

Public Document Pack



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TUESDAY, 1 NOVEMBER 2016

A MEETING of the EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE will be held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS, NEWTOWN ST BOSWELLS, TD6 0SA on TUESDAY, 1 NOVEMBER 2016 at 10.00 am

J. J. WILKINSON,
Clerk to the Council,

25 October 2016

BUSINESS		
1.	Apologies for Absence	
2.	Order of Business	
3.	Declarations of Interest	
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS		
4.	Economic Development Update (Pages 1 - 2) Presentation on recent Economic Development progress by Chief Officer Economic Development (briefing note attached).	10 mins
5.	Implications of UK Referendum Vote to Leave the European Union for the Scottish Borders (Pages 3 - 12) Consider report by Chief Executive setting out the implications of UK Referendum Vote to leave the European Union for the Scottish Borders and outlining how issues are being addressed (copy attached).	10 mins
6.	Business Gateway Progress Report 1 April - 30 September 2016 (Pages 13 - 22) Consider update by Corporate Transformation and Services Director on the performance of the Business Gateway in the Scottish Borders, covering the period 1 April 2016 to 30 September 2016 (copy attached).	10 mins
7.	VisitScotland Information Provision (Pages 23 - 28) Consider update by Corporate Transformation and Services Director (copy attached).	10 mins
8.	Scottish Borders Council Events Plan 2014 - 2020 - Progress Report (Pages 29 - 54)	10 mins

	Consider update by Corporate Transformation and Services Director on the Scottish Borders Council's Events Plan 2014 – 2020 (copy attached).	
9.	Scottish Borders Cycle Tourism Strategy (Pages 55 - 84) Consider report by Corporate Transformation and Services Director, giving an update on the consultation process and seeking approval for the Scottish Borders Cycle Tourism Strategy 2016-2021 (copy attached).	10 mins
10.	Scottish Government Review of Enterprise & Skills Report on Phase 1 (Pages 85 - 102) Consider the announcement on 25 October 2016 by the Scottish Government in respect of their Review of Enterprise & Skills. (Report by the Government attached).	10 mins
11.	Any Other Economic Development Items Previously Circulated	
12.	Any Other Economic Development Items which the Chairman Decides are Urgent	
	Economic Development theme additional membership of Committee:- Mr J Clark, Mr G Henderson	
	OTHER BUSINESS	
13.	Minute (Pages 103 - 106) Minute of Meeting of Executive Committee of 18 October 2016 to be approved and signed by the Chairman (copy attached).	2 mins
14.	Winter Service Plan For Year 2016/17 (Pages 107 - 142) Consider report by Service Director Assets and Infrastructure presenting a review of the Council's Winter Service during 2015/16 and the Winter Service Plan for 2016/17 (copy attached).	15 mins
15.	High Street Outdoor Tables and Chairs - Trial Permit Proposal (Pages 143 - 148) Consider report by Chief Officer Roads proposing introduction of a 3 year trial permit system to allow catering establishments to place tables and chairs temporarily outside their premises (copy attached).	15 mins
16.	Unauthorised Signs and Obstructions within the Road Boundary (Pages 149 - 156) Consider report by Chief Officer Roads proposing two options to revise existing policy (copy attached).	15 mins
17.	Any Other Items Previously Circulated	
18.	Any Other Items which the Chairman Decides are Urgent	
19.	Private Business 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”.	
20.	Minute (Pages 157 - 158) Private Minute of Meeting of Executive Committee of 18 October 2016 to be approved and signed by the Chairman.	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.**

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

Please direct any enquiries to Fiona Walling Tel:- 01835 826504
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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 1 NOVEMBER 2016

Economic Development Update

1. Business:

- In September the Business Gateway team assisted **17 business start-ups**, of which 6 have the potential to be high growth. The advisers have delivered 6 start-up workshops and 5 Growth workshops with 53 attendees.
- Business Gateway has worked across the Borders meeting with a number of intermediaries and spreading the promotion. In total 14 Intermediary visits have been held during the period.
- For the period from 1 September 2016 to 31 October 2016, the **Scottish Borders Business Fund** received 4 applications and approved 2 grants valued at £4,198.23 supporting projects with a value of £8,396.47. These projects are forecast **to create 2 jobs** with an estimated forecast **economic impact of £70,078 GVA**.

The **Scottish Borders Business Loan Fund** offers loans of between £1,000 and £20,000 over terms of up to three years. For the period from 1 September 2016 to 31 October 2016, the Loan Fund received 1 application and approved 1 loan valued at £20,000. This loan is forecast **to create 2.5 jobs** with an estimated forecast **economic impact of £146,245 GVA**.

- **Business Loans Scotland** – work is nearly complete on this and a launch is imminent for the new £100k loan scheme.

2. Regeneration:

- **Galashiels Town Centre**
 - The **Borders Railway Ambassadors Pilot** will conclude at the end of October. An end of season project report will be collated to review the service over the year. Funding is in place to deliver the Ambassadors service for 2017 with funding from the Council and £16.5K from the Borders Railway Blueprint Fund.
- **Scottish Government Regeneration Capital Grant Fund** –The Fund is aimed at providing new and/ or improved infrastructure for capital expenditure supporting community projects in 2017/18 – 2019/20. The focus for Round 4 is for projects that are capable of starting in the financial year 2017/18 and to fully utilise the grant allocated for that financial year. The Fund is assessed in two stages. The Council submitted three applications for the first stage:

1. Great Tapestry of Scotland (GToS) Museum and Town Centre Regeneration Project, Galashiels (Scottish Borders Council)
 2. Newcastleton Hub & Community Fuel Pumps (Newcastleton & District Community Trust)
 3. Jim Clark Museum, Duns (Scottish Borders Council)
- Only the Newcastleton Hub & Community Fuel Pumps project was invited to submit a Stage 2 application by Scottish Government. This must be submitted by 28 November 2016. Notification will be given to all applicants of funding recommendations by the end of February 2017.

3. Tourism & Events

- **Tourism support** – Destination Scottish Borders are currently planning a Christmas shopping campaign in Galashiels, Selkirk, Hawick, Jedburgh, Melrose, Lauder and Kelso over two weekends in December. The aim is to attract visitors from Edinburgh to visit the Borders over these weekends. VisitScotland will support the marketing & PR of the project, and the Council is supporting event logistics. The Community Rail Partnership has been approached for financial support. This will be used to gather evidence for a bigger Christmas project in 2017, where there would be direct links to the Edinburgh Christmas experience.

4. Funding:

- European funding continues to be available to projects through the Scottish Borders LEADER and European Maritime Fisheries Fund 2014 – 2020 programmes. Project managers are expecting further guidance from Scottish Government on delivery of these programmes during Brexit negotiations.
- The **LEADER Local Action Group** met in October 2016 and approved grant funding to two business projects, total £68,650 against projects valued at £286,257. Three applications from community groups were considered and further information, including confirmation of match funding arrangements, was requested. The next application deadline for LEADER funding is 30 November 2016.

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

IMPLICATIONS OF THE UK REFERENDUM VOTE TO LEAVE THE EUROPEAN UNION FOR THE SCOTTISH BORDERS

Report by Chief Executive

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1 November 2016

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out the implications of the UK Referendum Vote to Leave the European Union for the Scottish Borders and Scottish Borders Council and outlines how issues arising from this outcome are being addressed.**
- 1.2 The main implications of the UK vote to leave the EU on the 23 June 2016 relate to the:
- Financial issues for the agricultural sector and for rural, regional and local economic development arising as a result of losing access to EU funding streams in the longer term;
 - Lack of access to major funding for economic development that may have arisen through the Southern Scotland NUTS 2 proposal;
 - Significant number of export orientated businesses in the Scottish Borders needing continued access to the Single European Market for trade purposes; and the requirement to secure satisfactory trade agreements with countries outside the EU to make up for any loss of access to markets within the EU;
 - Uncertainty of the long term status of the approximately 3,500 EU nationals living in the Scottish Borders.
- 1.3 Since the vote, the UK Government has taken actions which have sought to mitigate some of these issues. It has announced continued support for the farming sector on the same basis as the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) up to 2020. Funding commitments have also been given for EU funded structural and investment projects signed after the Autumn Statement 2016 and which continue after the UK has left the EU. The Council Leader has written to the Prime Minister outlining the concerns of Scottish Borders Council and local businesses, and requesting that these be addressed.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 I recommend that the Executive Committee:

- (a) Notes the report and work already being carried out to highlight the implications for the Scottish Borders of the UK vote to leave the EU;**

- (b) Agrees that the Council supports the South of Scotland Alliance to develop an advocacy strategy focused on securing special status for the South of Scotland in relation to future regional policy, so that the economic challenges facing the area are appropriately addressed.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 23 June 2016 the UK voted in a national referendum to leave the EU. This report provides an overview of the implications for the Scottish Borders and Scottish Borders Council that have been identified up until now. These are set out in the following sections under a number of themes.

4 FUNDING

- 4.1 As a large rural area, the Scottish Borders currently receives a significant amount of European funding, primarily through the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP). The most recent figures indicate that the area's farming community receives agriculture payments of over £61.5 million annually. This is important funding for the agricultural sector and very significant for the local economy, as it represents about 3.2% of Scottish Borders Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
- 4.2 Scottish Borders Council has involvement in the following European funded grants projects and programmes:
- Scottish Borders Business Growth Programme - delivered by Business Gateway and funded by a European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) award of £546,424 for the period 1/1/15 - 30/6/19.
 - Employability Pipeline Scottish Borders - funded by a European Social Fund (ESF) award of £539,354 for the period 1/6/16 - 30/6/19. This funding is still to be formally approved.
 - Scottish Borders LEADER 2014-2020 Programme award of £4,018,427 for the period 14/8/15 - 31/12/20.
 - FORTH Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) covering the Scottish Borders, Fife & East Lothian with an award of £1,052,000 from the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) for the period 4/12/15 - 31/3/18. This programme is facilitated by Scottish Borders Council but it does not have financial responsibility for it.

It should be noted that there are also national programmes supported by European Funding that are delivered by Skills Development Scotland, Scottish Enterprise, VisitScotland and the Scottish Funding Council which impact on the Scottish Borders.

- 4.3 On 3 October 2016 the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond MP, confirmed that the UK Government will guarantee EU funding for structural and investment projects, including agri-environment schemes, signed after the Autumn Statement 2016 and which continue after the UK has left the EU. The structural and investment funds subject to this assurance include the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development – CAP Pillar 2, European Social Fund (ESF), European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Structural and Investment Funds payments to the agricultural sector under Pillar 1 of the CAP have already been assured until the end of the multiannual financial framework in 2020.
- 4.4 Once the UK has left the EU, it is crucial that the UK and Scottish Governments provide funding for the agricultural sector beyond 2020 and for regional and rural development support to be put in place in a manner similar to that provided for in European Regional and Cohesion Policies.

5 NUTS 2 SOUTHERN SCOTLAND PROPOSAL

- 5.1 Together with other local authorities across Southern Scotland, the Council has promoted the need for an additional European NUTS 2 statistical area for Scotland. Earlier this year the Scottish Government recommended a change in these boundaries in line with the Southern Scotland proposals, and this recommendation was passed by the UK Government's Office for National Statistics to the European Commission. This was then accepted by the European Statistical System Committee in May 2016 and there is a strong likelihood that it will be accepted by the EU. Following the outcome of the referendum, the Scottish Government is continuing to support these statistical changes.
- 5.2 This change to the statistical map would show more clearly the economic and social fragility of this area of Scotland which had been masked because of the existing focus of NUTS2 areas on city areas outside the Highlands and Islands. With a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 73% of the EU average, NUTS 2 status for Southern Scotland would have been likely to give the area access to major European Cohesion funding post 2020. This could have led to a step-change in economic development and economic growth in Southern Scotland. The decision to leave the EU will mean that this funding will not be available to Southern Scotland.
- 5.3 In the absence of EU Funding Programmes, there will be a need for a much stronger regional policy in both the UK and Scotland. This should not just focus on cities and the Highlands and Islands but should also address other areas of need, such as the South of Scotland.

6 ACCESS BY BUSINESSES TO EUROPEAN AND GLOBAL MARKETS

- 6.1 Within the Scottish Borders there are a significant number of businesses employing large numbers of people with a high dependency on exports with the EU and the rest of the world. These include, but are not limited to, businesses in the knitwear sector, producing high end cashmere garments, and food and drink companies, adding value to local produce. In relation to European markets these business are dependent on continued access to the Single European Market for trading purposes and it is vital that this is retained.
- 6.2 As part of the EU, the UK is also a partner in a number of EU trade agreements with individual and groups of countries across the world. It is crucial that negotiations with countries are carried out quickly by the UK Government to put in place similar trade agreements to minimise any disadvantage to exporting businesses in the Scottish Borders, whoever they may be trading with.

7 EU NATIONALS RESIDING IN THE SCOTTISH BORDERS

- 7.1 There are an estimated 3,500 EU nationals living in the Scottish Borders. They make a vital contribution to both the local economy and local communities, and this needs to be appropriately recognised. It is important that the Scottish Borders continues to be an open and welcoming region, which is able to welcome EU nationals, and nationals from all parts of the globe.

8 WAY FORWARD

- 8.1 The Council Leader Councillor David Parker has recently written to the Prime Minister, Theresa May MP, to raise the concerns of Scottish Borders Council and local businesses following the Referendum Vote on 23 June 2016. The South of Scotland Alliance also met with South of Scotland MSPs on the 28 September 2016 and discussed the implications of Brexit for the economy of the South of Scotland. The Alliance intends to meet Scottish Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) from the main political parties to discuss the Southern Scotland NUTS 2 proposal and develop an advocacy strategy on this matter. It will also be important for the Council to continue to take opportunities to discuss with the UK and Scottish Governments the issues raised above.

9 IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Financial

The recent announcement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer seems likely to minimise any possible financial implications to the Council of the various European projects not being able to be fully completed by the time UK leaves the EU. However, the future implications of the loss of such regional development funding are significant for the Scottish Borders and the Council and its partners need to lobby UK and Scottish Governments to ensure that an appropriate regional policy framework is put in place to support areas of need, such as the Scottish Borders.

9.2 Risk and Mitigations

- (a) There could be significant risks to the economy of the Scottish Borders if the concerns arising from referendum vote are not dealt effectively during the Brexit negotiations.
- (b) There remain uncertainties for the future residence of EU nationals in the Scottish Borders which needs to be addressed.

9.3 Equalities

The vote to leave the EU has led to insecurity for part of the population of the Scottish Borders i.e. EU nationals, which need to be addressed.

9.4 Acting Sustainably

There could be significant impacts on the economy, community or environment arising from changes in legislation resulting from the decision by the UK to leave the EU.

9.5 Carbon Management

There are no direct effects on carbon emissions arising from the proposals contained in this report.

9.6 Rural Proofing

The decision to leave the EU could have significant implications on agriculture and development support for rural areas in the Scottish Borders.

9.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

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

10 CONSULTATION

10.1 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 on the report.

Approved by

**Tracey Logan
Chief Executive**

Signature

Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Douglas Scott	Senior Policy Adviser Tel 01835 825155

Background Papers: None

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. Douglas Scott can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

Contact us at Douglas Scott, Chief Executive’s Department, Scottish Borders Council, tel. 01835 825155 dscott@scotborders.gov.uk



HM Treasury, 1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ

Rt Hon David Davis MP
Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union
Department for Exiting the European Union
London
SW1A 2AG

12 August 2016

Dear David

EU FUNDING

1. The result of the referendum has caused uncertainty for a number of sectors and organisations which currently receive a range of different EU funding streams. I want to update you on the steps Treasury will be taking now to address this uncertainty for recipients of all these funding streams.

2. First, many individuals and organisations bid for and carry out multi-year projects funded by European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIFs) and administered by government. ESIFs include agri-environment, employment, and regional development schemes. These individuals and organisations face immediate decisions about starting, or progressing, such multi-year projects, and some are nervous about proceeding given concerns about what will happen when we leave the EU.

3. In the short term, I can confirm that the Treasury will give an assurance that all multi-year projects administered by government with signed contracts or funding agreements in place, and projects to be signed in the ordinary course of business before the Autumn Statement, will be fully funded, even when these projects continue beyond the UK's departure from the EU. In the medium term, the Treasury will work with departments, Local Enterprise Partnerships and other



relevant stakeholders to put in place arrangements for considering those ESIF projects that might be signed after the Autumn Statement but while we still remain a member of the EU. Further detail will be set out ahead of the Autumn Statement and we will ensure these spending commitments remain consistent with value for money and our own domestic priorities.

4. Second, a number of UK organisations bid directly to the European Commission on a competitive basis for EU funded multi-year projects. Partner institutions in other EU countries have raised concerns about whether to collaborate with UK institutions on EU funding projects, such as universities and businesses participating in Horizon 2020, and some UK participants are concerned about longer-term participation.

5. The Commission have made it clear that the referendum result changes nothing about eligibility for these funds. UK businesses and universities should continue to bid for competitive EU funds while we remain a member of the EU and we will work with the Commission to ensure payment when funds are awarded. The Treasury will underwrite the payment of such awards, even when specific projects continue beyond the UK's departure from the EU. The UK will continue to be a world leader in international research and innovation collaboration, and we expect to ensure that close collaboration between the UK and the EU in science continues.

6. Third, the UK agricultural sector receives annual direct payments through Pillar 1 of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The Treasury will therefore reassure the agricultural sector that it will receive the same level of funding that it would have received under Pillar 1 of CAP until end of the Multiannual Financial Framework in 2020, alongside considering the options for long-term reform beyond that point. The government will work closely with stakeholders to ensure that funding in the period immediately after exit is used to help the agricultural



sector transition effectively to a new domestic policy framework. These funds will be allocated using the principles of CAP Pillar 1, and we will of course consider the opportunities post exit for making any short-term improvements to the way the system operates once we cease to be bound by EU rules.

7. Naturally, we will need to address the future of all programmes that are currently EU-funded, once we have left the EU. Leaving the EU means we will want to take our own decisions about how to deliver the policy objectives previously targeted by EU funding. Over the coming months, we will consult closely with stakeholders to review all EU funding schemes in the round, to ensure that any ongoing funding commitments best serve the UK's national interest, while ensuring appropriate investor certainty.

8. The administration of EU funding is largely devolved. We are offering the devolved administrations the same level of reassurance as we are offering to UK government departments in relation to programmes they administer but for which they expected to rely on EU funding. We will also work with the devolved administrations on subsequent funding arrangements to allow them to prioritise projects within their devolved responsibilities.

9. I am copying this letter to Cabinet colleagues.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'David Gauke'.

DAVID GAUKE

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BUSINESS GATEWAY PROGRESS REPORT – 1 APRIL - 30 SEPTEMBER 2016

Report by Corporate Transformation and Services Director

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1 November 2016

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report presents an update on the performance of the Business Gateway in the Scottish Borders, covering the period 1 April 2016 to 30 September 2016.**
- 1.2 Business Gateway continues to perform well as an integrated part of the Council's Economic Development service. The introduction of area focussed Growth Advisers in April 2016 has seen an improved spread of activity across the Borders, increased acceptance by private sector intermediaries and new business enquiries from companies not previously accessing the service.
- 1.3 Progress against key performance targets is detailed in Table 1 in Section 3.2, and an update on the Performance Improvement Plan is set out in Appendix 1.
- 1.4 Events continue to be a key part of the success of Business Gateway. Through the series of Masterclasses and Business Week, new speakers and new business methods are being introduced to Scottish Borders businesses.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 I recommend that Executive Committee:**
 - (a) Notes the successful performance of the Business Gateway Service in this period and the actions planned for the future;**
 - (b) Continues to receive regular progress reports to monitor performance;**
 - (c) Requests that the Business Gateway provides an annual report and update to Committee in June 2017.**

3 BUSINESS GATEWAY PERFORMANCE

3.1 The National Service Specification (NSS) for the Business Gateway Service 2012-17 was developed nationally. Each local authority responsible for the delivery of Business Gateway services across Scotland is obliged to deliver to a consistent standard and to report in a consistent manner. The updated NSS has been finalised and Council officers have played an important role in this.

3.2 Table 1 below indicates the performance against target for the first six months of the current financial year to 30 September 2016.

Table 1 – 1 April 2016 to 30 September 2016			
Service Output Targets			
Start-up Service	Target 2016/17	Actual to 30/9/16	%age
Total number of start-up customers who have begun trading	220	100	45%
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	25	9	36%
High Value Start-ups (HVSU). Businesses that actually turning over in excess of £70k in the first year or have employed someone	20	5	25%
Number of start-up workshops/seminars held	72	37	51%
Number of clients attending start-up workshops/seminars	432	176	41%
Growth Services			
Local Growth Advisory Service (LGAS) businesses expected to increase annual turnover by £100k on 3 years	30	19	63%
Growth Advisory Service (GAS) businesses expected to increase annual turnover by £200k in 3 years	15	8	53%
Growth Pipeline (GP) businesses expected to increase turnover by £400k in 3 years, approved by Scottish Enterprise	6	3	50%
Account Managed (AM) Businesses who meet SE criteria for acceptance on to national account management structure	2	0	0%
Number of workshops aimed at Growing Businesses	60	26	43%
Number of clients attending growing business workshops/seminars	360	176	49%
ERDF Targets			
Number of Masterclasses held	5	1	20%
Number of Scottish Borders Business Fund grants issued	20	22	110%
Increase in Employees in assisted companies	40	30.5	76%
Number of businesses assisted to export for the first time	15	0	0%

- 3.3 As can be seen from Table 1, good progress is being made across the range of targets, with the exception of one or two. Start-up targets are going well for the period in question, as historically these pick up considerably over the winter months. The Higher Value Start-ups are behind profile at this point and this will be addressed in the coming months.
- 3.4 Growth targets are progressing well due to the increased focus on individual geographic areas that our new approach has supported. Having an area focus has allowed each of the growth advisers to identify new businesses to work with. There have been two businesses identified for Account Management and applications have been made to Scottish Enterprise (SE), although there is a delay in approval partly due to a resource issue at SE.
- 3.5 ERDF targets run for the calendar year. The Masterclass target has been reduced to 5 due to the delay in the funding and also a reduction of the funding. This has been reflected in Table 1 above. A second Masterclass is being run in October 2016 with significant numbers already booked on. The lack of progress on the 'Export' figure is due to an issue in recording activity rather than there being no businesses to record. This issue will be resolved in the coming months. Good progress is being made against jobs and the number of businesses accessing Council funding.
- 3.6 To help stimulate demand for the start-up service Business Gateway has held 7 workshops across the area during the period. These were in Kelso, Eyemouth and Galashiels with a total of 28 attendees. These are in addition to the regular weekly workshops that are run at Ettrick Riverside, Selkirk and which continue to be well attended. A new series of Saturday morning workshops will be delivered in November 2016.
- 3.7 Digital Boost Workshops have been run as part of a National Programme to help stimulate the use of IT in businesses in the Borders. A total of 30 workshops have been held with 190 attendees. This additional series of workshops is part of a joint project with Scottish Government, Scottish Enterprise and Local Government, being delivered by Business Gateway.
- 3.8 Performance against target has been strong when compared to last year. This is due to the new geographic area focus of the advisers, a shift away from the previous sector based approach. The advisers have been more visible across the Scottish Borders than they were previously able to be. Some of this is due to the additional work possible because of ERDF funding. More time has been spent working with intermediaries, with 72 meetings being held, and meeting businesses that have not worked with Business Gateway in the past. The advisers have also been attending more networking events. Where possible they have also looked for desk space in the main towns in their areas, in order to base themselves more locally.
- 3.9 ERDF funding was finally agreed in July 2016, allowing work to start on the targets shown above. Expert Help has only been available since that time, but has already been more successful than similar previous projects. This is mainly due to 100% funding now being available for consultancy projects on a limited basis up to a maximum of 4 days. Since the target of 10 Masterclasses was set funding has been reduced and this target will reduce as well. The first Masterclass was held in Hawick in June 2016 and the second Masterclass will be held in October 2016 in Kelso.

- 3.10 Scottish Borders Business Week 2016 is running from 7 - 11 November 2016. There are 12 events organised this year. The events are running on four main themed days: Innovation, Leadership, Exporting and Digital. The Borders Business Excellence Awards, run by Scottish Borders Chamber of Commerce, is being held on Friday 11 November 2016.

4 PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2016/17

- 4.1 The Business Gateway Business Plan 2016/17, approved by Executive Committee in May 2016, included a 9-point Improvement Plan for the service.
- 4.2 Appendix 1 sets out the Performance Improvement Plan and progress to date. Key highlights to note are:
- The implementation of a geographic approach for the Growth Advisers, creating a better reach across the Scottish Borders; and
 - The better service provided to start-up businesses

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

- (a) Scottish Borders Council receives funding to deliver Business Gateway in the Scottish Borders from the Scottish Government. 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.

5.2 Risk and Mitigations

- (a) While Business Gateway is performing well against target for this point in the year, there was difficulty in achieving growth targets last year. Failure to meet national targets could create potential for a reputational risk. These risks are being mitigated by a number of projects within Business Gateway to help identify businesses with growth potential. Included in this is the allocation of 5 growth advisers across the area, giving a better spread of support.
- (b) A risk workshop was undertaken in September 2016 and an Action Plan developed and implemented to mitigate the key risks. This Risk Register is reviewed quarterly. This is a continuous process to ensure that the service continues without incident.

5.3 Equalities

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

5.4 Acting Sustainably

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

5.5 Carbon Management

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

5.6 Rural Proofing

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

5.7 Changes to the Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

There are no changes to be made to the Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation.

6 CONSULTATION

6.1 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

Rob Dickson
Corporate Transformation and Services Director

Signature

Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Phil McCreadie	Principal Officer – Business (Acting), tel 01835 825605

Background Papers: None

Previous Minute Reference: Executive Committee, 10 May 2016

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

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

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Business Gateway – Performance Improvement Plan – 2016/17

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Improvement Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Cost/Resource	Update to September	Expected Result
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	Now have two officers on Start-up team, allows for more time to be spent with each start. All starts now offered meeting rather than telephone support. Leading to earlier identification of growth prospects.	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	Working well per the figures shown in the committee paper.	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	More Economic Development staff hot desking in BG office. Officers have been across to BG team meetings to present on their areas of activity and expertise.	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.

APPENDIX 1

Improvement Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Cost/Resource	Update to September	Expected Result
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	Workshops held in Eyemouth and in Langlee, Galashiels.	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	Further work required. The delay in EU ERDF approval led to workshops being put back, these are likely to start in Jan 2017. Presentation made to Scottish Borders Export Association in Sept 2016 and 2 seminars planned for Borders Business week in Nov 2016.	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.
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	Long term project - working with Heriot Watt University to look at their Innovation Centre plans and also seeking to provide a service through the Borders College in Hawick.	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.

APPENDIX 1

Improvement Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Cost/Resource	Update to September	Expected Result
7). Launch a new series of Masterclasses and networking events.	BG Manager and BG Administrator	May 2016	£10k budget ERDF funded	2 planned/delivered for 2016, more to come in 2017.	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	12 events planned for Scottish Borders Business Week, which will run from 7-11 November 2016.	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	First event planned in Galashiels on 3 November 2016, with Marks & Spencer and Boots taking part.	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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VISITSCOTLAND INFORMATION PROVISION – UPDATE

Report by Corporate Transformation & Services Director

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1 November 2016

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

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

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 I recommend that the Executive Committee:-**
- (a) Agrees to invite senior managers from VisitScotland to provide a briefing for all elected members on VisitScotland's Customer Experience Strategy and its developing approach to information provision in the Scottish Borders and the rest of Scotland; and**
 - (b) Request that a further report on tourism information provision is brought to the Committee in 2017 once VisitScotland has finalised its review.**

3 VISITSCOTLAND INFORMATION CENTRES

- 3.1 VisitScotland currently operates five 'VisitScotland iCentres' in the Scottish Borders. The centres located in Jedburgh, Peebles and Hawick operate all year round, while centres in Melrose and Kelso operate on a seasonal basis. In addition, VisitScotland works in partnership with Scottish Borders Council and Live Borders to deliver an 'Information Point in Partnership' in Selkirk at Halliwell's House Museum, and with Eyemouth Museum Trust to deliver an 'Information Point in Partnership' in Eyemouth Museum.
- 3.2 From 2017 the current partner model will cease and sites will become part of the VIP Programme. The VisitScotland Information Partner (VIP) programme has been developed to recognise and support the great effort that businesses across all sectors undertake to bring Scotland to life and help our visitors make informed choices to ensure they get the most from their visit. The VIP programme is currently open to all Quality Assured businesses, community groups and social enterprises. This will increase the number of outlets at which visitor information is available.
- 3.3 Tourism is a key sector of the local economy, with an economic impact of £194 million annually, supporting approximately 4000 jobs (2015). 1.8 million people visited the Scottish Borders in 2015, spending 3.5 million days in the area. Of these, 1.15 million were day visitors. The 2013-2020 National Tourism Strategy and the Scottish Borders Area Tourism Partnership's new Tourism Strategy and Action Plan aim to grow visitor spend by 20-30% to contribute to sustainable economic growth.

4 REVIEW OF OPERATIONS

- 4.1 VisitScotland has rebadged its Information Centres and is now referring to the locations as 'iCentres'. The iCentres play an important role in helping to enhance visitor's stays in Scotland, connecting them to memorable experiences, encouraging them to do more, spend more and return again.
- 4.2 However, the way in which visitors access information has changed, and VisitScotland has recognised that it needs to change the way it provides information to visitors. Rather than cutting back on information provision, VisitScotland, in partnership with Scottish Borders Council, is aiming to provide more information, to more visitors through even more outlets than at present. This will be delivered via a new hybrid model consisting of iCentres, VisitScotland Information Partner (VIP) programme, and the delivery of mobile and outreach services.
- 4.3 Visitors are accessing information from a wide range of sources when they are in Scotland. The use of new technology has grown to become one of the most innovative and integral parts of modern consumer behaviour. Trends indicate that online usage for visitor information and booking will continue to rise. These changing patterns of visitor behaviour have led to a decline in footfall at VisitScotland iCentres across the country.
- 4.4 VisitScotland has provided an updated set of visitor figures for the iCentre's in 2015/16. Overall, Scottish Borders VisitScotland iCentre's have experienced a 12% decline in footfall between 2015/16 and 2014/15. They also saw a 21.9% fall in the overall number of bookings made in the same period. The specific results and analysis for the Scottish Borders are set out in Appendix 1, Table 1 and are summarised below:

Jedburgh

An annual visitor footfall of 27,000, indicating a fully performing centre with good footfall, although there has been a decline in numbers over the past 3 years.

Kelso

An annual visitor footfall of 13,000, with a steady decline over the past 3 years, footfall to this site is low based on a national picture with little demand for core services.

Melrose

An annual visitor footfall of 5,000, with a steady decline over recent years, footfall to this site is low based on a national picture with little demand for core services.

Hawick

An annual visitor footfall of 17,000, the footfall to this site is low based on the national picture albeit it has shown an increase on the previous year. This could be due to an improved retail offering at the iCentre.

Peebles

An annual visitor footfall of 22,000, indicating a fully performing centre with good footfall, although there has been a decline in recent years.

- 4.5 As noted, there has generally been a decline in footfall at VisitScotland iCentres across the country due to changing patterns of visitor behaviour. In response to this, VisitScotland has developed a completely new approach to its information provision which looks across all channels – including face-to-face and digital provision, in line with visitor trends and demand. VisitScotland will look at each site on an individual basis to identify whether there is an identified need for change. The Council will seek to ensure that robust alternatives are in place before agreeing to any changes.
- 4.6 In addition to the iCentre provision, there are now a number of 'Interactive Screens' available for use by visitors at sites in attractions and key outdoor locations across the Borders. By Spring 2017 these will be available in Tweedbank, Melrose, Hawick, Abbotsford and Stow, as well as Kelso and Galashiels. If funding can be secured, it is anticipated that further 'Interactive Screens' could also be installed in future in Peebles, Eyemouth, Coldstream, Selkirk and Lauder. VisitScotland has noted that the Information Points in Partnership in Selkirk and Eyemouth will continue to be reviewed on an annual basis.

5 NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 The growth of online channels for visitor information has led VisitScotland to a review how they provide information through all of their channels. Combined with a proposal to review iCentres on a case-by-case basis in line with visitor demand, their plan includes a commitment to provide high quality information and inspiration to more visitors than ever before, through the channels that they use the most. This will include investment in, and development of, its digital channels to ensure that visitors can find, click on, and spend more in the local economy. VisitScotland is aiming for closer working with local businesses so that visitors can access great information from local experts.

- 5.2 It is likely that changes will be made to the delivery of visitor information in the Scottish Borders in line with the current national review being undertaken by VisitScotland. In order to provide elected members with a more detailed briefing on that VisitScotland work, it is proposed that a special briefing should be arranged. This would allow senior managers from VisitScotland to provide an outline of the new strategy that is being developed and would also cover the options for future visitor information provision that are currently being considered. It is proposed to hold this special briefing session for all Elected Members in early December 2016.

6 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

- (a) The VisitScotland iCentre's in the Scottish Borders are funded via an annual 'Minute of Agreement' between VisitScotland and Scottish Borders Council. This details the delivery of regional VisitScotland marketing and visitor information expenditure for the Scottish Borders. The 2015/16 Minute of Agreement committed £108,000 from Economic Development budgets towards regional marketing and visitor information activity. This provides an annual commitment of £61,000 towards the iCentres and £47,000 towards the regional marketing budget.
- (b) In addition, more interactive screens are now being installed at Tweedbank and Stow. This was funded through the Council using Smarter Choices sustainable transport funding. There will be additional expenditure required to supply any new information screens. Any changes to VisitScotland services and delivery systems will be financed by VisitScotland.

6.2 Risk and Mitigations

There is a reputational risk to the Council if the VisitScotland iCentres are not well used, not seen to be embracing new technologies or are not able to properly address user's requirements. This will be mitigated by undertaking an effective and ongoing annual review process in partnership with VisitScotland.

6.3 Equalities

An equalities impact assessment will be carried out on the new touchscreen information provision in areas where they are planned to be installed.

6.4 Acting Sustainably

The provision of accessible, high quality tourist information helps to make the visitor experience of the Scottish Borders more memorable. Continuing to support appropriate visitor information in key locations across the Scottish Borders helps to support the tourism sector and the businesses and jobs that rely on it.

6.5 Carbon Management

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

6.6 Rural Proofing

Rural proofing is not required because this project does not change Council strategy or policy.

6.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

There are no changes to be made to the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation.

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 their comments incorporated into the report.

Approved by

Rob Dickson

Corporate Transformation & Services Director

Signature

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Background Papers: None

Previous Minute Reference: Executive Committee, 3 November 2015

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Appendix 1

VisitScotland iCentres Data – Scottish Borders

FOOTFALL	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11
Jedburgh	26,861	30,558	33,646	32,153	32,536	29,373
Hawick	17,240	15,105	14,872	15,157	14,201	13,779
Peebles	21,760	26,193	26,251	27,385	27,594	36,984
Melrose	5,067	8,117	15,312	16,431	14,975	23,498
Kelso	13,192	15,611	15,261	14,943	15,968	18,026
TOTAL	84,120	95,584	105,342	106,069	105,274	121,659

BOOKING NUMBERS	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11
Jedburgh	119	162	131	147	225	270
Hawick	29	57	47	41	72	64
Peebles	63	35	141	63	107	169
Melrose	11	30	88	55	115	192
Kelso	21	27	14	21	45	43
TOTAL	243	311	421	327	564	738

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL EVENTS PLAN 2014-2020 – PROGRESS REPORT

Report by Corporate Transformation & Services Director

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1 November 2016

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report presents an update on the Scottish Borders Council's Events Plan 2014-2020.**
- 1.2 The Council successfully facilitates and supports the delivery of a wide range of regional, national and international events. This coordinated and targeted approach to promoting events in the Scottish Borders has had a significant impact on the economy, generating an estimated economic impact of £8 million per year.
- 1.3 These events raise the profile and enhance the reputation of the Scottish Borders, and deliver social and community benefits. The regional tourism strategy and action plan highlights events as a key success factor in attracting more visitors to the area, and encouraging them to do more, spend more and return more often.
- 1.4 The Events Plan 2014-2020 set out in Appendix 1 outlines the approach to prioritising event support activity and highlights key achievements to date.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 I recommend that the Executive:**
 - (a) Notes the achievements and progress made in relation to the Scottish Borders Council Events Plan 2014-2020;**
 - (b) Approves the updated Scottish Borders Council Events Plan until 2020 to support the events sector to maximise economic impact and legacy; and**
 - (c) Agrees the need to prioritise and target the available resources towards events with the most potential to raise the profile of the Scottish Borders and benefit the economy.**

3 SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL'S EVENTS PLAN 2014-2020

- 3.1 In March 2014, the Council's Economic Development Group considered a report on the Scottish Borders Council's Events Plan 2014-2020. The 2014-2020 Plan outlined the vision that: By 2020 the Scottish Borders is seen as 'a stage' for significant events that raise the profile of the area and create sustainable economic benefits.
- 3.2 The overall aim of the Events Plan 2014-2020 is to work together to develop the reputation of the Scottish Borders as an excellent host for a wider variety of events. In order to achieve this and maximise the wider tourism and economic benefits, a number of key objectives were identified:
- A. To support the development of events
 - B. To encourage effective event promotion and marketing
 - C. To ensure events are evaluated so we understand their economic impact
- 3.3 The Events Plan 2014-2020 sets out the Council's approach for the support, development, delivery and measurement of the impact of events in the Scottish Borders for the period 2014-2020. The Economic Development Group approved the Plan to support the events sector to maximise economic impact and legacy.

4 SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL'S EVENTS PLAN – 2016 UPDATE

- 4.1 The Scottish Borders Council's Events Plan 2014-2020 is ambitious and proposes targeting support towards events that have the greatest regional and national impact. The approach aims to maximise financial leverage from EventScotland and other partners, as well as maximise social, cultural and environment benefits. The coordination and management of the Events Plan is led by Scottish Borders Council. However, successful event delivery requires a partnership approach with ambitious event organisers and national agencies as well as local businesses and communities.
- 4.2 Taking this partnership approach, significant progress has been made with regard to the delivery of the Plan. Appendix 1 provides a summary of this progress. Some of the key highlights since 2014 have been:
- Homecoming 2014 – Borders wide
 - Commonwealth Games legacy impact, 2014 – Borders wide
 - Tweedlove Festival - Peebles
 - Borders Book Festival - Melrose
 - Enduro World Series 2014, 2015 - Peebles
 - Melrose 7s
 - Tour o' the Borders – Peebles
 - British MTB Championships 2015 - Selkirk
 - Scottish Government's 'Years of' Events including YES Festival, Selkirk and the Borders Heritage Festival, Borders wide
 - Borders Railway Opening event celebrations 2015 - Tweedbank, Galashiels and Stow with the official opening by HM The Queen at Tweedbank
 - Tour of Britain Stage event in 2015 - Kelso
 - Flying Scotsman and Steam Train excursions 2016 - Tweedbank and Galashiels

- 4.3 The Council identified a range of actions within the Event Plan 2014 - 2020. Actions were prioritised by those which would deliver significant economic impact and for which resources were available; and actions for which resources were still to be identified. In terms of overall delivery, the Council has made positive progress with the majority of the actions within the limited resources available. Some actions are ongoing and will continue to be developed and implemented. The 'amber' shaded actions, where progress has been limited, correlate with the actions that were identified as requiring resources. These will continue to be developed where possible within the resources available.
- 4.4 In 2015, EventScotland published its updated 'Scotland The Perfect Stage', the national event strategy. 'Scotland The Perfect Stage' comprises the Events and Festivals aspect of 'Tourism Scotland 2020'. The Scottish Borders Events Plan, in Appendix 1, has been updated to reflect the new national Event Strategy. The Council will continue to work with partners to grow existing events and bring new, exciting events to the area. We will build on the rich heritage of events currently in the Borders, and also encourage new and different events that can offer a unique experience to visitors.
- 4.5 This coordinated and targeted approach to promoting events in the Scottish Borders has had a significant impact on the economy. The combined economic impact of events funded by the Council in 2015/16 is estimated to be £8 million based on the national EventIMPACTS model.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

- (a) The Economic Development Service currently has a budget of £100,000 annually to support events development in the Scottish Borders. This does not include direct financial support to local Common Ridings and Festivals. The Economic Development team has a dedicated 0.5 FTE Events Strategy Officer post to provide business and event management advisory support for key regional events, as well as events development. Additional officer input from Economic Development is also provided as required for key event coordination activity.
- (b) It is important to acknowledge that as well as the £100,000 that Economic Development invests each year, there is considerable in-kind support for events from a range of services across the Council. This includes Emergency Planning (Safety Advisory Group), traffic management, street cleansing, licensing, communications and other services. As budget pressures increase in future, it may prove more difficult to provide these services on an in-kind basis.
- (c) The financial support provided by the Council for the development of events has a proven impact and helps the events add value to the local economy. By coordinating activity across the Council and working in partnership with event agencies and key local event organisers, the Scottish Borders events calendar continues to grow. However, there are challenges within the sector in relation to the size and scope of sustainable events, the limited infrastructure and increasing competition from across the UK and globally.

5.2 **Risk and Mitigations**

- (a) Event development is a priority in the Scottish Borders Economic Strategy 2023 and in the Scottish Borders Tourism Strategy and Action Plan. A committed resource is required to continue to develop individual events, and the area as a whole, as a national and international events destination.
- (b) Lack of support to local events potentially risks the delivery of events and reduces economic impact. Competition from other regions in the UK, as well as abroad, means that the public and private sector need to work effectively together to ensure the Scottish Borders is providing the best possible 'support package' for events. It is important to note that the Council does not generally deliver these individual events and is therefore not responsible for the risks associated with the events.

5.3 **Equalities**

An equality impact assessment (EIA) is not required as this report relates to the continuation of the existing event development support service. A key aspect of the Council's Economic Development Team's work is to reduce barriers to economic inequality and information on service delivery to equalities groups is monitored.

5.4 **Acting Sustainably**

Event development delivers a number of key outputs and outcomes that deliver economic benefit and benefits to help sustain local communities.

5.5 **Carbon Management**

Event development support includes advice on potential impacts of events on carbon emissions. Where possible, event organisers will seek to encourage reduced emissions by providing accessible local information linked to environmental sustainability policies ISO 20121.

5.6 **Rural Proofing**

Rural Proofing checks have been undertaken previously and a revised Rural Proofing exercise is currently in progress.

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

There are no changes to be made to the Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation arising from this report.

6 **CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 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

Rob Dickson

Corporate Transformation & Services Director **Signature**

Author(s)

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Background Papers: None

Previous Minute Reference: None

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Appendix 1

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

EVENTS PLAN 2014 - 2020

2016 Update

2016 Update: October 2016
Economic Development, Scottish Borders Council

1. Introduction

Events are recognised as an important part of the social and economic life of communities. They have the potential to enrich lives, attract visitors, and add significantly to the economic vitality of an area. Events help us celebrate our cultural identity and heritage, and are increasingly based on our rich natural heritage.

The Scottish Borders Council Events Plan reinforces a strategic approach to events across the Scottish Borders.

In 2015, EventScotland published its updated 'Scotland The Perfect Stage', the national event strategy. 'Scotland The Perfect Stage' comprises the Events and Festivals aspect of 'Tourism Scotland 2020', a strategy for the tourism industry established by the Scottish Tourism Alliance.

The revised 'Scotland The Perfect Stage' strategy focuses on:

- Promoting the importance to successful events of communities and partnerships between the public, private and third sectors.
- Sustaining support for investment for events from private, public and third sectors.
- Working together to tackle inequality.
- Better consideration of transport links, technology and accommodation within long term event planning.
- Using events to promote Scotland to the wider world.
- Continuing to develop existing Scottish events, as well as securing one-off events.
- Recognising events as a driver of Scotland's visitor economy.
- Developing the industry through further higher, post-graduate and CPD courses, as well as the exchange of best practice.
- Improving how the economic, social, environmental and promotional value of events is evaluated.

The national strategy for delivering the vision and fulfilling the mission has two components,

- I. To utilise and develop the assets that Scotland has which make it 'The Perfect Stage' for events:-
 - Our people
 - Our cultural identity and heritage
 - Our natural environment
 - Our built facilities
 - Our signature events
- II. To deliver a portfolio of events which provide world leading authentic experiences for residents and visitors:-
 - Authentic experiences
 - Events
 - Residents and visitors

The Scottish Borders Council Events Plan links directly to the national Events Strategy, and to regional economic, tourism and sports strategies, and the Single Outcome Agreement to sustain and grow economic activity in key sectors of the Scottish Borders economy.

The Tourism Strategy and Action Plan for the Scottish Borders include Events as a key driver for attracting visitors to the area and crucially to encourage people to return to the Scottish Borders.

These strategic documents recognise that the 'events product' has a fundamental part to play in developing and growing the tourism sector. In this sense, the objectives of any event are two-fold:

- To deliver the specific objectives of the event itself – and these can range from cultural and sporting objectives, to tourism and community development objectives; and, crucially;
- To maximise the economic development impacts from the event.

2. Scottish Borders Council Events Plan

2.1 Our Vision

Through discussions with the Council's Event Coordination Group, the following vision has been developed:

By 2020 the Scottish Borders is seen as 'a stage' for significant events that raise the profile of the area and create sustainable economic benefits.

2.2 Strategic Aim

Scottish Borders Council will seek to deliver this vision by developing national and international events in partnership with EventScotland and working across the public, private and voluntary sectors. The aim is:

To work together to develop existing events and create new, exciting events, endorsing the Scottish Borders unique selling points (USP), targeting events with a significant economic impact as well as promoting stronger communities and embracing 'Ambitious for the Borders' priorities.

2.3 Objectives

The overall aim is to work together to develop the reputation of the Scottish Borders as an excellent host for a wider variety of events. In order to achieve this and maximise the wider tourism and economic benefits, a number of key objectives emerge:

- A. To support the development of events**
- B. To encourage effective event promotion and marketing**
- C. To ensure events are evaluated so we understand their economic impact**

The Council in previous years moved away from being directly involved in the delivery of events so wider 'legacy' impacts could be successfully exploited and harnessed. In order to link events activity closer to tourism and economic development, developing events with an economic development focus.

Fundamentally we want to bring new, exciting events to the area, and help them to grow and become sustainable. The Council's focus will be on enabling new events to develop and grow, so that over time its resources will continually shift from existing events towards new events.

The tourism growth opportunity is driven by unique and authentic experiences that visitors can seek out in our area. Therefore, we must build on the rich heritage of events that we currently have in the Borders, but we must also encourage new and different events that can offer that fresh, unique experience to tourists

3. Opportunities for Strategic Events

3.1 Key Event Opportunities

From the review of previous event activity, discussions with EventScotland and discussions with local event organisers, the following Event Opportunities have been identified:

	Event Opportunity 2014-2016	Event Opportunity 2016-2020
Event opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homecoming - 2014 • Commonwealth Games 2014 • Cycling – Tour of Britain/ Tour de France (Yorkshire) • New Year and winter months • Others including sport, heritage, arts and culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Government Focus Years • Borders Railway event specific opportunities • Borders Railway Steam Train opportunities • Cycling – Tour of Britain • New Year and winter months • Others including sport, heritage, arts and culture
Infrastructure development opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abbotsford House • Borders Railway • Border Union Agricultural Society Showground • Tweed Valley/ Glentress • New visitor accommodation opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abbotsford House & Visitor Centre • Borders Railway • Border Union Agricultural Society Showground • Galashiels town centre event space • Tweed Valley MTB Action Plan / Glentress master plan • New visitor attraction opportunities • New visitor accommodation opportunities
Links with local/ national partners:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local event organizers (private and voluntary sector) • Local clubs and associations • National partners, including EventScotland, VisitScotland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local event organisers (private and voluntary sector) • Cross Border links • National partners, including EventScotland, VisitScotland, SportScotland • Railway Blueprint partners including Scottish Government, Abellio/ Scotrail, Edinburgh & Midlothian Councils, Network Rail • Live Borders and local Trusts • Local clubs and associations

3.2 Key Activity Areas

From the review of previous event activity, discussions with EventScotland and with local event organisers, the following 'activity areas' have been identified as having the most potential:

i) Events promoting Scottish Borders as a host destination -

The Scottish Borders should continue to seek a high profile as an events destination. This will involve attracting events which have a high economic direct spend or a high economic impact via Comms / PR coverage. For example, the Tour of Britain stages in the Scottish Borders are broadcast nationally as part of the 7-day long event via broadcaster, ITV4.

ii) Events with the potential to develop into major National/ International events -

To further develop and grow the potential of existing events within the Scottish Borders to attract new audiences, specifically around:

- Cycling
- Rugby
- Outdoor/ Adventure Sports
- Equestrian events
- Motor sport and specialist vehicle events

iii) Events offering varying degrees of potential for development -

To develop areas of regional activity that offer the potential for event development, including collective marketing and profile raising opportunities specifically:

- Traditional Music
- Outdoors and Access
- Literature
- Culture & Visual Arts

4. Scottish Borders' Events Characteristics

Festivals and events in the Scottish Borders fall into four categories as detailed below. Different festivals and events exist and operate for varying reasons, ranging from tradition, income generation, community cohesion, and visitor and audience development.

Category	Definition
1. Major Festivals and Events 'Hallmark'	<p>HIGH VALUE TOURIST DEMAND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - International, National or Regional Events - High Profile - Fit with Borders USP - Require some SBC support - Generated both in and outwith the region <p>They will attract the most publicity and be of most benefit to the area. They will include some of the area's major tourist attractions and local landmarks/landscapes.</p>
<p><i>Some events may fit between these two categories – more specifically parts of the programming may sit between these two areas within one event</i></p>	
2. Mid-sized events Ticketed / Spectator One off events/ periodic	<p>MEDIUM SIZED EVENTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Generate regular audiences - Specific motive to attend - Domestic tourists, wider marketing and appeal <p>These events are programmed for a specific purpose and audience. Marketing will expand beyond the local community and will have specialist press interest.</p>
3. Community & Local Events	<p>LOW DEMAND / LOW VALUE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular events - Potential to grow into Medium sized events <p>These events link culture and community and reflect the Scottish Borders. Their primary audience is the local community. They will attract some passing trade from visitors. Examples include local fairs/fetes and rural agricultural shows and local sports events.</p>
4. local weekly and monthly events	<p>They provide 'added value' to the day-to-day experiences for local people and visitors. These are likely to be determined as 'activities' rather than stand-alone events or regular programming of spaces, such as farmers markets, venues and or visitor attraction programmes.</p>

5. Priorities for Investment – Our Principles and Criteria

5.1 Support Criteria

Scottish Borders Council will invest budget and support to events using the following Event Development criteria:

- **Fit with Strategy:** does the event play to our strengths as an area; celebrate our unique cultural heritage and landscape or develop our reputation as an excellent event host to increase opportunities for higher profile events?
- **Attracting Visitors:** does the event have the potential to attract visitors from outside the area and is there opportunity to promote overnight stays and return visits?
- **Economic Impact:** does the event create a substantial economic impact for businesses in the local towns and surrounding area?
- **Place Shaping:** does the event encourage, support and facilitate events that celebrate the Scottish Borders' distinctiveness utilising the landscape and backdrop which does not allow these event to be held anywhere else?
- **People – Stronger communities, health, care & wellbeing:** does the event support event organisers who use events to develop a strong sustainable community, providing opportunities for:
 - Volunteering
 - Skills and training
 - Pathways to employment
 - Health and wellbeing
- **Media Profile:** does the event have the ability to attract media attention furthering the Scottish Borders reputation throughout Scotland, UK and Internationally?
- **Funding gaps and potential to draw external funding:** what added value would Scottish Borders Council funding provide? Would Scottish Borders Council funding enable more external funding to be drawn into the area, for example from EventScotland/ Creative Scotland/ SportScotland.

Consideration will also be given to minimising potential negative impacts, including:

- **Potential for disruption to normal life of residents:** are plans in place to minimise disruption for local communities?

6. Key Event Support

6.1 Resources

Scottish Borders Council will continue to offer support to deliver events which fit the priorities of the Scottish Borders Council Events Plan. Support will be targeted towards events which have the potential to deliver the most significant economic impact (primarily Major Festivals and Events and Mid Sized Events).

The Economic Development Service plays a specific role in supporting local organisers to develop themed events. Working with event organisers, the aim is to develop, attract and sustain key (and new) events across 'national' and 'regional' categories, to promote the area, and measure and promote the impact of these events. The partnership approach includes working with national agencies EventScotland and VisitScotland as well as local businesses and communities to maximise local economic impact. For example, recent events such as the Tour of Britain has returned for the fourth year, while existing successful events such as the Borders Book Festival, TweedLove and Melrose 7s are being developed further to enhance their economic impact, particularly with the opportunities arising from the Borders Railway.

Economic Development supports the development and coordination of events in conjunction with other key support services within the Council including the Safety Advisory team, the Roads Engineers/ Safety team, Licencing, Environmental Health, Wellbeing and Safety, Communications.

This coordination role ensures that economic links are made between the events and local business development opportunities. Tourism and events are sectors of the Scottish Borders economy and the Council's priority is to sustain and grow business activity in these sectors.

6.2 The Approach

How it Works: the Economic Development Service works closely with event organisers and other Council services across four key stages to maximise economic impact.

1. Event Attraction: activity includes marketing the area to event organisers; a series of business development/ sales pitches to organisers and initial negotiations; development of a bid to the organiser; securing financial support.

2. Pre Event: once the Event has been confirmed, activity includes working with organisers on logistical/ technical support, promotion/ marketing and developing local business opportunities around an event.

3. During Event: activity involves ensuring the safe and effective delivery of the event in conjunction with event organisers, sponsors, participants and attendees; and liaising with other relevant Council services via the Events Coordination team.

External: working with Agencies such as VisitScotland, EventScotland, Live Borders, private sector, Town Centre Groups, Events Organisers/ funders and emergency services.

Internal: Within the Council, activity is coordinated via the Events Strategy Coordination Group, comprising of representation from Safety Advisory, Licencing, Legal, Wellbeing & Safety, Built & Natural Heritage, Building Standards, Community Funding, Roads/ Traffic, Communications, Environmental Health.

Events often require cross-departmental project teams, therefore the coordination role is critical. The event-specific project teams also ensure that the non-economic objectives of an Event are realised with local event organisations receiving support from other services in SBC where relevant.

4. Post Event: activity includes completing appropriate monitoring and evaluation to ensure the additional economic impact of the event is fully captured and understood.

6.4 Responsibilities

The coordination and management of the Events Plan is led by Scottish Borders Council. However, successful event delivery requires a partnership approach with ambitious event organisers and national agencies, as well as local businesses and communities.

Major events will require co-ordination support from Scottish Borders Council services to ensure traffic control measures, cleansing etc are in place, keeping disruption to local life to a minimum. The Council coordinates Local Organising Committees (LOC's) where necessary as part of the Safety Advisory Group process. Many events have received this LOC approach for support including Borders Book Festival, Tour of Britain, Tour o' the Borders, Tweedlove, Melrose Sevens and the Club Lotus Jim Clark weekend.

Civic events, which fall under the auspices of the Council, also require the appropriate strategic overview and planning.

Contact:

Bryan McGrath (Chief Officer Economic Development)

Jane Warcup (Event Strategy Officer)

Economic Development, Scottish Borders Council

Action Plan 2014 – 2020: 2016 Update

KEY

Project Pipeline 2014

	Resources Identified/ Deliverable
	Resources Required

Update 2016

	Achieved/ Ongoing annual activity
	Progressing/ Work in progress
	Limited/no progress

Action	Resource	Lead (Support)	Target (activity/output)	Timescale	Impact/ Outcome Measured by:	Progress Update
A. Support Event Development						
Provide Advisory and Funding Support to local event organisers	Staff	SBC AFA / CGS Creative Scotland/ ES	No. of Events receiving external funding investment.	Ongoing	£ leverage	Ongoing advisory support provided to local event organisers. 2014/15: £141,822 of total grant funding (SBC/ ES) 2015/16: £143k (SBC/ ES)
Provide up to date advice via SBC website and online guide	Staff	SBC	Eventful guide used as first point of contact.	Yearly or as required	Increased knowledge for event organisers	Eventful updated regularly as /when required
Maximise benefits of Scottish Government 'Years of Focus' - Food & drink - Innovation, Architecture & Design (16) - History, heritage and Archaeology (17) - Young People (18)	Staff £20k	SBC/ES/VS	Support key events to align to the 'focus years'. Increased investment for key events.	Ongoing	National £ leverage	Support to appropriate 'Years of...' events has been provided.

Action	Resource	Lead (Support)	Target (activity/output)	Timescale	Impact/ Outcome Measured by:	Progress Update
Develop existing key events to increase Economic Impact	Staff £40k + (est.)	SCB/VS	Increased investment for key events which bring sustained EI in the region.	Ongoing	Increase in Economic Impact outturn figure	Support provided to 'Hallmark' events including: Borders Book Festival, Tour of Britain, Melrose 7s, Tweedlove and Tour o' the Borders. Support provided annually working towards the events being fully sustainable in future years. Significant support to Borders Railway Opening Celebration Events and Steam Train events in 2015 and 2016.
Support networking mechanisms for event organisers	Staff £10k	SBC	Tailored practical support - deliver 5 workshops per year	Ongoing	Increased knowledge of event organisers. Best practice and skill set development Increase in quality of event delivery	Networking opportunities provided at the events/ tourism conferences (as below) Limited progress made to providing additional support network mechanisms due to commitments of the Borders Railway Opening/ related events in 2015 & 2016.
Event sector conferences	Staff 5k	SBC VS Other agencies	Deliver event sector conference	Yearly	Increased knowledge, best practice and skill set development Increase in quality of event delivery	2014 /15 event and tourism conference held in Kelso with 150 attendees (focus on Food and drink) 2014 Scottish MTB/ cycling conference hosted in Peebles with 190 attendees.

Action	Resource	Lead (Support)	Target (activity/output)	Timescale	Impact/ Outcome Measured by:	Progress Update
Ensure events are supported by Safety Advisory Group process (SAG) and Local Organising Committees (LOC)	Staff	SBC / Multi-agency, Fire, Police, Ambulance etc.	<p>Ensure Public Safety</p> <p>All events comply with legislation</p>	Ongoing	Safe execution of events Standardised approach and one stop shop for event organisers	<p>38 number of events were supported by the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) process in 2014/15. This covers all of the main events and those events, where there is a public safety consideration.</p> <p>Events are constantly reviewed and consideration taken as to whether they should undertake the SAG process.</p>
Attract New National and International Events	£50k (additional)	SBC ED/ EventScotland	<p>Bids submitted for hosting events.</p> <p>No. of National & International events secured.</p>	Year by year basis	<p>No. of Event attendances</p> <p>Visitor spend</p> <p>Growth in GVA</p>	<p>Tour of Britain was hosted with a finish event in Kelso in 2015. The net economic impact was £307k. The Council are currently negotiating for future TOB events to be hosted in the Scottish Borders.</p> <p>The Tweed Valley and Peebles hosted the Enduro World Series in 2015 with 4600 visitors and a net economic impact of £600K.</p> <p>The Tweedlove Bike Festival, now over 2 weeks in May had a net economic impact of £594k with 5,000 visitors.</p> <p>The Tour o the Borders continues to grow annually. In 2015 the net economic impact was £595K with 7,500 visitors.</p>

Action	Resource	Lead (Support)	Target (activity/ output)	Timescale	Impact/ Outcome Measured by:	Progress Update
						The British MTB champs were hosted in Selkirk in 2015 and the net economic impact was £69k.
Work in Partnership to develop coordinated communication	Staff	SBC ED/Comms	Promote event related activities / business tie ins etc.		No. of Event attendances Visitor spend Growth in GVA	The Council works in conjunction with VisitScotland, EventScotland and other national partners to promote events to a national/ international audience (measured by individual event EIAs).
Identify local infrastructure needs & facilitate investment	Staff (additional)	SBC/ Various stakeholders FC/SE/Tweed Valley	Development strategy work with partners on infrastructure requirements	Ongoing	Improved and higher quality facilities	<p>The Tweed Valley / Glentress Master Plan is currently progressing, which considers potential infrastructure developments for the Tweed Valley and multi user access opportunities.</p> <p>A Borders Railway Tourism Destination Audit has been produced by Midlothian and Scottish Borders Councils to highlight the opportunities for partnership and collaborative development opportunities linked to the Railway.</p> <p>A 'Covered Spaces' Report has been completed for Galashiels, which considers various town centre locations for additional activity and events to stimulate the town centre/ linked to the Borders Railway opportunities.</p>

Action	Resource	Lead (Support)	Target (activity/output)	Timescale	Impact/ Outcome Measured by:	Progress Update
Promote benefits to businesses through collaborative working	Staff (additional)	SBC/ BG /ATP/ Chamber of Commerce	Specific assessment of businesses when events are taking place in the locality	Ongoing	Economic Impact assessment of increase in expenditure by event attendees and event organisers (goods & services)	<p>Economic Impact Assessments are completed for significant events, which identified the benefit of local partnership/ collaborative working:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Borders Railway opening • Tour of Britain • Tour o’ the Borders • Tweedlove • Borders Book Festival • Melrose 7s. <p>Total Economic Impact for the above events £5,735,052</p>
B. Encourage Effective Event Promotion and Marketing						
Maximise joint marketing and promotional activities	Staff	SBC/VS/ES	<p>VisitScotland promotions and linkages to VisitScotland Website and/ or publications</p> <p>Promote coordination of events with similar themes</p>	2 per year Ongoing	<p>Increase awareness and event attendance</p> <p>Capture of campaign information (web hits / etc.)</p> <p>Event collaboration (theme/geographical)</p>	<p>Significant national promotion of the Scottish Borders with the re-opening of the Borders Railway and related event activity (see below).</p> <p>Significant media promotion of the Scottish Borders particularly with the Hallmark events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melrose 7’s covered by BBC Scotland • Tour of Britain featured on ITV4 <p>Opportunity to develop continued promotion with the current hallmark events and the wide range of the events calendar.</p>

Action	Resource	Lead (Support)	Target (activity/output)	Timescale	Impact/ Outcome Measured by:	Progress Update
						<p>Locally Border Events (private sector) continue to market and promote events via the website and hard copy brochure.</p> <p>Live Borders continue to deliver the quarterly hard copy 'what's on' guide.</p>
Promote the Scottish Borders as an excellent host for events	Staff	SBC/VS/ES	Event Destination Guide produced No of new events aligned to the region's USP's	Ongoing	Increase in the number of events in the region	<p>Continuous partnership working with EventScotland to raise the profile of the Scottish Borders and bring events to the area.</p> <p>Opportunities to build on this and attract additional events will require increased investment and resources.</p>
Promote 'Event Tourism' in the Scottish Borders, including focus on USP 'all wheels' cycling	Staff £12k	SBC/ VS/Comms	Event Destination Guide / Social Media	Ongoing	Increase in number of event attendees and quality of experiences Closer links and collaboration, creating a portfolio of events to 'sell/showcase' the region	<p>The area has a range of cycling events, festivals and sportives including Tour of Britain, Tweedlove, Tour o the Borders, Tour de Lauder, Selkirk MTB, Ken Laidlaw Sportive as well as many other local cycling events/activities (see below).</p> <p>The Scottish Borders Cycling Tourism strategy and Action Plan 2016 – 2021 has been developed to progress further opportunities.</p>

Action	Resource	Lead (Support)	Target (activity/output)	Timescale	Impact/ Outcome Measured by:	Progress Update
Facilitate the development of events and promotional activities with neighbouring Local Authorities and other areas of Scotland.	Staff (additional)	SBC/ES/ other Local Authorities Engage with various stakeholders , i.e. FC / SE / D&G	Review current network and opportunities on offer. Attendance at event development meetings Cross boundary events hosted Collaboration on specific events	2 per year Ongoing	Number of joint events hosted Increase in collaboration of stakeholders	Regular cross boundary events have been added to the events calendar including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooler Wheelers, Northumberland • A Bridge too Far, Norham/Kelso • Ride to the Sun, through Borders (Carlisle to Cramond) • Poppy Scotland sportive, Prestonpans / Berwickshire • Bethany sportive, starting at Lasswade and heading south Further opportunities will be explored as part of the Scottish Borders Cycling Tourism strategy and Action Plan 2016 – 2021.
C. Evaluate Events and Understand their Economic Impacts						
Measure the economic impact of all supported events using the eventIMPACTS method and use data to inform future development	£5k Staff	SBC/ED/E&L L	Evaluation of specific key events	Ongoing	No. of Event attendances and increase year on year. Visitors spend. Growth in GVA	Each event, which is supported by the Council or the public sector, is required to submit an Economic Impact Assessment. Economic Impact figures are collated each year.
Measure National and International Media Exposure	Staff (additional)	SBC/ED/Co mms	Evaluate media coverage associated with events	ongoing	AVE & PR Value of events Strengthen the events/tourism profile of the region	Significant international and national promotion of the Scottish Borders with the re-opening of the Borders Railway and related event activity.

Action	Resource	Lead (Support)	Target (activity/output)	Timescale	Impact/ Outcome Measured by:	Progress Update
						<p>The Railway was officially opened by HM The Queen on the day, which marked her as the longest reigning monarchy. This ensured international coverage throughout the commonwealth.</p> <p>Range of national and international media exposure with particularly the current hallmark events.</p>

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SCOTTISH BORDERS CYCLE TOURISM STRATEGY

Report by Corporate Transformation & Services Director

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1 November 2016

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report updates members on the consultation process and seeks approval for the Scottish Borders Cycle Tourism Strategy 2016-2021.**
- 1.2 The Scottish Borders has a long-established and substantial road cycling offer as well as world-class mountain biking. It has been agreed that a strategy for cycle tourism in the Scottish Borders should be developed to provide a strategic framework for the development of cycling in the area.
- 1.3 The overall aim for the Scottish Borders Cycle Tourism Strategy is to boost the Scottish Borders economy and accelerate the growth of cycling from an events and tourism perspective. The Scottish Borders is already a recognised destination for cycling in the UK and the aim will be to be seen as one of Britain's premier destinations for cycling by 2021.
- 1.4 Following a consultation exercise, which invited responses from relevant partners, stakeholders and interested groups, the draft strategy has been updated and an action plan produced. The Scottish Borders Cycle Tourism Strategy 2016-2021 is set out in Annex 1.
- 1.5 Scottish Borders Council has supported the cycling sector to continue to thrive and grow, promoting the Scottish Borders as a cycling 'destination'. The Council Administration's manifesto, 'Ambitious for the Borders', sets out an ambition to make the Scottish Borders one of Britain's premier destinations for outdoor activities, both sporting and leisure. The Cycle Tourism Strategy and action plan will help support the sector to move forward to realise this ambition.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **I recommend that the Executive Committee:**
 - (a) Approves the Scottish Borders Cycle Tourism Strategy 2016-2021 as set out in Annex 1;**
 - (b) Approves the Action Plan for 2017 / 2018, as set out in Annex 2, and notes the actions that are already resourced and those for which resources are still to be identified; and**
 - (c) Supports the decision to move the Tour o' the Borders closed road cycle event to 3 September 2017, and agrees to continue supporting and encouraging this cycle event, and others, as part of the Cycle Tourism Strategy.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Scottish Borders has a long-established and substantial road cycling offer as well as world-class mountain biking at the 7stanes sites at Glentress, Innerleithen and Newcastleton. It also has an attractive series of natural trails on the hills. The natural assets of the area provide a cycling 'playground' and a range of cycle friendly services. Unlike other activities, cycling is available throughout the Scottish Borders, offering a good opportunity for geographic spread.
- 3.2 Following the development of the 7stanes mountain biking centres and a concerted effort to promote road cycling from 2009 via the Scottish Borders Recreational Cycling Group (SBRCG), cycling has become a key tourism product for the Scottish Borders. This period of activity coincided with a growth in the number of cycling and mountain biking events including TweedLove, the Tour de Lauder, the Tour o' the Borders and the Enduro World Series. These events all help to promote the Scottish Borders and raise its profile as a cycling destination.
- 3.3 There is now a need to consider the current position and look at the opportunities to use cycle tourism as a means to increase economic benefit to the Scottish Borders.

4 CYCLE TOURISM STRATEGY

- 4.1 Council officers have identified that there is a continued requirement for investment into cycling product development in all areas. In order to ensure this is addressed in a strategic and coordinated way, there is now a requirement for a Scottish Borders Cycle Tourism Strategy.
- 4.2 The overall aim is for the Scottish Borders Cycle Tourism Strategy to boost the Scottish Borders economy and accelerate the growth of cycling both from an events and tourism perspective by encouraging and working across the cycling and tourism spectrum. The Scottish Borders is already a recognised destination for cycling in the UK and the aim is to be seen as one of Britain's premier destinations for cycling by 2021. The strategy that has been developed encompasses event development, infrastructure and marketing to maximise cycling events and tourism opportunities.
- 4.3 The draft Scottish Borders Cycle Tourism Strategy was presented to the Executive Committee in June 2016. The consultation period over the summer involved online consultation as well as specific workshop sessions. A range of relevant partners, stakeholders and interested groups were invited to respond and over 70 written responses were received.
- 4.4 The comments were positive and constructive and endorsed many areas within the draft strategy. Broadly, it was felt that the strategy reflected the business opportunities around cycling for the Scottish Borders, as well as providing a focus for planning new cycling infrastructure and building on the strong events offer that currently exists. The feedback assisted in identifying priorities within the action plan.
- 4.5 Following the consultation period, the Strategy for the period 2016 to 2021 has been reviewed and the following vision proposed:

We will work to make the Scottish Borders one of Britain's premier destinations for cycling by 2021.

The Council will seek to deliver this vision by working across the public, private and voluntary sectors.

- 4.6 The aim is to prioritise aspects of cycle tourism by capitalising on the Scottish Borders' unique selling points to increase awareness and, through the creation of new packages, deliver strong economic impact. The following key objectives are highlighted:
1. Developing our Assets – turning our cycle tourism assets into experiences and improving quality.
 2. Event Development – attracting and leveraging events
 3. Building consumer demand – promoting the quality experiences
- The finalised Strategy is set out in Annex 1 with an Action Plan specifically for 2017/2018 set out in Annex 2.
- 4.7 The Tour o' the Borders closed-road cycling event is an excellent example of the type of event that can help to raise the profile of cycling in the Scottish Borders. In 2016 it attracted over 2000 riders to come to the area to experience the fantastic cycling on offer on Borders roads. In discussion with officers, Hillside Outside, the event organisers, has confirmed that the race will shift to a new date for next year, 3 September 2017. This is later than previous years and will now avoid the school holidays. It also puts the event into the 'shoulder' months, which helps support a longer season for tourism businesses. Officers agreed that the new date was helpful in supporting the tourism sector and also helped meet the concerns raised by a number of communities. An in-depth process of community engagement has begun already, with the organisers taking a stand at the Yarrow Show in September 2016.
- 4.8 Scottish Borders Council has supported the cycling sector to continue to thrive and grow, promoting the Scottish Borders as a cycling 'destination'. The Council Administration's manifesto, 'Ambitious for the Borders', sets out an ambition to make the Scottish Borders one of Britain's premier destinations for outdoor activities, both sporting and leisure. The Cycle Tourism Strategy and action plan will help support the sector to move forwards to realise this ambition.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

The Cycle Tourism Strategy initially has an action plan specifically for 2017/2018 to help support the sector to move forward. The Council has identified existing budget of £57,000 from Economic Development, which can be targeted to support cycling events activity. There are two key areas which have been identified as areas of opportunity and which require further development. These include additional marketing and infrastructure development and a further £58,000 will require to be identified from Council and partner sources if the actions are to be delivered. At this stage in the financial planning for 2017/18 it is helpful to identify priorities in this way.

5.2 Risk and Mitigations

There is a risk if the Council does not support businesses and communities to take advantage of the opportunities provided by cycle tourism that the economic development opportunities from this growing sector may not be maximised. The Cycle Tourism Strategy has a detailed Action Plan with specific resources to deliver key priorities activities. Working in partnership with local agencies and businesses will be critical to the successful delivery of the Action Plan.

5.3 Equalities

An Equalities Impact Assessment is being undertaken to identify any potential positive or adverse impacts due to race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation or religious/belief arising from the Cycle Tourism Strategy.

5.4 Acting Sustainably

The encouragement of cycle tourism will help support economic activity across the Scottish Borders, bringing in new and repeat visitors to the area and raising the profile of the Scottish Borders at a national and international level. There are also opportunities to link cycle tourism to the Borders Railway and the Core Path Network.

5.5 Carbon Management

Increasing the volume of visitors who are using bicycles for transport and recreation could reduce the need for travel and have a positive impact on carbon emissions.

5.6 Rural Proofing

The Strategy could have a positive impact for rural areas of the Scottish Borders as many of the best road and mountain biking routes are in the remoter parts of the Scottish Borders.

5.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

There are no changes to be made to the Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation arising from this report.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 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

Rob Dickson
Corporate Transformation
and Services Director

Signature

Author(s)

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Background Papers:

Previous Minute Reference:

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

Contact us at Bryan McGrath, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA Tel: 01835 826525, email bmcgrath@scotborders.gov.uk

Annex 1

Scottish Borders Cycle Tourism Strategy 2016-2021

'Keeping up the momentum'

October 2016
V3 171016

1. Purpose of Document

The purpose of this document is to set out a proposed five year strategy for cycle tourism in the Scottish Borders until 2021. It details the product strengths, the challenges and the ambitions of using cycling as a means to deliver economic benefit to the area. It also highlights key issues needing to be addressed and identifies three key objectives. This document is a result of a consultation exercise ensuring that all relevant partners and interested groups and individuals have been engaged with prior to progressing the subsequent Action Plan.

2. Introduction

The Scottish Borders has a long-established and substantial road cycling offer along with world-class mountain biking at the 7stanes sites at Glentress, Innerleithen, Newcastleton, and also a series of natural trails. The natural assets of the Scottish Borders provide a wonderful cycling¹ playground that is supported by a range of cycle friendly services. Unlike other activities, cycling is available throughout the Borders offering good opportunity for geographic spread.

Following the development of the 7stanes and a concerted effort to promote road cycling from 2009 via the Scottish Borders Recreational Cycling Group (SBRCG), cycling has become a key tourism product for the area. The SBRCG comprised a number of organisations and interests with either a remit for, or an interest in, the promotion of cycling. This period of activity coincided with a growth in the number of cycling and mountain biking events with TweedLove, the Tour de Lauder, the Tour o' the Borders and the Enduro World Series exploding on to the scene helping to promote the area and firmly putting it on the 'map'.

Activity to date has mostly relied on funding from sources such as LEADER, or as support activity around the regular hosting of the Tour of Britain, resulting in infrequent bursts of activity and momentum. Some of this funding supported a Project Manager working a few days each month delivering planned activity. As part of the LEADER-funded projects by the SBRCG a website was developed under the heading of Cycle Scottish Borders. On the completion of the second LEADER project in 2013 the final report concluded that going forward both road cycling and mountain biking should be promoted together, i.e. in an 'all wheels' project. Due to a lack of funding this idea has not been progressed.

There is now a need to consider activity to date whilst looking at the bigger opportunity and to develop an Action Plan using cycle tourism as a means to increase economic benefit to the Scottish Borders.

¹ For the purposes of this document 'cycling' refers to both mountain biking and road cycling.

3. The Vision

The following vision is proposed:

We will work to make the Scottish Borders one of Britain's premier destinations for cycling by 2021.

3.1 Strategic Aim

Scottish Borders Council will seek to deliver this vision by developing the cycle tourism product, including cycling events, by working across the public, private and voluntary sectors. The aim is:

To develop prioritised aspects of cycle tourism by capitalising on the Scottish Borders' unique selling points to increase awareness and, through the creation of packages, deliver strong economic impact.

3.2 Objectives

The overall aim is to develop the reputation of the Scottish Borders to maximise wider tourism benefits, working in partnership and leveraging the Borders Railway as opportunities arise. The following key objectives are desirable:

- Develop our cycle tourism assets – turn our assets into experiences and packages, and improve quality
- Event development – attract new, develop existing and leverage events to maximise wider tourism opportunities
- Build consumer demand – promote quality authentic experiences to target markets

The lack of baseline data on the product and market currently restricts the opportunity to make these objectives – more specific or measurable. This is an issue needing to be addressed as the Action Plan is developed.

4. Value of Cycle Tourism

Cycle tourism has an important role to play in supporting local, sustainable economic development. Cycling is a thriving sector of Scotland's tourism industry. VisitScotland's research shows that in the first nine months of 2015 alone, GB residents who took part in cycling and mountain biking during overnight or day trips to Scotland spent almost £155 million. Analysis from Sustrans shows that spending from cycle tourism and leisure cycling across Scotland reached a record £375 million in 2014.

There is great potential to increase the impact and benefits for the whole country and for the Scottish Borders, which offers some of Scotland's most exceptional landscapes and outstanding routes and trails for the activity.

4.1 Target Markets

Little or no data exists specifically for the Scottish Borders, and this has been identified as a key issue going forward. Small pockets of data exist from a range of stakeholders but not enough to provide a complete picture. There is no indication of who the target markets are who will be attracted to the region's cycling assets or the value of them, eg main purpose cyclists, generalists who cycle as part of a holiday, day trippers or those staying overnight. Without this information the scale of opportunity cannot be quantified and without baseline data or segmentation it is difficult to identify targets or to measure what success may look like.

5. Strategic Considerations

There are a range of initiatives, strategies and stakeholders involved in cycle tourism both within the Scottish Borders region but also nationwide. The following section details some of the key strategic considerations.

Ambitious for the Borders sets out that the Scottish Borders Council (SBC) administration will ensure that economic development is the key driver by:

- Supporting our communities through a focused programme of regeneration and rural development with an emphasis on working with the Scottish Government
- Strengthening our targeted marketing strategy to attract business into the Scottish Borders and building on the opportunities provided by the Borders Railway

Furthermore the ***Scottish Borders Economic Strategy 2023*** has four key strategic aims:

- Creating the conditions for business to compete
- Building on our assets
- Developing the workforce of the future
- Providing Leadership

In addition the Council's ***Corporate Plan*** has eight priorities, which relate to both external and internal facing services. The two that are most relevant to this Strategy are:

- Encouraging sustainable economic growth
- Developing our assets and resources

Furthermore, consideration must be given to the need to

- Maximising the Place – town centres, activity tourism and location
- Focusing on our competitive advantage and also our natural assets
- Encouraging entrepreneurial activity.
- Opportunities for economic diversification and further development of the rural economy.

5.1 Local Access and Transport Strategy

This consultation document contains a section on cycling and walking and suggests a long term future cycling network, primarily utilising the existing former rail network. Specifically it acknowledges that cycling and walking are fundamental elements of any integrated transport system offering a wide range of benefits including cheap flexible transport, increased health benefits and pollution-free travel.

A number of issues are raised in this document including a potential pilot project to develop and promote 'Sections of Quiet Road'. This 'sections of quieter road' at a selected location would be specifically linked to the development of a strategic shared access network for the Scottish Borders. Linked to this would be the potential safeguarding the 125 mile network of former railway lines, which have the potential to be used as safer walking, cycling and horse riding routes. Such an initiative would deliver economic and tourism related benefits for the area.

5.2 Cycling Action Plan for Scotland

This document by Cycling Scotland contains 19 actions, and outlines how through working in partnership the shared vision that by 2020, 10% of everyday journeys taken in Scotland will be by bike, will be achieved.

These actions include Borders specific approaches to supporting functional cycling, the promotion and support of community-led cycling initiatives and the development of the National Cycling Network.

5.3 Transform Scotland

In 2013, Transform Scotland published a report on the Value of Cycle Tourism. This report made a number of key recommendations in the following areas which should be considered alongside this strategy and action plan:

- Strengthening Leadership and Collaboration
- Knowing our Markets
- Managing the Customer Journey
- Building Sustainable Tourism

5.4 Abellio ScotRail Cycle Innovation Plan

This details Abellio ScotRail's vision and approach to sustainable transport. Specifically it details plans to include a Bike & Go service at Tweedbank, their intention to support feature cycle events and also develop a leisure programme for popular cycle destinations such as the Scottish Borders. Furthermore cycle events will be a mandatory item on the agenda of the ScotRail Cycle Forum.

5.5 Borders Community Rail Partnership

Community Rail Partnerships form a bridge between the railway and local communities, bringing together a wide range of interests along a rail corridor. The Partnership works to build connections between those managing the railway and the communities along the length of the line from Edinburgh to Tweedbank, maximising the potential and benefits of the line for all.

5.6 The South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan Authority

SESplan is a partnership of six Member Authorities comprising the City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian, Fife, Scottish Borders and West Lothian, working together on strategic development planning matters. SESplan's key role is to prepare and maintain an up to date Strategic Development Plan (SDP) for the South East Scotland area. This process involves engaging key stakeholders and the wider community. The first SDP was approved by Scottish Ministers in June 2013.

5.7 South East of Scotland Transport Partnership

SEStran has been working toward the development of key strategic regional cycle routes, which have been identified within their Strategic Cross Boundary Cycle Development plan. As part of its delivery SEStran work closely with Sustrans to offer the SEStran Regional Cycle Network Grant Scheme.

5.8 Green Networks

Scottish Natural Heritage encourages green networks. Such network have multiple objectives, often with a primary aim of improving the environment for people, and usually to help to improve the economic status of an area, by making it more attractive place to live and work. Scottish Borders Council supports the development of Green Networks where relevant.

5.9 The Tourism Development Framework

Published by VisitScotland with input from many parties, including the Council, the Tourism Development Framework for Scotland looks at the role of the planning system in delivering the visitor economy. It contains a specific section on road cycling and mountain biking and reference is made to the Glentworth Masterplan. This document also contains development priorities for the Scottish Borders across a number of areas including transport, accommodation and activities with specific reference included on mountain biking and the railway.

5.10 The National Tourism Strategy

The National Strategy: *Tourism Scotland 2020* was developed to target markets offering the greatest growth potential, focusing on developing key assets through collaboration in order to offer visitors a diverse range of authentic experiences. The Strategy states 'playing' to Scotland's strengths is one half of the step change required. In order to develop quality and authentic tourism experiences we must also build the capability of our businesses and the industry as a whole in the following key areas:

- Leadership and collaboration
- Sustainable tourism
- Quality and skills
- Marketing

This cycle tourism strategy links directly to the National Strategy's Nature and Activities priority.

5.11 Regional Tourism Context

The Scottish Borders Area Tourism Partnership's vision up until 2020 is to grow tourism visits and spend in the Scottish Borders, through positioning and promotion as, a sustainable, year-round destination, which capitalises on its unique geography, heritage, natural environment and people. Cycling features as a key action within the Partnership's plan.

5.12 Event Strategies

With the increase in cycling events in the area it is worth noting that Scotland's Events Strategy states the need:

- to utilise and develop the assets that Scotland has which make it The Perfect Stage for events
- to deliver a portfolio of events which provide world leading authentic experiences for residents and visitors

Scottish Borders Council's Events Plan 2014-2020 has the following objectives:

- To support the development of events
- To encourage effective event promotion and marketing
- To ensure events are evaluated so we understand their economic impact

6. Competitive Positioning

In a previous LEADER-funded project for road cycling, the Scottish Borders was positioned as 'Scotland's leading cycling destination'. It should be noted that although mountain biking was not explicitly promoted as part of this project the world class status of 7stanes was implied, or 'borrowed', to help reinforce this positioning.

Furthermore, as a result of a pilot project to expand VisitScotland's Cyclists Welcome Scheme, the Scottish Borders is well served with scheme members and this adds weight to the area being the most friendly cycling destination in Scotland.

The growth in the number of cycling events continues to help raise the profile and provide plenty of content for social media. In short, the area has a wealth of cycle tourism assets, albeit there are superior trails, events, road surfaces and infrastructure to be found elsewhere.

Although very little specific marketing activity currently takes place, the 'leading' positioning continues to be used as and when the opportunity arises e.g. during the promotion of the Tour of Britain to promote Cycle Scottish Borders, and where relevant in VisitScotland's regional marketing activity.

It should be noted that at the time the 'leading destination' positioning was created few areas in Scotland were using cycling as a key product message and as a result the Scottish Borders was often cited as best practice in cycle tourism. These days there are other Local Authorities who are keen to do more to promote the cycling in their areas, however only a few have the mix of mountain biking and road cycling – e.g. Perthshire, Dumfries & Galloway and the Highlands. Fife has previously undertaken significant activity to promote their cycle routes and more recently Edinburgh and the Lothian's Area Tourism Partnership has explored the possibility of working collaboratively to promote cycling across the wider region. Midlothian has subsequently taken a further step by hosting a stand-alone workshop to develop their cycle tourism offer and have now published a factsheet on cycle-friendly businesses. They are also keen to maximise cycling and walking opportunities associated with the Borders Railway. Glasgow, South Lanarkshire and Dundee also have broad cycling strategies that are not tourism specific.

Beyond Scotland, areas such as Yorkshire, the Lake District, the Peak District and Devon & Cornwall all have good cycling product and some have very good mountain biking. The hosting of the Grand Depart of the Tour de France in Yorkshire, and the high profile Tour de Yorkshire have done much to position Yorkshire as a key cycling destination in the UK. These areas (and many others) also host stages of the Tour of Britain which shine a media spotlight and help add credibility to a destination. In a world of limited resources, events need to be used to help promote destinations and make every pound go further.

Wales also has a good offering of both cycling and mountain biking (Bike Park Wales) and a range of cycling events such as the Velothon Wales with 18,000 riders taking part in this closed road sportive, and the Dragon Ride with four distances including the Dragon Devil offering a 305km route for more experienced riders. It is an increasingly competitive market from a domestic tourism perspective and without having a presence in the market place, the Scottish Borders will be difficult to find and the potential to increase economic benefit will be greatly reduced.

Overseas competitors are many and varied and include Majorca, Italy, numerous alpine/mountain destinations in Europe such as Les Gets in France, and also further afield e.g. the USA, Canada (Whistler) or New Zealand (Queenstown).

7. Scottish Borders Product Strengths

7.1 Road Cycling

There are hundreds of miles of cycling routes on mainly quiet roads across the Borders, including a good range of long distance routes. Please refer to the map in the Appendix.

- The Borderloop is 250 miles long and provides a reasonably comprehensive tour of the area
- The 4 Abbeys is 55 miles long and links the Borders' key abbeys
- The Tweed Cycle Route follows the course of the Tweed along a 95 mile route
- The Coast & Castles route/National Cycle Network (NCN) route 1 passes through the area from Newcastle to Edinburgh, and NCN Route 76 between Berwick upon Tweed and Edinburgh passes through coastal Berwickshire and forms an integral part of the North Sea Cycle Route.
- The Southern Borders Loop, a fairly recent addition to the long distance routes, links Hawick and Newcastleton over two distance choices; as yet not specifically signposted.

The area is also well served by an excellent range of shorter local cycling trails from:

Duns – 5 trails at 4.5, 10, 16, 16.5 and 25.5 mile distances

Eyemouth – 4 trails at 8.5, 14, 20 and 26 mile distances

Hawick – 4 trails at 7, 14, 14.5 and 19 mile distances

Innerleithen – 3 trails at 37, 42 and 53 mile distances, including the local favourite Megget & Talla

Jedburgh – 5 trails at 7, 11.5, 17.5, 19 and 20 mile distances

Kelso – 5 trails at 5.5, 14, 18.5, 20.5 and 24 mile distances

Melrose – 4 trails at 5, 8, 13.5 and 15.5 mile distances

Peebles – 5 trails at 7.5, 13, 20.5, 22.5 and 26 mile distances

Selkirk – 4 trails at 7, 8.5, 16 and 19.5 mile distances

The long distance routes are more suitable for confident, main purpose cyclists, whilst some of the trails from the towns provide plenty of cycling opportunities over a variety of distances.

In reality these routes are under-promoted. Locals are often unaware of most of these routes, never mind those the region is hoping to attract.

Safety of both local and visiting cyclists is important and the majority of these routes have been developed utilising the network of quiet roads in the region. They are not car free zones however and safety of cyclists remains a key issue. Several routes involve cycling on or crossing busy roads such as the A1 or A68. In particular, some cyclists from overseas may have a different expectation when it comes to quiet roads and the quality of some of the road surfaces.

The Council has recently developed an off-road route on the former railway line between Peebles and Innerleithen which has proven to be very popular with over 70,000 people using the path on an annual basis. Subsequently, a number of communities throughout the Scottish Borders have indicated a desire to see a strategic network of routes that would help to connect local towns and villages together.

Bike hire is available in a number of locations throughout the Borders, but predominantly in the Tweed Valley and also in Newcastleton. There is also limited bike hire available in neighbouring Berwick upon Tweed. Until recently electric bike hire was available in the Tweed Valley, but

unfortunately this business has ceased trading. Electric bike hire has the potential to open up other markets.

7.2 Mountain Biking

The Scottish Borders can boast world-class mountain biking with the 7stanes at Glentress, Innerleithen and Newcastleton; these trails are a huge year-round tourism asset. To some, however, these trails are no longer world leading and due to a lack of investment in maintenance and development are no longer considered the best out there; the Tweed Valley is being left behind. Unofficial trails are developed under the cover of darkness in an attempt to fill this gap. These illegal, wild trails do not have any big jumps or large drops and there are issues regarding the ongoing maintenance and safety of those using them. By in large the 7stanes trails have not developed at the same pace as the market demands and without development there is the potential for a drop off in numbers.

The mountain biking options at 7stanes are varied and are suited to both beginners and those who are more experienced either in cross country or downhill. The 7stanes trails are graded so users can identify the trail most suited to their ability and this provides the opportunity to either progress as their skills develop, or to participate as a family. One of the many benefits of mountain biking is that it can be an all year round activity – tricky conditions with mud and leaves can add to the experience. There are a number of operators based in the Tweed Valley offering guiding and skills coaching for mountain biking.

Further details on developments in the Tweed Valley can be found in section 8.1.

Further mountain biking trails are to be found around Jedburgh, promoted locally as Jedforest Trails and comprise a unique mixture of waymarked mountain bike routes. They consist of an eclectic mix of natural and man-made surfaced trails linked by forest track and some tarmac roads. This includes the 40km Justice Trail and also three family routes.

The Duke of Roxburghe has recently provided consent for Kelso Wheelers to lease Angraflats plantation on the outskirts of Kelso for an off-road cycling area, which would provide improved local training facilities and encourage more people to take up the sport.

7.3 Welcoming Cyclists

There is very good provision of services for cycle visitors with approximately 100 businesses in VisitScotland's Cyclists Welcome Scheme. Membership of this scheme provides these businesses with the opportunity to be listed on the Cycle Scottish Borders website for free. The Tweed Valley Tourism Consortium also promotes a Mountain Bike Hospitality Scheme for those businesses who specifically cater for the needs of mountain bikers to the area.

7.4 A Developing Events Calendar

The Scottish Borders has a very good range of cycling events to both participate in and to spectate at. Events such as TweedLove, the Tour o' the Borders, Tour de Lauder and the Enduro World Series have all helped to raise awareness of what the area has to offer. Ride to the Sun travels through the Borders from Carlisle to Cramond in Edinburgh and makes use of the facilities at the Crook Inn, helping to put the area on the cycling map.

The frequent hosting of the Tour of Britain brings a significant media spotlight with it and the traffic to the Cycle Scottish Borders site significantly increases when the event is in town, albeit from a low base, eg from 550 visits per week to almost 2,000. The Tour of Britain relies on funding from

Scottish Borders Council and EventScotland who also support other cycling events in the region eg TweedLove and Tour o' the Borders. Events supported by EventScotland feature as part of the national portfolio.

New events continue to appear and be explored with 2016/17 looking as if it is going to have at least three new significant cycle events in the calendar (Race the Train, The Gran Fonduro and PoppyScotland and Shelter Scotland charity cycle rides). The growth in the number of new events may have an impact on existing club events that have been experiencing a drop in participants eg the Ken Laidlaw Sportive run by Hawick Cycling Club was cancelled this year due to a lack of participants.

In recent times the Tweed Valley has benefited from the growth in endurance events, hosting the Enduro Worlds Series twice. The market is predominantly private sector led and attracts a wide audience from both the UK and Internationally. The events are characterised by participants paying an entry fee which helps to offset the costs of the overall event. This as a new growth area which needs to be capitalised on and the Scottish Borders is a perfect location.

7.5 Railways

Berwick upon Tweed provides an opportunity for visitors to alight and access the Borders through Berwickshire. The potential re-opening of the station at Reston will, if realised, provide a further access point.

The re-introduction of the Borders Railway provides an opportunity for more visitors to access the area with the Edinburgh catchment area alone representing a significant market. There is room for two bikes per train, if space allows more cyclists will be accommodated on each journey at the discretion of the staff. Anecdotally, travellers with bikes appear to be accommodated but the uncertainty around being able to travel with bikes will put some visitors off, especially those travelling as a family, or as a group. There is no significant increase planned for current on-train provision.

As yet there is no bike hire available at any of the Borders' stations, but there is the potential for a Bike & Go facility operated in partnership with ScotRail at Tweedbank. The nearest bike hire is available in Galashiels and also in Melrose.

The railway provides an opportunity for spectators to travel and attend cycling events in the area, e.g. The Tour of Britain. Abellio ScotRail's Cycling Innovation Plan states that they will support/feature key cycle events in Scotland. Although early stages this has yet to manifest itself into anything meaningful.

There is good provision of cycle racks at the new stations and also throughout the area's towns.

Opportunities exist to work in partnership with Midlothian to promote the cycling (and walking) routes from the stations along the Borders Railway.

8. Scottish Borders Product Challenges

A number of issues and actions were identified in the Tourism Destination Audit undertaken in 2015 as part of the activity surrounding the re-introduction of the Borders Railway. This included the need for the development of:

- additional hostel/bunkhouse style accommodation (favoured by those undertaking outdoor activities)
- bike hire at stations
- bike hire/drop off at attractions
- small group bike tours from stations
- extended opening hours of attractions
- extended opening hours for bike hire into the evening during summertime

Other issues that have been identified as part of the consultation on the draft Strategy include:

- sufficient geographic spread of cycle friendly businesses to encourage wider distribution of cycling visitors throughout the region eg in Berwickshire
- concern over the use of the A1, rather than the specified Coast & Castles route which is hilly in parts – combined with issues of cyclists crossing the A1
- the lack of basic cycle repair kits/services in some towns
- the lack of cafes open on Sundays – a key day for cyclists doing a ‘Sunday run’
- road surface issues – the number of pot holes and also the need to have built up edges and no raised ironwork
- issues with regard to cyclists dominating shared-use paths and the need to regularly check these paths for over-hanging vegetation
- the cost of Public Liability Insurance for cycle hire/small businesses
- the need for buses to be fitted with bike racks

Currently there are no packaged up attractions/ lunch and bike hire options to promote to potential visitors at present. The Borders only features in the programmes offered by a limited number of cycling tour operators – either for cycling holidays or for the purposes of training for participation in endurance events.

Much more could also be done to encourage locals to use their bikes instead of cars thereby making it more of a cycle friendly destination. The Council should consider how best to engage with grassroots cycling and schemes such as Bikeability alongside this tourism strategy.

8.1 Infrastructure and Future Development

From consultation responses it is clear that the general public would like to see a network of custom made off-road cycle routes between our key towns and smaller settlements, providing an expanded safer environment for cyclists of all ages and encouraging more people to park the car and use sustainable means of transport.

The key to the development of this network is the utilisation of the former railway lines that cross our area, although the promotion and development of these routes can be expensive to provide and normally require strong political support in order to succeed, especially with regard to some landowners not allowing access to their land for path development.

Wayfinding and Interpretation need to be considered as a whole; there is the opportunity to tell more of a story. Visitors need to be able to get onto a route and navigate that route easily. In some

towns where bike trails are developed and new entry points made into towns the signage can become confusing. There is also a preference for more detail on signs (distance/destination) rather than just a route symbol. Other suggestions include the preference for signs in both directions and signs alerting motorists to there being cyclists on certain routes. Existing signage needs to be considered and, if new trails are created, this needs a signage review process.

Suitable routes and trails to and from the stations in the region are needed and these should be a central consideration in determining the infrastructure needed to support the strategy. Better integration for tourists – railway companies, signed routes, overnight stay options with bike hire at stations.

8.2 Cycle Scottish Borders

The Cycle Scottish Borders website has recently been re-developed to ensure that it is mobile responsive and easily accessed by those on phones, tablets or from interactive screens at stations and in towns. The content will continue to focus on road cycling with mountain biking content currently being provided by way of links to the 7stanes site and Jedforest Trails. Future consideration needs to be given to how best to integrate mountain biking content going forward.

The content for this site is currently kept up to date on a freelance basis when budget can be found to pay for this service. This also applies to the upkeep of the social media presence on Twitter and Facebook. There is a need to explore options to ensure that the upkeep of these services can be maintained longer term. There is also a need to make the most of technological developments and trends in social media to promote the region as a cycling destination.

The website analytics highlight that the site suffers from a lack of promotion and web traffic therefore remains low in comparison to some of the websites for cycling events in the region.

The consultation exercise highlighted a desire for more to be done to promote safe cycling and the online presence provides a platform for key safety messaging.

8.3 Current Events

With an increase in the number of cycling events on offer across the UK there is a need to ensure that the events in the Scottish Borders are sustainable. The origin of the events is often different – some are developed by professional event organisers or charities, others by enthusiastic locals and others by established cycling clubs. Some of the events are more suited to locals or club members and others attract participants, spectators and the media from across the world.

The Tour of Britain in particular is in a class of its own; it sweeps in and out of the Borders bringing a significant entourage, thousands of spectators and considerable media coverage. The estimated Economic Impact for the area in 2015 was £307k. Average viewing figures for Stage 3 in 2015 from Cockermouth to Kelso were 250,000 for the live coverage, 385,000 for the highlights package and 36,000 from repeats. 13 TV broadcasters broadcast over 129 territories providing a total potential reach for the full event of 116,487,600. This event can only visit the region with the strategic intervention and financial support of EventScotland and the Council.

In comparison to the Tour of Britain, it should be noted that although it does not receive the same media attention or coverage, the Economic Impact for the Tour o' the Borders was £496k. This event has potential to grow and represents a good return to those public sector organisations and sponsors who support it.

Some cycling events happen on one day and others last up to two weeks. Some of the events due to the size and scale have a requirement to go through the Safety Advisory Group. A number of events seek Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders and close roads – sometimes these road closures are considered an inconvenience to the local community.

There are also smaller cycling events that are included in the wider programmes of Common Ridings and Festivals throughout the Borders.

Enduro events are a relatively new growth area which needs to be capitalised on, however issues exist over the suitability of trails for these events. The market is evolving quickly and is seeking more natural, man-made trails offering more variety to those currently on offer at Glentress. Assets which were a huge draw five or ten years ago are no longer seen as relevant; the market demands regular refreshing. This issue contributed towards the decision of EMBA to look for other host destinations for their Enduro World Series. The requirement for such trails for these international level events raises a number of issues over the responsibility for maintenance and also insurance-related concerns as a result of the trails not being sanctioned.

Events secure funding from a variety of sources – mainly the Council and EventScotland - and others do not bother. Sponsorship is not often readily available, and can take much time and effort to secure. Each event has a different business model and some of these models are not as profitable as others. With some events outgrowing their original model there is a need for organisers to do more to monetise their events in order to develop a more sustainable model, however, this is not always easy to achieve.

8.4 7stanes

Following a reduction in public sector funding the 7stanes Community Interest Company (CIC) was established in 2009 and had responsibility for the promotion of all the 7stanes trail centres. Unfortunately, it proved difficult to keep the CIC financially viable and it wound up on 31 March 2016. At this point the responsibility for the promotion of the 7stanes passed back to Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES). Given the importance of 7stanes there is a need to ensure the promotion of the trails is maintained and that this fundamental change does not impact directly on the numbers visiting the mountain biking centres in the area. FES has subsequently developed a new marketing strategy for the 7stanes. As previously stated, the 7stanes trails need to be adequately maintained and developed to keep them relevant to the market.

8.5 Collaboration and Communication

At the moment cycle tourism is often developed in isolation by the various stakeholders/groups and agencies. There needs to be a specific communication structure between the various departments within the Council and also engagement with key external agencies and partners so that the entire cycle tourism sector is catered for as changes occur and initiatives are developed.

There is a wealth of bike-related entrepreneurs based in the Scottish Borders and this well of knowledge and experience perhaps goes untapped when it comes to developing and promoting the region as a world class cycling destination.

9. The Opportunity

Looking at the wider cycle tourism market, consideration needs to be given to what needs to be done to develop facilities, events and the welcome cycling visitors receive throughout the area. The Scottish Borders led the way in establishing itself as a cycle friendly destination, underpinned by an exciting event calendar, but the impetus behind this earlier initiative has fallen by the wayside due to a lack of resource. The re-introduction of the Borders Railway provides further opportunities for product development.

Partners believe there is the potential for the Borders to achieve premier bike destination status and increase the economic benefit that this activity can bring to the area. These key partners should be engaged with as part of the delivery of the Action Plan. Furthermore following the demise of the 7stanes CIC there is a need for close working with FES and VisitScotland to ensure that the 7stanes receive the appropriate level of promotion to encourage future visitors. The continued growth in cycling events will require close working with EventScotland and event organisers to ensure that the Scottish Borders is considered as a key destination to host future international and national events.

There is the need to look at the many touch points cyclists come into contact with and identify areas for improvement – starting with the issues identified within the Destination Audit and the supplementary issues raised as part of the consultation exercise.

Ambitions of local communities such as Ettrick & Yarrow Valley, Craik, the Upper Tweed Valley, Chirside, Alewater Valley and Galashiels to develop their cycling offer should also be explored. Collaboration with Midlothian to develop cycling options along the Borders Railway corridor should also be considered. More needs to be done to get the area on the map and create a 'Destination Bike' status for the region.

An ambitious approach appropriately resourced is now required to underpin the proposition of the Scottish Borders actually *being* Scotland's leading cycling destination, rather than just laying claim to it.

9.1 The Tweed Valley

Glentress Forest is at the heart of the Tweed Valley and forms a key component of the Scottish Borders Tourism offer, attracting over 300,000 visitors a year. Over the last 15 years Glentress has grown to become a premier mountain biking destination, acting as the flagship 7stanes venue with over 50 miles of world class mountain bike trails.

The Glentress Masterplan, which has recently been approved, has been developed to guide the future sustainable development of the Glentress forest visitor attraction located in the Tweed Valley between Peebles and Innerleithen. The Masterplan presents a strategic context for this part of the valley and sets out proposals for development to enhance the visitor attraction. The Scottish Borders continues to suffer from a low average stay by visitors, at 2.2 days. With that in mind the Masterplan considers a wider programme of diversification and development that could be delivered, whilst protecting and enhancing the forest park setting.

FES need to allow for any refresh or modest provision of additional trail development (this poses a challenge as public resources are under pressure); hence the desire to develop new income streams through diversification into more commercial enterprises and charging for secondary activities and attractions.

Furthermore the Tweed Valley Mountain Biking Stakeholder Group has agreed a number of key actions, which will aim to continue the growth of mountain biking in the area. The Tweed Valley MTB Action Plan highlights opportunities to invest in the Glentress and Innerleithen trails and facilities, which jointly attract over 330,000 visitors per year to the Tweed Valley Forest Park. Development of additional outdoor and indoor activities, longer opening hours for local businesses and facilities and investment in accommodation and other facilities have also been identified by the Stakeholder Group as key to building on the efforts made so far.

Proposals for a mechanical uplift at Traquair Forest by Action for the Innerleithen Mechanical Uplift (AIMUp) were also considered by the Stakeholder Group. The AIMUp project is an exciting opportunity which aims to appeal to a range of forest users including families, walkers and mountain bikers of all disciplines, ages and abilities, including wheelchair mountain bikes. The intention is to create an innovative tourist attraction to increase visitor numbers and help to drive economic regeneration in the Tweed Valley and wider Scottish Borders. Such a development could be considered game changing and potentially could provide useful revenue which could contribute to the cost of ongoing maintenance of trails. It was however recognised that the best prospect for taking forward the proposal was through a private sector investment. It was considered not possible to provide the necessary financial support from Scottish Borders Council and public sector partners at a time when public money is very tight particularly with uncertainty about the projected visitor numbers and the ongoing sustainability of the project.

10. The Ambition

With the Scottish Borders suffering from a low average stay of 2.2 nights there is therefore a need to develop products that encourage visitors to stay longer, i.e. give them more things to do using a combination of existing assets and new products.

10.1 Routes & Infrastructure

As previously stated there are a number of issues identified with regard to the ongoing conditions of the roads and also the need to review the signage of cycle routes throughout the region.

Furthermore the following would enhance the product offering:

- An extension of the Tweed Valley Railway Path from Innerleithen to Walkerburn, and in time on to Galashiels;
- The development of a route from Peebles to Roslin;
- The development of an off-road route between Galashiels and Edinburgh via Peebles;
- A route between Melrose and Oxton utilising sections of off-road paths and quieter roads;
- The development of an off-road route between Newtown St Boswells and Coldstream via Kelso;
- The development of an off-road route between Earlston and Eyemouth via Duns, Chirnside and Reston
- A route between Galashiels and Stow train stations using the Southern Upland Way and trails network at Innerleithen and Glentress

Collaborative working with Sustrans Scotland and other key stakeholders will continue to help the development of the route network in the region, and some key elements of the above list are already being progressed. Other route suggestions are currently just aspirational and no firm plans

or funding are in place. Some will have issues with landowners that may frustrate community groups and public sector agencies and will take time to progress and hopefully resolve.

The Scottish Borders has the biggest concentration of world-class mountain bike trails, but a huge number are not officially mapped and therefore cannot be promoted. A solution needs to be found to be able to make better use of these assets.

10.2 Tourism packaging

Future development of attractive tourism packages for cyclists requires investment and collaboration with operators. The starting point will be the key actions identified in the Tourism Destination Audit. Opportunities to explore specific product ideas could potentially be undertaken as part of pilot projects.

10.2.1 Cycling Hubs

There is scope to develop a number of towns or villages as cycling 'hubs'. A hub could have

- a range of good cycling routes to venture out from
- cycle hire opportunities (or car parking for those who have brought their own bikes)
- a good range of businesses welcoming cyclists both in the town and along the routes – including providers of bike repair essentials where no bike hire/shops exist
- route maps/an App
- cycling tours on offer (see 9.2 .2 for further thoughts)
- cycle racks
- cycle events, where possible
- discounts for visiting cyclists
- extended opening hours in the summer months for bike hire
- a pilot project for 'Quiet Roads' in the vicinity of a hub

The Stirling Cycle Hub, supported by ScotRail, offers much of the above, and could be used as a model to explore opportunities to develop a physical presence at a railway station. ScotRail welcome the opportunity to explore options in the Scottish Borders. Other 'hubs' have the potential to be virtual without the need of a physical presence or 'mini hubs' where a community goes the extra mile to welcome visiting cyclists.

Some towns already offer some of the above but are not promoted as a hub, such as Peebles. This town's demographic has changed over recent years with many bike-related and lifestyle businesses now established. Much more could be done to harness the product and establish Peebles as a bike town, much as Fort William has done in establishing itself as the Outdoor Capital.

There is scope for other towns and villages to develop a cycling offer. It should be noted that Newcastleton has previously been positioned as the most cycle friendly destination in Scotland linked to the number of Cyclists Welcome Scheme members in the village – in reality this would now need to be re-visited. Eyemouth may also provide an opportunity to develop their cycling offer alongside their coastal walking and diving offer. Lilliesleaf may also provide scope to explore what might be possible in a small community with a quiet network of roads.

Tourism businesses and Community Councils have a role to play with the public sector in any future developments, and this may include exploring options for community- operated bike hire solutions.

Sustrans Scotland is supportive of the 'Cycle Friendly Roads' initiative (as piloted by Clackmannanshire Council) and an ambition for a 'quiet roads' initiative aligned to a hub may be eligible for match funding through the Sustrans Scotland Community Links programme.

10.2.2 Railways - Cycle Hire and Tours

With limited capacity on the Borders Railway, there is a need to explore other options and ScotRail has indicated that they would like to work with partners, to support measures which will allow people to hire bikes once they have reached the Borders. ScotRail is looking to work with partners to find third party funding and identify viable locations where "Bike & Go" could be developed and installed. Alongside this and in order to promote cycle hire further in the Borders ScotRail would be keen to work with partners to develop deals to make cycle hire in the area more attractive. This could be in the form of discounts at local cycle hire shops similar to those available in the Aviemore and Inverness area or the development of other all-inclusive packages.

As yet there is no operator offering visitors arriving by train with the opportunity to be met with a bike and taken on an afternoon/day tour of the adjacent area. These tours could visit key attractions and stop for lunch or afternoon tea thereby providing opportunities to showcase the best of the Borders Food and Drink offer and encourage geographic spread around the area.

A further, basic offering would be to have cycle hire on offer at Galashiels or Tweedbank with self-guided routes on offer. Discounts at attractions and food stops could be part of the hire package. A pilot project might involve the training of local cyclists to act as cycle tour guides.

There is potential to do more to promote the existing cycling options and explore other opportunities from the stations in the region, and also from Berwick upon Tweed.

10.2.3 Themed routes

Many other destinations have themed routes on offer and these routes can provide good hooks for promotional purposes. Consideration should be given to developing themed routes, eg Big Houses, food and drink, arts and crafts, Sir Walter Scott or the Borders Brains of Hume, Hutton etc.

These routes could either be offered as cycle tour packages or as self-guided route options and suit different visitor needs and interests.

10.2.4 Baggage Transfer

With a number of long distance routes passing through the region there is scope to do more with baggage transfer to enhance the offer.

10.2.5 Cyclists Welcome Scheme Plus

Other nations operate Velohotels and in Italy there is Italy Bike Hotels who specialise in welcoming cyclists to a network of super-cycle friendly accommodation. Their service goes way beyond the basic criteria required to be a Cyclists Welcome Scheme member. Consideration should be given to whether there is scope to expand the current Cyclists Welcome Scheme.

10.2.6 Cross Border Initiatives

Visitors do not see regional boundaries. There is scope to explore joint working with neighbouring Local Authorities eg Midlothian, East Lothian, South Lanarkshire and Dumfries & Galloway. Midlothian in particular provides opportunities around the Borders Railway. Newcastleton and Hawick may also provide some opportunities to explore joint working with Kielder Forest.

With the East Coast Main Line stopping in Berwick upon Tweed there is scope to maximise opportunities in East Berwickshire and beyond. Wooler in Northumberland is also active in cycling promotion and there are regular cycling events crossing from Wooler into the Scottish Borders that provide potential opportunities for joint working.

10.2.7 Events

For some visitors, events provide a reason to visit – sometimes just for the day, but some generate overnight stays not only for participants, but also their family supporters providing further economic benefit to the area. Sportive events, specifically those with a charity theme, remain popular and the region is well placed as a venue for a number of them to be held throughout the year. There is also scope to do more with family events. An event series could be developed working with local cycling clubs and event organisers that will attract visiting cyclists.

Working with EventScotland, specific events such as the Tour of Britain should be encouraged to return as they can generate large crowds of spectators in towns and along the route and valuable media coverage which brings economic benefit to the area. The region should, again with the support of EventScotland, also explore what other significant or international events could be held in the region to help raise the profile.

Options should be explored to make more of event routes such as the Tour o' the Borders, the Tour de Lauder and also the Tour of Britain stages held in the region. These routes should be promoted as should any King of the Mountains climbs which will help add credibility to the offer. Permanent signage would help enhance the offer. Such features will enhance the routes and create more memorable experiences.

Events also provide useful content for promotional activity and increase traffic to the Cycle Scottish Borders website. With the range of events now on offer in the calendar, there is a need to maximise the opportunities to encourage those in attendance to stay longer, come with family/friends or do more whilst in the area. Businesses with an interest in the cycle tourism market should be encouraged to develop offers and packages and to work together. Packages around the 2017 Tour of Britain should specifically be considered.

The role of community facilities such as the Crook Inn's involvement in, the through- Borders event, Ride to the Sun should be explored as there can be a direct benefit to the community and also help convey a welcome to visiting cyclists. Conversely, consideration also needs to be given to the impact on communities of events on closed roads, and also on the wider events calendar in some areas.

Sponsorship of events should also be considered as opportunities for inward investment which might offer corporate hospitality packages.

Event organisers should be supported by Scottish Borders Council and where relevant by EventScotland to allow events to develop if it furthers economic benefit to the region. Advancements in technology and equipment should also be considered in the delivery of events and initiatives such as White Space Technology may help with communications during events.

ScotRail is keen to support the sustainability of the Borders Railway through developing tourism and recognise the opportunities that cycling plays within this context. ScotRail is happy to work with partners in practical ways to encourage and develop this market through promotional and operational support for events that matches their capabilities with customer expectations.

With limited funds it is important to ensure that all budgets spent on events are maximised as promotional opportunities to raise awareness of the region as a cycle tourism destination. Funding requirements from the public sector should ensure that event organisers promote the destination as part of their event promotion.

10.3 Promotion

This strategy has identified that the region has very good cycling assets in the shape of routes, trails, services and of course events, but they are currently under-promoted in what is an increasingly competitive environment. Further product development as detailed above will enhance the offering and there will be 'new news' to communicate to potential visitors. Knowing more about the target markets through the development of segmentation will help focus activity. There is a need for the development of a brand to cover all of the cycling assets in the region.

With no promotional budget the Cycle Scottish Borders website under-performs with low traffic to the site in comparison to some of the region's events and other destinations. As the main showcase for the cycling product this needs to be addressed; currently the destination has no voice in the marketplace. It is crucial that the Scottish Borders secures the necessary budget and develops an appropriate promotional plan which meets the ambitions of the region to be the premier cycling destination in the UK. A partnership approach will need to be implemented to ensure that all promotional opportunities are maximised, eg with input from the Area Tourism Partnership, Forest Enterprise Scotland and also VisitScotland. Event organisers and cycle tourism related businesses should also have a role to play in promoting the region. Clarity on who will take the lead in the marketing will also need to be sought.

The consultation has highlighted the desire to promote the 'best' of the region's cycling assets such as best views, best big climbs, best for families, best for thrills, best for history etc. All of which will help create a more memorable experience and hopefully encourage repeat visits. It was also suggested that consideration should be given to appointing a cycling ambassador to help raise awareness.

The website content needs to be expanded to contain more details on mountain biking options and consideration needs to be given on the inclusion of core paths. Some of the long distance routes have symbols that are used on the route signs. These symbols are not carried through to the website and this is something that should be looked at as part of the promotional activity.

10.4 Businesses

In one of the previous LEADER funded cycling projects a Borders Bike Kit was developed to provide tourism businesses with essential information to allow them to welcome cyclists. Harnessing the knowledge and support of tourism and bike-related businesses widens the promotional message and also strengthens the product offering.

Sustrans Scotland has led on the development of a Leisure Cycling Business Toolkit, due to be launched in November 2016. This toolkit is designed for any tourism business in Scotland that wants to find out more about the leisure cycling tourism opportunity. Post launch, there will be opportunities to work with Sustrans Scotland as they deliver a series of regional Business Engagement Workshops.

Previously a Scottish Borders Recreational Cycling Group was established, and there is now a need to explore whether a similar Group should be established eg a Scottish Borders Cycle Tourism Interests Group. Such a Group will allow an exchange of ideas and access to knowledge, experience and resources that will help drive forward key actions and allow the region to maximise opportunities.

11. Delivery

Much has been proposed in this document, and the following Action Plan identifies how it may be delivered. A budget for the activity needs to be secured and the Council will need to identify a champion to drive forward the strategy and deliver the agreed outputs accordingly.

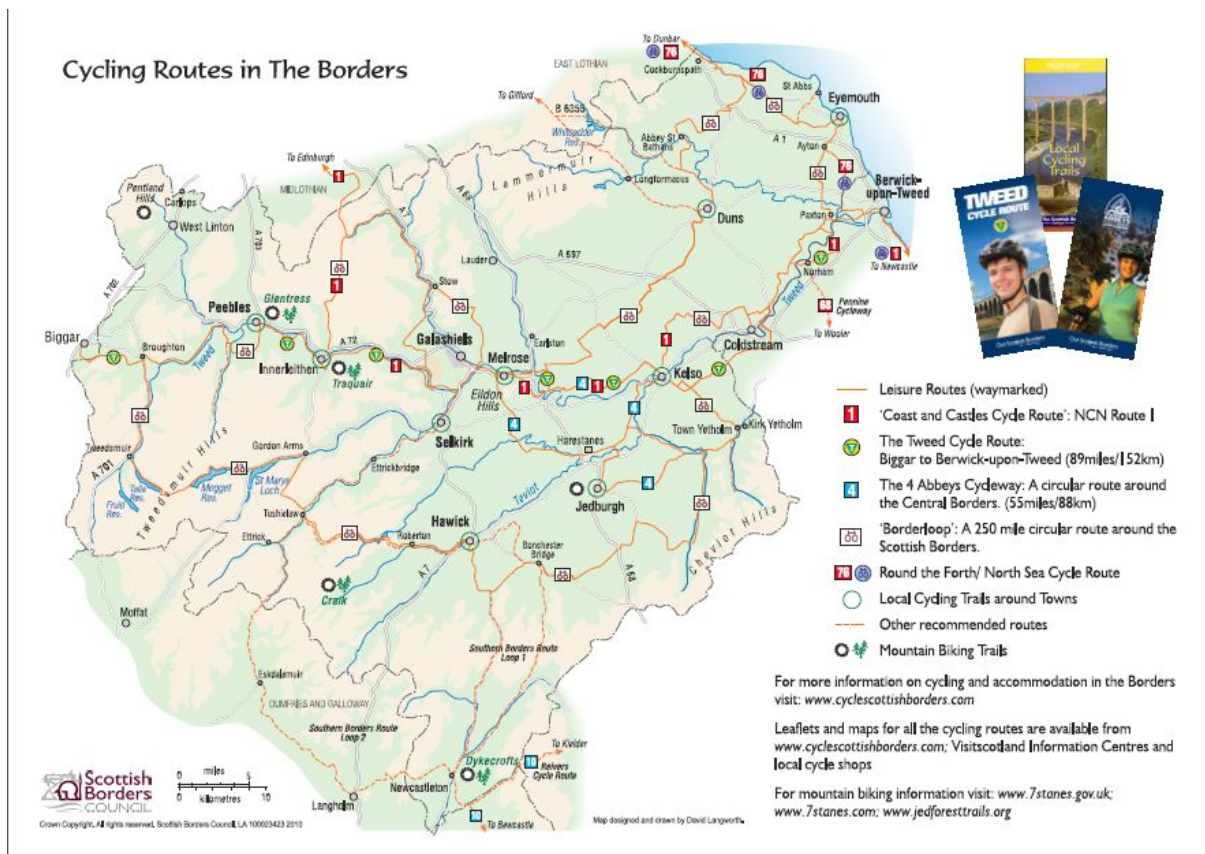
In order to realise the potential and secure the Scottish Borders as the premier cycling destination within the UK, partnership working is essential. Methodologies need to be identified to coordinate the delivery of the proposed outcomes. The Council must facilitate effective communication across the cycle tourism sector and collaborate across public, private and third sectors.

Appendix 1

The following participated in the Consultation on the Draft Strategy –

- Scottish Enterprise
- Scottish Borders Chamber of Commerce
- VisitScotland (including the EventScotland team)
- Scottish Tourism Alliance
- Forest Enterprise Scotland
- Abellio ScotRail
- Borders Railway Blueprint
- Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland/Scottish Cycling
- Mountain Bike Centre of Scotland
- National Cycle Tourism Forum
- Cycling Scotland
- Sustrans
- Scottish Borders Area Tourism Partnership
- Live Borders
- Newcastleton Business Forum
- Tweed Valley Mountain Bike Stakeholder Group
- AIM Up
- Local community groups and interests such as Ettrick & Yarrow, Tweed Valley Tourist Consortium, Craik etc
- Private sector cycle tourism related businesses and clubs– eg event organisers, tour operators, skills/guiding companies, bike hire, accommodation providers, attractions, local cycling clubs, etc

Appendix 2



ANNEX 2 - Scottish Borders Cycle Tourism Action Plan (Specific Actions 2017-2018)

Action	Resource	Lead (Support)	Target (Activity/output)	Timescale	Impact/ outcome (measured by)	Benefits Realised: Outcomes to 2021
1. Developing our assets – turning our cycle tourism assets into experiences and improving quality						
Market Research Baseline data does not exist for the Scottish Borders. Undertake study to identify target markets and economic value specific to the Scottish Borders to ensure objectives are meaningful and measurable	a) Staff b) £5,000 (To be identified)	SBC SE FES	Region specific data	2017/2018	Greater understanding of who the cycling visitor is - leading to an increase in Economic Impact outturn figure	Tailored marketing to attract more visitors
Product Development - Infrastructure Identify and progress key areas/products for cycling development, e.g. Infrastructure – routes, signage Consider and audit existing cycle route infrastructure.	a) Staff b) £30,000 (To be identified) Staff	SBC VS BG ES	Deliver and plan infrastructure development as available budgets allow. Identify product gaps and areas for improvement/expansion, improved signage etc	2017/2018	Improved understanding and ability to 'fill' gaps and improved signage	More coherent product Cycling tourism is increased and opportunities are maximised
Cyclists Welcome Encourage membership of VisitScotland's Cyclists Welcome Scheme – with specific focus on encouraging attractions and food businesses	Staff	VS	Increase the uptake of membership from 100 to 125	2017/2018	Better take up which in turn will benefit cycling tourists	Increase in awareness of the positioning of the region as a cycling friendly destination
Tweed Valley Work in partnership to deliver relevant actions from the Tweed Valley Mountain Bike Action Plan and the Glentress Master Plan.	Staff	FES TVMTB Group AIM Up	Maintain contact and awareness of all cycle tourism related developments in the Tweed Valley	2017/2018	Greater collaboration and ability to market product	As above

Action	Resource	Lead (Support)	Target (Activity/output)	Timescale	Impact/ outcome (measured by)	Benefits Realised: Outcomes to 2021
Cross Border Initiatives Explore opportunities for any cross border initiatives with neighbouring local authorities in Scotland or Northumberland.	Staff, MBTAG group. Access team.	SBC Midlothian South Lanarkshire Northumberland	To explore opportunities specifically along the railway corridor (Midlothian) in addition to Northumberland (Newcastleton/Kielder)	2017/2018	Collaborative opportunities for development and promotion.	As above
2. Event development – attracting and leveraging events						
Event Development Regional key event development - Major events e.g. Tour of the Borders, Tweedlove, Tour of Britain. Promote the region as a host for new, International and National events. Develop a sustainable cycling event programme	a) Staff b) £50,000 From existing event budget	SBC/ES/ various stakeholders inc. Live Borders & Cycling clubs	Develop key events; high profile, fit with regions USPs generate maximum publicity Work in partnership with EventScotland to ensure that all relevant cycle event opportunities are maximised	2017/2018	Increase in cyclist numbers and region profile Increase in visitor spend in GVA and also EI outturn figure Scottish Borders is the first point of call for cycling events	Activity is increased and opportunities maximised
Event Funding Advice Provide advisory funding support to event organisers and local communities	Staff	SBC BG ES	Provide relevant advice on funding sources and signpost relevant sources of business advice e.g. Business Gateway.	2017/2018	Improved business models	Sustainable events
Event Safety & Planning Advice Provide advisory support to event organisers and local communities	Staff	SBC/Multi agency, Fire Police, Ambulance etc.	Signpost relevant sources of event planning support and necessary processes (roads, SAG Eventful guide, etc)	2017/2018	Safe execution of events and a standardised approach for event organisers	Regulated events leading to improved quality and safety.
Economic Impact Assessment of value of cycling events Profiling of attendees and participants	a) Staff b) £3,000 per annum from existing event budget	SBC ES Event Organisers	Support organisers in the need to gather relevant data to capture the economic benefit of events and to collect data to profile participants/spectators	2017/2018	National £ leverage. Data to support future event development and to attract sponsors/funding.	Improved data will support future event development

Action	Resource	Lead (Support)	Target (Activity/output)	Timescale	Impact/ outcome (measured by)	Benefits Realised: Outcomes to 2021
Borders Railway Facilitate opportunities to engage with ScotRail and Blueprint partners around existing and new cycling events.	MBTAG	SBC/ScotRail / Blueprint programme manager/VS BG/ES Midlothian TAG	Support event organisers in the delivery of their events and how the Railway might enhance the spectator/participant experience.	2017/2018	Increase in number of tourists	Increased activity and £ benefits
3. Building consumer demand – promoting the quality experiences						
Marketing To develop prioritised aspects of cycle tourism by capitalising on the Scottish Borders' unique selling points to increase awareness through the creation of a dedicated marketing campaign and packages to deliver a strong economic impact.	a) Staff/ dedicated resource, plus campaign budget b) £20,000 – per annum (To be identified)	SBC/VS/ES/ Event organisers	Deliver a dedicated scheduled plan of activity across a period of time. Ensure all cycling related activity (events / routes/ cycle hubs/ etc.) is promoted as one entity for the Scottish Borders. Support events in their own PR and Marketing efforts as required. Encourage event organisers to undertake reciprocal promotion of events on offer in the region. Work with local businesses who are interested in the cycling market	2017/2018	Increased visitor numbers Increased profile for events in area. Increased promotion of the cycling product.	Increased activity and visitors and £ spend.
Online presence – CycleScottishBorders.com Manage content for the Cycle Scottish Borders website and the associated social media presence. Promote online website in particular the pairing with the sister site – Walk Scottish Borders	a) Staff/ dedicated resource b) £4,000 Tourism / Access Budgets (£2K each) c) £3,000 (New)	SBC/Content manager. SBC/Content manager	Regularly update with news and events and related social media within the Twitter and Facebook accounts All cycle friendly businesses to be listed on CSB Site. Soft launch of new interactive website.	2017/2018	Site traffic increase, number of followers/likes. Detailed comprehensive listings Increased awareness and profile for visitors and businesses	Awareness and ranking As above

Action	Resource	Lead (Support)	Target (Activity/output)	Timescale	Impact/ outcome (measured by)	Benefits Realised: Outcomes to 2021
Promotional resources Update Photography	Staff	Visit Scotland/Digital Media library	Updated photography to promote the region is required	2017/2018	Visually portray the Scottish Borders as a top destination within the UK	As above

BUDGET SUMMARY: 2017/2018

BUDGET SOURCE	£	SPEND AREA
Existing Events Budget	£53,000	(Tour of Britain, Tour of the Borders, Tweedlove, etc)
Tourism/Access Budget	£4,000	(web/social media content management)
Unfunded actions – resource to be identified	£58,000	(Market Research, Product Development, Marketing, Soft launch new website)
TOTAL	£115,000	

ENTERPRISE & SKILLS REVIEW: REPORT ON PHASE 1 OCTOBER 2016





FOREWORD BY KEITH BROWN

Scotland has a vibrant and diverse business base, with strengths across a wide range of sectors. That success is based on both the skills and ingenuity of our people and the maintenance of a supportive and competitive business environment.

We are justifiably proud of our enterprise and skills agencies – Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Skills Development Scotland, and the Scottish Funding Council. Our agencies, colleges and universities have played a key role in developing this environment and in helping our businesses to thrive and grow. In recent years their efforts have contributed to real improvements in our economic performance across a range of key economic indicators.

Since 2007 we have seen growth in R&D investment by Scotland’s businesses, exports have increased, and we have consistently secured among the highest levels of inward investment in the UK. Alongside these achievements we have continued to develop a highly-qualified and well-educated workforce.

More fundamentally, we have made progress in narrowing the productivity gap with the UK. But we know that further improvement is required – our ambition is for Scotland to rank among the top performing OECD nations for productivity, equality, sustainability and wellbeing.

On 25 May 2016, the First Minister announced a review of enterprise and skills support in Scotland to help make further progress towards these goals. Since then, the EU Referendum result has made the economic context more challenging. It requires that we renew our focus, prioritise our efforts, and leverage all our assets across the public sector and in partnership with business and civic society to maintain prosperity and opportunity for our people.

Although the economic context has changed, Scotland’s Economic Strategy continues to set the overarching framework for delivering the more productive and cohesive Scottish economy that we seek through ever greater focus on growth driven by investment, innovation, exports and inclusion.

In undertaking this review, I have been grateful for the support of the members of the Ministerial Review Group and the wide range of expertise, constructive input and challenge that they have brought. I am also very grateful for the high level and high quality of responses to the call for evidence that we undertook as a key part of the review.

This review has focused on how we can work within the framework of our economic strategy and build on existing strengths and successes to further improve the enterprise and skills support system in Scotland. Its decisions cover a range of aspects that are designed to deliver on our aspirations for a more prosperous and inclusive Scotland by ensuring coherence and hence a simpler, more flexible and cost-effective system of national and local support. This will ensure a system in which all of our agencies work hand in glove with each other and collaboratively with our business, academic and civic partners to optimise economic impact across the whole of Scotland.

In taking forward this work, I want to harness and build on high levels of engagement generated by the review so far. This report sets out the conclusions of phase 1 of our work and the framework for the shape of enterprise and skills services in the future. Phase 2 will take forward implementation of those conclusions. In phase 2, we will also explore how we can better work in partnership with local government and their business and other local interests to maximise regional opportunities and respond to local needs and how, working with our agencies, we can take forward the right digital approach and a new system of enterprise and skills support.



Keith Brown, MSP

Cabinet Secretary for Economy,
Jobs and Fair Work

October 2016

KEY STEPS

In its focus on improving economic outcomes, the review has been guided by the principles outlined in its [remit](#):

- to make a step-change in enterprise and skills support to help progress towards our ambition of Scotland ranking among the top quartile of OECD countries in terms of productivity, equality, wellbeing and sustainability;
- to be driven by evidence, to listen to the views of users, and put forward proposals that respond to their needs; and
- to ensure a simpler and more coherent enterprise and skills support system.

We have engaged widely to understand stakeholder views and published a number of key pieces of [evidence](#). These include:

- a high-level overview of current economic performance and the nature of the challenge;
- the findings of a public 'Call for Evidence' process that was undertaken from 15 July-15 August and generated 329 responses;
- reports on international enterprise and skills experience and practice commissioned from experts; and
- a report on outcomes from workshops with users of business and skills support.

The review has benefited from the input of the [Ministerial Review Group](#). This Group comprises individuals with a wide range of expertise drawn from business, business organisations, colleges, universities, the National Union of Students, COSLA and the STUC. It has met regularly during the review and contributed considerably to our thinking.

In reaching our conclusions the following key themes have emerged:

- the degree of alignment between enterprise and skills support services, and how to measure impact;
- the optimal fit between national and local priorities;
- the need for a 'no wrong door' approach to simplify service and funding streams;
- how best to augment support for internationalisation in a changing context;
- how to improve our innovation performance; and
- how we improve skills provision and utilisation.

There is some overlap between these issues and the findings of Audit Scotland's report on 'Supporting Scotland's Economic Growth' (July 2016). In addition, we have taken into account Audit Scotland's 2016 work relating to Scotland's Colleges and to Higher Education in Scottish Universities, and Professor Graeme Reid's Review of the Innovation Centres Programme.

On 15 September we announced that we would take forward the review in two phases in response to the new economic context and in order to ensure that we fully capture the high levels of interest generated by the review so far. This report covers the findings of the first phase. It sets out our headline aims and the changes we believe are needed now to deliver on our economic growth and inclusion ambitions.

ACTIONS

One Scotland – STRONGER GOVERNANCE OF A COHERENT SYSTEM

- 1) To bring greater integration and focus to the delivery of our enterprise and skills support to businesses and users of the skills system, we will create a new Scotland-wide statutory board to co-ordinate the activities of HIE and SE, including SDI, SDS and the SFC.
- 2) To support the new board, we will review existing data and evaluation functions to further align our enterprise and skills support and to ensure robust evaluation of activity and impact.

NATIONAL AND LOCAL ENTERPRISE AND SKILLS DELIVERY

- 3) Recognising the different social, economic and community development challenges facing the Highlands and Islands, we will maintain dedicated support which is locally based, managed and directed by HIE.
- 4) Recognising the unique challenges faced in the region, we will create a new vehicle to meet the enterprise and skills needs of the South of Scotland. This will be accountable to the new Scotland-wide statutory board alongside our other enterprise and skills bodies.

AN OPEN AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMY

- 5) In order to bring greater coherence as we step up the pace of delivery of our Trade and Investment Strategy through activity such as the establishment of a new Board of Trade, the appointment of Trade Envoys, the establishment of an Innovation and Investment Hub in Berlin, and the doubling of SDIs presence across Europe, we will ensure a much stronger focus on co-ordinating international activity across the public and academic sectors to deliver maximum benefit for Scotland.
- 6) We will consider the role, position and governance of SDI and its possible establishment as a distinct and separate organisation under the new Scotland-wide statutory board delivering a broader range of international activities and support.

INNOVATION

- 7) We will review, streamline and simplify the innovation support ecosystem, connecting programmes, funding and delivery mechanisms. We will ensure that more businesses in Scotland increase their level of innovation to realise their major growth ambitions by implementing an innovation action plan that will be published by end of November.

SKILLS PROVISION AND ECONOMIC SUCCESS

- 8) We will align the functions of our learning and skills agencies to better join up how education services and training are planned and provided to learners and employers.
- 9) We will conduct a comprehensive review of the Learning Journey focused on sustained employment, with significantly enhanced use of labour market information in skills planning at its heart.
- 10) We will review the effectiveness of our investment in learning and skills to ensure we have the right balance of provision across age groups and sectors and to maximise our contribution to productivity and inclusive growth.

PHASE 1: FINDINGS AND DECISIONS

STRONGER GOVERNANCE OF A COHERENT SYSTEM

Vision: Our vision is a Scotland that is among the top OECD nations for productivity and equality. A Scotland where we build on the existing achievements of our enterprise and skills bodies by enhancing coherence and focus, by bringing each of them under the direction of a single board, by de-cluttering and simplifying the system for the user, and enhancing and measuring the impact of our success. A system that facilitates partnership with business, academia, the third sector and local government to optimize what we can achieve together.

Guiding principles: The review's wide-ranging engagement has identified the following key principles that will underpin our drive for deeper alignment:

- we should retain our existing strong coherent economic strategy and focus on improving performance in relation to investment, international, innovation and inclusive growth;
- we should optimize what can be achieved by working across the enterprise and skills system seamlessly with a focus on agreed priorities and objectives;
- we should build on existing analytical and performance measurement capability to improve the measurement of whole system impacts and enhance our capacity to respond quickly; and
- we should simplify and improve the system for business, learners and other users and to enhance partnership working with business, third sector and local government interests.

Current strengths and successes: Scotland has a diverse and resilient economy that provides solid foundations on which to build. The Scottish economy grew 0.7% over the year to Q2 2016, and GDP now stands 10% higher than at the low point of the recession at the end of 2009. The number of people in employment is currently 2,618,000, 54,000 above the pre-recession peak (March-May 2008). The unemployment rate is currently 4.6%, which is lower than the UK as a whole. Other strengths include:

- a strong performance on post-secondary qualifications with one of the highest rates in the EU;
- over £27 billion of international exports a year, an increase of over 17% since 2010;
- the highest level of private sector businesses since records began, an increase of 7.8% between 2014 and 2015;
- the second highest level of Foreign Direct Investment projects in UK in 2015, behind only London;
- five universities in the top 200 in the world, more than any other country per head of population except Luxembourg;
- 25,818 Modern Apprenticeship starts in 2015-16, above the target of 25,500;
- one of the highest rates of spend on Higher Education Research and Development in the OECD, and with Business Expenditure on Research and Development that has increased by 44%, in real terms, since 2007;
- over £1 billion of investment in our higher education institutions in 2016-17, building on over £4 billion over the last four years;

- enterprise agencies that have supported 340 businesses to export and over 1,000 businesses to become innovation active in the last year; and
- being one of the first countries in the OCED to put inclusive growth at the heart of our economic strategy, focusing on the mutually supportive pillars of increasing competitiveness and tackling inequality.

Challenges and opportunities: Whilst Scotland has significant economic strengths, the evidence and views of a broad range of system users suggest scope for improvement around:

- maximising impact by focusing on well-defined goals, shared ownership and clear accountability;
- perceptions of a ‘cluttered landscape’ where unclear roles and responsibilities may lead to agencies duplicating activity or users finding it difficult to understand access criteria and the entirety of available support;
- simplifying service delivery by developing a ‘no wrong door’ approach that hides operational complexity for users;
- the need to improve digital performance, to focus on targeted advice (which can be more appropriate than funding schemes or grants), and to streamline funding and more closely align it with the shared national ambition;
- the need for improved system-wide performance measures that evaluate individual and cumulative agency contributions to delivering national targets and outcomes; and
- the need for businesses to influence the development and operation of enterprise and skills support, with views differing on the extent of this relative to academic and other input.

Action: In order to strengthen governance and deliver the benefits of a single system:

- **To bring greater integration and focus to the delivery of our enterprise and skills support to businesses and users of the skills system, we will create a new Scotland-wide statutory board to co-ordinate the activities of HIE and SE, including SDI, SDS and the SFC.**
- **To support the new board, we will review existing data and evaluation functions to further align our enterprise and skills support and to ensure robust evaluation of activity and impact.**

NATIONAL AND LOCAL ENTERPRISE AND SKILLS DELIVERY

Vision: We seek to build an economy that is equitable and has the necessary flexibility and focus to respond well to local circumstances. To do this we will work with local and regional partners to understand key challenges and to maximise economic opportunity in all parts of the country.

Guiding principles: Drawing on the collective experience of individual experts and the lessons of previous approaches, our national and local co-ordination of enterprise and skills support will reflect the following:

- the rationale for moving away from uniform separate regional structures across Scotland in the 2007 Enterprise Network Reforms remains valid;

- arrangements should respond to the differing opportunities and challenges across Scotland, including an openness to pilot fresh approaches in one or more areas; and
- local and regional level arrangements throughout Scotland should be developed in partnership with local government.

Current strengths and successes: Scotland has a diverse business and asset base that creates opportunities for future growth. Different approaches to fostering these opportunities highlight successes around which future local and national action can be focused. Examples include:

- broad agreement that national and local parties can align behind an inclusive growth agenda which allows communities across Scotland to prosper – recognising the significant current local investment and action that supports economic growth;
- City Deals that drive economic growth and inclusion at city region levels, and improve knowledge sharing and risk awareness. These engage key public and private sector organisations, and are supported by robust regional governance;
- the strong partnership working in developing Regional College Outcome Agreements that reflect economic circumstances and skills needs in each region;
- HIE’s specific expertise and support to strengthen communities and address issues in remote, rural and fragile areas. HIE account manages 44 communities, all of which are pursuing revenue earning projects; and
- the partnership approach to delivering the Highlands and Islands Skills Investment Plan that matches individual skills development to local industry needs supported by local plans.

Challenges and opportunities: Responses to the call for evidence and engagement with key stakeholders highlighted opportunities for improved local support around:

- a stronger regional approach where appropriate to respond to need;
- inconsistency in how the particular needs of the Highlands and Islands and the South of Scotland have been addressed, despite the socio-economic circumstances faced by both areas being more similar to each other than to the Central Belt;
- the effectiveness of the link between national and local enterprise support, including Business Gateway;
- national skills support products and their scope to meet local needs; and
- building on the positive impact of current economic partnerships, for example the work of the three Ayrshire Local Authorities around a growth deal and South Lanarkshire’s participation in the Glasgow City Region Deal.

Action: In order to ensure that economy has the necessary flexibility and focus to respond well to local circumstances:

- **We will recognise the different social, economic and community development challenges facing the Highlands and Islands and maintain dedicated support which is locally based, managed and directed by HIE.**
- **We will recognise the unique challenges faced in the South of Scotland and create a new vehicle to meet the enterprise and skills needs of the region. This will be accountable to the new Scotland-wide statutory board.**

AN OPEN AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMY

Vision: We want an enterprise and skills system that works as one both in Scotland and internationally, that inspires, enables and supports Scotland's businesses to trade internationally, and that engages individuals, businesses and institutions to invest in Scotland. One system that promotes a global mindset, raises international ambition, and works with and for the private, academic and public sectors to maximise the impact of individual action and of Scotland's collective endeavour.

Guiding principles: Our actions in this area are based on the wide range of experience and expertise which the review has drawn upon, including:

- an existing internationalisation agenda which improves understanding of international opportunities and increases our appetite and ability to seize them; enhances our ability to influence the world around us; and raises Scotland's profile and reputation;
- an approach that builds on *Global Scotland*, Scotland's Trade and Investment Strategy for 2016-21;
- a One Scotland approach so that working together across the public, private and academic sectors and among individuals and businesses is the norm; and
- agility in our response to international opportunities and circumstances.

Current strengths and successes: Work across the public, private and academic sectors already provides a strong foundation for achieving our vision:

- between 2010 and 2014 international exports increased by £4.0 billion (17.3%) from £23.4 billion to £27.5 billion;
- total food and drink manufacturing exports increased by £3.4 billion (63%) from £5.4 billion to £8.8 billion between 2002 and 2014;
- the 2016 EY Scotland Attractiveness Survey ranks Scotland as the top location for inward investment in the UK outside of London;
- Scotland is now the top UK region for R&D inward investment, with 2015 a record year in attracting 23 individual projects, up from 17 in 2014;
- SDI's support to Scottish companies has increased from 1,380 companies in 2011-12 to 2,607 companies in 2015-16; and
- Scotland's universities attracted over 50,000 EU and international students in 2014/15. They have agreements with other universities across the world; have established or are developing campuses in places from Malaysia to Dubai to South Korea; and are internationally renowned for their research and academic excellence.

Challenges and opportunities: Our existing strengths and successes, and the agenda for internationalisation set out in our Trade and Investment Strategy, provide a strong platform for the future. However, Scotland's long-term economic performance depends on greater success in international markets and in continuing to attract stronger investment. The outcome of the EU Referendum puts this at significant risk

In this context, the review identified:

- the need for a more concerted and better co-ordinated effort across the enterprise and skills system and beyond to ensure that our collective international activity, and not just that focused directly on trade and investment, delivers maximum benefit for Scotland;

- a need to improve understanding of SDI's responsibilities and governance;
- the need to embrace digital as a key means of accessing international opportunities and to provide and join up services in Scotland and internationally; and
- the scope and opportunity to make even more of Scotland's wide range of international assets and strengths, including the SDI network; the expertise and reach of VisitScotland; the development of innovation and investment Hubs in London, Dublin, Brussels and Berlin; networks such as Connected Scotland and Global Scots; and our universities' global reputation, teaching and research reach.

Action: In order to bring greater coherence as we step up the pace of delivery of our Trade and Investment Strategy through activity such as the establishment of a new Board of Trade, the appointment of Trade Envoys, the establishment of an Innovation and Investment Hub in Berlin, and the doubling of SDI's presence across Europe:

- **We will ensure a much stronger focus on co-ordinating international activity across the public and academic sectors to deliver maximum benefit for Scotland.**
- **We will consider the role, position and governance of SDI and its possible establishment as a distinct and separate organisation under the new Scotland-wide statutory board delivering a broader range of international activities and support.**

INNOVATION

Vision: We want Scotland to be a place where innovation is an intrinsic part of our culture, our society and our economy – where businesses across the country are ambitious and open to collaborations and partnerships with one another, with academia, and with other organisations, and have high levels of innovation and growth as a result.

Guiding principles: Innovation and collaboration are about turning ideas and research into new or improved products, services or business processes. To drive this:

- we need to simplify the innovation landscape and align better our innovation approach to maximise the impact of public sector support for innovation;
- we need to ensure that we have the right range and mix of accessible innovation advice and products, tailored to the right customers and meeting their needs; and
- we need to increase awareness of sources of innovation support and the benefits it can provide for businesses across Scotland. This should include access to academic expertise and facilities across Scotland.

Current strengths and successes: Scotland has a world-wide reputation for invention and innovation. Evidence shows that:

- Scotland's world-class innovation assets include a highly skilled and qualified workforce, a strong HE sector and research base, and a number of internationally innovative companies across a variety of sectors;
- our businesses have been improving their innovation performance in recent years through increased investment and increased innovation activity;
- Scotland does well internationally on the enablers of innovation, ranking second among EU countries in terms of university graduates as a share of the adult population, and fifth in the OECD in terms of expenditure on higher education R&D.

Our public sector plays a number of important roles in supporting innovation by:

- acting as a catalyst through procurement and support for research and innovation;
- contributing to the creation and development of innovative firms and assisting existing businesses to access finance and assimilate innovative products and ways of working;
- helping to shape markets and create the best environment for innovation; and
- driving collaboration between business and academia.

Scottish Enterprise, which provides the bulk of our business-facing innovation support, has improved its approach in order to widen and deepen business innovation activity. A review of innovation support over the past decade shows that it has:

- significantly increased the reach of its innovation support and engaged with an additional 2000 new innovation companies;
- increased the economic return on its innovation investment to £15 for every £1; and
- increased export activity, with the innovative firms it works with now more than three times more likely to export.

Challenges and opportunities: Nonetheless, Scotland remains a mid-ranking nation when it comes to innovation performance overall. Significant gaps remain between our performance and the best-performing countries in the OECD. Evidence shows that:

- although Scotland's innovative SMEs are amongst the most likely in the EU to collaborate with others on innovative activities, Scotland has a notably lower share of SMEs innovating in-house;
- although more businesses are innovating, Scotland still lags behind the leading regions and countries in Europe with a lower share of 'innovation active' businesses overall. Although Scotland's larger businesses are more likely to be innovative than smaller or medium-sized businesses, innovation rates for both medium and large-sized businesses still substantially lag behind the EU average;
- Scotland lags behind other parts of Europe in the economic outcomes associated with innovation, e.g. in terms of employment and of its export share in knowledge-intensive manufacturing and services; and
- basic digital skills issues persist both for businesses and individuals, alongside gender segregation in educational choices.

In helping to build and develop an environment that supports innovation we need to address several challenges highlighted in the Call for Evidence:

- simplify and streamline funding and interventions and reduce duplication in our support for innovation, while ensuring it is agile, fast and flexible in responding to businesses' needs;
- improve leadership, digital and other skills to drive innovation and enterprise;
- maximise the impact of university research to increase collaboration with businesses in Scotland and internationally in order to better drive improved economic output;
- make better use of our existing network of innovation centres and ensure the wider public support landscape enables growth; and
- maximise the impact of our world-renowned research base.

Action: In order to drive up innovation across Scotland:

- **We will review, streamline and simplify the innovation support ecosystem, connecting programmes, funding and delivery mechanisms. We will ensure that more businesses in Scotland increase their level of innovation to realise their major growth ambitions by implementing an innovation action plan that will be published by end of November.**

SKILLS PROVISION AND ECONOMIC SUCCESS

Vision: The recently published Labour Market Strategy makes clear our ambitions to deliver a labour market where there:

- is a skilled, productive and engaged workforce capable of meeting the needs of employers;
- is equality of opportunity to access work and to progress to ensure everyone is able to maximise their potential;
- are fulfilling, secure and well-paid jobs, where employees' contributions are encouraged, respected and valued;
- is low unemployment and high employment; and
- is an economy that supports a sustainable working population and can retain and attract new talent to meet our wider economic and social ambitions.

Guiding principles: The skills and learning systems contribute to our economic success by supporting people to get the skills they need to participate in the labour market and by ensuring our employers are supported to build and develop the workforce they need to succeed. Building from this strong base, we need to better meet the needs of learners, colleges, universities, business and employees by:

- focusing on an efficient learner journey toward and into sustained employment, with funding mechanisms aiding that journey; and
- supporting learners' progression at each stage of that journey, even as they switch between types of learning and institutions.

Current strengths and successes: Scotland already has a high-performing skills system by many measures:

- a strong performance on post-secondary qualifications with one of the highest rates in the EU;
- our college reforms have seen the emergence of a network of regional skills and technical education hubs focused on the needs of the region's learners and employers;
- five universities in the global top 200; and
- the scale, impact and ambition of our Modern Apprenticeship programme has grown significantly over the past decade in partnership with employers across the economy.

The review has highlighted the importance of good quality labour market information to better drive the planning and procurement of skills across the system. Skills Development Scotland has made good progress in recent years with the development of Skills Investment Plans and Regional Skills Assessments. The Scottish Funding Council, having responsibility for funding both further and higher education, has been in a unique position of being able to think strategically about the learning system as a whole, using this information to help meet the needs of students as they progress through their learner journey.

Challenges and opportunities: Building on this, the first phase of the review has concluded:

- that we need to enhance significantly the use of information across the system to ensure that learners have a wide range of high quality options that are informed by the needs of employers;
- that we should consider the types of partnerships necessary to improve our responsiveness to regional skills needs, starting with the alignment of the two skills agencies;
- the move to more joined-up governance of the skills and enterprise agencies should be replicated at an operational level, with much closer alignment across the system with the planning and provision of learning and skills;
- the importance of understanding better the most effective balance of our skills investment to maximise the return in terms of productivity and labour market inclusion; and
- the need to consider how we invest to ensure the most effective support for, and contribution from, those in work, always mindful of changing external factors.

Action: In order to contribute to increased productivity, we want to make sure that learners move as effectively and efficiently through their learning toward employment. To support this, we will start to take forward the following improvements with our agencies over the coming months:

- **We will align the functions of our skills agencies to better join up how learning and skills are planned and provided to learners and employers.**
- **We will conduct a comprehensive review of the Learning Journey focused on sustained employment, with significantly enhanced use of labour market information in skills planning at its heart.**
- **We will review the effectiveness of our investment in learning and skills to ensure we have the right balance of provision across age groups and sectors and maximise its contribution to productivity and inclusive growth.**

PHASE 2: IMPLEMENTATION, NEXT STEPS AND FRONT-LINE SUPPORT

Phase 1 Implementation

In phase 2 we will undertake the implementation of our phase 1 decisions. This will include working with the agencies and other partners to strengthen our enterprise and skills system by:

- consulting on the strategic board, the best distribution of functions between the agencies underneath it, and the associated legislative requirements;
- taking forward plans for the development of a common analytical approach;
- developing a number of common targets aligned with Scotland's National Performance Framework and Economic Strategy to help measure performance;
- exploring how best to create the new vehicle to meet the needs of the South of Scotland, including clarifying its boundaries and the locally-based support it will deliver; and
- taking forward our decisions across internationalisation, innovation and the learning journey.

Next Steps – Regional Partnerships

In addition, we will work with COSLA, local authorities and their business and other local partners to build on existing and emerging opportunities throughout Scotland and to optimise regional economic impact while remaining responsive to meeting local needs. This is with the aim of building on assets to harness regional strengths to stimulate local economic development and to build inclusive growth.

Next Steps – Strengthening Front-line Support

In phase 2, we will also undertake further work with our agencies to develop the right digital approach and a new system of enterprise and skills support.

On digital, evidence from the review highlighted the critical dependency of our global economic competitiveness on the **right digital approach**. Stakeholders identified various key contributory factors: connectivity; skills; business capability to operate digitally; and the development of digital public services. They highlighted the need:

- for good connectivity across all parts of the country;
- to increase general digital skills levels across all parts of our population, including those in work;
- for increased specialist skills to be available to ensure that businesses can design modern, internationally competitive services;
- for more businesses to be fully digital, applying digital technologies in core business beyond website design to reach and service customers, respond to feedback, improve back-office support, use analytics, and develop new types of services;
- for a wider digital support offering to more businesses; and
- public services to be available digitally and be user-focused with ‘no wrong door’ access.

In response, we will seek to implement with agencies over the coming months:

- a step-change in digital skills provision at both general and specialist level;
- wider support for more businesses to increase their appetite and skills to operate digitally so that every business can be a digital business; and
- better communication of the Scottish Government’s infrastructure plans, and ongoing examination of how best to accelerate improved coverage.

On enterprise support, evidence from the review suggested the system had broadly identified the right strategic framework and considered areas where operational delivery might be improved. It was suggested that:

- it may be reasonable to seek certain attributes or contributions from companies seeking and receiving public sector support;
- ‘high growth’ company support might be better and more clearly targeted and should be time-limited in nature, with clearer entry and exit points;
- more companies might benefit from advice and support, with a wider core offering around increasing productivity, innovation, digital support and exporting;
- targeting should be reviewed and focused on increasing impact;

- in many cases, the right advice and support for businesses might offer greater impact than grant; and
- there are opportunities to involve businesses more effectively in the design of services and some aspects of delivery.

In response, during phase 2 we will look at the best way to take forward:

- improving the delivery of enterprise support with better targeting, and clearer entry and exit points;
- a wider and more coherent offering of core support to more businesses. This will cover innovation, productivity, digital and exporting, and may include improved web-based delivery and one-to-many engagement;
- increased focus on ensuring the right advice and support services over grant provision;
- closer engagement with the private sector to shape how the public sector can meet business needs; and
- the right areas for the private sector to engage in providing services.

ANNEX

Scotland's Enterprise and Skills Agencies – Factual Background

Scottish Funding Council (SFC) was established under section 1 of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005 and is given various statutory functions in that Act, e.g. the undertaking of research. The Act also sets out the number of board members and details their appointment arrangements. The SFC Board is accountable to Ministers for the funding it is given, under terms of conditions of grant and a Ministerial letter or guidance, and the Chief Executive is an Accountable Officer. Ministers have statutory powers of direction. A Framework Document governs the relationship between Ministers and the Agency.

Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (SE and HIE) are set up under Part 1 of the Enterprise and New Towns (Scotland) Act 1990 and have various functions under that Act. HIE has some additional social development responsibilities to SE. The legislation sets out the number of board members and details their appointment arrangements. Framework documents govern the relationship between Ministers and the Agencies. Chief Executives are Accountable Officers. Ministers issue strategic guidance letters and budget allocations. Ministerial agreement is required for certain decisions, e.g. relating to new leases, and Ministers have the power to issue Letters of Direction.

Scottish Development International (SDI) brings together the Scottish Government, Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. It is the lead body for driving forward international trade and investment support in Scotland.

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) has no statutory governance structure, although it has a number of statutory functions. It is a company limited by guarantee with Scottish Ministers the sole member of the company. Its powers and functions are determined by Memorandum and Articles of Association, which may be adjusted by special resolution to Companies House. Ministers set out their priorities in annual budget allocation letters and in strategic guidance letters.

SE, HIE, SDS and the SFC all collect and analyse **data** to help them to carry out their functions as effectively as possible. Some also carry out **evaluation** functions to help to identify the most effective interventions. The Agencies undertake **strategic analysis** both in relation to national priorities and to support their specific delivery functions.

Local government – Local authorities can promote economic development under the power to advance wellbeing (The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 – Guidance on the Power to Advance Wellbeing). The Business Gateway service is one element of economic development services offered by local authorities. It is delivered locally through Councils, either by in-house provision or externally by a contractor. Its funding forms part of the local government funding block. Beyond local authorities there is significant existing regional activity (e.g. ONE, City Regions). There are **three City Deals** in Scotland (Glasgow, Aberdeen and Inverness). Together, these commit Scottish Government funding of £760 million over the next 10-20 years. There is a commitment to tripartite discussions on a **City Region Deal** for Edinburgh and South East Scotland.



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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 on Tuesday 18 October 2016 at 10.00 a.m.

Present:- Councillors S. Aitchison (Chairman – Education Business), C. Bhatia, J. Brown, V. Davidson, G. Edgar, J. G. Mitchell, D. Moffat, D. Parker (Chairman), D. Paterson, F. Renton, R. Smith.
Also Present:- Councillors I. Gillespie, J. Greenwell.
Apologies:- Councillor S. Bell, M. Cook, Mr. J. Walsh.
In Attendance:- Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (People), Democratic Services Team Leader, Democratic Services Officer (F. Henderson).

EDUCATION BUSINESS

Present:- Mrs J. Aitchison, Ms A. Ferahi, Mr G. Donald, Mr G. Jarvie, Mr D. Moore, Miss E. Page.

CHAIRMAN

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

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chairman varied the order of business as shown on the agenda and the Minute reflects the order in which the items were considered at the meeting.

1. **VISIT TO HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT**

There were present at the meeting Ceri Hunter, Engagement and Participation Officer, Pam Rigby, Youth Engagement Worker and Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYP) to make a presentation on their recent trip to the Houses of Parliament in London. Funding had been secured through Westminster Education Department and Local Rotary Clubs to send Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament to London for the day. A guided tour of Westminster, while Parliament was sitting had been a wonderful experience for the Young People together with a debating workshop, the trip finished with a flying visit to some of the main tourist attractions. In response to questions from Members, it was reported that one representative from each High School and the SYP Members had been invited to attend and it was hoped to provide the opportunity to more Young People in the future. A visit was planned to attend the Scottish Parliament during First Ministers question time. The Chairman thanked the MYSPPs for their most interesting presentation.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

2. **SCOTTISH YOUTH PARLIAMENT MENTAL HEALTH CAMPAIGN**

There had been circulated copies of a report 'Our generation's epidemic' which was based on research carried out by the Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) and their partners which represented all of Scotland's young people. Their vision for Scotland was of a nation that listened to and valued the participation of children and young people. Their goal was to do their utmost to make the vision a reality which they considered vital in ensuring Scotland was the best place in the world to grow up. The report explained that each year the Scottish Youth Parliament ran a national campaign focusing on an issue which young people care

about. In October 2015, the Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYPs) voted for the 2016 campaign to focus on young people's mental health. The campaign, called 'speak your mind', had been developed by young people and its objectives were:-

- To increase young people's awareness and understanding of the issues associated with mental health.
- To encourage the use of a common language in order to promote positive conversations and tackle stigma associated with young people's mental health.
- To identify young people's awareness and experience of mental health information and services for young people across Scotland.
- To advocate for high quality mental health services and information provision for all of Scotland's young people, with supporting guidance on best practice for service providers.

Cian Gullen and Cory McFarlane were present at the meeting to give a presentation on the work undertaken and answer members questions. The Chairman thanked those present for their very informative presentation.

DECISION NOTED.

3. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Catherine Thompson, Senior Lead Officer gave a presentation on the 2016 Exam Performance. She explained that following three years of Curriculum for Excellence there was an improving picture in terms of attainment. Over the period of Curriculum for Excellence the percentage of pupils gaining qualifications in five subjects at Level 5 in S4 had risen steadily from 37.3% in 2013/14 to 52.6% in 2015/16. In terms of pupils gaining five subjects at Level 6 in S5 this had also increased from 14.9% in 2013/14 to 16.6% in 2015/16. The % of Pupils gaining five subjects at Level 6 in S6 had increased from 30.0% to 33.9%. The presentation went on to highlight attainment at National 5 in English, Maths, PE and Practical Woodwork compared to the National Statistics and Higher English, Mathematics, History and French compared with the National Statistics which were above the national average each year. The Presentation further highlighted that 20 subjects at Advanced Higher were offered within Secondary Schools in the Scottish Borders. There had been 70 entries for English with an 89% pass rate, 62 entries for Maths with an 82% pass. 90% of pupils presented for Advanced Higher History passed with an 87% pass in Chemistry and Geography and 100% pass in Music. In terms of improving Literacy and Numeracy, the presentation explained that Scottish Borders Council compared favourably against their virtual comparator in terms of SCQF level 4 and 5. Scottish Borders Council also matched the National and Virtual Comparator in terms of improving attainment for all S4 and S5 pupils. In terms of tackling disadvantage by improving the attainment of lower attainers relative to higher attainers, Scottish Borders had improved. The next steps included forensic analysis of data per School, subject and specifics including gender, LAC, SIMD, ASN, EAL. There would be, learning visits to schools in and outwith SBC, an Action plan prepared, targeted support, the sharing of good practice and working with learning partners. In response to questions about links with businesses for vocational training, it was explained that some young people needed to go onto work rather than further education and a prolonged period of work experience rather than the traditional one week was being developed where there was mutual gain for both parties. Work was being carried out through the Developing Young Workforce Programme and each School also had a Developing Young Workforce co-ordinator who would make links with local businesses. It was acknowledged that there was a balance to be struck between attainment and a good quality learning experience. The Depute Chief Executive People advised that a more

detailed report on the Developing Young Workforce Programme would be submitted to a future meeting.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

4. NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Children and Young People which provided an update on the new Strategic Policy and to raise Members' awareness of the change in national policy to assessing and reporting children's progress. The report explained that raising attainment and achievement had been a key priority locally and nationally for a number of years. In 2016 a significant shift of emphasis occurred when the "National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education" was published. The document set out a clear vision for both excellence and equity in Scottish Education. It also included the introduction of national assessment and reporting of attainment levels for primary aged children. The report outlined how Scottish Borders Council was taking forward the practice set out in the National Improvement Framework. The report went on to detail the background, and the implications. Members were in agreement with the National Improvement Framework but did express some concerns with regard to making the data publically available. Councillor Aitchison acknowledged these concerns but advised that a final decision had not yet been taken on what exactly would be published. Liz Wharton, Senior Lead Officer was present at the meeting and answered Members questions. She confirmed that once teachers' confidence grew with increased participation in moderation practice and working with the recently published national benchmarks in literacy and numeracy, there could be a higher degree of confidence in the data.

DECISION

- (a) AGREED that a communication be sent to all parents about the National Improvement Framework, including the changes taking place regarding the assessment and reporting of children's progress.**
- (b) NOTED:-**
 - (i) the contents of the National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education; and**
 - (ii) the levels of achievement in schools across the Scottish Borders in respect of Reading, Writing and Numeracy as per the National Improvement Framework.**

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11.25 a.m. and reconvened at 11.30 a.m.

MEMBERS

Councillors Davidson and Edgar left the meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

CHAIRMAN

When the meeting reconvened, Councillor Parker took the Chair for the remaining business.

5. MINUTE

The Minute of meeting of the Executive Committee of 4 October 2016 had been circulated.

DECISION

APPROVED for signature by the Chairman.

6. **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 8 of part 1 of schedule 7A to the Act.

SUMMARY OF PRIVATE BUSINESS

1. **INSURANCE SHARED SERVICES**

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Financial Officer which set out a proposal to establish a shared service of insurance services with the City of Edinburgh Council and agreed the recommendations contained in the report.

The meeting concluded at 11.35 a.m.

WINTER SERVICE PLAN FOR YEAR 2016/17

Report by Service Director Assets & Infrastructure

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1 November 2016

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 **This report presents a review of the performance of Scottish Borders Council's Winter Service during 2015/16, including the impact of severe storms on the roads infrastructure and presents, at Appendix 1, SBC's Winter Services Plan for 2016/17.**
- 1.2 SBC provides a winter service on nearly 3,000km of roads across the Scottish Borders. An annual Winter Plan is prepared to outline the steps that will be taken to ensure that the roads network is safe, within available resources.
- 1.3 The winter of 2015/16 was not particularly bad in terms of snow and ice but the region did experience very wet conditions, storms and flooding that led to deterioration of the roads network and subsequent pressures on the Roads service.
- 1.4 These pressures, in dealing with the aftermath of storms and works required through Bellwin, have meant that the resources have not been available to do a full review of the 2015/16 Plan and therefore the Winter Service Plan for 2016/17 is similar in terms of policy, priorities, routes, call out arrangements and resource planning (although it should be noted that significant work was done on the plan prior to 2015/16, including public consultation).

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **I recommend that the Executive Committee:**
 - (a) **Notes the performance of the SBC Winter Service during 2015/16 and the impact of last winter and the damage caused to the roads infrastructure as a result of severe storms;**
 - (b) **Endorses the Winter Services Plan for 2016/17;**
 - (c) **Agrees to consider, in the Autumn of 2017, amendments to the plan for Winter 2017/18.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council undertakes a Winter Service on nearly 3,000km of local road network. The Service is provided by the Environment and Infrastructure Department.

Under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984, Section 34, all roads authorities are required to *'take such steps as they consider reasonable to prevent snow and ice endangering the safe passage of pedestrians and vehicles over public roads'*. The safe passage of people on the road network during winter is very important for the social and the economic needs of the area.

- 3.2 To assist in meeting the legal requirements the Department produces an annual Winter Service Plan which describes what steps will be taken to maintain the local road network free from ice and snow as far as it is considered reasonable within the available budget. The Plan is mainly based on a route treatment hierarchy where priority routes have been determined depending on various factors such as traffic volumes, bus routes and access to schools, shops and medical centres. Officers have updated the Council's Winter Plan for 2016/17.

- 3.3 How the Council keeps the road network operating safely and effectively is taken forward in 2 ways:

- Prevention – by pre-salting roads to reduce the effect of frost and frozen conditions, taken forward on a routine, planned basis. The road network is currently split into Primary and Secondary Routes. Planned "pre-salting" is only undertaken on the Primary Routes. The remaining road network will then come under the "post-treatment" or secondary route network where, after treating the primary routes, there is time and resources to cover them and it is believed that the freezing conditions will continue. Although all routes receive some treatment, priority is given to the Primary Network. This preventative approach is covered in the Winter Service Plan.
- Intervention – through large scale snow clearance following extreme winter conditions, taken forward on more of an ad hoc basis, involving emergency actions and community resilience. This is co-ordinated by the Council's Emergency Planning processes.

- 3.4 Officers have presented to the Executive Committee a number of reports on the Winter Service over the last 3 years, the most recent of which was on 29 September 2015, where approval was given to amend the Winter Service Plan for 2015/16 by defining a secondary salting route network in urban and rural areas across the Scottish Borders. Previous reports defined the primary salting route network and presented an update of the overall Winter Plan document.

These reports have put the Council in a robust position in terms of defining the standards and levels of service delivered through its Winter Service Plan.

4 REVIEW OF THE SERVICE DURING WINTER OF 2015/16

- 4.1 The Winter of 2015/16 was not particularly bad in terms of extreme winter weather such as snow fall and very low freezing temperatures. It is, however, recognised that the winter was particularly wet during the months of January and February with many parts of the central and

western Borders suffering from flooding. In terms of snow and ice conditions this view is supported when compared with the extreme winter of 2011/12 and in relation to the number of planned actions carried out and the total salt used. The following key parameters illustrate this.

Years	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	Comment
Planned Actions	150	271	202	204	213	194	Call outs to undertake preventative actions – annual average 205
							Salt
Usage (,000T)	23	43	23	24	33	28	Used on local & Trunk roads

- 4.2 The following represents an assessment of the weather experienced across the UK during Winter 2015/16 (December, January and February) and how it compares with the 1981 to 2010 average.
- 4.3 Coming only two years after the stormy winter of 2013/14, this equally remarkable winter brought severe flooding in December from record-rainfall totals, accompanied by exceptional warmth from a persistent flow of Tropical Maritime air. January and February remained mostly unsettled but were thankfully quieter. Nine named storms from mid-November led to some impacts from strong winds, but it was the rainfall which resulted in the most serious impacts, causing extensive flooding across many northern and western parts of the UK; at least 16,000 homes were reported to be flooded in England alone. During storm Desmond on 5 December, 341.4 mm of rain fell in 24-hours, a new UK rainfall record.
- 4.4 Winter 2015/16 was second-wettest for the UK in a series from 1910, with only winter 2013/14 wetter. For Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, it was the wettest winter in the series. December (UK anomaly 191%) saw between two and four times the monthly average rainfall falling across much of the west and north and this was the wettest calendar month in the UK series. January (152%), and February (129%) continued fairly wet in many areas, January exceptionally so in eastern Scotland and north-east England. Rainfall totals for the winter varied from less than 150 mm across parts of East Anglia to more than 1m across upland areas in the north and west.
- 4.5 While there were some impacts and disruption from storms Eva and Frank associated with strong winds, inevitably the most serious impacts were caused by flooding. This was greatly exacerbated by the wet weather through November and early December, with storm Desmond bringing record-breaking rainfall totals to Cumbria on 4th and 5th; the saturated conditions meaning that the ground had no capacity to store any further moisture.
- 4.6 Storm Frank then brought further serious flooding to Scotland, again with thousands of properties evacuated and several borders towns badly affected such as Hawick, Jedburgh, Peebles and Dumfries. Over New Year into January, more heavy rain fell across eastern Scotland with further

flooding in Aberdeenshire, for example at Ballater and Braemar.

- 4.7 During the winter of 2015/16 the Scottish Borders was subjected to a period of extreme wet weather with each of the storms, Desmond (6 December 2015), Frank (31 December 2015), flooding on 27 January 2016 (following an unnamed storm) and Gertrude (29 January 2016) creating very visible high profile flooding emergencies in towns such as Hawick, Peebles and Jedburgh which required a high level co-ordinated response led by the Council's Emergency Planning teams. Considerable damage was done in each of these towns and the surrounding area which will require extensive repair efforts and costs.

5 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE WINTER SERVICE PLAN FOR 2016/17

- 5.1 Officers have considered a number of aspects of the current Winter Service Plan arrangements, but due to the pressures of dealing with the aftermath of the 2015/16 storms and works around Bellwin there has been insufficient time and resource to bring forward any changes to the 2016/17 Plan. However, through consultation with Members and local communities in 2015, the current plan is robust in determining this Council's standards and level of winter service.
- 5.2 The Winter Service Plan at Appendix 1 will be the Winter Service Plan for winter 2016/17. In terms of policy, priorities, routes, call out arrangements and resource planning these will be as per Winter 2015/16. The 2016/17 Winter Plan is a robust plan and clearly defines and has an agreed approach to primary and secondary route salting.
- 5.2 Officers will continue to monitor and review existing winter service arrangements throughout this winter, noting any deficiencies in service provision, with a view to bring forward any further amendments for the 2017/18 Winter Plan.

6 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

- (a) In 2016/17 the winter service will continue to be delivered as a funded service. The basic cost of all plant and vehicles required to deliver the winter service are also fully funded from within the NS budget.
- (b) The 2016/17 financial plan includes a permanent saving of £100,000 to be met through modernising the approach to winter delivery. To date detailed proposals have not yet been identified, the resulting pressure in the current year is being met through temporary measures.

6.2 Risk and Mitigations

It should be noted that the Winter Plan being recommended for adoption this year has not been fully tested during extreme weather. This represents a risk in that elements of the plan may not be as effective as is required should unexpected, unusually inclement and/or sustained weather conditions prevail. The Roads Service, in conjunction with Officers across SBC and partners will monitor and review arrangements throughout this winter, noting any areas of stress in service provision, with a view to bring forward any further amendments in the Autumn for the 2017/18 Winter Plan.

6.3 Equalities

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out on this proposal and it is anticipated that there are no adverse equality implications.

6.4 Acting Sustainably

There are no significant economic, social or environmental issues associated with this report.

6.5 Carbon Management

There are no significant impacts on the Council's carbon emissions that are additional to current operation.

6.6 Rural Proofing

There are no rural proofing impacts resulting from this report. The Winter Service Plan recognises the rural nature of the Scottish Borders and the importance of maintaining links during the winter months. With nearly 3000km of road network winter service resources are prioritised to primary routes.

6.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

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

7 CONSULTATION

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

Approved by

Service Director Assets & Infrastructure **Signature.....**

Author(s)

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Background Papers:

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, PLACE, Business Support, Scottish Borders Council, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA, Tel 0300 100 1800, email JWhitelaw@scotborders.gov.uk.

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Scottish Borders Council Winter Service Plan 2016/17



Philip Barr – Depute Chief Executive, Place

October 2016

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1. INTRODUCTION

Ice and snow affects the safety of the travelling public as well as the availability and reliability of the road network throughout the winter period.

As such the successful delivery of the winter service is absolutely key to supporting the economic and social well-being of the Scottish Borders.

This Winter Service Plan explains the arrangements for dealing with ice and snow on the region's roads and outlines the efforts that will be made to inform the public of these interventions.

Generally, our winter service is defined to begin on 1 November and end on 31 March, however as conditions dictate this period can change.

The severe and prolonged weather experienced over recent winters has had a significant impact on our communities and tested the resilience of all our services and whilst Scottish Borders Council's road service coped well, which has been recognised by our customers, we recognise that there is always potential for improvement.

It should be noted that naturally occurring rock-salt is the treatment of choice in the Scottish Borders, although the term 'gritting' continues to be used.

The Council's website carries a variety of information pertaining to the winter service and should be referred to for information on gritting routes, self-help, etc.

www.scotborders.gov.uk

During the summer of 2013 the Council undertook to review the impact of the winter weather and the Council's response to it. Neighbourhood Services contributed to this review and we have considered the findings along with our own assessment of the best practice that exists both within Scottish Borders and elsewhere.

Scottish Borders Council works with many partners over the winter period, and in particular:

- * Transport Scotland
- * AMEY as trunk roads operator
- * Police Scotland
- * Public transport operators
- * Local media outlets
- * ELBF and other local authorities

ELBF is a joint working partnership consisting of Edinburgh, Lothians, Borders and Fife Councils that meet regularly to maintain a dialogue on best practice, opportunities for collaboration and knowledge sharing.

The overarching aim of this Winter Service Plan is to allow the safe passage of pedestrians and vehicles on priority routes, to control delays due to winter weather and carry out operations safely.

1.1 Legal requirement and standards

Under Section 34 of the **Roads (Scotland) Act 1984**, the Council has a duty to *"take such steps as they consider reasonable to prevent snow and ice endangering the safe passage of pedestrians and vehicles over public roads."*

The Code of Practice for Well Maintained Highways (2011 revision) recommended that local authorities should demonstrate that they are taking reasonable steps to keep the public safe during winter periods. Appendix 'H' of this code amended in 2013 suggests a framework for local authorities to follow.

The management of the winter service is audited against our registration to BS EN ISO 9001:2015.

1.2 Weather, climate and forecasting

To provide a reliable, secure and robust winter service the Council have a number of forecasting tools at their disposal to plan the best possible treatment regime throughout the winter period.

The forecasts are based on global and national information supplemented by six roadside weather stations strategically placed at sites throughout the Scottish Borders.

We subscribe to the Met Office "Open Road" service during the months of October to April and receive the following via the Vaisala Bureau Service:

We will continue using this domain based forecasting as the basis for our decision making throughout the season.

- * 24 hour forecasts
- * 5 day forecasts
- * Ice prediction graphs
- * Road surface condition information
- * 24 hour consultancy service from the Met Office
- * Ice prediction web page

Flood sensors are located throughout the region and are monitored remotely by Bordercare to check water levels at weirs and grills.

1.3 Communications

Neighbourhood Services will be responsible for providing winter service information to Scottish Borders Council's Corporate Communications Team.

Information will be supplied on an 'as required' basis by Neighbourhood Services to provide frequent communications with Scottish Borders Council during periods of severe winter weather.

In order to ensure that consistent information is given out, contact with the media on winter service operations will generally be through the Council's Corporate Communications Team, supported by Neighbourhood Services Team.

Communications will detail:

- * Road closures
- * Driving advice
- * Gritting routes
- * Snow clearance

The Council's website has a Winter Service section that will provide a wealth of relevant information for the public to view and will be updated with the aim of creating as close as a 'real time' situation as practicable to assist the public in making informed decisions on travel. www.scotborders.gov.uk

Twitter, Facebook, SBAAlert and local media outlets will be used to help spread relevant winter information and advice to the public.

1.4 Resilient communities

Whilst the legal obligations of the Council as a roads authority focus on the safe passage of traffic we recognise that prolonged and severe winter conditions can lead to significant issues in other service areas such as health and wellbeing.

Scottish Border Council is leading a new Resilient Communities Initiative to enable communities to better prepare, organise and respond to emergency situations such as severe weather, fire, power failure or other major incidents, working along with partner agencies, communities as well as third sector organisations.

1.5 Financial resources

In the current financial climate all public sector services are facing cuts in the available funding and our approach to the delivery of winter service is not immune to this challenge. However, we are continuing to plan so that we can cope with a severe winter by ensuring that we do address the core requirements of our winter service.

It should be noted that it is not possible to provide the winter service on all parts of the network nor to ensure running surfaces are kept free of ice or snow at all times, even on treated parts of the network.

To carry out the core requirements of winter service we will:

- * focus on a clear set of priorities
- * continue to introduce efficiencies
- * make prudent and timely investments that will best ensure the resilience of the service
- * deliver a safe and reliable road network for our customers

1.6 Informing future plans

It is noted that changes in the extent and scope of winter treatments can have significant implications for the service, and may require significant investment to facilitate the desired change, for example the addition of a road to the priority gritting routes may lead to the need for an additional gritter, driver and salt.

We do recognise the importance of this service to our communities and our need to further our understanding of what is wanted from our winter service. With this in mind we have sought the views of our customers through the Household Survey and the National Highways & Transport (NHT) Network public subcontractor survey which will inform the development of the future service. In addition to this, as for all road services we welcome comments, requests for service or inquiry through our customer services feedback.



2. POLICY

COUNCIL POLICY FOR WINTER SERVICE

“Scottish Borders Council aims to assist road users in adverse winter conditions by providing a service which it considers reasonable to prevent snow and ice endangering the safe passage of pedestrians and vehicles, using available financial and operational resources”

2.1 Policy introduction

The Winter Service Plan contributes to the delivery of the four core aims of the Road Maintenance Plan, being

- * Safety
- * Serviceability
- * Sustainability
- * Customer Services

These aims support delivery of the Council's Local Transport Plan, the key priorities of the Council and our many partner organisations.

It is recognised that there are three principle activities when considering the winter service:

- * Pre-treatment-precautionary salting
- * Post-treatment – salting lingering ice
- * Clearance of snow

The Council's website should be consulted for the most up to date route information with regard to roads and footways.

2.2 Delivery

The winter service has developed over time combining established practices for the clearance of snow and ice with:

- * developments in salt products
- * forecasting technology
- * route optimisation and GPS

We aim to deliver a service that is efficient, timely and supports our environmental objectives.

We are committed to minimising pollution from the leaching of dissolved salt and to make most effective use of salt by using it only when conditions require.

To ensure timely delivery we aim that:

- * all planned early morning treatments are completed before 8.30am
- * our gritters respond within 1 hour of the instruction to treat;
- * all treatment runs are completed in 2½ hours.

These aims are subject to the severity of prevailing weather conditions and safety considerations.

2.3 Primary routes (roads)

We are responsible for the maintenance of 1841 miles (2963 km) of roads throughout the region.

Approximately 717 miles (1154 km or 39% of all roads) have been identified as primary routes whenever carriageway surfaces become, or may become, dangerous through ice and snow.

These routes are those where traffic volumes and speed are likely to be higher and as such the risk to the safety of road users is similarly high if they were to remain untreated.

The rural routes have been established using the following criteria

- * routes of importance to the emergency services
- * topography
- * strategic A class roads
- * main commuter and school routes
- * regular rural public transport routes with weekday frequencies of 2 hours or better
- * other heavily trafficked routes

The urban routes have been established using the following criteria

- * routes around town centres
- * routes leading to town centres
- * routes leading to town buildings, public buildings, schools, hospitals and community centres

2.4 Secondary routes (roads)

During severe winter periods treatment may extend to other routes. Traffic volumes and speeds on these routes are typically lower than on the primary routes, as such the risk to the safety of road users is less.

However in times of prolonged severe weather failure to treat these routes will compromise accessibility and heighten the risk of isolation, particularly in rural communities.

Approximately 293 miles (472 km or 16% of all roads) have been identified as secondary routes, these routes are deployed to deal with prolonged dangerous ice and snow roads.

Treatment of these routes will only be carried out if after completion of the primary routes there is adequate time and resources to cover them and that the freezing conditions will continue. Recognising that such constraints on the level of service may exist in the future also, we have prioritised the rural routes using the following criteria

- * sections removed from the primary route list during 2012 winter
- * remaining school bus routes with vehicles over 16 seats
- * timber transport routes
- * remaining 'A' and 'B' roads

The urban routes have been established in consultations with Communities and Local Members and have been included within the roads and streets as defined as the urban secondary salting network. To finalise the actual secondary route to be adopted, consideration was given to:

- * main distributor routes
- * links to industrial zones
- * large housing estates

2.5 All other routes (roads and car parks)

The remaining roads, ie those which are neither primary nor secondary routes but are on the list of public roads will be classified as 'all other routes'.

'All other routes' will only be treated when extended weather conditions persist, all primary routes have been treated, resources have been committed to treat secondary routes, and resources have become available

2.6 Forecast information

When forecast that road surface temperatures indicate a **Readiness Colour: Red**, these conditions are defined as "winter" conditions and actions are planned accordingly.

The primary routes (roads) will be treated at the discretion of the Winter Service, Duty Managers. The timing of any treatment will be dependant on the indication of the minimum forecast temperature. Only in exceptional circumstances, i.e. where roads have remained dry for long periods and there is a high degree of confidence in the level of residual salt, will consideration be given to the non treatment of first priority routes. The extent of patrols may be varied according to conditions. Weather and information from sensors located in the road surface are monitored to enable plans to be adjusted accordingly.

When road surface temperatures indicate a **Readiness Colour: Amber**, these conditions are defined as "Marginal" conditions and actions are planned accordingly.

The primary routes (roads) may be patrolled at the discretion of the Winter Service, Duty Managers. The extent of this patrol may be varied according to conditions. If the patrol crews find significant areas of icy conditions they will inform the duty foreman and the Winter Operations Team to initiate further action. Weather and information from sensors located in the road surface are monitored to enable plans to be adjusted accordingly.

2.7 Post treatment

Post treatment salting to carriageways will be carried out when the conditions are:

- * extreme and severe and predicted to last for a prolonged period.
- * icy with formations on surfaces expected to remain after 09:00 hours
- * where snow has been cleared and where conditions are extreme and severe and predicted to last for a prolonged period.

Selective post treatment salting of footways will be carried out when conditions are:

- * extreme and severe and predicted to last for a prolonged period.
- * icy with formations on surfaces expected to remain after 09:00 hours and the surface temperature is expected to stay below 0 degrees C. at this time.

Selective snow clearing would be planned to be carried out should the forecast indicate that extreme and severe weather with settled snow deeper than 40mm and predicted to last for a longer period.

2.8 Primary routes (footways)

In previous Winter Service Plans we have considered the treatment of footways alongside the treatment of the public roads. The experience gained through the 2012/13 winter review indicated a clear need to consider the needs of pedestrians and cyclists separately to the needs of motorists and other road users. The risk to public safety posed by untreated footways heightens as freezing conditions become very severe or prolonged.

As such the decision to treat footways will be made alongside the decision to treat other areas.

Footways will not automatically be treated each time we treat our primary routes, but in line with the criteria set out below. We have identified the following classifications of footways and cycleways for treatment:

- * town centre & shopping areas
- * footways leading to town centres
- * footways serving – public buildings, schools, hospitals, medical centres

2.9 All other routes (footways)

If severe conditions persist, then treatment of other locations may be carried out as needed, subject to the availability of resources. We shall consider the ad-hoc treatment of any location in support of a particular emergency or medical access

need as identified through our partner agencies. We will work with the Community Councils and others to identify all reasonably practicable opportunities for self help.

2.10 School transport routes

Unfortunately, it is impracticable to extend our winter service treatments to include all school transport routes. In severe and prolonged winter conditions our treatment coverage will extend to include the access to all schools in the region.

We will continue to work with bus operators where appropriate to ensure buses reach essential routes, the majority of these routes will be catered for as our resources can reasonably allow.

Through our proposals for self help in the community and with better communications with the education service we may be able to facilitate the treatment of identified problem sites in times when accessibility and isolation become a significant risk.

All treatment will be subject to the availability of resources and the prevailing conditions.

2.11 Provision of grit bins

Grit bins can be provided and maintained with stocks of salt where they improve road safety and benefit the community.

Grit bins will generally be provided when determined through a risk based assessment.

Maintaining salt/grit stock in the grit bins will be dependent on the available resources and the prevailing conditions. In severe and prolonged winter weather we may not be able to carry out any re-stocking, as our resources will have to be directed towards treating our roads and footways in line with the priorities set out in this plan.

We will, as part of our asset inventory, maintain details of all our grit bin locations.

Grit bins will **not** usually be provided:

- * on roads that form part of a primary route.
- * where they attract anti-social behaviour or cause nuisance to nearby residents.
- * where their provision would create a further proliferation of street furniture to the detriment of disabled or visually impaired people and/or the community.
- * on unadopted roads whether subject to future adoption or not.

The salt/grit provided in these bins is for spreading on public roads only, and unauthorised use of this salt to treat other premises will be considered as an act of theft.

We aim to have all our grit bins full in advance of winter and seek to maintain these stocks throughout the winter season. Where usage is high and it is confirmed that the salt/grit is being used on the road, we may supplement the existing grit bin provision following assessment.

2.12 Diversion routes

Diversion routes shall be treated to at least the standard required for the diverted route. When selecting diversion routes during the winter season consideration shall

be paid to the extent of the priority routes and for the potential need for a proposed diversion route to be inspected to ascertain its suitability for gritting prior to being used.

2.13 The trunk roads in the Scottish Borders

Transport Scotland is the authority responsible for the management of the Trunk Roads in the Scottish Borders. The A1, A68, A6091, A7 south of Galashiels and A702 fall within their South East Unit area and the services for this area are delivered through their agents AMEY.

Through existing sub contract arrangements Neighbourhood Services currently provide support to AMEY in winter service provision on trunk roads within the Scottish Borders area.

AMEY 0800 042 0188

2.14 Contingency planning – Route rationalisation

Recent winters have seen the nation experience difficulties with the supply of road salt. Where there is a requirement to constrain gritting operations to less than primary routes then the decision to rationalise the extent of treatment in this way may be taken by the Corporate Transformation and Services Director in consultation with the Chief Executive and Police Scotland.

This option shall only be actioned if all other contingency options such as the use of alternative salt supplies and reduced or variable spread rates have been exhausted.

If taken, the communication of this decision to all road users will be critical to the management of the consequential risk.

2.15 Community self help

Whilst the legal obligations of the Council as a road authority focus on the safe passage of traffic we recognise that prolonged and severe winter conditions do lead to isolation being experienced in both rural and urban situations. The issue of isolation can be most acute in our rural communities where the distance to a treated road may prevent access and egress for significant periods.

Scottish Borders Council has developed the existing Resilient Communities scheme to enable a winter service capability in those communities that:

- * are at risk of isolation
- * where that risk cannot be realistically managed through the provision of grit bins and
- * the community have the capacity to respond to that risk through self help in the community.

2.16 Winter file

The Winter File will be maintained centrally by Neighbourhood Services at the Reiver Complex, Council Headquarters, Newtown St. Boswells. It will consist of the following:

- * Daily Decision Records
- * Operational Log
- * Plant and equipment records
- * Hard copy of this plan, including all appendices
- * Other relevant documentation



3. ORGANISATION - STAFF RESOURCES

3.1 Overall responsibility

As the Roads Authority, Scottish Borders Council has the overall responsibility to provide an effective Winter Service in accordance with its duties. The responsibility for the efficient and effective delivery of winter service operations sits within Neighbourhood Services.

Neighbourhood Services also play a key role for the Council in any emergency response to the severe weather to prepare, respond and recover from the impact of any severe weather event, including the effects of freezing temperatures, ice and snow. The Council's overall response in such circumstances is coordinated through its Emergency Planning team.

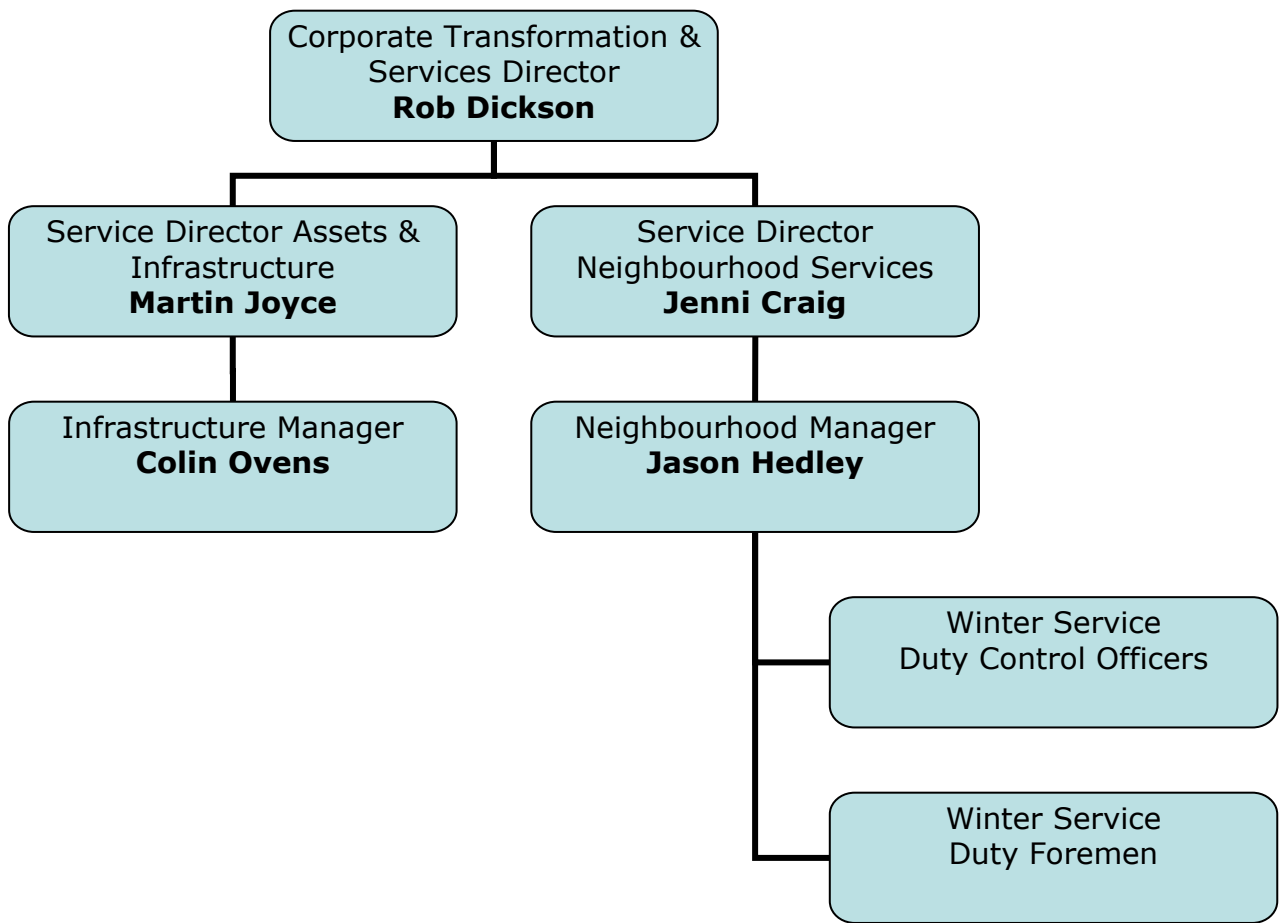
3.2 Prevention

The Council keeps the road network operating safely through preventative treatment – by pre-salting roads to reduce the effect of frost and frozen conditions, taken forward on a routine, planned basis. The road network is currently split into Primary and Secondary Routes. Planned "pre-salting" is only undertaken on the Primary Routes.

The remaining road network will then come under the "post-treatment" or secondary route network where, after treating the primary routes, there is time and resources to cover them, and it is believed that the freezing conditions will continue. Although all routes receive some treatment, priority is given to the Primary Network.

3.3 Intervention

The Council's Corporate Transformation & Services Director has responsibility for Emergency Planning, and will oversee the winter at a strategic level. During large scale snow clearance following extreme winter conditions, the winter service will be taken forward on a more ad hoc basis, involving emergency actions and community resilience.



3.4 Liaison arrangements with other authorities

The following Road Authorities adjoin Scottish Borders:

- * Northumberland
- * Cumbria
- * Dumfries & Galloway
- * South Lanarkshire
- * West Lothian
- * Midlothian
- * East Lothian

Transport Scotland, through their agents AMEY are responsible for treatment of Trunk Roads within the region.

At times of severe winter weather, the availability of other resources may need to be considered.

Any other cross boundary allocation of resources, other than those in existing agreements, should be authorised by the Council’s Depute Chief Executive, Place.

Where there is a cross border working arrangement with each county, we shall seek to confirm the commitment to treat each others’ routes in formal agreements.



4. RESOURCES - PLANT, MATERIALS & FINANCES

4.1 Vehicles and equipment - Gritting vehicles

The Council's salting fleet consists of both dedicated gritter vehicles as well as other trucks that have quick change bodies to convert them to gritters.

All Council trucks are fitted with GPS technology with accompanying software to allow real-time tracking and updates on salt spreading.

To ensure correct salt spreading takes place winter kit and machinery is calibrated and certified to 6mm salting standards.

Snow blowers, propelled spreaders and footpath tractors are also available during inclement weather.

4.2 Depots and salt barns

There are a number of depots and salt barns strategically located across the region. We are also taking forward our arrangements for self help in the community by building upon our Community Resilience planning scheme.

Through these arrangements there may be additional salt stored throughout the region, which will improve our overall resilience levels during times of severe or prolonged winter weather

4.3 Salt

Salt usage is recorded at each depot by Neighbourhood Services staff and the levels of salt available are monitored. By carefully managing salt levels accurate reports can be transmitted to Transport Scotland.

A national 'Salt Cell' was activated for the winter of 2009/10, run by Transport Scotland. Scottish Borders Council participated fully in these arrangements and through doing so has assisted in the appropriate distribution of salt stocks on a regional and national basis.

4.4 Additional resources

During periods of prolonged snowfall a network of registered local contractors and the Borders Machinery Ring are used to supplement our own resources. These clearance contractors are coordinated by Neighbourhood Services.

Scottish Borders has proven to be resilient as a community when dealing with winter issues and we hope to harness this community support and where possible enable communities to help themselves through times when isolation becomes a real issue alongside our core road safety duties. Self help is an important factor in overcoming severe winter conditions.



5. DECISION MAKING

5.1 Operational decision making

Operational decisions will normally be made by the designated Duty Control Officers, except in exceptional circumstances when weather conditions have changed unexpectedly. If instructions are changed, due to such circumstances, the Duty Control Officers should be informed of the

change and the reasons for it at the earliest possible opportunity.

The decision for ordering treatment may be based on a combination of weather forecasts, consultation and previous treatments.

5.2 Decision process

The decision will usually be based on interpretation of the weather forecast by the Duty Control Officer. This will normally be undertaken between 11:00 and 12:00, if the available forecast information allows, and will result in one of the following:

1. Standby.
2. Treatment at specified times.
3. No Action.

The Duty Control Officer will be responsible for:

- * Organising action based on the forecast received, liaising with others as necessary.
- * Informing the duty supervisors of the decision.
- * Updating the winter file.

5.3 Action required

Operational staff will be informed that action is required by text, email or phone call. The following day, or as soon as possible, paperwork will be filed with the actual time that each gritter left the depot and the time each route was completed, and returned to Neighbourhood Services administration.

A register will be maintained of all road condition reports received. It is essential that this Winter Operations Team is supplied with up-to-date information from area offices so that the Corporate Transformation and Services Director and the police can be kept properly informed.

Post treatment salting to carriageways will be carried out when the conditions are:

- * extreme and severe and predicted to last for a prolonged period.
- * icy with formations on surfaces expected to remain after 09:00 hours

Selective post treatment salting of footways will be carried out when conditions are:

- * extreme and severe and predicted to last for a prolonged period.
- * extreme and severe weather with settled snow deeper than 40mm and predicted to last for a longer period.

5.4 Major snow storms

During severe and prolonged snowstorms, when resources can no longer keep main traffic routes open, clearance will be attempted on the basis of the Police Snow Emergency Scheme including snow gate operation.

In this event, the Corporate Transformation & Services Director, in consultation with the Police will decide that conditions are abnormal and will ensure that the appropriate use of resources are deployed throughout this period. Consideration will be given to locating a Police Officer within the Winter Operations Team and they will liaise over operational matters together with a direct link to the local radio station.

Outwith office hours the Duty Control Officers will ensure that operations are properly controlled. Foremen will normally be on duty during the day and early evening. As far as possible, they will not be disturbed at night. Night staff will contact the Duty Control Officers or standby foremen for instruction when required.

5.5 Salt spread rates

Salt spread rates have been revised following new guidance provided by the UK Road Liaison Group and in consultation with Edinburgh, Lothians, Borders and Fife Councils (ELBF).

This revision followed research undertaken by TRL on behalf of the Transport Scotland and the National Winter Research Group into the possibility of reducing spread rates; taking into account the new guidance whilst utilizing best practice gained from local knowledge and experience of past winters. Rates of spread will be 8 g/m² unless conditions dictate otherwise.

Snow Gates are located on the A68 at Soutra and the A7 Falahill to facilitate safe road closures and a system of variable message signs have been developed for the diversion of traffic.

The police control overall strategic traffic routing making use of both trunk and council roads. Snow clearance operations can be seriously hampered by the presence of abandoned vehicles and to prevent this situation as far as possible snowplough drivers are reminded of the need to pass information quickly to their area offices and Winter Operations Team.

ELBF Councils agreed a common matrix for salt spread rates that relate to:

- * surface conditions
- * road temperatures
- * salt condition

This agreed matrix has been developed from the Well Maintained Highways Code of Practice of September 2013 Appendix H and takes account of recommendations by the SCOTS Winter Group following a review of the Code of Practice and consultation with the National Winter Service research Group (NWSRG).

TREATMENT MATRIX A - DRY SALTING MEDIUM / LOW TRAFFIC ONLY

Frost or forecast frost Road Surface Temperature and Road Surface Wetness	C Poor Cover (salt stored uncovered) Medium Traffic Normal Loss	K Good Cover (salt stored under cover) Medium Traffic Normal Loss	Comments
RST at or above -2 deg and dry or damp road conditions	10	10	
RST at or above -2 deg and wet road conditions	15	10	
RST below -2 deg and above -5 deg and dry or damp road conditions	(15 or 20) ₁	(10 or 15) ₁	₁ Spread rate dependent on residual salt on road surface
RST below -2 deg and above -5 deg and wet road conditions	1 x 20 & monitor & treat as required)	20	
RST at or below -5 deg and above -10 deg and dry or damp road conditions	(1 x 20 & monitor & treat as required) ₁	20	₁ Spread rate dependent on residual salt on road surface
RST at or below -5 deg and above -10 deg and wet road conditions	(1 x 20 & monitor & treat as required)	(1 x 20 & monitor & treat as required)	
Precautionary treatment before snow / freezing rain			
Light snow forecast	20 to 40	Dependent on capability to complete route within reasonable time and monitor for further action.	
Moderate / Heavy Snow forecast	20 to 40	Dependent on capability to complete route within reasonable time and monitor for further action	
Freezing Rain forecast	2 x 20	Spreading salt before freezing rain can have a limited benefit and follow up treatments will be delivered on any ice that has formed	
Treatment when ice formed			
Ice formed up to 1mm RST higher than -5 deg C Medium / Light traffic	20	Winter Officer to monitor for further treatment	
Ice formed up to 1mm RST lower than -5 deg C Medium / Light traffic	20	Winter Officer to consider and seek approval for 1:1 mixture and further assess spread rate	
Treatment during snowfall			
Continuous snow falling	20	Winter Officer to monitor for further treatment	
Snow forecast for during the night	Patrol	Winter Officer to monitor for further treatment	
Treatment for slush when freezing conditions are forecast			
Plough to remove as much slush as possible before treating	2 x 20	Winter Officer to monitor for further treatment	
Treatment for thicker layers of compacted snow and ice			
Medium layer 1 to 5 mm initial treatment	20 to 40	Dependent on capability to complete route within reasonable time and monitor for further action. Winter Officer to consider and seek approval for 1:1 mixture	
High Layer Thickness greater than 5mm Initial treatment	20 to 40	Dependent on capability to complete route within reasonable time and monitor for further action. Winter Officer to consider and seek approval for 1:1 mixture For successive treatments spread abrasives only After traffic has started breaking up the layer spread at 20g/m ² of salt / abrasive mixture	



6. PERFORMANCE & BENCHMARKING

6.1 Performance & benchmarking

We benchmark the performance of the service and seek to identify areas for further improvement in our efficiency and effectiveness through our active participation in the APSE and SCOTS Benchmarking and Performance group. Monitoring and reporting of local indicators through the ELBF group is also undertaken together with a review of customer response to the Household Survey and the National Highways & Transport (NHT) Network public subcontractor survey. This will inform the development of the future service. In addition to this, as for all road services we welcome comments, requests for service or inquiry through our CRM line.

Performance is measure using the following KPI's agreed with APSE/SCOTS:

- * actual number of planned actions
- * total cost of winter maintenance
- * cost per km treated (planned routes)



7. CONTACT INFORMATION

The main point of information and contact is via Scottish Borders Council's website www.scotborders.gov.uk

During periods of severe weather the Council will also use Facebook and Twitter to provide frequent updates to the public.

We work closely with local radio stations to inform listeners of road conditions throughout the region.

During office hours (08:45 to 17:00) queries should be directed via the Council website or through the helpline:

* 0300 100 1800.

In the case of an **emergency** out of normal office hours we have an agreement with Bordercare who can be contacted on:

* 01896 752 111

AMEY, the trunk road manager can be contacted on:

* 0800 042 0188

You can get this document on tape, in large print, and various other formats by contacting us at the address below. In addition, contact the address below for information on language translations, additional copies, or to arrange for an officer to meet with you to explain any areas of the publication that you would like clarified.

Contact – Jacqueline Whitelaw, PLACE, Business Support, Scottish Borders Council, Council Headquarters, Newtown St. Boswells TD6 0SA Tel. No. 0300 100 1800

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HIGH STREET OUTDOOR TABLES AND CHAIRS: TRIAL PERMIT PROPOSAL

Report by Chief Officer - Roads

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1 November 2016

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 **This report proposes the introduction of a 3 year trial permit system, with review after year 1, to allow catering establishments across the Scottish Borders to place tables and chairs temporarily outside their premises.**
- 1.2 The Council's Roads Network section is aware that carefully placed tables and chairs on High Streets can greatly enhance the look and feel of the area, as well as contributing to sustainable economic within the Scottish Borders.
- 1.3 Currently, some establishments apply for permission to place tables and chairs but some do not. Not only does this lead to variations in quality, but it can compromise public safety, especially for those who are visually impaired.
- 1.4 It is therefore recognised that there is a need to have a consistent approach in place to make sure that tables and chairs are placed in a safe and sensible manner and are of a quality that will not be detrimental to the look and feel of High Streets.
- 1.5 This report, based on the temporary placement of tables and chairs as well as the necessary associated temporary barriers, proposes that a 3 year permit trial is undertaken to ensure that streets are kept safe and enhance townscapes across the Scottish Borders.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **I recommend that the Executive Committee agrees to the introduction of a 3 year trial permit system – as detailed in Section 4 of this report - to allow tables and chairs to be placed outside catering establishments, with a review after year 1.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Scottish Borders Council is keen to encourage a 'café culture' on High Streets throughout the region and acknowledge that good quality tables and chairs can enhance a townscape.
- 3.2 It is important that the needs of pedestrians, wheelchair users, prams, buggies and in particular those with visual and mobility disabilities are given due consideration when contemplating any items being placed on footways.
- 3.3 At present some catering establishments have sought permission for tables and chairs on a temporary basis, and some have not. This has led to a mishmash of tables and chairs on High Streets of varying qualities and in various locations. Some have appropriate safety barriers with tapping rails for the visually impaired and others do not. Some are at the back of footways, others are at the front of footways and there is an overall lack of consistency.

CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.4 A recent walk about in Galashiels with representatives from the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) was very informative and the need for consistency in where items are placed on footways was highlighted as a major issue for disabled pedestrians. In a 2014 RNIB survey almost all respondents had collided with at least one obstacle and a third reported suffering injury from a street obstruction.
- 3.5 Current roads legislation states: Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 *nothing may be placed or deposited in the road so as to cause an obstruction except with the written consent of the Roads Authority and subject to any conditions they think fit to attach.* Businesses that apply and successfully adhere with the table and chairs policy will receive a permit and those who do not will have a notice of removal served on them.
- 3.6 Where premises wish to have permanent tables, chairs and barriers outside then they will be advised to apply for formal planning consent as this would likely be viewed as a change of use.
- 3.7 Other authorities have introduced a permit system to allow better management of temporary tables and chairs to ensure that pedestrian safety can be taken into account and that high quality tables and chairs are used.
- 3.8 In August 2016 over 3 sunny days there were approximately 40 traders in the central Borders with tables and chairs outside their premises.

4 TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE PROPOSED TABLE AND CHAIRS PERMITS

By carrying out a permit trial for 3 years, with a review after 1, this would allow the Council to gauge the effect and associated costs of such a practice. The following terms and conditions would be applied:

- 4.1 To have tables and chairs outside a business, food must be the main business of the establishment.

- 4.2 A detailed description of barriers, tables and chairs and proposed occupied space must be submitted with the permit application.
- 4.3 Permit holder must provide evidence that their public liability insurance covers external trading.
- 4.4 Table and chairs must be of a good quality and be removed from the footway and stored elsewhere each night. Plastic garden furniture is not acceptable.
- 4.5 A solid barrier of 1metre in height must surround the tables and chairs which may only display the name of the establishment. Canvas barriers are acceptable on the condition that a tapping rail is present. Ropes are not acceptable as they do not provide white cane users the necessary hard surface to determine a boundary. The barrier is to be substantial enough to resist collapse if walked or stumbled into. Parasols are not permitted due to wind loading requirements. Any new awnings will require planning permission and possibly advertising consent. Barriers, like tables and chairs must be removed each night.
- 4.6 A minimum footway width of 1.2 metres must be available for pedestrians to safely pass by.
- 4.7 The applicant must notify all residential properties above, below and to either side of their establishment of their application.
- 4.8 The permit holder must ensure that the area is kept clean and tidy, and that their customers behave in a courteous and responsible manner.
- 4.9 The permit must be displayed in the front window of their premises.
- 4.10 The default location for tables and chairs will be at the rear of the footway, however in exceptional circumstances this can be varied and this must be agreed with the Council Road's section in advance.
- 4.11 Customers will be required to vacate the seating area no later than 21:00 each night and if any other events or utility works require the area to be kept clear.
- 4.12 It is not envisaged a fee will be set as part of the trial, however this could be introduced in future years if necessary.
- 4.13 A permit may be withdrawn if any reasonable complaints received cannot be resolved.

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 By introducing a 3 year trial permit system, with a review after year 1, SBC would ensure a consistent approach to allowing tables and chairs to be placed outside catering establishments in a safe way that enhances townscapes across the Scottish Borders and contributes to sustainable economic growth (one of SBC's key priorities).

6 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

It is expected the costs associated with the permit system will be minimal and an assessment will be made as the trial progresses on how much time is spent on the project to determine future costs.

6.2 Risk and Mitigations

- (a) If the Council do not adopt a policy on tables and chairs it is possible that High Streets may become littered with unsuitable and unsightly garden furniture.
- (b) A permit system will ensure that disabled pedestrians in particular are taken into account when encouraging sensible table and chair use.
- (c) If tables and chairs are not enclosed then there is a risk to the Council of knowingly allowing an obstacle to be placed on the footway and possible liability.
- (d) Traders will be required to protect themselves with adequate public liability coverage of £5million.

6.3 Equalities

- (a) One of the groups who are impacted upon most when considering tables and chairs are visually impaired pedestrians. By permitting only properly barriered areas with sufficient footway width then their risk of tripping and falling into or over tables and chairs should be reduced. Wheelchair users, prams and buggies will equally benefit from the retention of a sensible footway width.
- (b) Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out on this proposal and it is anticipated that there are no adverse equality implications.

6.4 Acting Sustainably No impacts anticipated.

6.5 Carbon Management No impacts anticipated.

6.6 Rural Proofing No impacts anticipated.

6.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation No changes required.

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 received have been incorporated into the final report.

7.2 Corporate Communications are aware of the report and need for a good joined up information exercise to traders.

Approved by

David Girdler
Chief Officer - Roads

Signature

Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Philippa Gilhooly	Team Leader, Network PLACE 01835 825089

Background Papers: none

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. Philippa Gilhooly can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

Contact us at Philippa Gilhooly, Scottish Borders Council HQ, Newtown St Boswells, MELROSE TD6 0SA pgilhooly@scotborders.gov.uk 01835 825089

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UNAUTHORISED SIGNS AND OBSTRUCTIONS WITHIN THE ROAD BOUNDARY

Report by Chief Officer - Roads

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1 November 2016

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report proposes two options to revise the existing policy to allow Officers to deal with unauthorised signs, banners, posters, sandwich boards and other obstructions frequently found in and around towns in the Scottish Borders.**
- 1.2 Scottish Borders Council has statutory duties under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 and under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertising) (Scotland) Regulations 1984 to ensure that roads remain unobstructed, safe and free from unauthorised signage and a policy was developed and approved by the Executive Committee in 2007. In addition, as property owner, it has common law rights to regulate whether any items can be attached to or deposited on its own property.
- 1.3 However, despite a policy being in place, the Council receives frequent road safety and aesthetic complaints from members of the public concerning signs and banners erected on footways and road sides. The vast majority of these signs and barriers are contrary to the relevant legislation in place and as such a review of the policy and 2 options have been presented in part 4 of this report.
- 1.4 Based on the recommended option, a revised policy could now be developed to better define what items such as advertising banners, trader's goods and sandwich boards may or may not be tolerated, ensuring that the whole community benefits both socially and economically.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 I recommend that the Executive Committee:

- (a) Agrees that Option 2 provides the best options for traders, members of the public and those holding events within the Scottish Borders;**
- (b) Approves the adoption of an amended policy as detailed in Appendix 2 in line with Option 2.**

3 REGULATORY CONTEXT BD

- 3.1 Scottish Borders Council has a duty, under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 to manage and maintain roads in the area and has a range of powers to enable it to do so. The Act provides that *"nothing may be placed or deposited in the road so as to cause an obstruction except with the written consent of the Roads Authority and subject to any conditions they think fit to attach.*
- 3.2 In addition SBC, as a property owner is able to insist that no item is attached to roadside furniture it owns, or indeed is deposited on areas of land which it owns. In combination therefore, use of these powers can ensure that members of the public are kept safe whilst using roads and that the aesthetics of an area are maintained. This is especially important in an areas like the Scottish Borders, that relies heavily on tourism.
- 3.3 In addition, The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertising) (Scotland) Regulations 1984, *provides that "No advertisement may be displayed without consent granted either by the planning authority (express consent) or deemed to be granted in accordance with part IV of these regulations."*
- 3.4 It should be noted that the Council does not have the authority to give permission for any traffic signs within the road boundary unless they are prescribed or of a type permitted by the legislation.

Current Situation

- 3.5 In order to ensure that the Council meets its duties, a policy on authorised signs and obstructions was agreed at Executive on 16 October 2007. However, at present the Council receives concerns and complaints from members of the public over:
- PVC banners advertising car boot sales, charity events, local festivals, restaurants, car washes, entertainment events, housing development notices, etc which are placed in areas where they could be viewed as causing a distraction to drivers, for instance on railings close to roundabouts, on the approach to towns and on pedestrian safety barriers.
 - Sandwich-boards proliferate High Streets and are a known hazard to disabled pedestrians.
 - 'Event countdown' signs are placed in verges on the approach to settlements.
 - Posters/signs linked to housing developments .
 - Stock from traders which has been placed outside their premises.
- 3.6 The Council recognises the commercial and economic pressures on local businesses, however, there is a need to balance this with genuine road safety concerns for pedestrians and vehicle users when considering the appropriate locations for advertising and the possibility of fly-posting.
- 3.7 At present there is not a consistent approach to removing unauthorised banners, signs, etc with some areas more active in removal than others.

- 3.8 A company or organisation who wishes to advertise on the road side can apply for formal advertising consent through the planning process.
- 3.9 There are now far more options open to people to advertise events, with Facebook, Twitter and other social media channels available and commonly used by advertisers. There are also a number of websites focused on events in the Borders which offer paid for and free advertising. Event organisers should consider these as appropriate channels to advertise their events.

4 OPTIONS

- 4.1 Appendix 1 contains information on generic definitions of road boundary, Council assets, no banner zones, banner tolerance zones, community event/organisation, commercial event/organisation and tolerance times that can be applied to each settlement.
- 4.2 There are a number of options available to the Council when considering unauthorised signs, banners, posters and sandwich boards.
- 4.3 **Option 1** would be a policy devised to completely ban all unauthorised signs, banners, posters and other obstructions and that these would be removed immediately by the Council. In practice, however, there could be difficulties implementing such a policy which would likely be viewed as unreasonable.
- 4.4 **Option 2** would be a policy where unauthorised signs and obstructions are categorised and depending on their location and type then agreed action would be taken.
- (a) In terms of advertising boards one sandwich board per establishment placed at the back of the footway immediately outside the premises with a width of at least 1.2metres retained for wheelchairs, prams, buggies, etc would also be included in the policy. A trader will be required to ensure their public liability insurance policy covers the placing of a sandwich board on the footway.
 - (b) Traders' goods may be tolerated if they are placed immediately outside the business premises, are placed in a tidy manner at the rear of the footway and a minimum width of 1.2metres of footway is retained for passing pedestrians. A trader will be required to ensure their public liability insurance policy covers the placing of items on the footway.
 - (c) In and around towns certain areas could be categorised as 'no banner zones'; this would include locations such as roundabouts, key junctions, pedestrian guard rails and roads with a national speed limit. Any banner, sign or other type of advert placed in these areas would result in instant removal regardless of advertising a commercial or community event for safety reasons.
 - (d) Banners, signs and adverts associated with a commercial event or organisation will not be tolerated at all. Any banners, signs or adverts that are erected and are of a commercial nature will be removed instantly. These organisations will be advised to apply through the planning process for advertising consent at a cost of £202.

- (e) Banners, signs and adverts associated with a community event or organisation may be tolerated in certain circumstances, however, they must not be located in 'no banner zones'. They may only be erected 7 days in advance of the event and must be removed within 48 hours after the event.
- (f) In and around towns certain areas could be categorised as 'banner tolerance zones' and depending on the location of an event it is anticipated that these areas will evolve over time. Banner tolerance zones will only apply to community events or organisations and may be tolerated 7 days in advance and 48 hours following the event.

4.5 **Option 3** of continuing to effectively ignore the issue unless complaints are received is not considered an appropriate way forward.

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 It is recommended that Option 2 is adopted and Appendix 2 is the policy guidance for this option.

6 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

Costs associated with removal of these signs and banners is anticipated to be minimal and would be absorbed by the sections as part of their everyday duties.

6.2 Risk and Mitigations

- (a) There are road safety risks of permitting unauthorised signs and banners at sensitive locations.
- (b) From a commercial perspective local businesses may believe the Council to be insensitive in removing unauthorised signs and banners.
- (c) A thorough communication strategy will be devised to ensure that commercial and community organisers will be clear on what will and will not be tolerated. As well as updating the Council website with the policy the 'eventful' guidance for organisers will also be updated.

6.3 Equalities

- (a) One of the groups who are impacted upon most when considering sandwich boards are visually impaired pedestrians. By insisting all boards are at the rear of the footway with sufficient width this should create a consistent message.
- (b) An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out on this proposal and it is anticipated that there are no adverse equality implications.

6.4 Acting Sustainably

No impacts anticipated.

6.5 Carbon Management

No impacts anticipated.

6.6 Rural Proofing

It is anticipated there will be no adverse impact on the rural area from the proposals contained within this report.

6.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

No changes required.

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 received have been incorporated into the final report.

7.2 Corporate Communications are aware of the report and need for a good joined up information exercise to traders and event organisers.

Approved by

David Girdler
Chief Officer - Roads

Signature

Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
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Background Papers: Unauthorised Signs/Obstructions within the Road Boundary
October 2007

Previous Minute Reference: Executive October 2007

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Appendix 1

Unauthorised signs and obstructions within the road boundary

Definitions

Road Boundary

Road, footway and any associated verge considered part of the road. This may include land not owned by the Council, but considered part of the road boundary.

Council Assets:

Pedestrian railings, lighting columns, road signs, traffic lights, power lighting pillars, council owned buildings and boundary railings/fences.

No Banner Zones

Areas where banners, signs and advertising will not be tolerated for road safety reasons: national speed limit roads, on or at roundabouts, key junctions, pedestrian guard rails and approach to settlements.

Banner Tolerance Zones

Areas where community events may be advertised, however must be outwith no banner zones. Community event organisers will be required to contact SBC to discuss suitable locations to erect banners. These areas will evolve over time.

Community Event/Organisation

An event aimed at the community which could include charity events, not for profit events and non-commercial events.

Commercial Event/Organisation

An event or organisation set up for commercial gain.

Examples:

Commercial Event/Organisation:

Restaurant, café, shop, wedding fair, commercial craft fair/art exhibitions, record/CD sales, live music, circus/funfair, cycling event, farmers markets, car rally, antiques fair, flea market, rug sales

Community Event/Organisation:

Horticultural, agricultural or flower show, local carnival, coffee morning, local rugby/football game, common ridings/festivals

Miscellaneous not tolerated

Sales, permanent adverts of recurring events, recurring weekly church services, 2nd Saturday of each month, etc.

Toleration Times

7 days before event and 2 days after event

Appendix 2

Policy/Guidance on Unauthorised Signs and Obstructions within the Road Boundary

Purpose of Document

A guide to Scottish Borders Council's policy on the placing of unauthorised signs and obstructions within the road boundary; which includes roundabouts, verges, railings, footways, major thoroughfares etc.

Current Legal Position

Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 nothing may be placed or deposited in the road so as to cause an obstruction except with the written consent of the Roads Authority and subject to any conditions they think fit to attach.

Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertising) (Scotland) Regulations 1984. No advertisement may be displayed without consent granted either by the planning authority (express consent) or deemed to be granted in accordance with part IV of these regulations.

SBC, as a property owner, may control what items are placed in, deposited on, or attached to its property and can assist that no such activity takes place on its land without its permission.

Unauthorised signs

These can be classified as a sign that has not been prescribed as part of the Road Traffic Regulation Act, 1984. In exceptional circumstances Scottish Ministerial approval can be sought to permit non-prescribed signs, but this is a lengthy process and only reserved for formal road signs.

Examples of unauthorised signs: sign/banners advertising commercial businesses, wedding fairs, new housing developments, upcoming musical events, happy birthday banners, car boot sales, car wash signs, event 'countdown' signs, etc.

Advertising Consent

Any company/organisation can apply for advertising consent through the planning process to erect an advertisement. The application fee is £202 and would be checked for approval with existing planning policy before a decision made.

Obstructions

Obstructions can be considered anything that is placed on the public road without the Roads Authority's consent, such as sandwich boards, tables and chairs, trader's goods, painted stones, etc.

Problems Associated with Unauthorised Signs and Obstructions.

These signs can be distracting, obstruct visibility, devalue prescribed road signs and in some instances block roads and footways.

Lighting columns, railings and pedestrian guardrails can be damaged by attaching signs and banners to them and weight loading is particularly important with lighting columns.

Banners close to roundabouts, major junctions and main thoroughfares can cause a distraction and block visibility to pedestrians and other vehicles.

Obstructions can be hazardous to pedestrians, especially those who are visually impaired or with mobility needs.

Removal of Unauthorised Signs and Obstructions

Generally complaints over signs and banners are passed to Neighbourhood Services staff from Roads Network and Planning Enforcement Teams. Any signs or banners that are removed by Scottish Borders Council staff can be collected after 7 days from the local roads depot.

Should any unauthorised sign or obstruction become a contributory factor in an accident then those responsible for them may be liable in damages.

No Banner Zones

Areas where banners, signs and advertising will not be tolerated for road safety reasons, unless formal advertising consent has been granted through the planning process: national speed limits, roundabouts, key junctions, pedestrian guard rails, approaches to settlements. Any banners or advertising would be removed immediately.

Commercial Event/Organisation

Any banners, signs or adverts erected associated with commercial events or organisations will be removed immediately.

Community Event/Organisation

An event aimed at community participation which could include charity event, not for profit event and non-commercial events. These banners and adverts may be in place for 7 days in advance of an event and must be removed within 48 hours. Banners may not be placed in no banner zones.

Sandwich boards/ traders goods

These may be tolerated on the condition of 1 per business and a minimum of 1.2 metres of footway must be left for pedestrians. Any sandwich board/traders goods must be placed at the rear of the footway.

Tables and chairs are dealt with separately by a permit system.

Document is Restricted

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