &amp; grow network themselves</li> <li>Organise and deliver an annual SoS Economic Summit, which will bring together D&amp;G and Scottish Borders business leaders</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identification of key leaders by summer 2016 (working in tandem with Unearthing Innovators)</li> <li>IoD events delivered throughout the year (guest speaker, targeted networking opportunities, chaired roundtable discussions)</li> <li>Inaugural Economic Summit in 2016</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number and scale of businesses attending Economic Summit/IoD events</li> <li>Feedback from Economic Summit/IOD event attendees (survey evidence)</li> <li>Evidence of self-inspired networking / collaborative activity aligned to Strategy objectives</li> </ul>	<p>Greater understanding between the public and private sectors</p> <p>Culture of constructive challenge and ongoing dialogue between the public and private sectors</p>

## Appendix 2

<b>2C - South of Scotland Leadership Programme</b>	1. Development and delivery of leadership support/ activity, to meet industry identified needs and complement/enhance existing offers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review of existing offers to follow developments on Innovation strands – spring 2017.</li> <li>2. Facilitate industry demand / solution articulation by autumn 2017</li> <li>3. Solution definition by winter 2017</li> <li>4. Implementation as required.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demand articulation</li> <li>• Existing offers awareness / take up</li> <li>• Activity / CPD take up (survey)</li> <li>• Leadership confidence / capability (survey)</li> </ul>	More confident business leaders aspiring to and delivering business growth (i.e. t/o growth, diversification, innovation activity, employment growth, business investment)
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## Appendix 2

### Priority 3 – Creating resilient, future-proof enabling infrastructure

PROJECT	CORE ACTIONS	TIMESCALE	MEASUREMENT	OUTCOME
<b>3A - Maximising connectivity</b>	1. Work with SG/UKG to develop and deliver firm action plans that address broadband and mobile phone 'not spots'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be agreed, informed by ongoing discussions with SG and mobile operators, and likely to include a mix of short, medium and long term</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate targets to be agreed, informed by ongoing discussions with SG and mobile operators</li> </ul>	Fully connected and digitally enabled South of Scotland economy
<b>3B – Hyperfast Broadband</b>	1. Commission a scoping study of the potential for Hyperfast broadband at key employment sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Study completed by winter 2016</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A (dependent on study findings)</li> </ul>	Understanding of the size and extent of Hyperfast broadband demand (existing and potential)
<b>3C - Continued delivery of the South of Scotland Rural Regional Economic Development Programme</b>	1. Delivery of all 4 core South of Scotland Rural Regional Economic Development Programme projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See individual project plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See individual project plans</li> </ul>	Transformational growth within key sectors of the South of Scotland economy, creating associated opportunities for the wider business base

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#### Glossary:

BG – Business Gateway

SE – Scottish Enterprise

IoD – Institute of Directors

SG/UKG – Scottish Government / UK Government

LA – Local Authority

SDS – Skills Development Scotland

CPD – Continuing Professional Development

FE / HE – Further Education / Higher Education

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**SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

MINUTE of Meeting of the EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, TD6 0SA on Tuesday, 19 April, 2016 at 10.00 am.

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- Present:- Councillors D. Parker (Chairman), S. Aitchison (during Para 2), S. Bell, C. Bhatia, J. Brown, M. J. Cook, V. Davidson, G. Edgar, J. Mitchell, D. Moffat, D. Paterson (during Para. 2), F. Renton, R. Smith.
- Also Present:- Councillors G. Garvie, I. Gillespie, A. Nicol.
- In Attendance:- Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (People), Corporate Transformation and Services Director, Service Director Regulatory Services, Service Director Assets and Infrastructure, Chief Financial Officer, Clerk to the Council, Democratic Services Officer (K. Mason).

1. **MINUTE**  
The Minute of meeting of the Executive Committee of 22 March 2016 had been circulated.

**DECISION**  
**APPROVED for signature by the Chairman.**

2. **BELLWIN 2**  
With reference to paragraph 10 of the Minute of the Executive Committee of 16 February 2016, there had been circulated copies of a report by the Depute Chief Executive – Place providing an update on the extent of damage caused by recent winter storms and the measures being taken and required to rectify this damage in a timely fashion that fitted with the Government’s Bellwin Scheme. The report was a follow-up to the report taken to Executive on 16 February following the major flooding events caused by storms Desmond, Frank and other flooding in 2015/16. The report outlined the work which had been done to date in responding to the initial aftermath of storm damage and actions taken to date and also outlined the extent of remedial work still needing to be undertaken and the measures which would be required to support completion of these works within the Bellwin timeframe. A technical opinion was given on the merits of localised river gravel removal and dredging as measures to alleviate flooding risks. It was important to note that under the Bellwin Scheme the Local Authority (LA) had to meet the first portion of costs equivalent to 0.2% of the LA’s total net revenue budget. In the case of Scottish Borders Council, this equated to £508k that would have to be met from reserves with the Bellwin Scheme picking up all eligible costs beyond this level. The main points of the report were highlighted by means of a powerpoint presentation by the Infrastructure Manager and the Project Manager Team Leader. They explained that the removal of gravel in localised areas could in some instances be used to manage flood risk but evidence indicated that localised gravel removal had very little impact on reducing flood levels. Enquiries had been received from a number of areas on the dredging of watercourses. The Council had computerised models for Hawick and previous experience to draw on in forming a view as to the likely effectiveness of water course dredging. While dredging appeared a straight forward solution to flooding, evidence indicated that it did not work on large rivers moving at pace, such as many of the Borders’ rivers and would only help if carried out on a regular basis. During a flood event when a river was fast flowing, the water would move material downstream and deposit it in any deeper dredged sections, filling the section back to its original level very quickly. An example was given of dredging which had reduced a river bed by 1m and this had only

lasted one month before returning to the original level. Removal of gravel would not reduce the flood risk to Hawick. A presentation on flooding in Hawick was due to be made at that evening's Area Forum meeting. The Chief Financial Officer highlighted the terms of the Bellwin Scheme and of the importance of making legitimate claims only for emergency works as a result of flooding/storm damage. In discussing repairs to the wall at the Hawick Post Office depot, the Project Manager Team Leader referred to the recommendation to advance £150k of capital from the Hawick Flood Protection Project from 2018/19 into 2016/17 to deal promptly with these repairs. Members were reassured by the Chief Executive that the ownership of the depot wall and any liability on adjoining owners would be checked by Legal Services. Members were supportive of actions to be taken to find the remaining £77,535.98 for priority one schemes. The Chief Financial Officer advised that officers could look at the 2018/19 flood allocation and advance funding from there if there was no consequential impact on other projects. In response to a request by Members, Officers advised that unfortunately they did not have the same level of detail/flood modelling for other towns as they did for Hawick but could make available the information they did have for other towns at the other Area Fora.

#### **DECISION**

- (a) **NOTED the**
- (i) **extent and costs of works undertaken to date in response to the three major flooding weather events;**
  - (ii) **scale and extent of works that remained to be done to re-instate a wide range of damaged Borders infrastructure;**
  - (iii) **progress made to date on remedial works under the Bellwin Scheme;**
  - (iv) **recommendations made with regard to river gravel removal and dredging; and**
  - (v) **list of Short Term measures recommended for implementation in Hawick.**
- (b) **AGREED to advance £150k of capital from the Hawick Flood relief project into 2016/17 to deal with repairs to the Hawick Post Office boundary wall.**

#### **MEMBERS**

Councillors Aitchison and Paterson joined the meeting during discussion of the above item.

### **3. BORDERS RAILWAY BLUE PRINT – DELIVERY OF ACTION PLAN**

With reference to paragraph 8 of the Minute of Council of 2 April 2015, there had been circulated copies of a report by the Corporate Transformation and Services Director providing an update on the delivery of the Borders Railway Blueprint and the Council's current financial contribution to key projects. The report explained that 'Borders Railway Maximising the Impact: A Blueprint for the Future' was launched in November 2014 by the First Minister. It aimed to maximise the economic benefits of the new Borders Railway connection by helping to stimulate business growth, generate employment and boost visitor numbers. The Borders Railway provided a once in a generation opportunity to support economic growth and development in the region, making the Scottish Borders a more accessible and more attractive place to do business, to visit, to live and to work. The development of the Blueprint was led by Scottish Enterprise in partnership with the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland, VisitScotland, Abellio ScoRail, and the City of Edinburgh, Midlothian and Scottish Borders Councils. The project was an exemplar of partnership working across the public sector in the city-region area and at a national level. Since the launch, work had focused on developing the Action Plan to deliver the key investments and commitments made by partners in the Blueprint. The Action Plan (Annex 1) outlined project delivery across three strategic themes: Great Places for Working and

Investing, Great Communities for Living and Learning, and Great Destinations to Visit. The Financial Summary (Annex 2a PRIVATE) outlined the project costs and partner budget contributions across the Programme. The Programme Manager, Borders Railway Blueprint was present, and referred to the "Hop on Hop off" Tourist Bus Service which commenced September 2015 and it was noted that Midlothian were carrying out a similar pilot. Good signage was in place at Tweedbank and if there were any gaps these would be investigated. First Bus was examining their timetables again. Members asked whether it would be possible to extend the Steam Train journeys into October but the Corporate Transformation and Services Director advised unfortunately this was not possible for commercial reasons so it was important to maximise the promotion of the experience in September to enable the economic development to continue. In response to a query, Officers undertook to check the signposting for the middle part of the cycle link from Tweedbank Train Station to Selkirk. Councillor Paterson advised that a public meeting was being held on 10 May 2016 in Newcastleton in relation to extending the railway from Tweedbank to Carlisle via Newcastleton,

#### **DECISION**

- (a) **NOTED the significant progress made in developing the Borders Railway Blueprint Action Plan.**
- (b) **AGREED that further reports on implementation of the Borders Railway Blueprint Action Plan would form part of the Executive Committee's regular quarterly monitoring of the Council's Corporate Transformation Skills.**

#### **4. PRIVATE BUSINESS**

##### **DECISION**

**AGREED under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the business detailed in the Appendix to this minute on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 6 of part 1 of schedule 7A to the Act.**

#### **SUMMARY OF PRIVATE BUSINESS**

##### **5. MINUTE**

The Committee approved the private Minute of 22 March 2016.

##### **6. BORDERS RAILWAY BLUEPRINT**

The Committee noted a report on the Borders Railway Blueprint.

*The meeting concluded at 11.20 am*

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## **STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN PROGRESS FOR 2015-2016**

**Report by Service Director Regulatory Services**

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### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**10 MAY 2016**

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

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the affordable housing completions, and progress made in the delivery of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) projects for the period 2015-2016.**
- 1.2 The Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) is the sole document for targeting affordable housing investment in Scottish Borders. Annual updates have previously been submitted to the Scottish Government in November of each year with the current SHIP 2015-2020 being submitted in October 2014 when it changed to bi-annual submissions.
- 1.3 This report advises Members that for the financial period 2015-2016, 220 new affordable houses were delivered. This means that over the 4 year period 2012-2016, a total of 467 new affordable homes have been delivered, which averages at 116 units per annum exceeding the Council's target of 100 new affordable homes per annum.

#### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members agree to endorse the progress made in the delivery of affordable housing projects in 2015-2016 as set out in the Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2015-2020.**

### 3 STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE

- 3.1 The current SHIP 2015-20 sets out how affordable housing projects are prioritised to meet affordable housing needs identified in the Local Housing Strategy and how new planned projects will be delivered in practice. Up until 2014 Councils were required to submit its SHIP to the Scottish Government on an annual basis and this was then changed to a bi-annual basis with the next full SHIP document due to be submitted in November 2016. Officers will prepare the 2017-2022 SHIP on the basis of new guidance which is anticipated to be published in June 2016.
- 3.2 The 2012-2015 SHIP and three year Strategic Local Programme (SLP) was estimated to deliver 331 new affordable homes over the three year period. To recap briefly, 113 affordable houses were delivered in 2012-13, 72 were delivered during 2013-14, and due to slippage in 3 development projects totalling 87 units, only 62 new houses were delivered in 2014-15 bringing it to a total of only 247 new affordable homes over the three year SLP period. These 3 projects have since completed in 2015-2016 which brings the total of new affordable homes for the last financial year to 220. This means that on average over the last 4 years (2012-16) an average of 116 units were delivered per year exceeding the Council's 100 homes per year target.
- 3.3 Table 1 below shows the new developments completed for 2015-16. Of the 220 homes delivered, 184 homes were for social rent and mid-market rent by Registered Social Landlords, 13 for mid-market rent via the Council's National Housing Trust (NHT) Local Authority Variant initiative, 12 via the Scottish Government's Open Market Shared Ownership mechanism. The remaining 11 homes were individual house purchases by Registered Social Landlords. Figure 1 on page 3 illustrates some of the completed developments over the last financial year 2015-2016.

**Table 1: Project Completions 2015-16**

RSL	Project Name	Supplier	Units GN	Units PN	Units Total	Status Update as at 31/03/16
<b>EHA</b>	Easter Langlee Ph2A	HA Rent	25	0	25	Completed
<b>EHA</b>	Rhymers Loan Melrose	HA Rent	4	0	4	Completed
<b>EHA</b>	Robinsland. West Linton	HA Rent	24	0	24	Completed
<b>BHA</b>	Acredale 2 Eyemouth	HA Rent	32	0	32	Completed
<b>BHA</b>	Todlaw 3 Duns	HA Rent/MMR	26	4	30	Completed
<b>SBHA</b>	Rutherford Square Kelso	HA Rent	0	24	24	Completed
<b>SBHA</b>	Stonefield remodelling	HA Rent	16	11	27	Completed
<b>SBHA</b>	Stonefield Ph1 New Build	HA Rent	10	0	10	Completed
<b>SBHA</b>	Deanfield Hawick	HA Rent	8	0	8	Completed
<b>Various RSL</b>	Individual house purchases	HA Rent	11	0	11	Concluded
<b>Bridge Homes</b>	Standalane Way Peebles	MMR	13	0	13	Completed
<b>OMSE<sup>i</sup></b>	Scottish Borders	Shared Equity	12	0	12	Concluded
<b>Total</b>			<b>181</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>220</b>	

Figure 1: Affordable Housing Developments Completed 2015-2016



- 3.4 The SHIP does not address unsubsidised private sector market housing, or include opportunistic unplanned provision of affordable housing by other means. However it is recognised that new private house building makes a significant contribution to communities' sustainability, and by providing opportunities to deliver affordable housing by providing sites through the operation of the Planning system and the Council's Affordable Housing Policy and working with Registered Social Landlords. In addition the private house building industry has also created opportunities to produce affordable housing opportunities to support the Council's National Housing Trust/Local Authority Variant initiative.
- 3.5 Bridge Homes was legally established in 2014-15 as the Limited Liability Partnership which owns the homes produced by the Council's National Housing Trust initiative. Officers have investigated 54 sites to date to ascertain if there is a potential to deliver homes for mid-market rent on these sites. 6 of these sites are being monitored which could potentially provide an estimated 35 homes. In addition, 20 sites are classed as "open" and could potentially provide an estimated 147 homes. Officers are constantly monitoring these and following up on potential development opportunities.
- 3.6 Bridge Homes currently owns 23 homes at Castle View, Ayton, and Queen Elizabeth Drive Galashiels. A further 13 homes were completed at Standalane Way Peebles during September-December 2015 which was officially opened by Margaret Burgess, Minister for Housing and Welfare in January 2016. Missives have been agreed with 3 developers who are currently building 8 homes in Kelso, 6 homes in Innerleithen and 8 homes in Denholm and it is anticipated that these 22 new properties will be delivered this financial year 2016-2017 with the first being in Denholm which was completed in April 2016. (see appendix 1 2<sup>nd</sup> Homes Council Tax balance)
- 3.7 More recently the Council has also agreed missives with a local developer to construct 7 homes in Lilliesleaf. Work is due to start on site in May 2016. It is considered that confirmation from the Scottish Government to extend the Initiative until March 2019 has provided more certainty in project delivery.

- 3.8 As reported in paragraph 4.1 (e) p. 5, the Scottish Government is keen to increase the supply of affordable housing over the lifetime of the next Scottish Parliament to over 50,000 homes, and have recently increased the unit benchmark RSL grant rates by 20%. Scottish Government have also advised that the 2016-2017 subsidy allocation to Scottish Borders area will be increased to £8.633m, which represents an increase of 89% and means that Scottish Borders received the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest increase in Scotland. This reflects a change in the methodology used to allocate the national Scottish housing budget which is to the advantage of Scottish Borders, and provision made to grant assist projects benefitting from the new higher grant rates.
- 3.9 Council Officers have already met with Scottish Government Officials and RSL development representatives to identify and agree what projects could be brought forward in order to achieve spend of the increased grant allocation for 2016-2017, some of which could be land acquisition. This is referred to as the Strategic Local Programme (SLP) and is a dynamic working document which will inform the SHIP 2017-2022 submission, the latter which will be presented to Members for endorsement in October 2016 for submission to Scottish Government in November.
- 3.10 Current estimates see the delivery of 107 new affordable homes for 2016-2017 and this figure does not take account of open market shared equity, discounted sales or other opportunistic acquisitions that may be completed during the period. On the basis of 107 as a minimum being delivered this would bring the total of new affordable homes over the five year period of the Council's current Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2012-2017 to a minimum of 574 new affordable homes delivered in the Borders more than achieving the LHS affordable housing target of 103 homes per year.
- 3.11 Following a SESPlan area wide Housing Need and Demand Assessment, Housing Supply Target Figures have been agreed by the SESPlan Board and it anticipated that these figures for the individual SESPlan Local Authorities will be brought forward in future strategic planning documents by the respective Local Authorities in particular the Local Housing Strategy and subsequent Strategic Housing Investment Plans. For the Borders this means an estimated annual shortfall of 128 affordable homes. It is anticipated that the Borders new LHS 2017-2022 affordable housing target will be increased from 103 to 128 affordable units required per year and this new target figure will also be reflected in the Council's new SHIP 2017-2022 submission due at the end of the year 2016.
- 3.12 In the event of any additional funding and resources being made available, or project re-phasing, the Council and its partners remain able to bring forward projects that have been identified through the routine SHIP project prioritisation assessment and review process. Officers and partners continue to proactively seek and explore any potential project opportunities that can be secured for affordable housing. Quarterly programme meetings with Berwickshire Housing Association, Eildon Housing Association, Scottish Borders Housing Association and the Scottish Government and the Council are instrumental in this project prioritisation and review process.

## **4 IMPLICATIONS**

### **4.1. Financial**

- (a) Ensuring the effective development and delivery of SHIP projects continues to be dependent on SBC's provision of core services, financial resource allocations from the Scottish Government, partner agencies and private developers and individuals.



- (b) There are a number of funding resources that the Council and its development partners have drawn upon including Affordable Housing Supply Programme Funding, 2<sup>nd</sup> Homes Council Tax, Commuted Sums, Housing Association Private Finance Borrowing and Scottish Water Grant Funding, and finally Council Borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) in order to deliver NHT Initiatives.
- (c) During 2015-2016, the Council has grant assisted Bridge Homes projects at Lilliesleaf (£105k), Standalane Way Peebles (£195k) and £47K towards Scottish Borders Housing Association's Stonefield Phase 1 through use of its Second Homes Council Tax budget.
- (d) The financial impacts of the National Housing Trust/Local Authority initiative programme are fully reflected within the revenue and capital budget and the associated Treasury Prudential Indicators which control council borrowing.
- (e) Scottish Government is keen to increase the supply of affordable housing over the lifetime of the next Scottish Parliament to over 50,000 homes, and have recently increased the unit benchmark RSL grant rates by 20%. Scottish Government have also advised that the 2016-2017 subsidy allocation to Scottish Borders area will be increased to £8.633m, which represents an increase of 89%. This reflects a change in the methodology used to allocate the national Scottish housing budget which is to the advantage of Scottish Borders, and provision made to grant assist projects benefitting from the new higher grant rates.
- (f) This significant delivery of new additional affordable houses will not only generate additional Council Tax income for the Council in the region of £212k per annum for 2015-2016 alone, it plays an important role in reducing income inequality for people in the Borders and has led to the creation of numerous direct construction jobs, apprenticeships and indirect jobs within the construction supply chain.

#### 4.2 **Risk and Mitigations**

Delivery of the SHIP is largely dependent upon a number of variables, not least of which relate to resource and other political and organisation decision making processes beyond the control of the Council. However, governance and control measures are in place to ensure delivery of the SHIP including monitoring contractor performance and quarterly programme meetings involving key partners and Scottish Government Officials.

#### 4.3 **Equalities**

- (a) In line with both Council policy and legislative requirement, the SHIP 2015-20 was subjected to an Equalities Impact Assessment which did not identify any concerns regarding adverse impact on equalities groups through delivery of the SHIP.
- (b) The development of SHIP 2015-20 was predicated on the endorsement of the principle of equalities as articulated in the SHIP Guidance. The SHIP was subjected to an Equalities Impact Assessment, Strategic Environmental Assessment screening and Rural Proofing Assessment.
- (c) Houses produced by Registered Social Landlords will be allocated according to their individual allocations policy and procedures. As a consequence the RSLs are subject to the weight of statutory scrutiny via regulation and inspection by the Scottish Housing Regulator.

#### 4.4 **Acting Sustainably**

- (a) In accordance with Section 7 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 a pre-screening assessment of the SHIP 2013-18 had been undertaken using the criteria specified in Schedule 2 of the Act. The pre-screening assessment identified no, or minimal, effects in relation to the environment, hence the SHIP is exempt from Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) requirements under Section 7(1) of the Act.
- (b) By seeking to deliver more new affordable houses, the SHIP will promote sustainable communities and help to overcome many of the housing supply challenges faced locally.
- (c) There are no adverse economic or social effects resulting from the recommendations of this report. In addition, SHIP delivery and potential environmental effects from new build housing will be addressed through the planning process and national policies and standards.

#### 4.5 **Carbon Management**

- (a) It is considered that there are no direct effects on the Council's carbon emissions arising from the report recommendations.
- (b) New additional affordable housing will have a general effect on the region's carbon footprint however these are addressed within the planning process, and in meeting the housing requirements and standards as set out by the Scottish Government.

#### 4.6 **Rural Proofing**

- (a) Rural proofing applies to all areas of Scottish Borders classified by Scottish Government as 'remote rural' or 'accessible rural'. This applies to all areas of Scottish Borders out with the towns of Hawick, Galashiels, Peebles, Selkirk, Eyemouth, Jedburgh and Kelso.
- (b) The SHIP Project Working Group carried out a rural proofing exercise as part of the preparation of the SHIP 2015-2020. It was determined that the delivery of this SHIP will not have an unforeseen adverse impact on the rural areas and that the needs of rural areas have been properly taken into account.

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

There are no changes to be made.

### **5 CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 The SHIP Working Group has been consulted and contributed to this report.
- 5.2 The Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, and the Clerk to the Council have been consulted and their comments have been incorporated in the final report.

#### **Approved by**

**Service Director Regulatory Services**

**Signature.....**

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

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Cathie Fancy	Group Manager Housing Strategy and Services [01835-825144]
Gerry Begg	Housing Strategy Manager [01896-662770]

**Background Papers: Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2015-2020.**  
**Previous Minute Reference: None**

**Note** – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Jacqueline Whitelaw can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies. Contact us at Scottish Borders Council, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA, Tel 01835 824000 ext 5431, email [jwhitelaw@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:jwhitelaw@scotborders.gov.uk).

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<sup>i</sup> OMSE Open Market Shared Equity

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Reference	Commitment													
	2005/06 £	2006/07 £	2007/08 £	2008/09 £	2009/10 £	2010/11 £	2011/12 £	2012/13 £	2013/14 £	2014/15 £	2015/16 £	2016/17 £	2017/18 £	2018/19 £
Balance b/fwd	0	666,951	1,067,389	1,553,846	1,765,641	1,574,913	1,586,428	1,597,335	492,194	966,348	905,712	1,503,932	1,236,114	1,811,114
Funding available in year (updated 10/04/14)	666,951	700,438	719,457	739,795	771,594	794,592	849,361	854,423	863,248	833,911	859,015	715,000	715,000	715,000
Trinity House - Capital expenditure							161,171							
Additional costs to alter Heating System							-161,171		0	544	0			
Scottish Borders Housing Association								32,150.00	650					
								-32,150.00						
									-650.00					
Innerleithen High Street Gap Site Part of Strategic Local Programme (see below)								0.00	0	14,182	0	345,818		
SBHA - Stonefield (8 "Right to Buy" flats)										-14,182				
Approved - Executive 18/09/12								105,000.00	88,000	0	0	167,000		
								-105,000.00	-88,000.00					
Tweedside Homes - 6-10 Chris Paterson Place, Balnakiel, Galashiels														235,000
Approved - Executive 18/09/12														
<b>Strategic Local Programme</b>														
Easter Langlee (Phase I)									266,961					
									-266,961					
Kingsmuir Drive, Peebles (Dunwhinny)										234,000				
										-234,000				
Acredale Phase II									27,921	421,544				
									-27,921	-421,544				
Stonefield Phase I										0	47,000			
											-47,000			
<b>NHT/LAV PROJECT</b>														
12/12/2013														
Bridge Homes - Castle View, Ayton										60,000				
										-60,000				
Bridge Homes - Queen Elizabeth Drive, Easter Langlee (Melrose Gait)										90,000				
										-90,000				
Bridge Homes - various											84,000	330,000		
											-84,000			
Bridge Homes - Violet Bank											195,000			
											-195,000			
<b>REVENUE EXPENDITURE</b>													140,000	140,000
													140,000	140,000
<b>TOTAL COMMITMENT IN YEAR</b>		300,000	233,000	528,000	962,322	783,077	838,454	1,959,563.26	384,076	819,726	326,000	982,818	140,000	375,000
<b>LESS TOTAL EXPENDITURE IN YEAR</b>		0	-300,000	-233,000	-528,000	-962,322	-783,077	-838,454	-1,959,563.26	-384,076	-819,726	-326,000	0	0
<b>OUTSTANDING COMMITMENT AGAINST BUDGET</b>		0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0	0	0	982,818	140,000	375,000
<b>NEW BUDGET IN CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR (Cumulative Total)</b>	666,951	1,367,389	1,786,846	2,293,641	2,537,235	2,369,505	2,435,789	2,451,757.67	1,355,442	1,800,259	1,764,727	2,218,932	1,951,114	2,526,114
<b>ADJUSTMENT FOR UPDATED CUMULATIVE ULTIMATE (wef end 14/15 based on actual collection)</b>									-5,018	-74,821	65,205			
<b>LESS EXPENDITURE IN YEAR</b>	0	-300,000	-233,000	-528,000	-962,322	-783,077	-838,454	-1,959,563.26	-384,076	-819,726	-326,000	0	0	0
<b>LESS OUTSTANDING COMMITMENTS</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0	0	0	-982,818	-140,000	-375,000
<b>TOTAL BUDGET CFD INTO NEW FINANCIAL YEAR</b>	666,951	1,067,389	1,553,846	1,765,641	1,574,913	1,586,428	1,597,335	492,194.41	966,348	905,712	1,503,932	1,236,114	1,811,114	2,151,114

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING INVESTMENT BUDGET (Council Tax 2nd Homes) - POSITION AS AT 15/4/16

	B/F - Balance as at 31st March 2015	905,714	
	Add: Adjustment to reflect actual collection (as at 31/03/16)	209,218	
	Add Interest Awarded		
	<b>TOTAL BALANCE BROUGHT FORWARD</b>		<b>1,114,932</b>
	2015/16 Budget assumed	715,000	
	Total Resources 2015/16		1,829,932
	Expenditure incurred to 15/4/16	326,000	
Committed 2015/16	Bridge Homes - Violet Bank, Peebles	0	
	Stonefield Phase I	0	
	Bridge Homes - Main St, Lillieslief- (MUSELIE)	0	
			<b>326,000</b>
	<b>Estimated Remaining Balance for earmarking and C/F to 2016/17</b>	<b>1,503,932</b>	
	Budget 2016/17	715,000	
	Total Resources 2016/17		<b>2,218,932</b>
Committed 2016/17	<b>REVENUE SPEND</b>	140,000	
	Innerleithen High Street (Gap Sites)	345,818	
	SBHA - Stonefield (phased)	167,000	
	Bridge Homes - Bowmont St Kelso - draft contract est 30/6/16	120,000	
	Bridge Homes - Queensberry, Denholm - acquired per contract- 1/12/16	120,000	
	Bridge Homes - Waverley Road, Innerleithen	90,000	
			<b>982,818</b>
	<b>Estimated Remaining Balance for earmarking and C/F to 2017/18</b>	<b>1,236,114</b>	
	Budget 2017/18	715,000	
	Total Resources 2017/18		1,951,114
Committed 2017/18	<b>REVENUE SPEND</b>	140,000	
			<b>140,000</b>
	<b>Estimated Remaining Balance for earmarking and C/F to 2018/19</b>	<b>1,811,114</b>	
	Budget 2018/19	715,000	
	Total Resources 2018/19		2,526,114
Committed 2018/19	<b>REVENUE SPEND</b>	140,000	
Executive 18/09/12	Tweedside Homes - 6-10 Chris Paterson Place, Balnakiel, Galashiels	235,000	
			<b>375,000</b>

**Earmarked Balance - 2nd Homes Council Tax**

<b>Balance brought forward from 2014/15</b>	£905,712 fed from balance bfd
Plus adjustment to previous year's collection	£65,205
Plus additional income received 2014/15	£144,015
Base Budget 2015/16	£715,000
<b>Project/scheme total expenditure:</b>	
SBHA - Stonefield (phased)	-£47,000
Bridge Homes - various	-£279,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£1,829,932      -£326,000</b>
	<b>£1,503,932 Balance cd/fd to 2015/16</b>

Cost

Centre	Cost Centre Long Desc
HD6117	NEW BUILD FROM COUNCIL TAX
HD6117	NEW BUILD FROM COUNCIL TAX
HD6117	NEW BUILD FROM COUNCIL TAX
HD6117	NEW BUILD FROM COUNCIL TAX
HD6117	NEW BUILD FROM COUNCIL TAX
HD6117	NEW BUILD FROM COUNCIL TAX

Subjective

Code Full	Subjective Description
56116	PAYMENTS TO EXTERNAL BODIES
56116	PAYMENTS TO EXTERNAL BODIES
56116	PAYMENTS TO EXTERNAL BODIES
56116	PAYMENTS TO EXTERNAL BODIES
56116	PAYMENTS TO EXTERNAL BODIES
56116	PAYMENTS TO EXTERNAL BODIES



Period	Posting Date	Journal ID	Journal Description	Ref 1
7	26/10/2015 00:00	JL4800	BRIDGE HOMES 2ND HOME COUNCIL TAX	JY
7	26/10/2015 00:00	JL4800	BRIDGE HOMES 2ND HOME COUNCIL TAX	JY
7	26/10/2015 00:00	JL4800	BRIDGE HOMES 2ND HOME COUNCIL TAX	JY
8	01/12/2015 00:00	APS466	2 HOMES COUNCIL TAX - STONEFIE	201511271900
10	29/01/2016 00:00	JL4878	BRIDGE HOMES VB (4) SHCT CONTR	SR
10	29/01/2016 00:00	JL4878	BRIDGE HOMES MUESLIE DR SHCT CONTR	SR

Ref 2	Ref 3	Ref 4	Journal Amount	Journal Quantity	Subjective Code	NOTES
			153400	0		
			16000	0		
			16000	0	56116	
900454886	54721	SCOBOR	47000	0.47		
			9600	0		
			84000	0	56116	

**2ND HOMES CTAX - YEAR END 2015/16**

**BUDGET MOVEMENT REQUIRED**

	DR	CR
1 Move balance from Ctax		
WH1202-97244		144,015
HD6117-56116	144,015	
2 Adjustment for changes in prev years collection		
WH1202-97244		65,203
HD6117-56116	65,203	
3 Earmark balance unspent		
HD6117-56116		1,503,932
XF2535-49994-81	1,503,932	
4 Reverse EMB (16/17)		
HD6117-56116	1,503,932	
XF2535-49994-81		1,503,932

Base Budget - HD6117-56116

14/15 Base	715,000
Adjustment for changes in previous years income	65,203
Adjustment for actual collection 15/16	144,015
	<b>924,218</b>
EMB from 14/15	905,714
	1,829,932
Less 15-16 spend	<b>-326,000</b>
Amount to be c/f to 16/17	1,503,932

Interest

Balance b/fwd 15/16	905,714
Less spend in year	<b>-326,000</b>
Interest to be paid on	579,714

	859,015	actual; 15/16 collection figure
-	715,000	Less base budget
	144,015	

year end file from Lorna Tice

John Yallop to do transaction Apr 16 (2k)



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## **LOCAL ACCESS AND TRANSPORT STRATEGY – CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

### **Report by Service Director Regulatory Services EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

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**10 May 2016**

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

- 1.1 **To advise members on the results of a recent consultation exercise that will help provide advice on the development of a Local Access and Transport Strategy for the Scottish Borders.**
- 1.2 The development of a Local Access and Transport Strategy (LATS) is a key document for the Scottish Borders, providing a focus for transport issues throughout the Local Authority area and beyond, whilst detailing key projects and longer term aspirations.
- 1.3 A Main Issues Report (MIR) provided the basis for consultation with stakeholders and the general public and asked a number of specific questions that will help mould the Officers' overall approach to the main strategy document. A twelve week consultation period for the LATS concluded on 23 October 2015, with 31 responses received from statutory consultees, community councils and the general public. A list of the people and organisations that responded has been provided in **Appendix A**
- 1.4 A summary of the key issues from the consultation period has been provided in **Appendix B** and a copy of the MIR document has been provided in **Appendix C**.

#### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the Executive Committee considers the responses from the recent consultation exercise undertaken as part of the development of the Local Access and Transport Strategy for the Scottish Borders.**

### **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Following the publication of the Scottish Integrated Transport White Paper in July 1988, the first Local Transport Strategy (LTS) document for the Scottish Borders was produced in 2001, covering a five year period. The second LTS document for the Scottish Borders was produced in 2008.
- 3.2 The LTS is informed by both the National and Regional Transport Strategy documents, produced by Scottish Government and the South East Transport Partnership (SEStran) respectively. The first National Transport Strategy (NTS) document was published in 2007. At the present time Scottish Government is considering a refresh of the NTS and SEStran has recently published a revised regional strategy document for the south east of Scotland.
- 3.3 Scottish Borders Council has incorporated countryside access alongside transport in the delivery of this strategy document. It was felt that there were a number of synergies between these two disciplines and a joint approach would provide a number of benefits.

### **4 MAIN ISSUES REPORT (MIR)**

- 4.1 The MIR identified a number of key transport and access related issues which formed the basis for consultation with the general public and a wide range of interested groups and statutory consultees. A total of 32 questions were included in the MIR document.
- 4.2 The MIR was issued for consultation at the end of July 2015 for a twelve week period.

### **5 CONSULTATION EXERCISE**

- 5.1 The consultation exercise consisted of an electronic questionnaire on the SBC website, area forum meetings, newspaper articles and radio coverage as well as utilising social media. Consultation meetings with specific groups such as the Community Planning Partnership Transport Group and equalities forums were also carried out where requested.
- 5.2 There were a total of 31 responses to the LATS consultation. A list of the organisations and individuals that responded has been provided in **Appendix A**, a summary of the comments is provided in **Appendix B** and a copy of the MIR document is provided in **Appendix C**.
- 5.3 It is expected that a draft Local Access and Transport Strategy (LATS) document will be finalised towards the end of 2016.

- 5.4 A paper on Peebles Transport Study was discussed by the Executive Committee on 24 March 2015 and it was indicated in this report that the LATS consultation would help inform the current situation regarding a potential new road bridge for Peebles. No comments on a proposed new bridge for Peebles were received as part of this consultation exercise.

## **6 IMPLICATIONS**

### **6.1 Financial**

The direct cost implications to the Council with regard to the document will be in relation to the printing and publishing of the final document. However the LATS will have an impact on how transport proposals are subsequently delivered in the Scottish Borders.

### **6.2 Risk and Mitigations**

The final Local Access and Transport Strategy (LATS) will have an impact on how transport proposals are subsequently delivered in the Scottish Borders.

### **6.3 Equalities**

Transport can have a significant impact on equality related groups within the Scottish Borders and this will be a key consideration in the delivery of the final strategy document.

### **6.4 Acting Sustainably**

One of the key strands of the strategy is the promotion of sustainable transport and the promotion of non-motorised modes such as walking and cycling.

### **6.5 Carbon Management**

There are no significant carbon emission impacts as a result of this report. However, a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) will be carried out as part of the main strategy development.

### **6.6 Rural Proofing**

The LATS is designed to help identify strategies and potential schemes that could help improve accessibility and social inclusion for the area and could help to initiate the development of tourism and economic related opportunities for the whole of the Scottish Borders.

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

No changes to the Scheme of Administration or Delegation are required as a result of this report.

## **7 CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Chief Officer HR and the Clerk to the Council have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the final report.

7.2 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive Place, Corporate Transformation & Services Director, Service Director Neighbourhood Services and Service Director Assets & Infrastructure were consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the final report.

**Approved by**

**Brian Frater**  
**Service Director Regulatory Services**

**Signature .....**

**Author(s)**

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Graeme Johnstone	Lead Officer for Access and Transport 01835 825138

**Background Papers:** Development Plan Working Group – 24 November 2015

**Previous Minute Reference:** None

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

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 [e&ittranslationrequest@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:e&ittranslationrequest@scotborders.gov.uk).



## **APPENDIX A**

### **Statutory Consultees**

NHS Borders

Historic Environment Scotland

SEPA

Scottish Natural Heritage

### **Other Organisations**

SEStran

Sustrans

Borders Carers Centre

Scottish Borders Learning Disability Service

Bowden Village Committee

Borders Voluntary Care Voice

### **Local Authorities**

Dumfries and Galloway Council

Northumberland County Council

### **Community Councils**

Upper Tweed Community Council

Upper Teviotdale & Borthwick Water Community Council

Stow Community Council

Gordon and Westruther Community Council

Kelso Community Council

Peebles and District Community Council

Ettrick and Yarrow Community Council

Denholm and District Community Council

Hutton & Paxton Community Council

## **Individuals**

Jeremy Cunningham

David Pollard

Timothy King

Alan Douglas

John Taylor

Andrea Beavon

Andy Maybury

Ian Turnbull

Jennifer Geddes

## Appendix B

### LOCAL ACCESS AND TRANSPORT STRATEGY: CONSULTATION RESPONSES

**Question 1** Do you agree with the Vision for the LATS and do you have any alternative proposals?  
Yes / No

#### **The vast majority of respondents agreed with the vision for the LATS**

Additional Comments Included:

- The rural dimension needs to be strengthened;
- The vision is too vague and not specific;
- Include improved health and social care services;
- The issue of market needs clarification;
- Climate change needs to be mentioned

**Question 2** Do you agree with the main aims for the LATS? Do you have any other alternative proposals? Yes / No

#### **The vast majority of respondents agreed with the aims of the LATS**

Additional Comments Included:

- Social services and mental health well-being needs to be improved;
- Social and rural isolation needs to be reduced;
- SBC needs to improve and promote a public transport timetable that meets public demand;
- Strategic walking and cycling network is welcomed and will help to promote low carbon transport;
- The aims of the LATS are not realistic, building a railway that doesn't carry freight and cutting essential bus services;
- We should be encouraging more investment in roads;
- Make better use of the A68 which is the main artery through the Borders;
- Further improvements required for roads crossing east to west;
- There is no aim that directly targets improved health and wellbeing;
- Better access to community transport required;
- Not enough on vision for economic improvements and related employment;
- No specific reference to rural areas.

**Question 3** What key projects should we be prioritising to help deliver the maximum benefits to the Scottish Borders?

#### **The key projects included:**

- Promotion of rail travel including extending Borders Rail to Hawick and providing more rolling stock, signage and passenger facilities at Tweedbank;
- The promotion of a strategic walking and cycling network for the Borders along with reduced speed limits to help encourage more sustainable transport opportunities;
- A safer and better maintained road network (A7 mentioned specifically);
- Better public transport services to the BGH;
- Increased number of electric charging points;
- Projects that attract industry and employment.

activity as a result of Borders Rail?

**The key issues identified from the consultation exercise were:**

- A proposed extension of Borders Rail to Hawick;
- Improved public transport connections to the stations;
- Improvements to walking and cycling routes as well as increased promotion of sustainable transport.

**Other issues included:**

- Improvements to Galashiels Town Centre;
- Provide adequate facilities at the rail stations;
- Additional mini-buses to deliver rail passengers to the key tourist destinations;
- Free bus services for tourists;
- Car free days in town centres.

**Question 5** What do you think are the positive and negative aspects associated with developing a relatively short extension of Borders Rail to Hawick and a longer extension to Carlisle?

**The positive aspects of a rail extension far outweighed the negative aspects**

**Positive Aspects**

- Increased footfall
- Freight opportunities
- Public transport efficiency
- Encourage electrification of line
- Better connections to the rest of UK
- Forestry industry
- Extension to Carlisle would offer value
- Tourism
- Commerce
- Work opportunities
- Mobile workforce
- Beneficial to Langholm and the whole A7 corridor

**Negative aspects**

- Costs
- Connection to ECML more realistic
- Marginalisation of communities
- Reduction in bus services
- Affordability
- Disruption during construction
- Only worthwhile if onward connections to the rest of UK are provided

**Question 6** If the bid to develop a new local rail service between Edinburgh and Berwick is successful, what can we do to help ensure the long term viability of the service?

**The key issues identified from the consultation exercise were:**

- Provision of high quality walking and cycling routes that connect to the proposed new stations as well as Tweedbank, Dunbar and Berwick;
- Good public transport connections and car parking facilities as essential;
- Cross-border collaboration in relation to provision of services;
- More integrated ticketing opportunities;
- More ticket purchasing machines.

**Question 7** What potential improvements to ticketing provision would you like to see implemented within the Scottish Borders?

**The primary issue identified from the consultation exercise was in relation to improved integrated ticketing to try and encourage more public transport usage.**

Additional comments included:

- Potential ticket purchases at Post Offices;
- The provision of a dedicated ticket office at Galashiels;
- An oyster card equivalent for Scotland;
- More ticket purchasing facilities at bus and rail stations (Stow mentioned specifically);
- Promotion of e-tickets;
- Large employers providing subsidised travel by public transport, including the use of rail cards.

**Question 8** Are there any aspects of information provision that require immediate improvement?

**The primary issue identified from the consultation exercise was in relation to the provision of a local helpline number associated with bus services to advise on late running services and cancellations (specifically not Traveline).**

Additional comments included:

- Interpretation boards for the new rail network should include QR codes, linking to smart phone optimisation;
- Utilise new technology in terms of information provision;
- Improved signposting at Galashiels and Tweedbank stations is required;
- Galashiels TI needs to be added to on-line bus maps;
- Maps of bus routes needs to be provided at stations;
- More real time information required for bus services;
- Stow Community Council is interested in utilising the Old Station House in Stow as a community building and information point.

**Question 9** What are the positive and negative aspects of our existing bus services?

**The negative aspects of our existing bus services far outweighed the positive aspects**

**Positive Aspects**

- The X95 is a very good service
- The 62 service frequency is good
- Vehicle quality and comfort is good

**Negative aspects**

- Some of the vehicles are too old
- Some small village have no service (Westruther mentioned specifically)
  - Limited bike provision on vehicles
  - Services need to be connected to work patterns
  - There are large gaps in service provision
  - No availability of suitable transport provision is damping down commercial and social activity (Broughton area mentioned specifically)
  - The existing services do not serve the needs of the young and working people
  - Lack of connectivity between operators
  - Services need to be better advertised
  - Bus fares are too expensive
  - Services need to be more responsive
  - Inadequate timetabling
  - Limited cross country routes
  - Poor level of low floor buses

**Additional Comments**

- A new strategy is needed to help facilitate public transport in rural areas to help people access local towns and hospital etc.
- The Western Borders is quite isolated at the present time in terms of public transport provision;
- Community councils should have the ability to apply for grants from the local authority in order to supply services to meet local needs;
- SBC should commission work on potential innovative rural transport schemes and promote pilot schemes
- The access to Borders College is very limited between Kelso and Hawick

**Question 10** What would attract you to use the bus more often?

**The key issues identified from the consultation exercise were:**

- More reliable vehicles required;
- Improved evening and Sunday services;
- Improved disability access;
- Improved driver training;
- A reduction in cost per trip;
- A better roads network;
- More direct routes;
- Better connections to workplaces and rail stations;
- Quicker journey times;
- Shorter waiting times between services;
- More widely published timetables and routes;
- Lower fares;
- A bus service that connects to Berwick in the early morning and the late afternoon;
- Allocated space for bicycle provision on the vehicles;
- Links to villages such as Westruther and Fountainhall

**Question 11** What possible improvements are required for taxi provision within the Scottish Borders?

**The key issues identified from the consultation exercise were:**

- Local operators need to provide better advertising;
- The continued maintenance of taxi-ranks to discourage abuse from other vehicles;
- Installation of EV charging points at ranks to encourage transition to EV taxis;
- A consistency in fare levels between companies;
- A subsidised taxi service could help deliver a more comprehensive transport service in remote rural areas;
- Proposed introduction of a taxi-card service;
- A taxi stance at Tweedbank is required;
- The taxi rank at Channel Street should be taken out of the town centre and deployed at another site.

**Question 12** Where should the priorities for an improved off-road shared access network between towns and villages in the Scottish Borders be located?

**The key issues identified from the consultation exercise were:**

- The priorities for an improved off-road shared access network should follow the strategic network of former railway lines;
- National Cycle Route 1 between Berwick and Edinburgh, via Tweedbank, Galashiels and Peebles should be a key priority, with some re-routeing into other centres of population;
- The main settlements of the Scottish Borders should be linked together;
- Hawick and Jedburgh should be included in the strategic network;
- A key route should be Roberton – Hawick – Denholm;

**Question 13** If the Council was to consider introducing a section of quieter road in the Scottish Borders as a pilot project, where should this pilot project be located?

**The key issues identified from the consultation exercise were:**

- Roads close to Glentress near Peebles could be developed as quiet roads;
- The Morebattle and Yetholm area was suggested as a possible location;
- A route between Hawick and Selkirk was suggested as a possible location;
- The B road between the old Peel Hospital and Walkerburn would be the ideal first traffic calmed route for the Scottish Borders;
- We support the aspiration of Scottish Borders Council to develop cycle friendly roads as introduced by Clackmannanshire.

**Question 14** What other measures might encourage walking and cycling to school?

**The key issues identified from the consultation exercise included dedicated walking and cycle lanes to primary and secondary schools. Another key point was the development of a route in Peebles that linked Tweed Bridge with Kingsland School through Haylodge Park and the development of a route along the north side of the River Tweed.**

Additional comments included:

- Safer crossing points;
- Peebles High School pupils travelling by bus should be dropped off at Kingsmeadows Car Park to help encourage walking;
- Implementation of school travel plans;
- 20mph zones in residential areas and around schools;
- Limit the drop-off zones at schools to children that live over a mile from the school;
- Separation of pupils from vehicles is important;
- Improved lighting;
- No parking zones around immediate school environment;
- Not suitable for more rural areas;

**Question 15** If you believe travel planning should be a priority, how should the Council promote travel plans more vigorously with employers?

**The key issues identified from the consultation exercise were:**

- Bike to work schemes should be promoted with employers such as the BGH;
- Borders College should be a key consultee in relation to this work;
- Travel planning needs to be connected to shift patterns and the main locations of workers;
- The Council should stay out of the matters of private business;
- The public bodies such as the Council, schools and the Health Service should take the lead and set an example.

**Question 16** Should the Council consider the promotion of further promoted routes for horse riders and if so where should these routes be located? Yes / No

**The majority of consultees indicated that the Council should not promote further routes for horse riders in the Scottish Borders.**

Additional comments included:

- There are tensions between walking, cycling and horse riders. SNH, British Horse Society and the Scottish Rural Business and Property Association have issued joint guidance;
- Horse riding is a rural pastime and if it gives pleasure and activity to a percentage of the population then as far as possible we should try and accommodate this;
- I do not consider this as a relevant issue when considering transport;
- Paths for horse riders are a part of local culture, should work in conjunction with cycling and walking paths;
- Horse riders should be encouraged to get off roads;
- Sadly, horse riding is an even more unsustainable activity than mountain biking.



**Question 17** Should the Council only concentrate on the key access routes within the Scottish Borders in terms of development, promotion and maintenance? Yes / No

**A small majority of consultees indicated that the Council should develop, promote and adequately maintain the whole of the access network throughout the Scottish Borders.**

Additional comments included:

- All routes should be maintained adequately.

**Question 18** How do communities feel about taking responsibility for managing a proportion of the local network?

**The key issues identified from the consultation exercise were:**

- If resourced correctly. Each community is different and have different needs and requirements;
- Most voluntary groups are overstretched and a bit demoralised. If money was spent locally and some decentralisation took place then this might engage more people;
- Communities would be willing to undertake responsibility if given the appropriate resources to do so;
- I imagine communities would be very resistant, but that would need further consultation and a huge support provided in terms of expertise;
- The community must be expected to play some part in this and provided it is reasonable and safe to do so, then why not;
- The resources would need to be available.

**Question 19** How should the Council promote walking in the Scottish Borders?

**The primary issue identified from the consultation exercise was in relation to enhanced marketing and promotion of routes, primarily through the tourist information centres.**

Additional comments included:

- The local press could highlight a suggested weekly walk;
- Not relevant, this is a leisure activity already well promoted;
- A Borders walking website is required as well as “apps” for smartphones
- There is a national strategy in place. There is no need to spend money locally;
- Walking should be promoted for short every day journeys;
- Utilise the NHS as a health intervention for those who do little or no regular physical activity;
- The Scottish Borders sells itself visually, so it is about getting that visual image to as many people as you can;
- Promotion of the key qualities of the Scottish Borders is an important aspect of attracting visitors. High quality infrastructure is a key element of developing places which people want to visit. This infrastructure should be planned and constructed in a way that respects local attractiveness and landscape characteristics;
- Greater development of riverside walks (Boleside mentioned specifically);

**Question 20** Should we provide more of a focus / prioritise developing more information for cycling / walking routes linked to key tourist attractions? Yes / No

**The vast majority of consultees indicated that there was merit in providing more information for walking and cycling, linked to key tourist attraction.**

Additional comments included:

- Develop and maintain tourist information boards;
- More guided walking tours required;
- Make more attractions accessible to people with disabilities;
- Link the tourist attractions and rail stations to walking and cycling routes;
- Information should include detail appropriate to key destinations likely to be used by tourist coming by rail bike and on foot;
- Spending money on this suggestion will not increase tourist numbers or tourist spending;
- We would like to develop this for Stow for people coming by train.

**Question 21** Are there any other aspects of Countryside Access that need to be addressed? Yes / No

**The primary issue identified from the consultation exercise was in relation to accessible paths for wheelchair users and restricted mobility users.**

Additional comments included:

- Paths could be better signed cared for and promoted;
- Some village have no path network;
- A robust defence of rights of way, core paths, established paths and the right to roam responsibly is needed;
- Specific mention of a path at Cuddy Brae, Fountainhall that has been damaged by the railway works;
- Clear information required with regard to accessing wind farm developments;
- Routes for trail runners required;
- Access to water should take account of angling and other water sports;
- The fragmentation of key access routes such as the "Black Path" should be avoided whenever possible, with alternatives provided where necessary;
- Increased provision of dog waste bins

**Question 22** The road infrastructure in the Scottish Borders is a very valuable asset. How do we ensure that this asset is suitably maintained and enhanced accordingly?

**The primary issues identified from the consultation exercise were in relation to the current deterioration of the A7 north of Galashiels and also requests for Scottish Government to re-trunk the A7 north of Galashiels and the A72. There were also a number of requests to provide more maintenance funding for the local road network and to deliver permanent road repairs as opposed to patching.**

Additional comments included:

- Road funding must be increased
- Investment in the A1 should be a priority;
- SBC should urgently consider raising the relative spend on road maintenance within the overall budget and identify those minor roads with high impact on visitors as a priority;
- Cross Border routes in particular the A72 require significant improvement;
- SBC should consider pressing the Scottish Government to make further improvements in the existing trunk roads and designate all or part of the main cross border routes as trunk roads;
- We note SBC's aspiration to see the network improve its ranking in the National Condition Standards from the bottom quartile to the second quartile, but there appears to be no strategy to achieve this;
- More funding needs to be invested into the maintenance of rural roads. We agree that the short term reactive approach is inefficient and costly;
- We would not agree with concentrating funding solely on the key strategic road network. The A708, B7009 and B709 are key roads, but the swires that link the valleys are also important;
- SBC should be lobbying the Government to allocate a significant one-off slice of funding to get the Scottish Road Network back up to a reasonable standard.

**Question 23** What other measures could be put in place to help improve and minimise the impact of forestry transportation in the Scottish Borders?

**The primary issues identified from the consultation exercise were in relation to the damage that forestry related traffic can do to the local road network and a call for the forestry industry to provide some form of compensation to the local authority to help with maintenance and repair of local roads.**

Additional comments included:

- A better method of monitoring and even enforcing the voluntary code is needed;
- The timber transport officer needs to be more visible and increase the amount of liaison with local communities;
- A clear timber management plan should be developed for all timber harvesting;
- SBC should urgently seek government support towards the maintenance of minor roads suffering degradation through forestry harvesting operations;
- Financial support may be offset through tax raising in the form of a levy per tonne transported or a satellite tracked charge per mile;
- Use the railway to move the timber;
- Timber lorries should be encouraged to use old and existing track roads to minimise disruption on the road network;
- More enforcement is required;
- Consideration should be given to investing in agreed future routes, based on forecasting, so that they are suitable for the function. Proactive rather than reactive;
- Approved and especially unapproved roads are suitably signposted so as to warn drivers who are unfamiliar with the area.

**Question 24** How effective are existing prevention methods in the Scottish Borders?

**The key issues identified from the consultation exercise were:**

- Liberal use of speed limits, more 20mph zones and the treatment of urban streets as the extension of the home;
- The traffic calming work around schools has been excellent;
- Policing of speed limits is lack lustre and predictable;
- There are many accidents on the A7. We would like to see steps taken to minimise accidents;
- The allocated 50k is way too low. There needs to be a mechanism to record near misses;
- Very effective, no more money should be spent;
- More is needed to change the attitude of most road users;
- Awareness raising of safety for wheelchair users and people with restricted mobility is required;
- Consideration should be given to a one-way system in Selkirk;
- Not many lowered kerbs for wheelchair users and people with mobility issues;
- Not effective, with no effective accurate stats.

**Question 25** What other road safety initiatives would you like to see Scottish Borders Council initiate?

**The key issues identified from the consultation exercise were:**

- More quiet street initiatives with more road narrowing and more speed bumps;
- Reduction of national speed limit;
- We would like to see measures taken to prevent speeding through the centre of Stow. Current measures are not working;
- Concerns raised regarding motorcycle activity on the A708;
- The B7009 is being used more by motorcycle traffic and we have concerns about the potential for an increase in accidents;
- Targeting speeding more actively;
- 20mph zones in all residential streets;
- A similar scheme to the IAM initiative for younger drivers should be rolled out to encourage older drivers to be more aware of the dangers of modern roads;
- There should be more speed bumps in built up areas;
- Implementation of the strategic path network for walking and cycling;
- Introduction of temporary street closures around schools at the start and the end of the day;
- Further introduction of 20mph speed limits in all settlements;
- Measures to prevent parking adjacent to dropped kerbs.

**Question 26** If the Council was to consider more 20mph zones in the Scottish Borders, where should these new zones be located?

**A small majority of consultees indicated that the Council should consider introducing more 20mph zones within the Scottish Borders although there were some strong views against introduction.**

Additional comments included:

- In residential areas (High Road, Galashiels specifically mentioned);
- Nowhere but near schools;
- The money that it costs to signpost these would be better spent on speed bumps;
- No-where, 20mph zones near to schools and play areas are sufficient;
- In small villages not designed for modern traffic patterns (Bowden specifically mentioned);
- All towns and villages;
- On A and B roads passing through communities;
- Some local residents would like to see a 20mph zone in Ettrickbridge. More consultation would be needed, but 20mph zones in rural areas should be an option, particularly where there are no pavements;
- In all residential streets, near all schools and community centres, parks, hospitals, doctors surgeries and activity centres.

**Question 27** Have you noticed a difference in parking behaviour locally since the removal of traffic wardens – please expand on your answer? Yes / No

**The vast majority of consultees indicated that they had noticed a difference in parking behaviour since the removal of traffic wardens.**

Additional comments included:

- People stop where they like;
- In some smaller towns such as Duns and Kelso, it has become very difficult to find a car parking space. This might have an impact on tourism;
- Dis regard for yellow lines and pedestrian crossings;
- Traders are parking all day on the high street. They should be encouraged to park in designated areas leaving space for customers;
- Indiscriminate parking has increased to the point of ridiculousness. Vehicles are sometimes parked for days in places where parking is limited to between 30 minutes;
- No, I have not. We should be encouraging people to stop and park in our town centres, not chase them away with overpaid wardens;
- Increased parking on pavements.

**Question 28** Is the current level of cycle parking in your town or village adequate? Is it safe and secure? What other facilities would you like to see which might encourage you to cycle? Yes / No

**The vast majority of consultees indicated that the level of cycle parking was not adequate and that more needed to be done in terms of providing secure cycle storage.**

Additional comments included:

- Other than supermarket car parks, there does not appear to be any specific parking for bicycles within the Hawick area;
- More cycle racks in or near the town centre area would encourage tourist cycling, in turn increasing footfall in town centres;
- The provision of secure cycle parking is of increasing importance. Cycle use is increasingly the preferred mode of local transport and many visitors use cycling as their main or only transport;
- The individual value of bikes is increasing and bike theft is a significant problem;
- The LATS should include a commitment to provide adequate secure cycle parking in towns and at visitor attractions;
- More cycle lockers next to bus stops and terminuses. The trouble is bikes are often expensive items and owners want to know they are secure and safe from vandalism.

**Question 29** Are there adequate levels of disabled parking (off-street and on-street) in our towns and villages? Yes / No

**The vast majority of consultees indicated that the level of disabled parking was adequate in our towns and villages.**

Additional comments included:

- I am pleased to see that there are disabled spaces in Selkirk Market Place. As I do not use these spaces, I feel unable to comment if there are enough;
- Misuse of the blue badge scheme is rife. Able-bodied drivers are using vital disabled parking spaces. Also, disabled drivers are using the spaces, but staying within their vehicle whilst an able-bodied passenger carries out whatever business they have. If a disabled driver used normal parking areas whilst able-bodied passengers do whatever they need to do, then that would free up vital spaces for the benefit of disabled drivers who do need to use them.

**Question 30** What additional measures should the Council be doing to improve the parking in our town centres?

**There was a wide ranging response to this particular question, with some consultees mentioning the existing disc parking arrangement in Northumberland as something the Council should consider.**

Comments included:

- Free parking;
- Resiting of taxi ranks to reduce congestion in town centres e.g. Galashiels and Peebles. Limit taxis using main thoroughfares. Increase parking facilities and increase disabled parking areas in town centres;
- It would be very helpful if there were better public parking available in Melrose and Galashiels to reduce use of our BGH car parks and help encourage our staff to adopt mixed mode active commuting;
- In the absence of wardens employed by Police Scotland, Council employed wardens to enforce parking restrictions would free up spaces which would allow more turn-around of potential customers to town centre shops;
- There is limited potential of increasing the number of car parks near to town centres, but where possible, this should be encouraged;
- “Disc” parking i.e. free on the display of discs that determine the length of time the car is in the car park. Used very effectively all over Northumberland;
- Encourage traders to walk and park away from high streets, discouraging long term parking on high streets by highlighting the effect this will have on traders;
- Remove all parking immediately outside shops, except for disabled access and pedestrianise town centres as much as possible;
- Remove pay and display charges in the winter months;
- Bring back the parking wardens;
- The decision by Police Scotland to remove warden control of “illegal” parking and the rise in motorists prepared to ignore parking regulation and the current and future impact of this trend on both local amenity and the local economy has not been fully assessed;
- The LATS should include a commitment to undertake a public consultation, setting out the cost implications and the likely impact of reduced police enforcement;
- Provide a disc which displays arrival/departure times.

**Question 31** What is your opinion on the provision of a network of charging points for electric vehicles throughout the Scottish Borders?

**The vast majority of consultees indicated that the provision of a network of charging points for electric vehicles was a good idea. Appropriate levels of consultation with local communities was also mentioned.**

Additional comments included:

- It has to be linked to demand;
- Further consultation would be needed on this and proposals would need to be costed as to whether this is the best use of scarce resources;
- A great start, but better promotion of the existing infrastructure and developing the network as uptake of EV’s increases;
- Depends on demand, at present not much demand;
- More and more electric vehicles are using the roads, thereafter more and more charging points will be required over time;
- Inconsiderate use by normal vehicles is an issue;
- Electric vehicle charging points are a waste of money;
- Good idea, consultation required with communities

**Question 32** What would be required to encourage you to work from home on a more regular basis?

**The vast majority of consultees indicated that the provision of better broadband would encourage them to work from home on a more regular basis.**

Additional comments included:

- Improved digital connectivity is key to the sustainability of more remote areas, supporting more home working and the possibility of developing businesses and hence employment in remote locations;
- Centralisation of local government and loss of local offices has not helped.



**Appendix C**

**LOCL ACCESS AND TRANSPORT STRATEGY – MIR DOCUMENT**



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