

# Public Document Pack



## SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL THURSDAY, 25 FEBRUARY, 2021

A MEETING of the SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL will be held VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS on  
THURSDAY, 25 FEBRUARY, 2021 at 10.00 AM

J. J. WILKINSON,  
Clerk to the Council,  
18 February 2021

BUSINESS																																			
1.	<b>Convener's Remarks.</b>																																		
2.	<b>Apologies for Absence.</b>																																		
3.	<b>Order of Business.</b>																																		
4.	<b>Declarations of Interest.</b>																																		
5.	<b>Minute (Pages 5 - 18)</b>  Consider Minute of Scottish Borders Council held on 28 January 2021 for approval and signing by the Convener. (Copy attached.)	2 mins																																	
6.	<b>Committee Minutes</b>  Consider Minutes of the following Committees:-  <table border="0"> <tr> <td>(a)</td><td>Teviot &amp; Liddesdale Area Partnership</td><td>12 January 2021</td></tr> <tr> <td>(b)</td><td>Audit &amp; Scrutiny</td><td>14 January 2021</td></tr> <tr> <td>(c)</td><td>Local Review Body</td><td>18 January 2021</td></tr> <tr> <td>(d)</td><td>Executive Committee</td><td>19 January 2021</td></tr> <tr> <td>(e)</td><td>Civic Government Licensing</td><td>22 January 2021</td></tr> <tr> <td>(f)</td><td>Chambers Institution Trust</td><td>27 January 2021</td></tr> <tr> <td>(g)</td><td>Eildon Area Partnership</td><td>28 January 2021</td></tr> <tr> <td>(h)</td><td>Planning &amp; Building Standards</td><td>1 February 2021</td></tr> <tr> <td>(i)</td><td>Lauder Common Good Fund</td><td>2 February 2021</td></tr> <tr> <td>(j)</td><td>Executive</td><td>9 February 2021</td></tr> <tr> <td>(k)</td><td>Peebles Common Good Fund</td><td>10 February 2021</td></tr> </table> (Please see separate Supplement containing the public Committee Minutes.)	(a)	Teviot & Liddesdale Area Partnership	12 January 2021	(b)	Audit & Scrutiny	14 January 2021	(c)	Local Review Body	18 January 2021	(d)	Executive Committee	19 January 2021	(e)	Civic Government Licensing	22 January 2021	(f)	Chambers Institution Trust	27 January 2021	(g)	Eildon Area Partnership	28 January 2021	(h)	Planning & Building Standards	1 February 2021	(i)	Lauder Common Good Fund	2 February 2021	(j)	Executive	9 February 2021	(k)	Peebles Common Good Fund	10 February 2021	5 mins
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7.	<b>Budget Communication Strategy 2021/22 (Pages 19 - 26)</b>  Consider report by Executive Director, Finance and Regulatory. (Copy attached.)	10 mins																																	
8.	<b>Council Tax 2020/2021 (Pages 27 - 32)</b>	10 mins																																	

	Consider report by Executive Director, Finance and Regulatory. (Copy attached.)	
9.	<b>Digital Strategy</b> (Pages 33 - 64)  Consider report by Executive Director, Finance and Regulatory. (Copy attached.)	15 mins
10.	<b>Draft Anti-Poverty Strategy</b> (Pages 65 - 124)  Consider report by Service Director Customer & Communities. (Copy attached.)	20 mins
11.	<b>Proposed Place Making Approach</b> (Pages 125 - 134)  Consider report by Service Director Assets and Infrastructure. (Copy attached.)	15 mins
12.	<b>Emergency Powers Reporting</b> (Pages 135 - 140)  Consider report by Executive Director, Finance & Regulatory. (Copy attached.)	10 mins
13.	<b>Motion by Councillor Greenwell</b>  Consider Motion by Councillor Greenwell in the following terms:-  <p>"This council notes the Scottish Government's recent announcement of "a package of financial flexibilities and extra funding for councils to address the financial pressures caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic over the next two years".</p> <p>Whilst we welcome the recognition of the financial crises local government is in, we remain concerned that this 'financial package' does not solve the problem.</p> <p>Only £139m of this package was 'new' money (£49m of which had already been announced). The remainder of the package is only be available if local authorities make full use of the complicated set of 'fiscal flexibilities' set out. But these fiscal flexibilities are no substitute for a fair funding settlement.</p> <p>This council still faces a perfect financial storm of extra demand for services at a time of substantial loss of income which means impossible choices about the funding of services going forward.</p> <p>This council notes that £2bn of 'efficiencies' have already been taken out of local government over the last decade. We also know that the financial impact of COVID-19 will not be confined to the next few months and with Brexit looming the effects of both on the wider economy are going to make the crises in Local Government much worse.</p> <p>This Council therefore pledges its support for UNISON's campaign and calls on the Scottish Government to Plug the Gap in Local Government finance in the 2021/22 budget to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reward Local Government Workers</b> - Local Government workers have been the hidden heroes of this pandemic. Their invaluable contribution to the COVID-19 response should be recognised and rewarded.</li> <li>• <b>Secure the long-term financial stability of Local Government</b> – Local Government needs long term stability to protect essential jobs and services for the future. The salami slicing of services needs to stop.</li> <li>• <b>Shape Local Government Fit for the Post-Pandemic Future</b> – It is a matter of fact that a number of roles undertaken by local government workers have changed as a result of the pandemic. These need to be</li> </ul>	5 mins

	<p>recognised and their job evaluation reviewed as a result.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Fully Consolidate the Living Wage</b> – Deliver on the existing commitment to fully consolidating the living wage for all local government workers across Scotland as committed to through our last pay deal.”</li></ul>																
14.	<b>Open Questions</b>	15 mins															
15.	<b>Any Other Items Previously Circulated</b>																
16.	<b>Any Other Items Which the Convener Decides Are Urgent</b>																
17.	<p><b>Private Business</b></p> <p>Before proceeding with the private business, the following motion should be approved:-</p> <p>“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.”</p>																
18.	<p><b>Committee Minutes</b></p> <p>Consider private Sections of the Minutes of the following Committees:-</p> <table><tr><td>(a)</td><td>Civic Government Licensing</td><td>22 January 2021</td></tr><tr><td>(b)</td><td>Chambers Institution Trust</td><td>27 January 2021</td></tr><tr><td>(c)</td><td>Lauder Common Good Fund</td><td>2 February 2021</td></tr><tr><td>(d)</td><td>Executive</td><td>9 February 2021</td></tr><tr><td>(e)</td><td>Peebles Common Good Fund</td><td>10 February 2021</td></tr></table> <p>(Please see separate Supplement containing private Committee Minutes.)</p>	(a)	Civic Government Licensing	22 January 2021	(b)	Chambers Institution Trust	27 January 2021	(c)	Lauder Common Good Fund	2 February 2021	(d)	Executive	9 February 2021	(e)	Peebles Common Good Fund	10 February 2021	2 mins
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19.	<p><b>Borderlands</b> (Pages 141 - 310)</p> <p>Consider report by Executive Director, Corporate Improvement &amp; Economy. (Copy attached.)</p>	15 mins															

## NOTES

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

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Please direct any enquiries to Louise McGeoch Tel 01835 825005  
email [lmcgeoch@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:lmcgeoch@scotborders.gov.uk)

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## **SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL**

MINUTE of MEETING of the SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL held in Council Headquarters, Newtown St. Boswells on Thursday, 28 January 2021 at 10.00 a.m.

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Present:- Councillors D. Parker (Convener), S. Aitchison, A. Anderson, H. Anderson, J. Brown, S. Bell, K. Chapman, C. Cochrane, G. Edgar, J. A. Fullarton, J. Greenwell, C. Hamilton, S. Hamilton, S. Haslam, E. Jardine, H. Laing, S. Marshall, W. McAteer, T. Miers, D. Moffat, S. Mountford, D. Paterson, C. Ramage, N. Richards, E. Robson, M. Rowley, H. Scott, S. Scott, E. Small, R. Tatler, E. Thornton-Nicol, G. Turnbull, T. Weatherston

In Attendance:- Executive Director (Corporate Improvement & Economy), Executive Director (Finance and Regulatory), Service Director Assets & Infrastructure, Service Director Young People, Engagement & Inclusion, Chief Legal Officer, Clerk to the Council.

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### **1. CONVENER'S REMARKS**

The Convener congratulated the following:-

- (a) Laura Patricia Alcock-Ferguson who was awarded the Member of the Order of the British Empire in the Queen's 2021 New Year's Honours List for her work as. Founding Director of the Campaign to End Loneliness;
- (b) Julie Forrest who, with her colleague Stewart Anderson, had won the mixed pairs World Indoor Bowls Championships title; and
- (c) Fiona Henderson who had received the thirty year Girl Guide long service award.

### **DECISION**

**AGREED that congratulations be passed to those concerned.**

### **2. MINUTE**

The Minute of the Meeting held on 17 December 2021 was considered.

### **DECISION**

**AGREED that the Minute be approved and signed by the Convener.**

### **3. COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The Minutes of the following Committees had been circulated:-

- |   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| (a) Major Contracts Governance                        | 3 November 2020  |
| (b) Police, Fire & Rescue and Safer Communities Board | 6 November 2020  |
| (c) Eildon Area Partnership                           | 12 November 2020 |
| (d) Teviot & Liddesdale Area Partnership              | 17 November 2020 |
| (e) Community Planning Strategic Board                | 19 November 2020 |
| (f) Civic Government Licensing                        | 20 November 2020 |
| (g) Pension Fund (Special)                            | 26 November 2020 |
| (h) Berwickshire Area Partnership                     | 3 December 2020  |
| (i) Sustainable Development Committee                 | 4 December 2020  |
| (j) Planning & Building Standards                     | 7 December 2020  |
| (k) Hawick Common Good Fund                           | 8 December 2020  |
| (l) Selkirk Common Good Fund                          | 9 December 2020  |
| (m) Jedburgh Common Good Fund                         | 9 December 2020  |

(n)	Audit & Scrutiny	10 December 2020
(o)	Innerleithen Common Good Fund	10 December 2020
(p)	Pension Fund	11 December 2020
(q)	Pension Board	11 December 2020
(r)	Local Review Body	14 December 2020
(s)	William Hill Trust	15 December 2020
(t)	Lauder Common Good Fund	15 December 2020
(u)	Jedburgh Common Good Fund	15 December 2020
(v)	Berwickshire Area Partnership (Special)	18 December 2020
(w)	Planning & Building Standards	11 January 2021

## DECISION

**APPROVED** the Minutes listed above subject to paragraph 4 below.

### 4. COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 With reference to paragraph 4 of the Minute of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee held on 10 December 2020, there had been circulated copies of a Minute Extract seeking approval of recommendations to change the current Police Community Action Teams governance arrangements:

- (a) that the tasking of the Police Community Action Teams remained with the CAT Member/Officer Oversight Group;
- (b) that the performance monitoring of the Police Community Action Teams be moved from the CAT Member/Officer Oversight Group to the Executive Committee, with reporting on a quarterly basis; and
- (c) the Police, Fire & Rescue and Safer Communities Board and the CAT Member/Officer Oversight Group meet informally, in private, on an annual basis, to discuss the work of the Police Community Action Teams.

The Committee had also recommended that a workshop be held for members of the Police, Fire & Rescue and Safer Communities Board to explain the process of tasking for the Police Community Action Teams.

4.2 Councillor H Scott, seconded by Councillor McAteer, moved as an amendment that the above recommendations be replaced by the following:

- (i) that the operational tasking of the Police Community Action Teams remains with the Community Action Team Member/Officer Strategic Oversight Group;
- (ii) that the Executive Committee monitors the governance and performance of the Community Action Team Member/Officer Strategic Oversight Group, and the Police Community Action Teams, by quarterly reporting by the Oversight Group to the Executive Committee; and
- (iii) that a workshop be held for members of the Police, Fire & Rescue, and Safer Communities Board to explain the process of tasking for the Police Community Action Teams."

Councillor Scott spoke in support of his amendment and explained that he wished to improve the accountability of the Community Action Teams. Members discussed the recommendations and Councillor Bell, seconded by Councillor Fullarton, moved approval of the Audit and Scrutiny Recommendations. Councillor H. Scott asked that the vote be taken by roll call and this was unanimously approved.

*Roll Call Vote*

<i>Councillor Aitchison</i>	<i>Councillor Cochrane</i>
<i>Councillor A. Anderson</i>	<i>Councillor Marshall</i>
<i>Councillor H. Anderson</i>	<i>Councillor McAteer</i>
<i>Councillor Bell</i>	<i>Councillor Paterson</i>
<i>Councillor Brown</i>	<i>Councillor H. Scott</i>
<i>Councillor Chapman</i>	
<i>Councillor Edgar</i>	
<i>Councillor Fullarton</i>	
<i>Councillor Greenwell</i>	
<i>Councillor C. Hamilton</i>	
<i>Councillor S. Hamilton</i>	
<i>Councillor Haslam</i>	
<i>Councillor Jardine</i>	
<i>Councillor Laing</i>	
<i>Councillor Miers</i>	
<i>Councillor Moffat</i>	
<i>Councillor Mountford</i>	
<i>Councillor Parker</i>	
<i>Councillor Ramage</i>	
<i>Councillor Richards</i>	
<i>Councillor Robson</i>	
<i>Councillor Rowley</i>	
<i>Councillor S. Scott</i>	
<i>Councillor Small</i>	
<i>Councillor Tatler</i>	
<i>Councillor Thornton-Nicol</i>	
<i>Councillor Turnbull</i>	
<i>Councillor Weatherston</i>	

*The Motion was carried by 28 votes to 5.*

## **DECISION**

**DECIDED to approve the recommendations of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee as detailed in paragraph 4.1 above.**

### **5. UNION CONNECTIVITY REVIEW - CALL FOR EVIDENCE**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Executive Director, Corporate Improvement and Economy, seeking approval of the response, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, to the UK Government's Union Connectivity Review and the submission of the response by 29 January 2021. The report explained that the review was being led by Sir Peter Hendy CBE and was focused on gathering information and views from across the United Kingdom on the status of cross border strategic infrastructure and its ability to maximise local economic potential, improve quality of life and help deliver aspirations for net zero greenhouse gas emissions. The proposed response set out in Appendix 1 had been drafted, building on responses from Scottish Borders Council individually and with partners to recent Scottish Government consultations in relation to the National Transport Strategy, the reports of the Infrastructure Commission and Strategic Transport Projects Review 2, and was designed to be consistent with Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal and the Edinburgh & South East Scotland City Deal. The response therefore strongly reflected the aspiration to extend the Borders Railway, improve key trunk roads and invest in public transport connection to the north of England. As of 1 January 2021, the UK was no longer part of the Trans-European Transport Network and the review requested parties to consider 'if' and 'how' this should be replaced. A question was also asked in respect of the means to improving linkages to Northern Ireland. Members welcomed the report and paid tribute to the

work by officers in preparing the submission. The need to improve rural connectivity was highlighted as isolation was an issue in many areas of the Borders. In response to a request from Councillor Robson regarding east/west connectivity, Mr Dickson advised that the response to question 11 could be strengthened.

## **DECISION**

**AGREED the draft consultation response as provided in Appendix 1 to the report, subject to the amendment of the response to Question 11 to include reference to east/west connectivity, and its submission to UK Government by 29 January 2021.**

### **6. LEARNING ESTATE REVIEW UPDATE**

- 6.1 With reference to paragraph 5 of the Executive Committee Minute of 7 November 2017, there had been circulated copies of a joint report by the Service Director, Young People, Engagement & Inclusion and Service Director, Assets & Infrastructure, providing an update on progress with improving the condition and suitability of many schools and sought approval of a process and actions to deliver a Learning Estate Strategic Plan. The report provided details of the progress which had been made in recent years, improving the condition and suitability of many schools. Despite huge improvements in the physical fabric of many buildings, it was recognised that much more had to be done and work was progressing to ensure future investment in the School Estate was planned, managed and delivered in line with empirical data and an overall strategy for the Learning Estate. This report also highlighted the many challenges facing the Learning Estate in the Scottish Borders and sought approval of a process and actions to deliver a Learning Estate Strategic Plan which was fit for purpose, responsive to changing population patterns, sustainable in the longer term, and accessible to all. The strategy would provide learning environments to deliver 21<sup>st</sup> century education as part of a wider place making agenda. To deliver this vision, meet the principles of Scotland's Learning Estate Strategy and to address the three key national education and skills priorities namely Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) and Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) a number of policies and methodologies would also require to be updated.
- 6.2 The Learning Estate was a significant and valuable resource for the communities of the Scottish Borders. The ongoing revenue costs for the Learning Estate and the capital costs of providing a Learning Estate fit for the future were significant. It was therefore vital, in light of these material costs, that the Learning Estate was managed and planned in an efficient, effective and strategic manner and that all priorities met the wider strategic objectives of the Council and the needs of communities. Scottish Borders Council had high aspirations for the Learning Estate, reflecting the value that was placed on learning, supported by a vision for well designed, maintained and managed buildings to facilitate learning for the whole community and the future strategy would inform prioritisation of investment while seeking to adhere to the principles of community place making. In order to drive innovation and creativity in how investment was used to best effect, it was necessary to engage with communities and partners to identify how, together, the changing demands and community needs were met. The report also made recommendations regarding future workstreams and policies that would be required to deliver the Learning Estate Strategic Plan. The outcome of this work would be brought forward for further approval at appropriate junctures and, once approved, those policies and workstreams would be incorporated into the Learning Estate Strategic Plan.
- 6.3 Members welcomed the comprehensive nature of the report and noted the 10 guiding principles produced by the Scottish Government for Scotland's Learning Estate Strategy. Members requested details of the 16 schools which currently had less than 50 pupils and Mrs Munro undertook to provide this information to Members after the meeting. She explained that the figure of 50 had been in the Small Schools Policy as it was the number when a school would go from 3 classes down to 2. She assured Members that this was not the only factor and that it was necessary to look at future roll projections to see if it was an ongoing trend. The educational benefits for the pupils were always the primary driver along with delivery of the Curriculum for Excellence, so it was not about savings or convenience.



Councillor C. Hamilton gave assurances to communities that there was currently no dialogue on specific schools and that equity of education provision across the Borders was paramount.

#### **DECISION**

##### **AGREED:-**

- (a) to progress the Learning Estate Strategic Plan using a wider place planning approach;
- (b) to the development of a Policy on Small Schools which determined triggers and process to place schools under review;
- (c) that core facts assessments of schools were reviewed on a staggered basis, with 20% of assessments being carried out each year;
- (d) that the School Roll Projection Policy and methodology was reviewed and amended; and
- (e) that methodologies for determining capacities of schools be reviewed and adjusted.

#### **7. PEEBLES HIGH SCHOOL UPDATE**

With reference to paragraph 12 of the Minute of 17 December 2020, there had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director, Assets and Infrastructure, providing an update on the progress with the Peebles High School project since the last meeting in December. The previous report had advised that the feasibility study to replace the parts of the school lost during the fire in November 2019 had been completed but officers had reservations on the findings of this study on the basis of it being part new build/part refurbishment. A further feasibility study for a possible new build option had now been completed allowing a more comprehensive review of the advantages and disadvantages of the options to be considered. The report explained that officers recommended that the new build option presented advantages in terms of saving time and minimising disruption and approval was now sought for the new build option to be taken forward to the Capital Investment Plan 2021/22. Members welcomed this recommendation and agreed that it was the best option not just for Peebles but Tweeddale as a whole.

#### **DECISION**

##### **AGREED to:-**

- (a) note the contents of this report;
- (b) approve that the option to provide a new build solution provided the most advantageous benefits and, subject to the Capital Investment Plan 2021/22 affordability, should be taken forward to delivery; and
- (c) thank officers for their work to date on the replacement Galashiels and Peebles Schools and their continued commitment to take forward the best options for both towns.

#### **8. PROPOSED RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON DRAFT REVISION TO COUNCILLORS' CODE OF CONDUCT**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Executive Director, Finance and Regulatory, proposing the submission of the Draft Consultation Response attached as Annex 1 to the report to Scottish Government as the Council's response to its consultation on a possible revision to the Councillors' Code of Conduct. The report explained that Section 1 of the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000 (the Act) required the Scottish Ministers to issue a Code of Conduct for Councillors (the Code). The aim of the Code was to

set out clearly and openly the standards that councillors must comply with when carrying out their council duties. The current version of the Code was originally issued in 2010 following a limited review of the pre-existing Code in 2009. A further amendment was published in 2018 - again following a very limited review. Scottish Ministers considered that many developments had occurred over the last ten years since the Code was last substantially reviewed and had therefore launched this consultation into a proposed revised Code. Their stated aim was “to amend the Councillors’ Code of Conduct to bring it up to date and make it more user friendly.” In order to consider the content of the proposed revised Code a short life Working Group had been established. This group met before and after the Christmas vacation and the draft response contained in the Annex 1 to this report was the output of that Group. Consultation responses had to be submitted to Scottish Government by 8 February 2021. Councillor Aitchison commented on the importance of the Code of Conduct and apologised for missing the opportunity to participate in the Working Group. He asked for two amendments as follows:

- (a) that under Question 4 – point 5 b. the word “tolerate” be changed to “experience”; and
- (b) that under Question 4 – point 5 d. the words “to consider reporting the conduct” be removed.

These proposed amendments were unanimously accepted.

## **DECISION**

### **AGREED to:-**

- (a) **approve the content of the Draft Consultation Response attached as Annex 1 to this report, subject to the amendments detailed above, as the formal response of the Scottish Borders Council to the Consultation: and**
- (b) **direct the Chief Legal Officer (Monitoring Officer) to submit it to Scottish Government on its behalf before 8 February 2021.**

## **9. AMENDMENTS TO COMMITTEE REPORT IMPLICATIONS SECTION**

- 9.1 With reference to paragraph 6 of the Minute of 25 September 2020, there had been circulated copies of a report by the Executive Director, Corporate Improvement and Economy, proposing some changes to the Implications section of committee reports to take account of UN Sustainable Development Goals and Climate Change, and also to include a new statement around Data Protection compliance. The report explained that at its meeting on 25 September 2020, Scottish Borders Council had decided that the ‘implications’ section of Council reports would be reviewed and updated generally, with a specific objective of addressing the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This review and updating was to be overseen by the Sustainable Development Committee and a report on the proposed changes was approved by that Committee at its meeting on 4 December 2020. The implications section of committee reports covered a number of specific areas: Financial, Risk and Mitigations, Integrated Impact Assessment, Acting Sustainably, Carbon Management, Rural Proofing, and changes to the Schemes of Administration and Delegation. The paragraphs which were being reviewed were the ones relating to Acting Sustainably and Carbon Management. To ensure officers took account of the UN Sustainable Development Goals when drafting reports, it was proposed that a checklist was completed and details were given in a new section, “Sustainable Development Goals”, on the specific UN goals which were being impacted. A checklist was attached as Appendix A to the report. The intention was that report writers completed the checklist and drew the most salient issues into a brief narrative in the ‘Sustainable Development Goals’ section of the report, explaining relevance and (where appropriate) how the recommendations in the report supported progress against the Sustainable Development Goals. While ‘taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts’ is a UN SDG (SDG 13), it was recognised that national legislation, the Scottish public policy context (e.g. the Programme for Government 2021-2022), and Scottish Borders Council’s own commitments manifested in the Responding to the Climate

Emergency Report of 25 September 2020 required specific reference to be made to the Council's efforts and progress in this area. Accordingly, it was proposed that a paragraph in the implications section was retained under the title 'Climate Change' with report writers setting out details of the impact of the report in this area, and (where appropriate) how the recommendations in the report supported progress against Climate Change objectives. A checklist to this effect for officer use was attached as Appendix B to the report. Guidance and training for report writers would be provided to ensure they understood and took account of the new requirements.

- 9.2 The Council had obligations under Data Protection legislation and non-compliance could result in substantial fines. If a proposal included any new processing of personal data, or any change to the way personal data was currently processed, then officers must be able to evidence that the potential impact on the privacy of citizens had been fully considered and that any risk around the process had been identified and mitigated appropriately. It was therefore proposed that a new paragraph was added to the Implications section of committee reports covering Data Protection. The Clerk to the Council in presenting the report added a further recommendation (d) that the above changes be reviewed after 12 months and a report brought to Council on the outcome. Members welcomed the report and suggested that training for Members might also be helpful. Councillor Aitchison commented on training he had received from "Keep Scotland Beautiful" and advised that they would be offering further sessions.

**DECISION  
AGREED:-**

**(a) to approve the following changes to committee reports:**

- (i) the amendment of the Acting Sustainably and Carbon Management sections of committee reports to reflect the UN Sustainable Development Goals and Climate Change;**
- (ii) that updated guidance/checklists and further training was provided to report writers to ensure they understood and took account of the new requirements; and**
- (iii) a Data Protection Impact Statement be added to committee reports to ensure that compliance with Data Protection legislation was confirmed, with further guidance on this provided to report writers and support given by the Data Protection Officer as required.**

**(b) that the above changes be reviewed after 12 months and a report brought to Council on the outcome.**

**10. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE BY-ELECTION FOR THE LEADERDALE AND MELROSE WARD**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Executive Director, Corporate Improvement and Economy, providing information on the arrangements for the by-election to be held in the Leaderdale and Melrose Ward, following the sad, untimely death of Councillor Drum. The report explained that the Returning Officer, after consultation with Scottish Ministers and the Chairman of the Electoral Management Board in Scotland, had now fixed the date of poll for the by-election as Thursday 11 March 2021. The by-election would be conducted in accordance with existing rules contained in the Scottish Local Government Elections Order 2011, and in such a way as to ensure the voters had full confidence in the result. This included measures to provide voter confidence around the protection of public health. The safety of the election staff and voters was being given priority in the planning of the by-election and appropriate arrangements were being put in place to mitigate risks to health. There would be 13 polling stations in the Ward: Oxtou War Memorial Hall; Lauder

Public Hall x 2; Blainslie Village Hall; Earlston Parish Church Hall x 2; Gattonside Village Hall; Tweedbank Community Centre x 2; Smith Memorial Hall, Darnick; Corn Exchange, Melrose x 2; Newstead Village Hall. The Count – which would be an electronic count – would take place in the Volunteer Hall, Galashiels on Friday 12 March 2021, starting at 10.00 a.m. Usually, for a by election, the Count would be held at Council HQ in the Chamber and Committee Room 1, but this was not large enough to ensure social distancing rules were met. In the same respect, postal vote verification would also take place in the Volunteer Hall, with opening sessions likely to be on Wednesday 10 and Thursday 11 March. Early indications were that the cost for the by-election was likely to be between £40k and £45k. As Polling day for the by election was 11 March and the count was being held on 12 March, it was therefore proposed to move the Galashiels Common Good Fund Sub-Committee and Employee Forum meetings from Thursday 11 March to the afternoon of Thursday 18 March; and for the Sustainable Development Committee meeting due to be held on Friday 12 March to be brought forward to Friday 5 March 2021. Members were pleased to see that measures were in place to allow the election to be conducted safely.

#### **DECISION**

##### **AGREED:-**

- (a) to note the arrangements for the by-election for the Leaderdale and Melrose Ward with Polling Day to be held on Thursday, 11 March 2021;
- (b) to note that the costs associated with the staffing, printing, supplies, venue hire, electronic equipment hire, PPE, and other expenses incurred by the Returning Officer, would be met from existing budgets; and
- (c) to move the meetings of the Galashiels Common Good Fund Sub-Committee and Employee Forum from 11 March to 18 March 2021, and the Sustainable Development Committee meeting from 12 March to 5 March 2021.

#### **11. DRAFT CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2021/2022**

- 11.1 The Convener advised that it was proposed that the meeting of Scottish Borders Council currently scheduled for 24 June 2021 be moved to 17 June to avoid the school holidays.

#### **DECISION**

**AGREED to approve that the Council meeting currently scheduled for 24 June be moved to 17 June 2021.**

- 11.2 There had been circulated copies of the draft Calendar of Meetings for the period August 2021 to July 2022.

#### **DECISION**

**AGREED to approve the Calendar of Meetings for the period August 2021 to July 2022.**

#### **12. OPEN QUESTIONS**

The questions submitted by Councillors H. Scott, Paterson, Ramage, Laing and Robson were answered.

#### **DECISION**

**NOTED the replies as detailed in Appendix I to this Minute.**

#### **13. 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 Appendix II to this Minute on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of**

**exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 6, 8 and 9 of Part I of Schedule 7A to the Act.**

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

**14. Minute**

The private section of the Council Minute of 17 December 2020 was approved.

**15. Committee Minutes**

The private sections of the Committee Minutes as detailed in paragraph 4 of this Minute were approved.

*The meeting concluded at 12.55 p.m.*

**SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL**  
**28 JANUARY 2021**  
**APPENDIX 1**  
**OPEN QUESTIONS**

**Questions from Councillor H. Scott**

**1. To Executive Member for Infrastructure, Travel & Transport**

Councillors receive many complaints about wheelie bins and bags of household and commercial waste being parked permanently on footways, causing obstruction and danger to pedestrians, wheelchair users, and parents pushing children's buggies and prams, by forcing them to move onto the roadway and into the path of vehicular traffic to avoid the obstruction.

Is it within the competence of Scottish Borders Council to introduce a bye-law prohibiting the placing of wheelie bins and other forms of household and commercial waste on footways, other than on the evening before, and on the day of collection, and if so, who/which organisation would be responsible for enforcement of that regulation?

**Reply from Councillor Edgar**

It is not within the competence of Scottish Borders Council to introduce such a Byelaw.

That is because Section 201(3) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 states that a Byelaw shall not be made for a purpose which is provided for by another Act.

In this instance Section 46 of the Environmental Protection Act of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 empowers a Local Authority to serve a Notice on a householder making provisions in this regard.

For the purposes of clarity the Council does not have a specific policy on the presentation and removal of wheeled bins. However our guidance is that bins must be presented on the kerbside by 7am on the day of collection and removed as soon as possible after the collection has taken place.

On the whole this guidance is abided by with the Council receiving very few complaints about bins causing an obstruction. Any reports of bins being left permanently on the pavement causing an obstruction are investigated and action taken as required. However officers are aware of a small number of specific areas across the Scottish Borders which can present challenges for the storage of bins due to the nature of the housing, parking and local road network.

**Supplementary**

Councillor Scott expressed his disappointment with the response and asked that the Council review its policy regarding Section 46 of the Environmental Protection Act and enforce the removal of bins from the streetscape. Councillor Edgar asked Councillor Scott to provide him with a list of locations where there were issues, and he would ensure these were investigated by officers and a response provided to Councillor Scott.

**2. To the Leader**

A January 2021 Accounts Commission report entitled "Digital progress in local government", highlights that among some local authorities, there has been a lack of citizen involvement in digital service design, and not enough focus on outcomes in monitoring progress of digital programmes, and that to better understand the needs of citizens, councils should have a citizen and community engagement plan.

What steps does Scottish Borders Council take now, and intend to take in the future, to ensure that there is full and meaningful citizen involvement in the implementation of its IT strategy, and what measures will be implemented to ensure that those who are unable to use, afford, or access IT equipment are not left at a disadvantage as it seeks to modernise its procedures?

**Reply from Councillor Haslam**

The Council recognises that the design of high quality digital public services must take the views, requirements and expectations of the public fully into account.

The Council has therefore adopted the “Scottish Approach to Service Design’ as an integral part of its Fit for 2024 programme, which seeks to provide citizen centric services that ensure the best possible uptake and acceptance of online services.

Council officers already ensure that we engage with our businesses and communities and that we learn from best practice elsewhere in the design and delivery of digital services. The experience of COVID 19 has for example been very instructive in designing on line application processes for business grant support, in assisting those who are shielding and in ensuring online booking arrangements for our child care hubs work effectively for key workers.

The Council is currently developing a new digital strategy which will detail how we will seek to involve our communities in the design of on line services and citizen engagement.

The COVID 19 pandemic has clearly demonstrated the value of online technology and digital solutions, for example by allowing pupils in the Borders to continue learning during lockdown through our innovative Inspire Learning programme in a way that has not been possible in some other areas.

It has also focussed attention on ensuring that no one is unintentionally digitally excluded due to their circumstances. All pupils in P4 – S6 regardless of their circumstances have a dedicated ipad. This device can also be used to access public services, support, benefits and information by their families when it is not being used for educational purposes. The Council has also worked with the Scottish Government to provide additional devices and data connectivity packages to those families of children at all stages of their school career who could not otherwise afford access to digital technology.

The Council uses online consultation tools such as citizen space to ensure there is full and meaningful engagement with communities in future and we will continue to ensure in our work with CGI that no one is disadvantaged while we seek to modernise our procedures and processes.

An officer Steering Group has been established to govern the future digital development of SBC’s online services and the overall development plan for the web. To ensure customer expectations and views are at the centre of our digital developments, the group will seek their input through a range of communication channels, including digital participation user groups, and wider community groups such as parent councils and third sector, and also feedback through surveys and information gathered from people’s panel and community groups.

Finally, it is worth noting that the Council is facilitating a partnership approach to the Connecting Scotland Programme to maximise the digital support available to vulnerable individuals within the Borders. To date 765 devices have been secured and each phase has been targeted to provide devices, connectivity and digital champion support to different vulnerable groups.

#### Supplementary

Councillor Scott asked that in future when services moved online, Members were briefed including with details of how services were being provided to those without IT access and the contingencies in place should the online service fail. Councillor Haslam confirmed that account was always taken of those who were not online, with contingencies in place for service failure, and commented on the roll out of iPads to Care Homes as an example. Everyone would be able to access Council services whether they were able to do so digitally or not.

#### **Question from Councillor Paterson**

##### To the Executive Member for Community Development and Localities

Are there any plans to change the format of the Area Committees to allow Community Councillors and all that attend the Area Committees or whatever they are changed into the right to vote on any matters that are to be discussed even financial matters at these Committee Meetings.

#### Reply from Councillor Tatler

Council agreed at its meeting on 27 August 2020 to request that each Area Partnership establish a mechanism to review the findings of the Scottish Community Development Centre report on Area Partnerships and the Community Fund. Each Area Partnership has now met and agreed the mechanism for review and the outcomes are being fed back to each Area Partnership.

Once each Area Partnership has considered the outcome of its individual review, officers will review the proposals and, after wider consultation, a further report will be provided to Council on the outcome of the review. It will be for full Council to decide on the future of Area Partnerships, including changes to composition and voting rights.

#### **Question from Councillor Ramage**

##### To the Executive Member for Children and Young People

In line with the Scottish Government announcement that early years settings/nurseries and schools will be open for invited children and for the children of key workers where no alternative childcare is available, SBC announced in January that in-school provision will take the form of activity hubs, not formal learning, supported by appropriate staff.

- This will be for vulnerable (“invited”) children and those of key workers with no alternative childcare.

Indeed we were told recently that 900 children had attended these education hubs across the Borders.

My concern is that we have a duty of care for ALL vulnerable (including additional needs) or at risk pupils, who may not be attending these education hubs, for whatever reason, as their mental health and wellbeing is being severely impacted. Are these young folk being recognised and supported, and if they are how?

##### Reply from Councillor C. Hamilton

All enhanced provisions are open full time for our complex needs children and young people across Scottish Borders.

Schools were opened on the 5<sup>th</sup> January and ran activity based provision for key worker and invited children until the focus switched to learning when remote learning began for all children and young people on the 11<sup>th</sup> January.

All schools considered the individual situations of all vulnerable children and young people. In discussions with the families they have agreed if they require a place within the school. This place could be on a full time basis or on a part-time basis depending on the needs of the child or young person. On occasions this will have involved discussions with social work or other agencies.

All young people not in school are having frequent check ins from teachers and should any concerns arise from these, additional supports are available.

Quarriers resilience practitioners continue to offer support to all young people in secondary schools through teams sessions or phone calls.

#### **Question from Councillor Laing**

##### To the Executive Member for Economic Regeneration & Finance

At the November 2020 Council meeting, I asked the Executive Member to comment on the likelihood of disruptions to fish exports following the end of the Brexit transition period and the impact of this on the fishing community of Eyemouth.

He said he “did not see that there would be any reduction in demand or a significant risk to this important industry, as processes were in place.”

In light of the recent catastrophic delays due to a sea of red tape, and the resultant serious risk to the survival of many businesses, would the Executive Member like to revise his response?



#### Reply from Councillor Rowley

Councillor Laing's present question refers to the record of her supplementary question and my reply of 26 November. It is apparent from the minute of that exchange that my reference to there 'not being a significant risk' and there being processes 'in place' was a reference to only those processes within the remit of Scottish Borders Council. The original question referred to Export Health Certificates and the Council's responsibility for issue of those certificates in relation to fish and seafood. The processes I referred to were limited to that and have proceeded without any issue. My comments on 26 November did not concern customs and Border controls over which the Council has no control.

What matters is the substance of the issue. It is clear that there have been significant issues for Scottish seafood exporters. This resulted in a significant Eyemouth business dispatching 6 trucks to Westminster to protest the current situation.

What is important is what gave rise to that protest and what role the Council has in the matter.

It has been reported to me that the heart of the problem is issues with the HMRC computer network, and problems with the UK Customs computer system talking to the French customs computer system. Unfortunately, problems have persisted.

This is very serious. It is vitally important that these matters are resolved urgently.

The UK Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has confirmed that it is putting in place a £23m compensation package for firms exporting fish and shellfish to the EU that can show they have suffered "genuine loss". The government has said seafood exporters will be able to claim up to £100,000 in compensation. That is a welcome step in responding to the problems which have arisen.

As already noted, the Council's role is limited. Council Environmental Health Officers have attended premises in Eyemouth to issue the appropriate Environmental Health Certificates. That will continue. The Council has done and will do what it can within its direct remit to support businesses.

#### Supplementary

Councillor Laing did not consider that this would be a short term issue and that Government assistance was capped at £1000 when firms like D R Collin were losing that each day. She asked if Councillor Rowley would write to the Government asking what further help would be provided if this situation continued. Councillor Rowley advised that he was happy to write such a letter to make the case for Berwickshire businesses and he absolutely supported the fishing industry. He commented on similar issues in France and the need to help businesses get around the red tape. He did feel it was a short term issue which would get resolved.

#### **Question from Councillor Robson**

##### To the Executive Member for Children and Young People

Can the Executive Member advise whether the Council intends to adopt or use a guide to strategies to support children and young people with Extreme (or Pathological) Demand Avoidance as a profile of the Autism Spectrum such as that recently published by South Lanarkshire Council ?

Link for ease of reference

[https://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/14113/extreme\\_demand\\_avoidance.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0CBc4F9688ue9gFMdF8soZ9g5dhqJ4\\_wTz\\_7XXQ9wlnh0ZPMvqGZL2ObE](https://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/14113/extreme_demand_avoidance.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0CBc4F9688ue9gFMdF8soZ9g5dhqJ4_wTz_7XXQ9wlnh0ZPMvqGZL2ObE)

#### Reply from Councillor C. Hamilton

Thank you to Councillor Robson for drawing this development from South Lanarkshire to our attention.

Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA) is not a recognised mental health diagnosis, whereas Autism (or ASD) is a recognised diagnosis. In this context some medical practitioners, in particular, in our experience, those in private practice, are beginning to identify ASD as a diagnosis but with a profile of PDA. This practice of diagnosing ASD but with a PDA profile allows the health practitioner to use the term PDA as part of the case formulation but not as the formal diagnosis.

Recently there has been significant political lobbying of Scottish Government for PDA to be recognised as a mental health diagnosis. Our understanding of currently position of NHS Borders CAMHS is that they, as with other NHS CAMHS teams in Scotland do not recognise the legitimacy of PDA as a diagnosis and also resist using it as a profile.

Where a legally registered health practitioner has diagnosed a child or young person with ASD with a profile of PDA and this information is made available to us, education authorities are under a legal duty to take account of this to inform our provision of education support for the child or young person.

Consequently we will always consider such reports and discuss the relevance for education support. In appropriate cases we have, and will continue to arrange for, relevant staff to access training on PDA and to implement strategies developed to support children and young people with PDA. In so doing we do not take a medical position regarding diagnosis –which would be inappropriate. Rather we focus on our legal duty to make the best provision we can for education.

Given that PDA is not currently recognised as a medical diagnosis our view is that the approach described above remains appropriate and proportionate at this time. The generation of a leaflet such as that developed by South Lanarkshire risks being perceived as validating PDA as a clearly bounded diagnosis which is not an appropriate role for an Education Authority. In our view such a development would not be appropriate locally without consultation with NHS colleagues.

What we will undertake is to share the guidance from South Lanarkshire with colleagues from CAMHS for further discussion and to share the outcomes from this discussion with Councillor Robson in due course. In the meantime we will continue to use PDA leaflets and strategies whenever we feel they can support us to provide education to an individual child or young person.

#### Supplementary

Councillor Robson welcomed the detailed response and asked for confirmation that there would be a meeting. Councillor Hamilton advised she would get in touch with him for a chat on the subject.



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## **BUDGET COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY 2021/22**

**Report by the Executive Director, Finance & Regulatory Services**  
**SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL**

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**25 FEBRUARY 2021**

### **1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Council of steps taken to engage with stakeholders as part of a consultation exercise on the budget.**
- 1.2 The paper highlights the budget Communication Strategy used and provides feedback gathered from the Scottish Borders Budget Challenge. This feedback has been considered as part of the 2021/22 Financial Planning process.
- 1.3 As part of the budget consultation exercise on the Council's updated Financial Plan, the Scottish Borders Budget Challenge was made available to members of the public on the Council website from early November 2020 to 31 January 2021. Members of the public were notified that in February 2021 we will set our next budget and early in 2021 we will also be reviewing and refreshing our Corporate Plan. The public were given a limited number of points to allocate across seven of the biggest high-level challenges facing the Council and the Scottish Borders area. The more points you allocate the higher the priority. The aim was for the public to use this online Points Simulator tool to let the Council know what their priorities are for the Scottish Borders.
- 1.4 As at the 31 January 2021, 314 members of the public completed the Simulator and gave us their views on prioritisation of high-level challenges the Council is facing.

### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that Council notes:**
  - (a) the budget Communication Strategy used; and**
  - (b) the feedback from the Scottish Borders Budget Challenge.**

### **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 As part of the financial planning process for 2021/22, the Council committed to engaging with staff, partners, stakeholders and the Scottish Borders community.
- 3.2 The forms of engagement have included:
- An online Points Simulator tool, made available from early November 2020 to 31st January 2021 to all members of the public, allowing the Council to gain valuable feedback on how individuals in the Scottish Borders prioritise seven of the biggest high-level challenges facing the Council;
  - Consultation with all Trade Unions as part of the budget process;

### **4 DIALOGUE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TOOL AND AREA PARTNERSHIP MEETINGS**

- 4.1 As part of the budget Communication Strategy, the Points Simulator tool was again used as a way of engaging with communities on their spending priorities. The Simulator was made available to members of the public via the Council website with the following aims of:
- helping the Council understand what local residents think we should be prioritising, both as part of the budget and as part of our longer term Corporate Plan, by prioritising seven of the biggest high-level challenges facing the Council and the Scottish Borders
  - allowing communities to also think about how they could contribute to the #yourpart campaign in shaping our next budget and Corporate Plan and future priorities by telling us what their priorities are
- 4.2 In practical terms the approach taken to collecting feedback on priorities was to launch the budget simulator with the requirement for participants to move dials up and down with 20 points to allocate across seven priority areas. This meant that each person could go in and quickly select their local area and spread their points across the services providing a prioritised list from higher priority to lower priority for each locality for those priorities included in the consultation. Participants also had the facility to add additional comments if they wished.

The areas selected for prioritisation were seven of the biggest high-level challenges facing the Council and the Scottish Borders areas as follows:

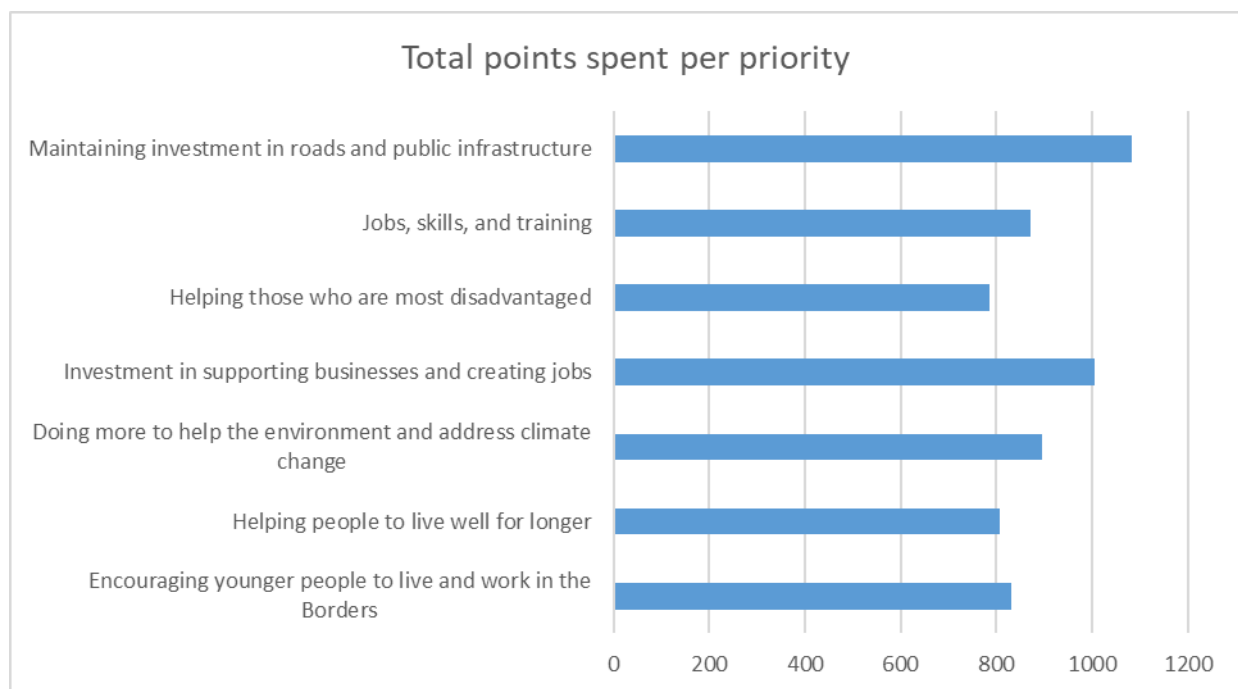
- Encouraging younger people to live and work in the Borders
- Helping people to live well for longer
- Doing more to help the environment and address climate change
- Investment in supporting businesses and creating jobs

- Helping those who are most disadvantaged
- Jobs, skills and training
- Maintaining investment in Roads and public infrastructure

4.3 Up to the date the consultation closed on the 31 January 2021, 314 respondents gave feedback on their prioritisation with 25 leaving specific comments. Specific comments received are included at Appendix 1. The summarised results were made available to Elected Members for consideration in forming the Council's budget proposals.

4.4 The output from the budget simulator shown in the table below reflects the highest 4 priority areas as:

- Maintaining investment in Roads and public infrastructure
- Investment in supporting businesses and creating jobs
- Doing more to help the environment and address climate change
- Jobs, skills and training



## 5 IMPLICATIONS

### 5.1 Financial

There are no direct financial implications resulting from this report.

### 5.2 Risk and Mitigations

By conducting various engagement programmes regarding the Financial Plan, the Council demonstrates a commitment to gathering stakeholder

### 5.3 Equalities

## 5.4 Acting Sustainably

## 5.5 Carbon Management

## 5.6 Rural Proofing

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

## 6 CONSULTATION

- Approved by**

**Author(s)**

**Background Papers:** N/A

**Note** – 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 Suzy Douglas Council Headquarters on 01835 824000 X5881

## Final Comments

- 1 The roads fiasco in the Liddesdale area this year, was nothing short, of incompetence. By allowing the cutting off of our essential access routes with little notice, or communication, the decision makers have highlighted here, the disparity that exists, when heavy industry is allowed to take priority over the average resident. Damage to bridges and roads exists chiefly through volume and weight of traffic increasing in our region, flooding is a likely excuse. These routes have survived for centuries, until the timber and wind boom and the allocation of payments the council take from this, must be realised to the residents affected directly. Please move to award those affected by such activities some relatable recompense. Please reflect this. going forward, in a significant reduction of council tax for those residents and waive council tax, for those grossly affected by other Scottish Government departments activities, where the need exists. Please audit all local trusts and community interest involvement and find out where the funding, all such have been awarded has actually gone. I will be in touch via my legal team in the very near future, to resolve the outstanding losses I have already experienced and to positively remedy, the inaction demonstrated by this administration.
- 2 Slash the total number of over paid managers and increase the pay and conditions of the poorly paid, split shifted workers that care for our elderly, there are worth their weight in gold.
- 3 This questionnaire is horrendous
- 4 Let's really do our part in tackling climate change by not cutting down woodland or destroying greenbelt areas for the sake of building houses and allowing developers to profit from environmental vandalism. After all, the only person benefiting is the developer and there are future generations we must consider now.
- 5 Not convinced that now is the time to spend on display cases
- 6 Prioritising climate, health and tackling inequalities will not only improve quality of life for a wider spectrum of the population, but would also create a positive environment to encourage internal and inward investment in businesses and jobs
- 7 Dog dirt is also a serious concern more needs to be done to address this issue.
- 8 Reduce rates and get landlords to reduce rents, Peebles high street is ready to take off, it just needs a better sustainable environment
- 9 Would love to see more and varied career opportunities for youth, addressing the rise in child poverty.

- 10 The roads are in a shocking state. The side roads need to be a higher priority again. This 20mph scheme needs scrapped too - it's worse for the environment than 30mph as people are constantly revving & driving in a low gear for longer creates more fumes! If children & roads are such a bad mix, perhaps we should be teaching them road safety at school? We only get one planet, & if we're not going to make a concerted effort to conserve it & save it, it doesn't matter what else you do as there won't be a planet for you to do it on!
- 11 As far as I know, not a single Stock Exchange or AIM listed company is headquartered in our region. SBC should do its best to find out why this is, and what can be done about it.
- 12 To retain services at a respectable level an annual increase in domestic rates may be required
- 13 This is NOT the area I live in yet it will not allow me to change! Please cancel this!
- 14 All points deserve 5 points..
- 15 Thanks for the opportunity to comment!
- 16 Please try and get the Sport and Leisure facilities right at the new school and start investing in sport again, all that has happened for the past 15 years is cut upon cut and the sports clubs are starting to struggle, support the sports officers to make a difference to the youngsters in our area.
- 17 More investment south of Tweedbank there is life and opportunities in these areas, Newcastleton closer to M6 motorway than any place in the borders why so little investment
- 18 education on the benefits of active travel would "help people live well for longer" - the 20mph limits will help, but research shows that traffic calming measures are successful. Resulting in perception of safety to walk and cycle. Needs more cycle racks, safe pavements, tolerance.
- 19 Priorities should be roads parks and recreation facilities to attract visitors.
- 20 Younger people can't get jobs in the borders due to the retirement age being so high which means older people work longer and younger can't get jobs
- 21 Reign in the spending on the Tapestry Building.
- 22 If we don't do our collective bit for climate change, the rest is essentially immaterial
- 23 I hope SBC's Sustainable Development Committee plays an active role in shaping investment in the Borders



- 24 More needs to be done to support single low income people who are being disproportionately affected by Covid, other health issues, and so on. All grants and financial support seems to be geared to families, while single people unfit to work, are tossed under the bus, with no support whatsoever!
- 25 We need to do better in the future.

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## **COUNCIL TAX 2021/22**

### **Report by Executive Director, Finance & Regulatory**

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### **SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL**

**25 FEBRUARY 2021**

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

- 1.1 This report provides information on the proposed Council tax levels for 2021/22. The 2020/21 Financial Plan assumed a 3% inflationary increase in Council Tax for 2021/22.
- 1.2 On 28th January 2021 the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Kate Forbes, wrote to Leaders of all Scottish Local Authorities regarding the Scottish Government's proposed budget including national intentions for Council Tax. In recognition of the unique pressures created by the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic the Scottish Government included within the Local Government Finance Settlement an additional £90 million available to compensate Councils who choose to freeze their council tax at 2020/21 levels with the intention of helping to protect household incomes.
- 1.3 The Borders share of these resources total £1.955m which is broadly equivalent to a 3% increase in the Council Tax product for financial year 2021/22. The funding is provided on a one off basis and to date there is no confirmation that the resources provided to freeze the council tax in 2021/22 will be included on a recurrent basis within the local government settlement. The implication, should resources to freeze the council tax in 2021/22 not be base-lined in future settlements is that a future council tax rise of 3% would have to be enacted in 2022/23 to make up the shortfall before any funding could be raised to invest in the provision of services.
- 1.4 It should be noted that the draft Financial Plan shared with political groups assumes this funding will be permanently provided through RSG from 2021/22 in order that the Council Tax base is not eroded through this freeze.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **2.1 It is recommended that Council:**

- a) Accept the additional funding of £1.955m through the 2021/22 Local Government Finance Settlement to freeze Council Tax at 2020/21 levels;**
- b) Approves the Council Taxes to be paid in financial year 2021/22, from 1 April 2021 in respect of all chargeable dwellings in the Scottish Borders as set out in the table below, with a Band D equivalent of £1,253.91.**

**Scottish Borders Council Tax applicable Charges from April 1 2021**

<b>Council Tax Band</b>	<b>Applicable Annual Charge Per property £</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>835.94</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>975.26</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>1,114.58</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>1,253.91</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>1,647.49</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>2,037.60</b>
<b>G</b>	<b>2,455.77</b>
<b>H</b>	<b>3,072.07</b>

### 3 BACKGROUND AND CONTENT

- 3.1 Council Tax funds around 20% of local government net revenue expenditure in the Scottish Borders, the remainder coming from Government in the form of direct revenue support grant. The Council Tax in the Scottish Borders is the sixth lowest in mainland Scotland and ninth lowest overall once the island Councils are included.
- 3.2 Council Tax is a tax on domestic property. All domestic properties are banded based on their valuation at the 1991 levels, any new properties are also assessed and allocated to one of the 9 property bandings (A-H). The Scottish Government made changes to the bandings in 2017/18, the effect of this change was to increase the rate of Council Tax paid by the higher bands E to H. Band "D" is the average rate of Council Tax. The band D tax is currently £1,253.91 per annum in the Scottish Borders. The 2020/21 Financial Plan assumed a 3% inflationary increase in Council Tax for 2021/22.
- 3.3 On 28th January 2021 the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Kate Forbes, wrote to Leaders of all Scottish Local Authorities regarding the Scottish Government's proposed budget including national intentions for Council Tax. In recognition of the unique pressures created by the COVID-19 pandemic the Scottish Government has included within the draft Local Government Finance Settlement an additional £90 million available to compensate Councils who choose to freeze their Council Tax in 2021/22 at 2020/21 levels with the intention of helping to protect household incomes. This additional allocation provides compensation to support services and broadly equates to an increase in Council Tax of around 3%.
- 3.4 As noted in the 'Budget Planning assumptions 2021/22' report approved by Council on the 17<sup>th</sup> December 2020, the table below shows impacts on Council Tax levels for 2021/22 at the assumed 3% along with 2%, 1% and 0%.

Table 1

<b>Council Tax Income Financial Plan 2021/2022</b>	<b>% Increase</b>	<b>2021/22 (Provisional) £000's</b>
<b>Forecast Council Tax Income at Increase</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>£68,419</b>
<b>Impact of 3%</b>		<b>£1,981</b>
<b>Forecast Council Tax Income at Increase</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>£67,759</b>
<b>Impact of 2%</b>		<b>£1,321</b>
<b>Forecast Council Tax Income at Increase</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>£67,099</b>
<b>Impact of 1%</b>		<b>£661</b>
<b>Forecast Council Tax Income at Increase</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>£66,438</b>

- 3.5 The Borders share of the national resources of £90m total £1.955m, as can be seen from the table above this is broadly equivalent to a 3% increase in the Council Tax product, with a small shortfall of £0.026m. The funding has been provided on a one off basis and to date there is no confirmation that the resources provided to freeze the council tax in 2021/22 will be included on a recurrent basis within future local government settlements. The implication, should resources to freeze the council tax 1 April 2021 from not be base-lined recurrently in future settlements is that a council tax rise of

3% would be required in 2022/23 to make up this shortfall before any additional revenue could be raised to invest in the provision of services. The draft Financial Plan in contrast previously shared with Elected Members assumes this funding will be permanently provided through RSG from 2021/22 in order that the Council Tax base is not eroded through this freeze.

- 3.6 Assuming a Council Tax freeze in 2021/22 the charge will remain as in 2020/21 and is shown per Council Tax band below with a Band D equivalent of £1,253.91.

Table 1 Council tax rates applicable from 1 April 2021\*

0% Increase	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H
Charge 20/21	835.94	975.26	1,114.58	<b>1,253.91</b>	1,647.49	2,037.60	2,455.57	3,072.07
Charge 21/22	835.94	975.26	1,114.58	<b>1,253.91</b>	1,647.49	2,037.60	2,455.57	3,072.07
Number of dwellings	16,475	12,748	7,126	6,070	6,508	4,935	4,568	480
No. of Dwellings as % of Total	28%	22%	12%	10%	11%	8%	8%	1%

(\*It should be noted that the charges above exclude Water Supply and Waste Water collection charges which will, for 21/22, rise in line with Scottish Water increases. So although Council Tax will remain static those liable for those charges will still receive a higher bill in April 2021.)

## 4 IMPLICATIONS

### 4.1 Financial

Approval to accept the funding of a Council Tax freeze in 2021/22 will ensure that assumed funding of the 2021/22 Financial Plan is in line with the draft issued to Elected Members.

### 4.2 Risk and Mitigations

There is a risk that the funding to freeze Council Tax in 2021/22 is not permanently added to the Financial Settlement which would have the effect of eroding the Council Tax base locally. This risk is being mitigated through ongoing COSLA budget negotiations with Scottish Government to make the local impact clear. Should these discussions not deliver a permanent increase in funding from Scottish Government the resultant shortfall in the income to fund services in future years would have to be funded from a further increase in Council Tax or through other financial savings.

### 4.3 Equalities

There are no equalities issues resulting from this report.

### 4.4 Acting Sustainably

There are no economic, social or environmental effects from this report.

### 4.5 Carbon Management

There are no effects on carbon emissions resulting from this report.

### 4.6 Rural Proofing

This report contains no implications that will compromise the Council's rural proofing policy.

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

This report does not result in any changes to the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation.

### **5 CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 The Monitoring Officer/Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Service Director HR & Communications, the Clerk to the Council and Corporate Communications are being consulted and any comments received will be incorporated into the final report.

#### **Approved by**

**David Robertson**  
**Executive Director, Finance & Regulatory**

**Signature** .....

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

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Suzy Douglas	Financial Services Manager 01835 824000 X5881

**Background Papers:** Scottish Borders Council, 17<sup>th</sup> December 2020

**Previous Minute Reference:**

**Note** – 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 Suzy Douglas Council Headquarters on 01835 824000 X5881

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## DIGITAL STRATEGY

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### Report by Executive Director Finance & Regulatory

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## SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

### 25 February 2021

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#### 1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present a new digital strategy for the Council developed with CGI. The strategy "Digital Borders" is designed to realise the vision of Scottish Borders becoming a Smart Rural Region. The Strategy will seek to invest in change programmes, new ways of working and new IT infrastructure to harness the power of communities, empower individuals, reduce inequality, widen access to digital connectivity and expand the economic potential of the Region. In doing so the strategy responds to the key recommendations of a recent study by the Accounts Commission.**
- 1.2 The Council at its meeting on the 25 September 2020 agreed to extend its strategic IT partnership with CGI and in doing so agreed to the development of a new digital strategy for the Council. This strategy is designed to help address a range of key challenges facing the Borders. The strategy will form a key part of the Council's Fit for 2024 transformation programme designed to deliver better outcome for citizens and a more efficient operating model for the delivery of local services either directly by the Council or in conjunction with our Community Planning Partners.
- 1.3 The Digital Borders strategy is consistent with the understanding of evolving national strategy. It will seek to enable citizens, suppliers, and local businesses, to engage effectively with the Council, empower front line staff using mobile technology, rationalise and integrate back office systems, ensure the security of data, reduce social isolation and digital exclusion in our communities, and enhance the skills and the digital capability local people through working with our schools and partner agencies. In doing so a range of environmental, social and economic benefits are expected to be achieved.
- 1.4 Significant detailed analysis work has been undertaken to date, as highlighted in Appendix 2, to assess how the opportunities identified by the strategy should be prioritised. Further diligence is now required to further work to refine the Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) benefits identified to date.
- 1.5 The strategy therefore advocates further work to be undertaken with CGI to develop a digital roadmap covering the next 3.5 years. A change programme and detailed benefits realisation plans for individual projects will also be delivered to enable sustainable change, track savings, achieve process efficiencies and deliver improved outcomes.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **2.1 It is recommended that Council:**

- a) Approve the Digital strategy outlined in the report;**
- b) Agree that further work be undertaken to develop the digital road map, detailed benefits realisation and change management plans for individual projects; and,**
- c) Note that update reports will be brought to future Executive meetings in line with routine FF24 transformation programme updates.**

### 3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council at its meeting on the 25 September 2020 agreed to extend its strategic IT partnership with CGI and in doing so agreed to the development of a new digital strategy for the Council. This strategy "Digital Borders," is to be enabled through the Councils' Fit for 2024 transformation programme. The strategy set out in Appendix 1 aims to make the Scottish Borders the first "Smart Rural Region" in the UK.
- 3.2 The September report highlighted the need for the Council to address a range of key challenges
- We need to engage more effectively with our citizens in ways that suit their needs.
  - Our resources are constrained, and our communities are rightly expecting more.
  - We face huge challenges with maintaining our ageing property estate that urgently needs rationalisation and where possible renewal.
  - We are facing increased demands for our services from an increasingly elderly population and help them to live well independently for longer.
  - We need to ensure those who live in our care can continue to communicate with family and friends.
  - We need to give our children the best possible start in life.
  - We need to ensure our young people have access to technology and the right digital skills to use this technology effectively as part of the Council's education offering, to gives them the best possible chance of success later in life.
  - We need to ensure all our staff, including those working with clients, e.g. front line social workers, can work more efficiently through technology.
  - We need to become more efficient and less reliant on paper.
  - We need to be more mobile, less reliant on costly carbon heavy buildings and adopt new ways of working using technology.
- 3.3 The way to best meet these challenges is considered to be through the adoption of a new digital strategy, delivered as part of the Fit for 2024 programme that will drive the implementation of new technology. The Council's response to the COVID 19 pandemic has shown the benefits that can be delivered through the effective deployment of new information technology and different ways of working. Inspire Learning for example has enabled the continuation of remote learning in all schools across the Borders in a way not possible in many other Council areas.
- 3.4 This report provides an update on work to develop the new Digital Strategy and seeks approval of the way forward.

The paper also responds to the recommendations of a recent study by the Accounts Commission "Digital Progress in Local Government" that highlights Councils should have a clear digital vision and strategy that sets out how digital transformation will deliver better outcomes for people. The strategy should be supported by plans detailing actions, timescales and the required investment in technology, people and skills.

## **4 DIGITAL STRATEGY**

- 4.1 The Digital Borders Strategy (Appendix 1) is a key pillar of Fit for 2024 programme. It aims to drive forward change and innovation, improve the effectiveness of Council services and thereby the quality of lives of our residents. At its heart the strategy seeks to use information technology and data insights to improve outcomes through new ways of working. This will enable our front line staff across the Council, whether they work in environmental services, Health and Social Care, Roads Inspections or Planning, to work in an agile mobile way, deliver an improved customer experience, and better support to local people, communities and businesses.
- 4.2 The new Digital Borders strategy will support the Council's stated aim of become the UK's first smart connected rural region; thereby delivering better outcomes for everyone who lives and works in the Borders.
- 4.3 Specifically the Digital Borders Strategy will deploy technology that will:-
  - a) Enable citizens, suppliers, and local businesses, to engage effectively with the Council, seeking information, booking services, tracking service requests, making payments, meeting with Council Members and Officials and using on line technology to manage their data. The improved information provided by the strategy will allow better planning information to inform future service delivery.
  - b) Empower front line staff through the deployment of mobile technology that makes their jobs easier, improves communications, improves operational efficiency and is fully integrated with central systems. This means that staff will be able to access the information they need using appropriate hand held technology while they are meeting clients, and while undertaking site visits operating out with an office environment.
  - c) Rationalise and integrate the complicated landscape of IT systems to ensure data requires to be input only once and is used effectively across the council to provide joined up and intelligent delivery of services.
  - d) Provide improved information to allow better service planning and inform future service delivery.
  - e) Ensure the Council systems and data remain secure at all times, safe from cyber-attack, malware and phishing attempts.
  - f) Ensure no one is excluded either by low incomes, capability or geography and that all those in the Borders are able to access the benefits of digital technology.

- g) Enhance skills and the digital capability of the local economy through working with local businesses, council suppliers our partner agencies.
- 4.4 The Digital Borders strategy is consistent with the evolving National Digital Strategy for Scotland being developed by the Scottish Government, COSLA, the Improvement Service and the Digital Office.
- 4.5 The vision is that that Scottish Borders will become the UK's first smart connected rural supporting better outcomes for everyone who lives and works here.
- 4.6 The benefits envisaged by the strategy are set out below.

#### **For the Environment and Sustainability**

- 4.6.1 By investing in new technology we can significantly reduce the Council's carbon footprint. A tangible difference can be made through reduced travel mileage, a transition to a green council fleet running on sustainable power rather than traditional petrol and diesel, and reduced printing savings on paper and ink cartridges.

#### **For Citizens**

- 4.6.2 Through our Digital Customer Access project, which is largely complete, the Council is already delivering a different relationship with the citizen for example allowing people to engage, report, request services, seek feedback and check the real time progress of their query online. The customer now has the ability to manage their account data through the Council's online data portal

#### **For SBC workforce**

- 4.6.3 The strategy will seek to leverage the investment the Council has already made in its core ERP system covering financial, payroll, HR and procurement modules. Integrating this with service specific information systems such as the social work system Mosaic so that colleagues can access a digital online workplace from a mobile device giving them the tools, data and capability they need to do their job without physically accessing an office. The aim is reduce administration and to use hand held technology and relevant information at the point of need to empower front line staff to deliver services to customers and clients.

#### **For the future skilled workforce**

- 4.6.4 Through the Council's partnership with CGI and investment in new technology and infrastructure creating a digital edge for the Borders. The strategy will seek to leverage the investment already made in Inspire Learning in order to maximise the depth and breadth of the curriculum available in all our schools. This will in turn help to develop new digital skills of young people in the Borders, such as coding and development of problem solving techniques, to equip them with the skills they need for the online workplace of tomorrow.

#### **For Local Business**

- 4.6.5 Making it easier to do business with Council through a new online supplier portal enabling businesses to tender for work, submit their invoices, track their payments, manage their cash flow more effectively and update their details online.

### **For those in our Care**

- 4.6.7 Allowing clients better access to online information about the services they need, accessing support and benefits, arranging meetings or health consultations online without the need to travel, addressing isolation and loneliness by using technology to signpost people to social interactions, volunteering opportunities, respite care and paid employment where appropriate and, as we already do, enabling those living in our care homes to keep in touch with friends and family even during lockdown.

### **4.6.8 For Communities**

Working with partner agencies and the Scottish Government to ensure that everyone in the region regardless of their material circumstance has the opportunity to access superfast broadband thereby allowing them to communicate, work, bank and engage online effectively wherever they live in the region and ensuring no one is left behind.

- 4.7 The digital strategy aims to deliver for all those noted above transforming the Council's service delivery model to a 'digital by design' approach. Significant work has already been undertaken with CGI to map out opportunities. These opportunities have been categorised as service imperatives, shown in appendix 1 which will fundamentally seek to:-

- Re-define SBC Services and our relationship with the citizen,
- Update our operating model,
- Simplify our processes,
- Prioritise the deployment of new technology to the front line,
- Enable change and increase efficiency,
- Improve communication with the people we serve,
- Build capability and empower staff.

### **Digital Strategy Roadmap**

- 4.8 This will cover a programme of work over the next 3.5 years commencing in April 2021. An initial view of the programme which is subject to refinement and final phasing is shown in appendix 1. Working with CGI the Council aims to deploy this roadmap to deliver projects that will help with the delivery of existing savings plans and identify future opportunities for greater operational efficiency.

### **Change Management**

- 4.9 The Council recognises that it is essential that a programme of change management is undertaken to ensure that changes made to implement new technology are also reflected in changes to culture, processes, staffing structures and the adoption of sustainable new ways of working. In order for the Council to modernise as effectively as possible the Council will develop a plan to implement these changes to culture, processes, staffing structures and the adoption of new ways of working in line with the technology being deployed to ensure that both financial and service benefits are maximised.

### **Benefits realisation**

- 4.10 A benefits realisation plan will be developed with CGI to track the delivery of savings and operational process improvements associated with each project. This plan will assess the current operating models, what impact the new technology can have on how we deliver these services, propose a plan

for how we move from current to new operating models and project anticipated benefits arising from this modernisation. This plan will be a crucial tool in ensuring both service and financial benefits and tracked and maximised.

### **Mobile working**

- 4.11 The programme will seek to leverage CGI experience of implementing technology change programmes elsewhere as well as learning from the previous experience of organisations have already implemented change successfully. An early win for example is the project to implement Total Mobile across SBC care services reflecting the experience of other Scottish Councils that have already undertaken this change.

## **5 DETAILED ANALYSIS**

- 5.1 Significant detailed analysis work has been undertaken to date, as highlighted in Appendix 2, to assess how the transformation projects identified by the strategy could be prioritised and to provide a rough order of magnitude (ROM) indication of the scale of benefits which may be achievable.
- 5.2 The slides in Appendix 2 give details on the output of fieldwork research undertaken by CGI to assess where the Council should prioritise investment through the digital strategy to deliver the most significant benefits. An exemplar is provided in the final 2 slides focusing on Health & Social Care and potential benefits of improving productivity enabled through mobile technology. The next steps around change management and benefits realisation plans explained above will now be progressed to assess the anticipated benefits of mobile technology for the Council.
- 5.3 These high level potential benefits give an initial indication of the scale of service and financial benefits which could be deliverable with crucial next steps now being planned to develop a digital road map, change management programme and benefits realisation plan.
- 5.4 The Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) figures included in appendix 2 should be viewed as a guide to the scale of benefits which may be possible and not a commitment to the level of savings which will be delivered. The detail around anticipated financial savings will be refined as new projects and operating models are developed and will be included in future Council Financial Plans once the necessary diligence has been undertaken. A key priority during the process will be balancing service outcomes and future service delivery models with potential savings opportunities.

## **6 IMPLICATIONS**

### **6.1 Financial**

This report proposes a new digital strategy for the Council the components of which are set out in appendix 1. The programme of change envisaged, including the deployment of new technology, will be funded by the investment budget of £34m already agreed as part of the CGI extension in September 2020. As such there will be no additional costs to the Council beyond the investment already approved and budgeted. The planned programme of work including the roadmap, benefit realisation plan and

change programme will be designed to deliver operational improvements and financial savings to the Council. The potential cost reductions highlighted by the strategy will help to deliver existing savings targets and future savings required by the Financial Plan. Once finalised, with the necessary due diligence work completed, they will be fully reflected in future revenue budgets. Any changes to the position outlined, for example a future requirement to switch resources between capital and revenue budgets, will be reported as part of future financial planning processes. The tracking of the delivery of savings will be reflected in the budget monitoring process.

## **6.2 Risk and Mitigations**

The Council as with many public sector organisations is facing huge demands upon its services. Many younger people traditionally leave the Region for further education or employment and the population pyramid of the Borders is characterised by a higher percentage of older people (many of whom inevitably require care and support services) than in other areas of the country. Society in the Borders contains pockets of deep seated deprivation while the economy presents significant long term challenges with relatively low wages and a reliance on farming, fishing and forestry and the public sector for employment. The challenges posed by rural isolation, poor transport and digital connectivity have all been added to by the impact of COVID 19. Faced with these issues and rising public expectations, the Council cannot stand still. The investment in new technology advocated by the digital strategy, provides the prospect of addressing these challenges and mitigating risks through investment in improved digital infrastructure and new ways of works that empowers citizens, businesses and staff.

## **6.3 Integrated Impact Assessment**

An Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has been undertaken for the overarching digital strategy. Individual projects will require their own IIAs as more detailed implementation plans are developed.

## **6.4 Acting Sustainably**

The greater use of information technology should assist with reducing the Councils carbon foot print through reduced travel and less use of stationery consumable.

## **6.5 Carbon Management**

There are no direct carbon emissions impacts as a result of this report, its adoption should however assist with reducing the council's carbon footprint.

## **6.6 Rural Proofing**

It is anticipated there will be no adverse impact on the rural area from the proposals contained in this report. Its adoption should help to assist with improving digital connectivity to rural areas of the region.

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

There are not changes to the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation required as a result of this report.



## 7 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The Monitoring Officer/Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Service Director HR & Communications, the Clerk to the Council and Corporate Communications have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

### Approved by

**David Robertson**

**Signature .....**

**Executive Director Finance & Regulatory**

### Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
David Robertson	Executive Director Finance & Regulatory, 01835825012

### Background Papers:

**Previous Minute Reference:** Private Minute Scottish Borders Council 25 September 2020.

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

Contact us at Contact us at: Pension & Investment Team, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 OSA Tel: 01835 825249 Fax 01835 825166. email: [t&cteam@scotborders.gov](mailto:t&cteam@scotborders.gov).

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# Digital Borders Strategy Overview

Scottish Borders Council

**25 February 2021**



## Setting the Scene and Agenda

Building on the vision to become a smart rural region, we have formulated a Digital Strategy to help realise this ambition and deliver improved outcomes across Scottish Borders.

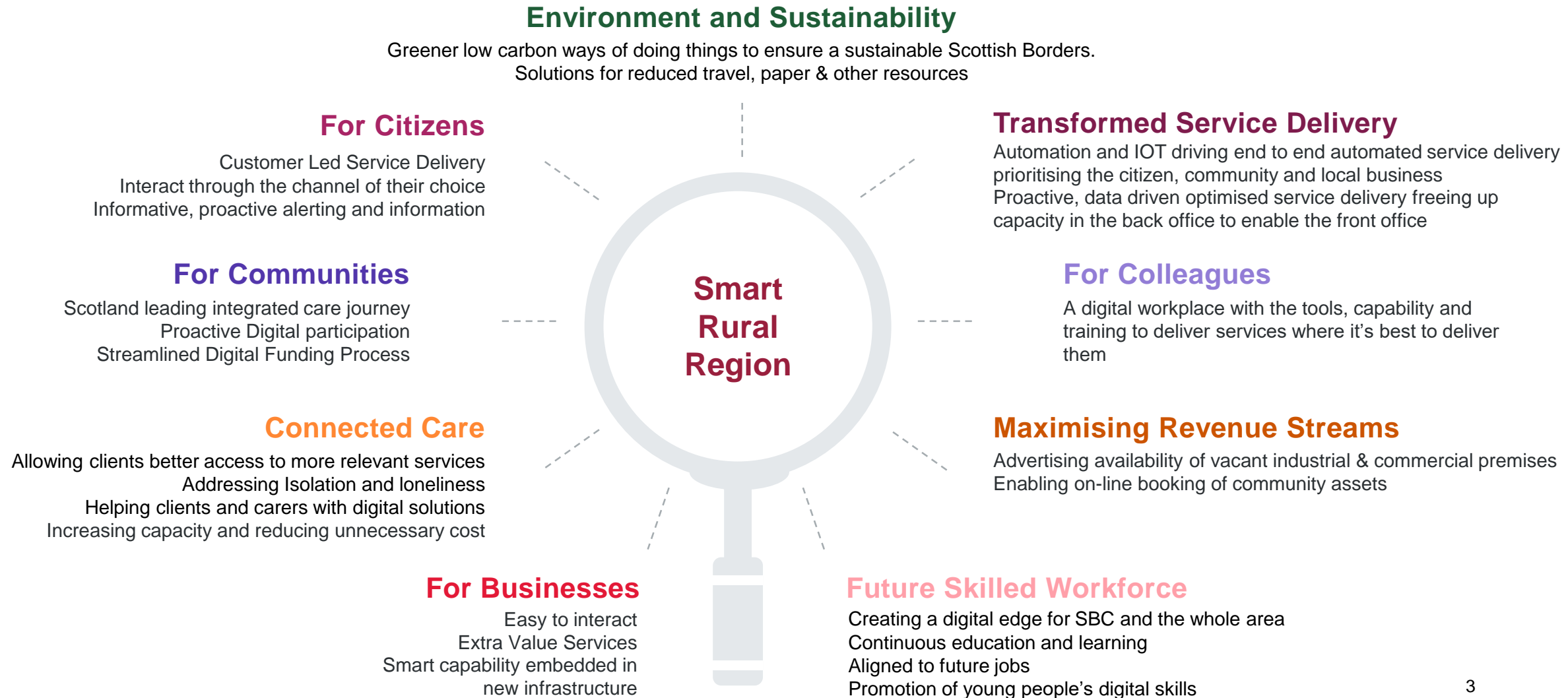
- ❖ Achieving improved citizen outcomes
- ❖ Further building SBC people capabilities
- ❖ Harnessing the power of communities
- ❖ Operating within agreed financial boundaries
- ❖ Expanding regional development
- ❖ Reducing Digital exclusion and improving inclusivity



The Digital Strategy has two main objectives.

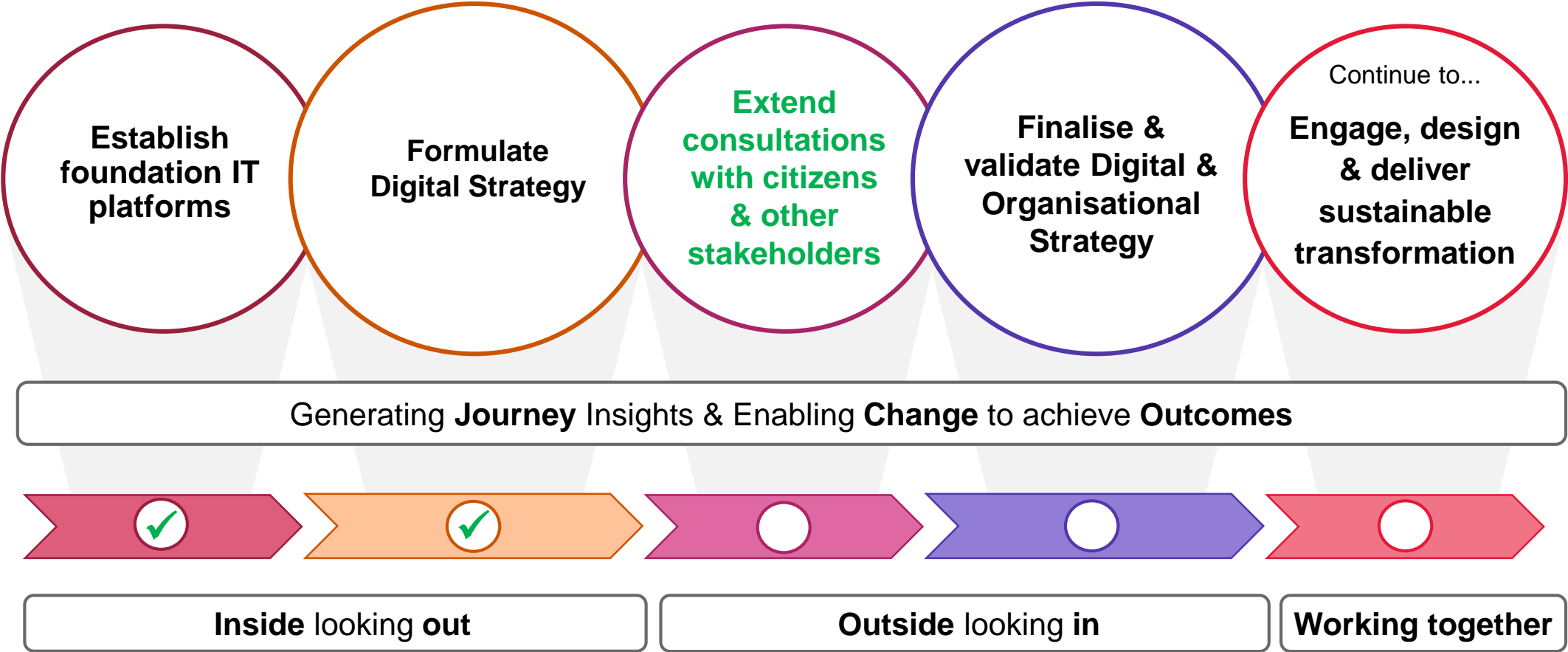
- To use digital technology to improve SBC processes, improve the customer experience and improve operational efficiency.
- to set out the Council's digital vision for the Borders.

Vision: Scottish Borders will become the UK's first smart connected rural region, supporting better outcomes for everyone who lives and works here



Our journey to becoming the UK’s first smart connected rural region supporting better outcomes for everyone who lives and works in the Scottish Borders

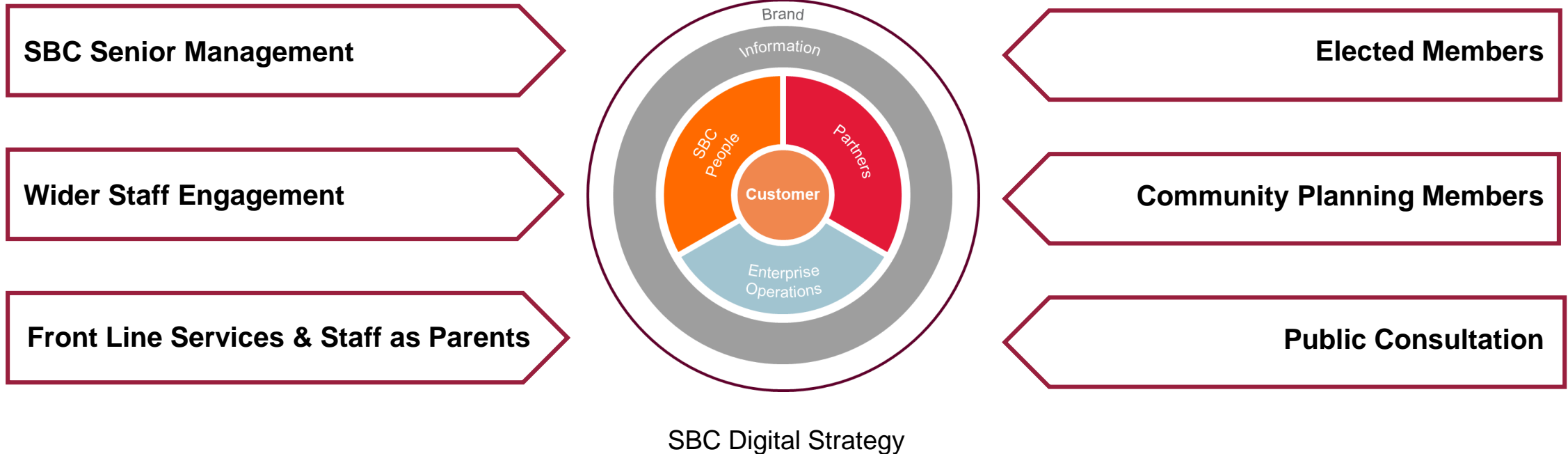
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We've engaged a range of stakeholders in over 20 separate sessions with further meetings planned, in order to formulate SBC's Digital Strategy

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# Enabling SBC's Strategic Direction through a Digital Strategy

## Corporate Plan

Setting Scottish Borders Council's strategic direction



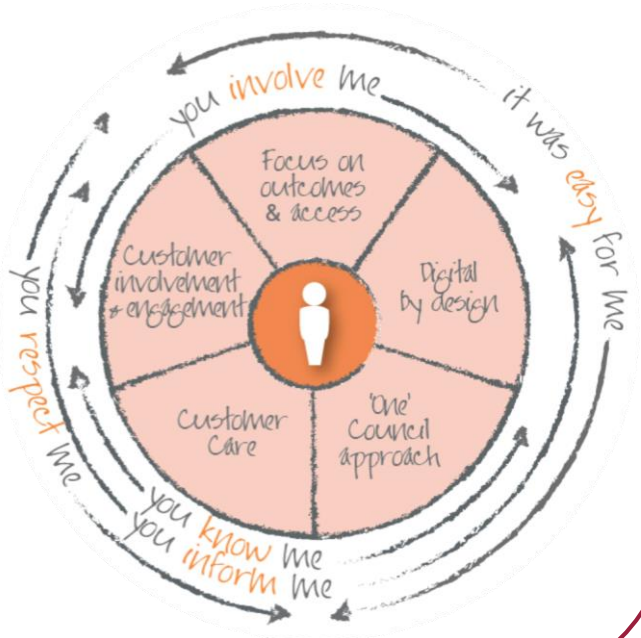
## Digital Strategy

Enabling citizen outcomes through a value-led digital strategy



## Customer Strategy

Enabling improved outcomes & quality of life for SBC citizens





# Digital Strategy Principles Informed by the Corporate Plan & Customer Strategy

- Citizen centric & value driven
- Prioritised based on impact
- Information-enabled
- Collaboratively informed & developed
- Stakeholder aligned
- Building on successful foundations
- Digital by design
- People, process & technology enabled outcomes



# Executive Summary: Overview

To enable improved citizen and employee experience and unlock economic value, SBC's digital strategy sets out **12 key programmes of work**, positioned across the **3 key areas** of Demand Management, Response Management and Enterprise & Asset Optimisation. This strategy will assist with the delivery of **existing savings plans** and **unlock future potential** savings.

- The **digital strategy roadmap**, set across a period of 3.5 years, shows an initial view of programme phasing to deliver a step change that will deliver long term benefits.
- Also recommended is a **change programme** and **benefit realisation** plan to run alongside the transformation.
- **Growing capability** and supporting **future change** will prepare SBC for the delivery and adoption of digitally-enabled citizen-centric services and the realisation of benefits.



# SBC's Priority Imperatives

Enterprise Operations					
<b>'Redefining SBC Services'</b>	<b>'Update SBC Operating Model'</b>	<b>'Simplified Processes'</b>	<b>'Tech-Enabled SBC Operations'</b>	<b>'Enabling Change'</b>	<b>'Disposal of Underperforming Assets'</b>
Empowering citizens and local bodies to define community role and responsibilities.	Modernise staffing structures and reporting to enable cost effective operations.	Simplifying processes to deliver cost effective outcomes for citizens and staff.	Prioritise the use of modern technology for front line employees, enabling cost effective operational running.	Create the tools and capabilities for staff to identify and adopt new ways of working.	Dispose of underperforming assets that are not part of the Council's strategic direction.

Customer							
<b>'Citizen Service Engagement'</b>	<b>'Joining the Dots Across Services'</b>	<b>'Prevention &amp; Early Intervention'</b>	<b>'Capacity Management'</b>	<b>'Resource Scheduling'</b>	<b>'Citizen Online Services'</b>	<b>'Proactive Citizen Communications'</b>	<b>'Cost Effective Customer Operations'</b>
Reach citizens, employees, partners and elected members to engage and evolve Council services.	Improving council service provision through a holistic understanding of citizen needs.	Focus resources on prevention and targeted early intervention to reduce social care demands.	Establish a forward view of demand and supply capacity to enable effective operational running.	Create real time scheduling capability for front line operational staff and other organisations.	Support citizen adoption of online services rather than face to face or telephone.	Creating proactive communication updates on service provision to citizens reducing the need for information requests.	Prioritise the use of modern technology for front line employees, enabling cost effective service delivery.

# SBC's Priority Imperatives

Information		
<b>'Physical to Digital'</b>	<b>'Front Line Actionable Information'</b>	<b>'Predictive Analytics &amp; Dashboards'</b>
Create an effective file management system for use across the organisation and its partners.	Enable staff and citizens to easily input and access real data insights at the point of need.	Create usable insights through dashboards using drill down & historic/future looking analysis to enable performance mgt.

SBC People				Partners
<b>'Empowered Staff'</b>	<b>'Two-Way Communications Across Staff'</b>	<b>'Building Capabilities'</b>	<b>'Support Employee Self-Service'</b>	<b>'Joining Up Service Provision'</b>
Digitally enable and empower employees to make timely and effective decisions.	Enabling two way communications to support efficient operations and quality of service.	Enabling people, roles and capabilities through improved ways of working.	Enable employees to self-serve through connected journeys.	Enabling end to end workforce management across SBC and external providers.

# Customer and Employee Journeys insights across SBC

Customer and employee journey analysis across three directorate areas was prioritised for inclusion into the Digital Strategy roadmap:

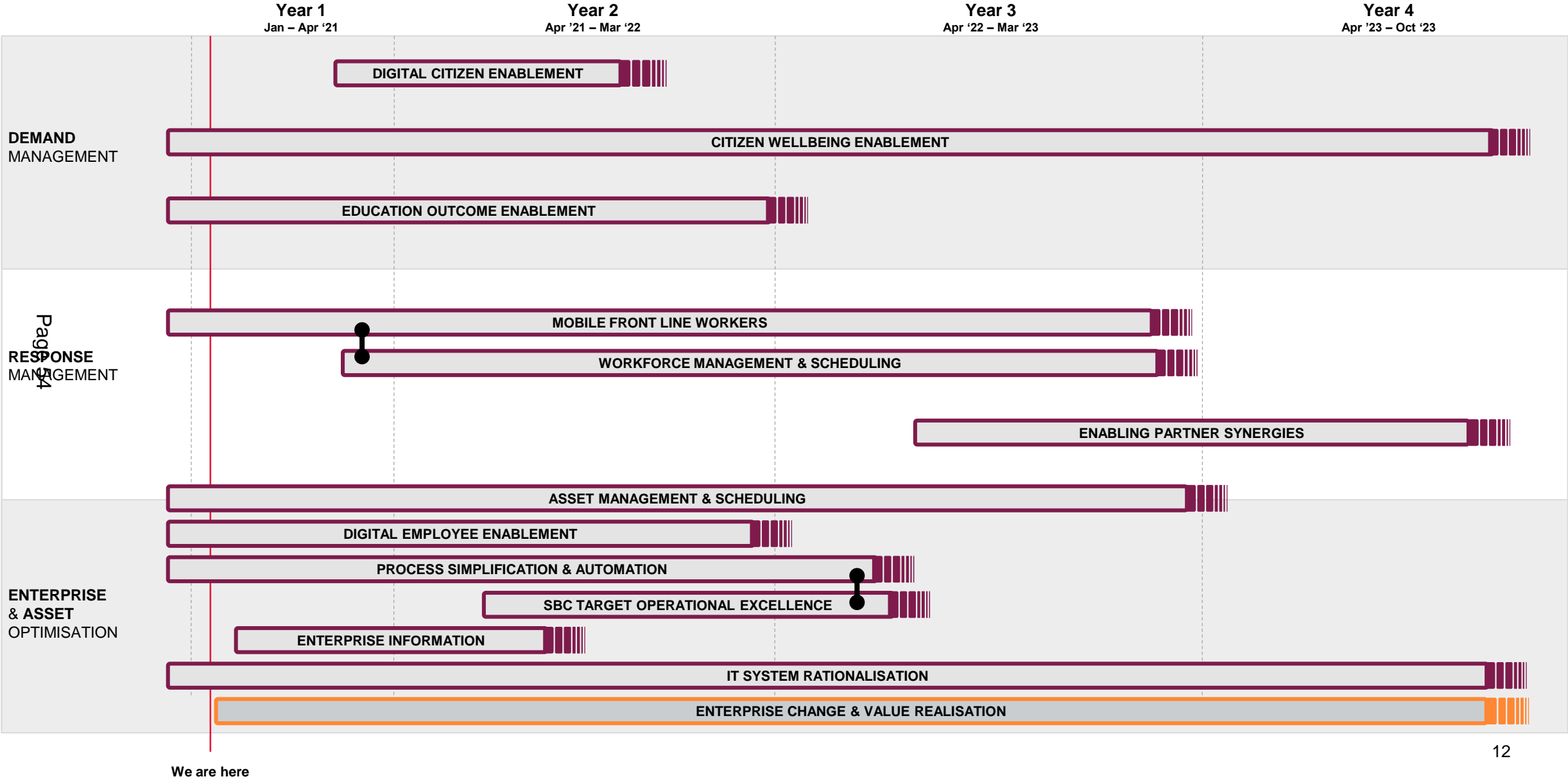
- Young People, Engagement & Inclusion
- SB Cares
- Customer and Communities



Discussions delivered tangible insights into service engagement, from employee & citizen perspectives.

# SBC Digital Strategy: Programmes of Work

(Prioritisation Based on Suggested Start Date)





## Next Steps

- ❖ **Complete consultations** with key stakeholders
- ❖ Build on our employee & citizen **journey engagement**
- ❖ **Support employees** for future change
- ❖ Finalise **roadmap**
- ❖ Support **transformation delivery**



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# Digital Borders Strategy – Appendix 2 detailed analysis work

Scottish Borders Council

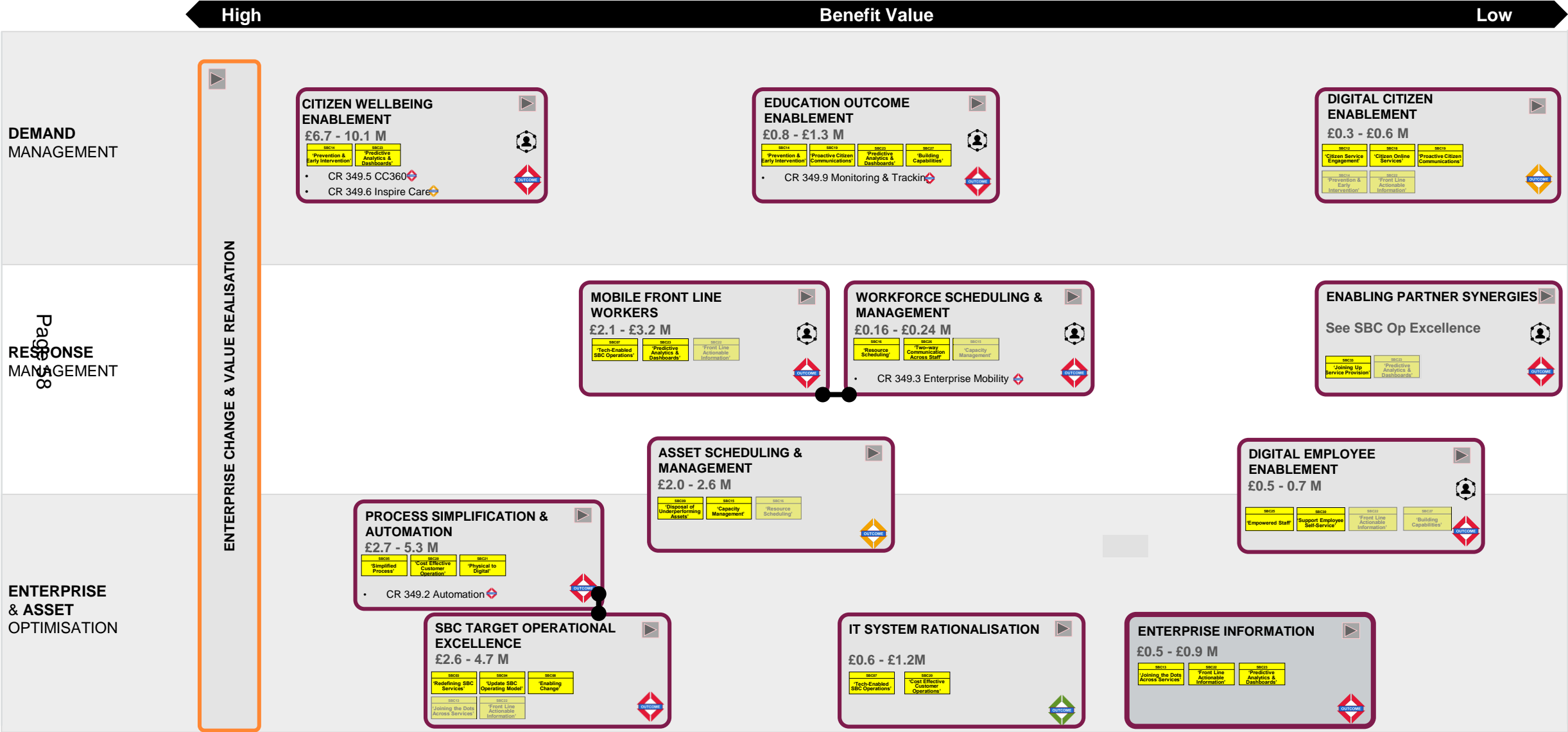
25 February 2021

# SBC Digital Strategy: Programmes of Work

(Prioritisation Based on initial estimated high level Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) Value)

Key

High complexity org change required

Link to delivery planMedium complexity org change requiredLow complexity org change required

# Executive Summary: Potential Value of benefits based on standard assumptions linked to SBC data to give an indication of the scale of savings which could be deliverable before detailed benefits analysis and change programmes have been undertaken

**£19 M - £31 M p.a.**

*Low case*

*High case*

*ROM\* value opportunity  
for SBC per annum*

**70% of total value  
comes from 6  
priority imperatives**

*c. £13 M to c. £21 M value p.a.:*

- ① 'Cost Effective Customer Operations'
- ② 'Simplified Processes'
- ③ 'Tech-Enabled SBC Operations'
- ④ 'Prevention & Early Intervention'
- ⑤ 'Resource Scheduling'
- ⑥ 'Front Line Actionable Information'

## Highlights & Approach Overview

- Value trees created across each SBC directorates to break down expenditure drivers
- Resulting in the formation of 13 value hypotheses – opportunities to unlock value through technology
- Hypotheses broken down into 39 value propositions to quantify potential value (Rough Order of Magnitude - ROM), of which 34\*\* contribute to the financial summary
- Value hypotheses validated by finance lead and quantification informed through data provided or validated by SBC service and finance managers
- Aligned to SBC imperatives to inform future digital strategy roadmap prioritisation

\*Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) value estimates not capable of commercial acceptance

\*\*5 value propositions have not been included in the financial summary. SBC operations teams were less confident of achieving these 5 value propositions.

# High priority imperatives: Initial Value Assessment\*

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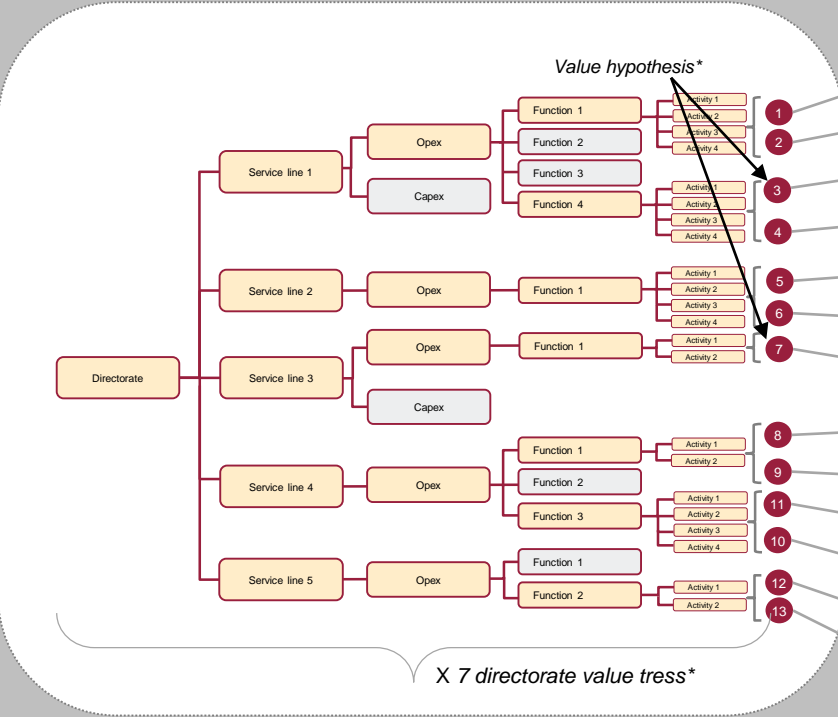
SBC Imperatives			Related value propositions		Potential value, p.a.		Priority imperative ranking by value			
Enterprise Operations Customer Info SBC People Partners					Low	High				
	SBC									
	SBC03	'Redefining SBC Services'	→	6A, 6B, 6C, 6D, 6E, 6F, 6G	c. £ 0.5 M	c. £ 0.9 M	High value (70%) c. £13.3M - £21.2M	SBC20	'Cost Effective Customer Operations'	> £1M
	SBC04	'Update SBC Operating Model'	→	6A, 6B, 6C, 6D, 6E, 6F, 6G	c. £ 0.5 M	c. £ 0.9 M		SBC05	'Simplified Processes'	
	SBC05	'Simplified Processes'	→	6A, 6B, 6C, 6D, 6E, 6F, 6G	c. £ 3.1 M	c. £ 6.1 M		SBC07	'Tech-Enabled SBC Operations'	
	SBC07	'Tech-Enabled SBC Operations'	→	1A, 1B, 1C, 2A, 2E, 5A, 7E, 7F,13A,13B	c. £ 2.4 M	c. £ 3.3 M		SBC14	'Prevention & Early Intervention'	
	SBC08	'Enabling Change'	→	6A, 6B, 6C, 6D, 6E, 6F, 6G	c. £ 0.5 M	c. £ 0.9 M		SBC16	'Resource Scheduling'	
	SBC09	'Disposal of Underperforming Assets'	→	11A, 13A	c. £ 1 M	c. £ 1.3 M		SBC22	'Front Line Actionable Information'	
	SBC12	'Citizen Service Engagement'	→	9A	c. £ 0.01 M	c. £ 0.02 M		SBC09	'Disposal of Underperforming Assets'	£0.4 M < x < £1 M
	SBC13	'Joining the Dots Across Services'	→	7A	c. £ 0.06 M	c. £ 0.1 M		SBC33	'Joining Up Service Provision'	
	SBC14	'Prevention & Early Intervention'	→	2A, 2B,	c. £ 1.7 M	c. £ 2.6 M		SBC23	'Predictive Analytics & Dashboards'	
	SBC15	'Capacity Management'	→	2C, 7D	c. £ 0.2 M	c. £ 0.4 M		SBC21	'Physical to Digital'	
	SBC16	'Resource Scheduling'	→	1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 1G, 2A	c. £ 1.7 M	c. £ 2.6 M	SBC03	'Redefining SBC Services'		
	SBC18	'Citizen Online Services'	→	9A, 9B, 10A	c. £ 0.3 M	c. £ 0.4 M	SBC04	'Update SBC Operating Model'	< £0.4 M	
	SBC19	'Proactive Citizen Communications'	→	7A, 9A, 9C	c. £ 0.1 M	c. £ 0.2 M	SBC08	'Enabling Change'		
	SBC20	'Cost Effective Customer Operations'	→	1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 2A, 2B, 2C, 3A, 5B	c. £ 3.2 M	c. £ 5 M	SBC18	'Citizen Online Services'		
	SBC21	'Physical to Digital'	→	7A, 7B, 12A	c. £ 0.7 M	c. £ 1.3 M	SBC15	'Capacity Management'		
	SBC22	'Front Line Actionable Information'	→	2A, 2C, 2E, 7A, 7B, 7C, 7E, 7F	c. £ 1.1 M	c. £ 1.6 M	SBC19	'Proactive Citizen Communications'		
	SBC23	'Predictive Analytics & Dashboards'	→	2A, 7B	c. £ 0.8 M	c. £ 1.3 M	SBC13	'Joining the Dots Across Services'		
	SBC25	'Empowered Staff'	→	-	£ 0	£ 0	SBC12	'Citizen Service Engagement'		
SBC26	'Two-Way Communications Across Staff'	→	-	£ 0	£ 0	SBC30	'Support Employee Self-Service'			
SBC27	'Building Capabilities'	→	-	£ 0	£ 0	SBC25	'Empowered Staff'			
SBC30	'Support Employee Self-Service'	→	5B	c. £ 0.007 M	c. £ 0.009 M	SBC26	'Two-Way Communications Across Staff'			
SBC33	'Joining Up Service Provision'	→	1A, 6A, 6B, 6C, 6D, 6E, 6F, 6G, 7A	c. £ 1 M	c. £ 1.5 M	SBC27	'Building Capabilities'			
Total, p.a.					c. £ 19 M	c. £ 31 M	4			

\*Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) value estimates not capable of commercial acceptance  
Numbers have been rounded

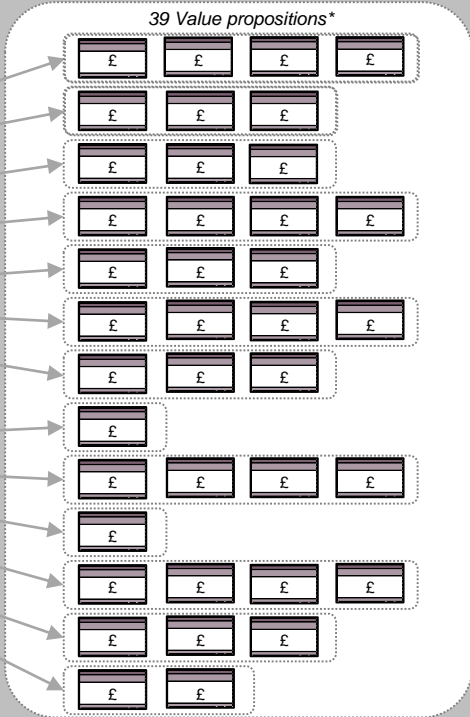
\*Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) value estimates not capable of commercial acceptance  
Numbers have been rounded

# Approach: Value-based Digital Roadmap

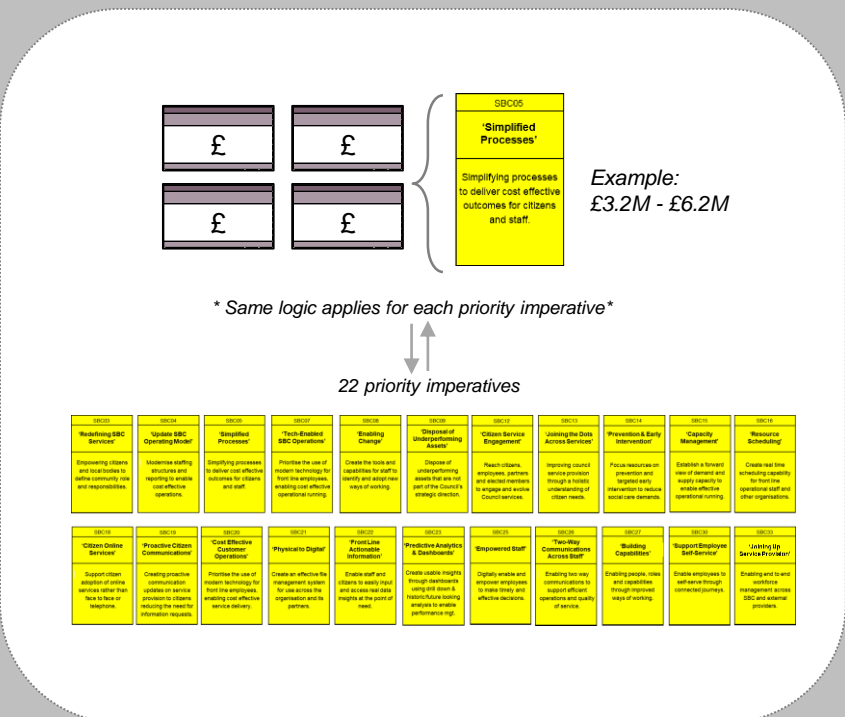
Value tree & hypothesis formation



Value proposition creation



Imperative and value alignment



\*Illustrative



# Health and Social Care: Example of a Value Tree

Budget figures are total

for 20/21 – 22/23

based on SBC Financial Plan

approved in February 2020

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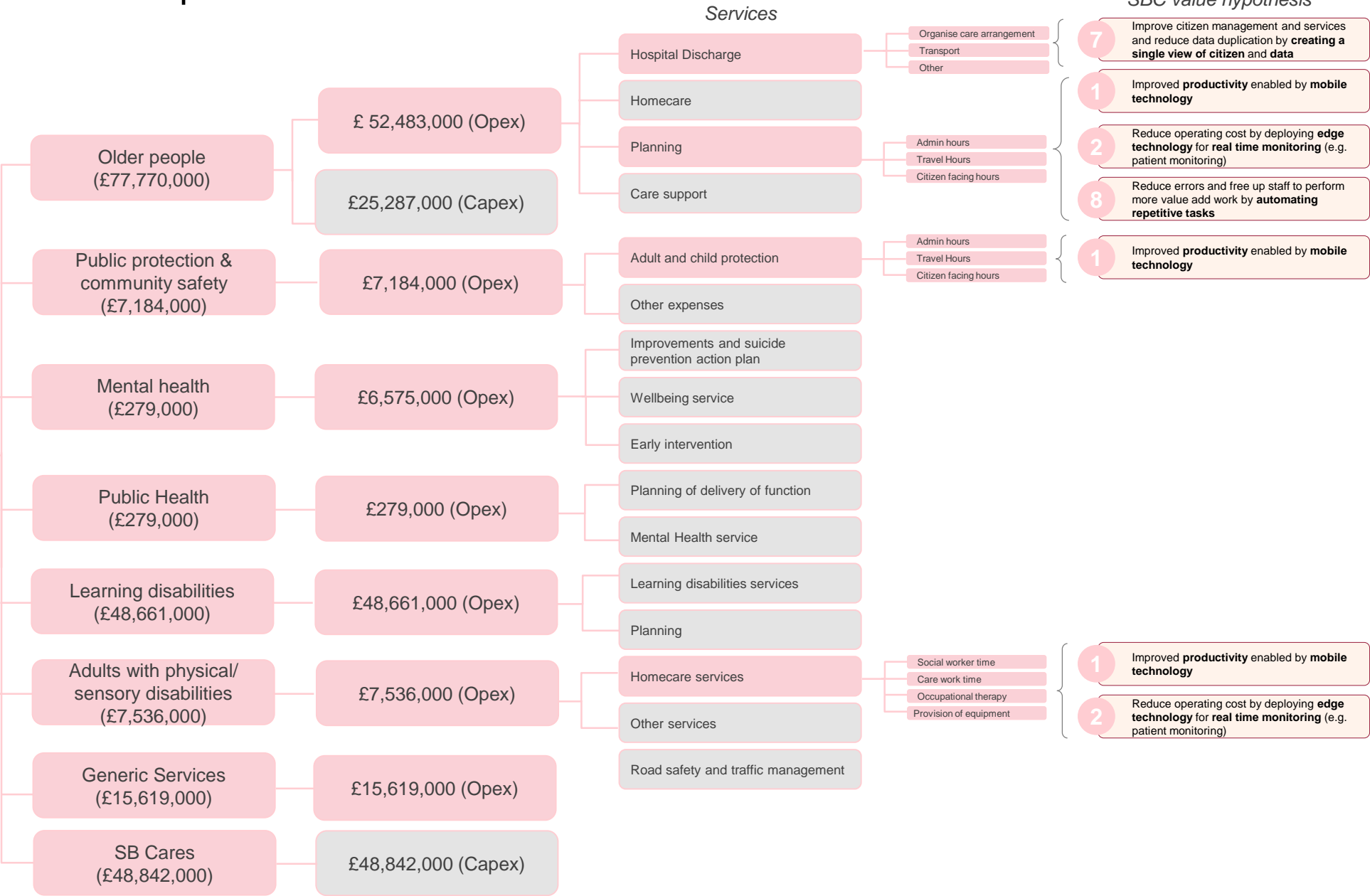
Total directorate budget  
for 3 financial years from  
20/21

Health and Social Care  
£231,932,000

Key

Low value digital potential

Value hypothesis



# 1. Improved productivity enabled by mobile technology – example of detailed analysis which will be used to develop detailed benefits and change plans

Value propositions for this hypothesis

- 1. Improved productivity enabled by mobile technology
- 2. Reduce operating cost by deploying edge technology for real time monitoring (e.g. patient monitoring)
- 3. Reduce time spent on administrative tasks by providing a platform to track and communicate patient assessment and attendance
- 4. Reduce cost by enabling employee digital self service (e.g. digital prescriptions)
- 5. Reduce back office operating costs by reducing work which can be done on site & in real time
- 6. Reduce operating costs by eliminating unnecessary activities through an updated operating model
- 7. Improve citizen management and services and reduce data duplication by creating a single view of citizens and data
- 8. Reduce errors and free up staff to perform more value add work by automating repetitive tasks
- 9. Reduce incoming citizen queries by providing proactive communication
- 10. Reduce the number of citizen requests to contact centre by improving citizens self service
- 11. Reduce operating cost to the council by reducing the number of unsupportable or underserved properties
- 12. Reduce IT operating cost by integrating and rationalising systems & associated licences
- 13. Reduce operating costs on office space by enabling remote working practices

1a Time saved by updating case files on the go/during customer visits using mobile devices			
Description	Value		
Type: Saving Opportunity	Low	High	Sources
Total number of home care client visits (per annum)	3,100,032	3,100,032	Outputs from table 2a
Avg. time on administrative tasks per client visit per visit (minutes)	2	2	Louise Wilson
Current total time spent on transcribing case notes onto system (hours)	103,334	103,334	Calculation
% reduction in time spent on administrative tasks	50%	70%	Impact of technology
Future total time spent on administrative tasks associated with home care clients (hours)	51,667	31,000	Calculation
Avg. hourly wage of one care worker	£ 12.87	£ 12.87	John Yallop
Total saving p.a.	£ 664,957	£ 930,940	Calculation

1b Travel time saved by care workers updating case files remotely rather than in office			
Description	Value		
Type: Saving Opportunity	Low	High	Source
# of care workers traveling into office before shift	1242	1242	Lorna Crow
# of shift per annum for care worker	233	233	Standard number of working days per annum
Total # of trips into the office (per annum)	289386	289386	Calculation
% reduction in the number of times required to travel to office to update case files	60%	80%	Impact of technology
Reduction in the # of trips to the office during shift (per annum)	173632	231509	Calculation
Avg. journey time for care worker to travel to council office (minutes)	20	20	Assumption
Reduction in time spent traveling to office (hours per annum)	57877	77170	Calculation
Avg. hourly wage of one care worker	£ 12.87	£ 12.87	John Yallop
Total saving p.a.	£744,880	£993,173	Calculation

1c Fuel and wear & tear cost saved by care workers updating case files remotely			
Description	Value		
Type: Saving Opportunity	Low	High	Source
# of care workers traveling into office to update case files	1242	1242	Lorna Crow
# of shift per annum for care worker	233	233	Standard number of working days per annum
Total # of journeys into office during shift (per annum)	289386	289386	Calculation
% reduction in the # of trips to office to update case files	60%	80%	Impact of technology
Reduction in the # of trips to the office during shift (per annum)	173632	231509	Calculation
Avg. care worker travel distance to office (miles)	5	5	Assumption
Reduction in miles travelled into office during shift (per annum)	868,158	1,157,544	Calculation
Expense cost per mile (£) for personal vehicle usage	£0.45	£0.45	SBC
Total saving p.a.	£390,671	£520,895	Calculation

- Key
- Value proposition included in the financial summary.
  - Value proposition excluded from the financial summary.

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## **DRAFT ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY**

**Report by Service Director Customer & Communities**

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**SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL**

**25 February 2021**

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### **1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1 **This report presents for approval the Scottish Borders Council Draft Anti-Poverty Strategy that has been developed following a motion by Councillor Tatler in September 2020 and sets out the next steps that Scottish Borders Council and Partners plan to take in tackling Poverty in the Scottish Borders.**
- 1.2 A Working Group (including agreed Terms of Reference) was set up to review the extent of poverty in the Scottish Borders.
- 1.3 The Working Group (including agreed Terms of Reference) in creating the draft Strategy took account of –
  - Economic poverty and income
  - Fuel poverty
  - Housing poverty
  - Food poverty
  - Impact on family and community health and wellbeing
  - Digital poverty
- 1.4 The Council is continuing to respond to the current Covid-19 pandemic and working with our communities through the Community Assistance Hubs. The learning from this work should be taken into account and how ongoing arrangements evolve.

### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **I recommend that Council:**
  - (a) **Approves the Scottish Borders Draft Anti-Poverty Strategy as detailed at Appendix 1.**
  - (b) **Agrees to proceed to Public Consultation to take place from the beginning of March to the end of May 2021.**
  - (c) **Agrees that the Anti-Poverty Working Group will develop an approach to public consultation and create a Final Strategy and Action Plan for approval.**

- (d) **Agrees to receive a further report in June 2021 from the Service Director Customer & Communities which will present a final Anti-Poverty Strategy and an Action Plan for approval.**

### 3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In September 2020, Scottish Borders Council approved a motion by Councillor Tatler for a Member/Officer Working Group to be set up to develop a draft Anti-Poverty Strategy for consideration for approval at February 2021 Council.
- 3.2 A Working Group (including agreed Terms of Reference) was set up to review the extent of poverty in the Scottish Borders and take account of –
- Economic poverty and income
  - Fuel poverty
  - Housing poverty
  - Food poverty
  - Impact on family and community health and wellbeing
  - Digital poverty
- 3.3 The Working Group used poverty definitions from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation - 'Poverty is when your resources are well below our minimum needs' and 'Poverty means not being able to heat your home, pay your rent or buy essentials (e.g., a winter coat for a child, a fridge) for you or your children.'
- [Joseph Rowntree Foundation \(JRF\)](#)
- 3.4 The Working Group have taken a forward thinking, sustainable approach to the development of the Draft Anti-Poverty Strategy. The approach is outlined below:
- (a) Examining relevant data to agree the best approach for the Scottish Borders.
  - (b) Analysing information to reach robust conclusions, examine options and consider costs of poverty.
  - (c) Identifying where support is needed most and where additional resources may be useful to tackle poverty.
  - (d) Worked with other organisations and a number of other partners including Citizens Advice Borders, Registered Social Landlords, Service Managers, the Third Sector Interface, and other voluntary organisations to ensure that appropriate issues were identified and included in the Strategy.
  - (e) Identifying best practice and the approach that had been taken to tackling Anti-Poverty in other local authority areas
  - (f) Reflecting on a variety of specific Covid-19 impact reports that are being published nationally, as well as Scottish Borders Council's response to the Pandemic.

- 3.5 The Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government and the Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Older People announced the creation of a Social Renewal Advisory Board in June 2020. The Board was tasked with making proposals to renew Scotland, as it emerges from the pandemic, focused on reducing poverty and disadvantage, advancing equality and embedding a human rights-based approach. The final report 'If not now, when?' was published in January 2021. The Anti-Poverty Working Group recognises this important report and the 'Calls to Action' to address the harms created by the pandemic and the inequalities facing people and communities, and will consider its relevance to the Scottish Borders in the Anti-Poverty Strategy Action Plan.

## 4 STRATEGY CONTENT

- 4.1 The Working Group agreed a vision -  
*'We want a Scottish Borders where no-one lives in Poverty and we want everyone to be able to achieve their full potential and feel healthy, happy and valued'*
- 4.2 Local context is set out in the Strategy and provides justification for the document. Examples are shown below. A full Picture of Poverty in the Scottish Borders is shown in Appendix 2, and provides a key evidence led baseline on which the draft has been developed. Detailed below are some of the key challenges:
- (a) In 2020, the **median gross weekly pay** (workplace based) for full time workers in the Scottish Borders was £481, **£111 below** the £593 for Scotland or **81%**.
  - (b) Between November 2019 and November 2020, the number of people claiming **Out-of-Work benefits** aged 16 to 64 **increased** by **95%** from 1,805 (2.7%) to 3,525 (5.2%) respectively.
  - (c) Around **29%** of all households in the Scottish Borders are fuel poor, equivalent to approximately **16,000 households**.
  - (d) There was a **20%** increase in free school meal awards from **1,659** in September 2019 to **2,075** in September 2020.
  - (e) In 2019-20 the Citizens Advice services in the Scottish Borders had **5,125** clients, gave advice 21,950 times, and gained over **£3.1** million for clients.
  - (f) **13%** of the Scottish Borders are unable to access decent broadband (USO) compared to **4%** for Scotland, this varies across the Scottish Borders.
  - (g) **81.3%** of households have home internet access in the Scottish Borders compared to **85%** for Scotland.
- 4.3 Challenges and Opportunities in tackling Poverty in the Scottish Borders have been identified. These will be used to work and consult with people to understand the issues involved and to improve service design and delivery to make a positive change for individuals, families, and communities. Key challenges and opportunities include:

- (a) The impact of Covid-19 is now an issue in the Scottish Borders. For those already living in poverty, the impact of Covid-19 is likely to make things worse for them, whilst there are people experiencing poverty for the first time. Scottish Borders Council has a Response and Recovery Board in place which meets regularly to respond to and make plans to assist those in need. A Covid-19 Vulnerability index has been developed which pinpoints areas where changes to service delivery will make a difference. This is used by the Council in its response.
  - (b) The rurality factors of the Scottish Borders present a challenge. Geography, ageing demographic, income deprivation, fuel deprivation, digital access, poor broadband, and food security are all issues which are taken into account in the Strategy. Access to affordable and timely transport and equitable access to all services are part of the rurality challenge too, and actions will be developed in the Action Plan to address these issues.
  - (c) Digital exclusion is an area of concern also. The rurality factor contributes to difficulties around access to good broadband and mobile coverage, however there are real opportunities for people to get online through the Connecting Scotland Project. To date over 700 devices have been issued to individuals, families, care leavers and vulnerable people. These devices provide invaluable support to people. The Council's Digital Strategy (which is presented to Council on 25.02.21) will make a valuable contribution to reducing digital exclusion and improving inclusivity by focussing on achieving improved citizen outcomes.
- 4.4 The Council, along with all public bodies continues to face significant challenges as it aims to provide the best possible services within the resources available. The adoption of a longer term timeframe for financial planning has previously enabled the Council to plan the delivery of service changes across financial years through modernising services, investing in new technology, and in developing a range of strategic partnerships to provide longer term benefits.
- 4.5 The Working Group have set out 6 themes and 7 outcomes in the Strategy. The themes are structured around the 'pockets, prospects, places' measurement framework adopted by the Scottish Government Child Poverty Strategy with additions of 'people,' 'partnerships' and 'pathways.' Outcomes shown against each theme will form the basis of the Action Plan.

## **5 APPROACH TO PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 It is recognised that this draft Strategy has been developed from a mainly internal perspective to date, and that full consultation with partners, communities and other organisations will be required in order to enable the draft Strategy and Action Plan to be brought back to Council in June 2021 for final approval.

- 5.2 The approach to this consultation will be co-produced with Third Sector and other partners to ensure that a combination of different types of engagement are undertaken. Whilst some effects of poverty are widely known and evidenced by a range of data, it is those who are experiencing some of the hidden effects of poverty that we are seeking to engage with, and what actions could be taken to alleviate the impact of poverty and support those individuals better.
- 5.3 It is vital to involve people with direct lived experience in the development of the Anti-Poverty Strategy. Their input is key to informing decision making and ensuring that appropriate actions are included in the Action Plan which have a real impact and will make a difference to their lives. Options under consideration include a direct lived experience online forum, a Survey open to the public and/or a targeted audience and engagement with specific stakeholders such as the Third Sector.

## **6 DELIVERY OF THE ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY**

- 6.1 The delivery of the Anti-Poverty Strategy will focus on an Action Plan which will be developed by the Anti-Poverty Working Group and include work that is already being undertaken to address poverty. The Action Plan will be added to as feedback from the public consultation and the proposed lived experienced forum is better understood.
- 6.2 The Anti-Poverty Working Group will initially develop an approach to both consultation and establishing a lived experience forum.
- 6.3 In parallel to this work, the Working Group will also create a draft Action Plan. The proposed Action Plan will:
- Be key to delivery of the Strategy
  - Involve the Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership, other partners and organisations who are also contributing to reducing poverty
  - Be based on themes and designed to achieve the desired outcomes set out in the Draft Strategy
  - Reflect identified challenges and opportunities
  - Be a live document that will be added to as the picture of poverty is better understood in relation to the impact of the ongoing pandemic
  - Reflect the outcome of consultation and the proposed direct lived experience forum
- 6.4 This Action Plan is not intended to replace work that is already being undertaken across the Scottish Borders to reduce poverty. There are a number of key strategies and actions that are already being undertaken and are contributing to reducing poverty in the Scottish Borders. (Appendix 3) A specific Child Poverty Action Report and Plan for 2020/21 is in place and many of the actions contained in it will contribute to achieving the outcomes set out in this strategy. This overarching Strategy aims to create a strategic approach in how the Council, with its partners, work together to maximise the opportunities and work in partnership to overcome the significant challenges in reducing poverty.

6.5 In March 2020, five Community Assistance Hubs were set up across the Borders to work with resilient community teams and other third sector organisations to co-ordinate the emergency response to the pandemic. The value of this work and the response within our communities has been invaluable and recognised as an example of excellent partnership working. This Strategy will build on that partnership work.

6.6 ~~Other key strategies and plans~~ Monitoring and Evaluation of the Strategy will be carried out by regular progress reporting of the Action Plan using existing measurement indicators where they exist and developing new indicators where there is a need. The longer-term effectiveness of the Strategy and Action Plan will be assessed to inform future strategy development.

## **7 TIMELINE**

7.1 The proposed timeline for the Draft Anti-Poverty Strategy is as follows:

- (a) The Draft Strategy is presented to Council on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021 for approval.
- (b) The Anti-Poverty Working Group will plan the approach to the consultation and lived experience online forum from 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021.
- (c) Public Consultation and other engagement mechanisms are held between March and May 2021.
- (d) The outcome of the consultation will be evaluated, and the findings presented to Council in June 2021 to enable the Strategy and Action Plan to be fully approved.
- (e) An Annual Progress Report will be presented to Council in March 2022.

## **8 IMPLICATIONS**

### **8.1 Financial**

There are no specific costs attached to any of the recommendations in this report. Budget provision is already reflected in the Council's budget which supports the anti-poverty agenda.

### **8.2 Risks and Mitigations**

Risks associated with this report relate to the deepening problem of poverty from the longer-term impact of COVID-19.

The Action Plan that will be developed will provide a number of mitigations to these risks, and effective evaluation and monitoring processes will be key to evidencing the impact of the Action Plan.

### **8.3 Integrated Impact Assessment**

There are no equalities issues associated with this report.

### **8.4 Acting Sustainably**

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

## 8.5 Carbon Management

There are no effects on carbon emissions as a result of this report.

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

There are no changes to the Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation as a result of this report.

## 9 CONSULTATION

- 9.1 The Executive Director (Finance & Regulatory), the Monitoring Officer/Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Service Director HR & Communications, the Clerk to the Council and Corporate Communications have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the Final Report.

### Approved by

**Jenni Craig**

**Service Director Customer and Communities Signature .....**

### Authors

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Janice Robertson	Strategic Planning & Policy Manager
Shona Smith	Communities & Partnerships Manager

**Background Papers:** N/A

**Previous Minute Reference:** N/A

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

Contact us at Scottish Borders Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, Tel 01835 824000, [performance@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:performance@scotborders.gov.uk).



# Scottish Borders Anti-Poverty Strategy 2021

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## **FOREWORD**

Welcome to the first Anti-Poverty Strategy produced by Scottish Borders Council. There is a growing awareness of the issues of poverty across Scotland, and the Council is facing many challenges and constraints, compounded further by the impact of Covid-19.

The Scottish Borders face a number of unique challenges due to rurality - these include geography, ageing demographic, income deprivation, fuel deprivation, digital access, poor broadband, and food security.

We need to understand the causes and impacts of poverty and we are listening to residents, community planning partners and the third sector as we develop our Strategy further, therefore our Action Plan will contain specific actions to increase the life chances and experiences of all, alleviate financial pressures, and enable people to be part of their community.

The challenges that we are facing within the Scottish Borders are accelerating as the longer-term impacts of Covid-19 are being felt within our communities. We will therefore review this Strategy on a regular basis to ensure that it remains current and aligns to these challenges.

As well as providing support and opportunities, we also recognise the need to take a poverty informed approach to planning and delivery of services to begin to reduce the stigma of poverty, and to provide dignified and sustainable pathways out of poverty.

We believe that the combined knowledge, expertise and experience of Scottish Borders Council and our partners, as well as open and honest engagement with people experiencing poverty, will help us to tackle poverty and improve lives.

We recognise that a culture shift is required to reduce poverty and the stigma of poverty, and we are committed to playing our part to make that happen.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the development of the Strategy, in particular to people experiencing poverty who have given their time and shared their story, and we look forward to working towards reducing the impacts of poverty in the Scottish Borders.

**Councillor Robin Tatler**

**Chair of the Anti-Poverty Working Group**

## INTRODUCTION

*'The Scottish Government is committed to tackling poverty, but poverty has been rising and we are not on course to meet interim child poverty targets within three years. The relative child poverty target requires a fall of a quarter in the proportion of children in poverty compared to the latest data, which has increased compared to five years previously. The picture for other groups over the last five years is similarly disappointing, with no change in poverty for working-age adults and an increase for pensioners.'*

*'Work, social security and housing costs are vital to solving poverty in Scotland, as the coronavirus storm is sweeping many people into poverty and others deeper into poverty'*

*'Even before coronavirus, around a million people in Scotland were in poverty, living precarious and insecure lives.'*

<https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/poverty-scotland-2020>

Setting out a clear vision and working with 6 themes and 7 outcomes, our Strategy highlights areas of activity that the Council and Partners aim to deliver to help reduce poverty in the Scottish Borders. We have identified key contributors to reducing poverty in the Scottish Borders already in existence and welcome these in support of this Strategy. It must also be recognised that Scottish and UK Governments have a part to play to improve the lives of people in the Scottish Borders and reduce poverty through nationally set policies and strategies. The Council will continue to lobby in support of these.

## OUR VISION

We want a Scottish Borders where no-one lives in poverty. We want everyone to be able to achieve their full potential and feel healthy, happy, and valued. We want the Scottish Borders to be a place where everyone can play their part in understanding that tackling poverty is everyone's responsibility.

We believe that if we act locally, and in partnership, we can make a real difference.

We want this Scottish Borders Anti-poverty Strategy to be pro-active, evidenced by real experience and directed by need.

Working with the people of the Scottish Borders, we aim to find solutions to poverty challenges which support them in a way that works best for them.

# POVERTY

## A DEFINITION

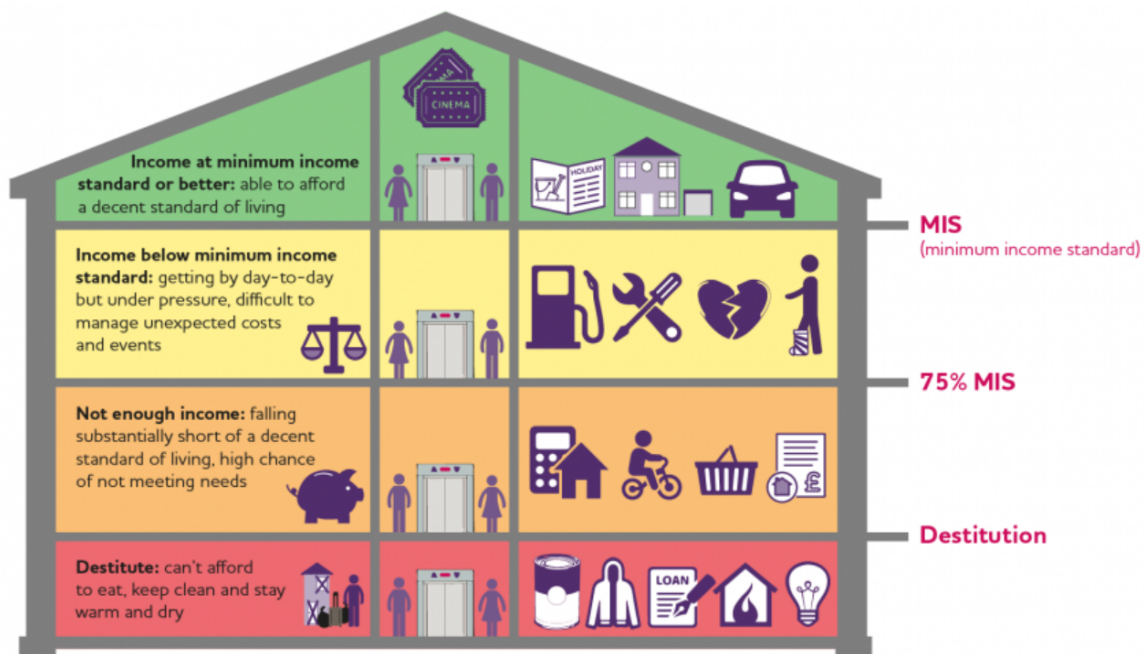
### What is poverty?

According to the [Joseph Rowntree Foundation \(JRF\)](#), Poverty is when your resources are well below your minimum needs.

### How does JRF define poverty in the UK?

Poverty affects millions of people in the UK. Poverty means not being able to heat your home, pay your rent, or buy the essentials for you or your children. It means waking up every day facing insecurity, uncertainty, and impossible decisions about money. It means facing marginalisation – and even discrimination – because of your financial circumstances. The constant stress it causes can lead to problems that deprive people of the chance to play a full part in society.

### Levels of poverty JRF picture: - Focus on Minimum Income Standard (MIS)

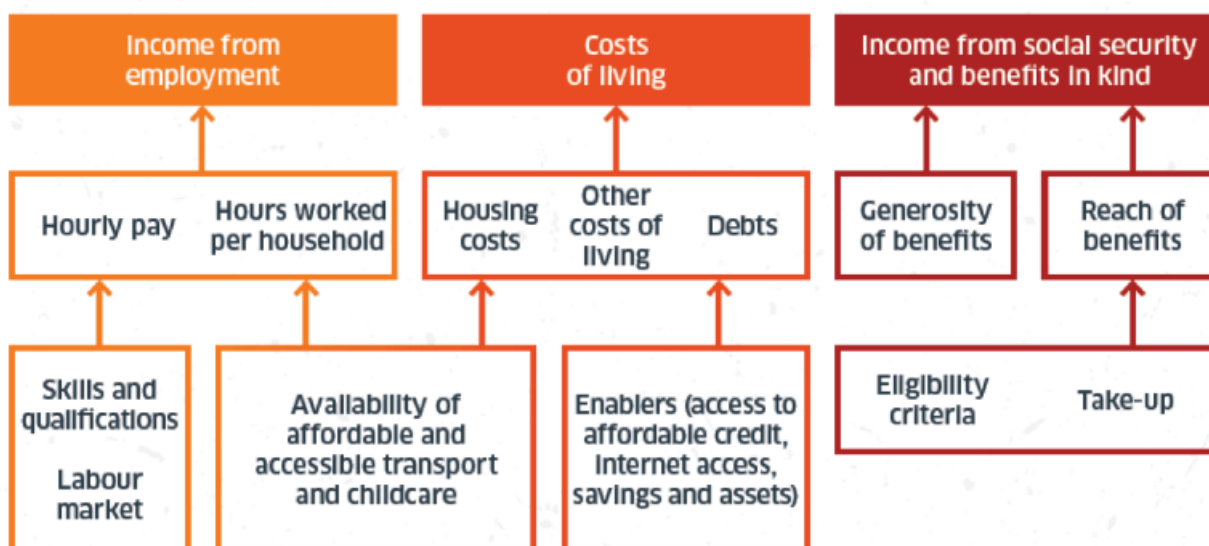


There are 3 levels of poverty

## FACTORS

There are several factors that can result in people experiencing poverty.

As identified by the Scottish Government's [“Every child, every chance: tackling child poverty delivery plan 2018-2022”](#) direct drivers of poverty fall in to three main categories – income from employment, costs of living and income from social security. The relationship of these drivers to wider thematic areas is summarised below.



Other factors that may contribute or compound people experiencing poverty, and are taken into account in the Scottish Borders Anti-Poverty Strategy include:

- Fuel poverty
- Housing poverty
- Food poverty
- Health and wellbeing
- Connections to family, friends, and community
- Digital poverty

It is recognised that multi-generational poverty exists but reasons why poverty persists are less clear-cut, and reveal multi-dimensional causes, as highlighted in the report: [“The persistence of poverty across generations”](#) by the JRF.

# CONTEXT

## NATIONAL

Prior to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Scottish Government published “Poverty & Income Inequality in Scotland: 2016-2019”.<sup>1</sup> Key findings were:

- It is estimated that **19%** of Scotland’s **population** (1.02 million people each year) were living in relative poverty after housing costs in 2016-19. Before housing costs, 17% of the population (900,000 people) were living in poverty in 2016-19.
- It is estimated that **24%** of **children** (230,000 children each year) were living in relative poverty after housing costs in 2016-19. Before housing costs, it is estimated that 20% of children (200,000 children each year) were in relative poverty.
- In 2016-19, **60%** of working-age adults in relative poverty after housing costs as well as before housing costs were **living in working households**. This represents 380,000 working-age adults in poverty after housing costs, and 310,000 working-age adults before housing costs. **In-work poverty** for working-age adults has continuously increased since 2011-14.
- Relative poverty after housing costs for **pensioners** was **15%** in 2016-19 (150,000 pensioners each year). Before housing costs, 18% of pensioners (180,000 pensioners) were in relative poverty.

In October 2020, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation published a briefing “Poverty in Scotland 2020”.<sup>2</sup> The report looks at what has happened to poverty in Scotland before and during the Coronavirus outbreak. Key findings of the report include:

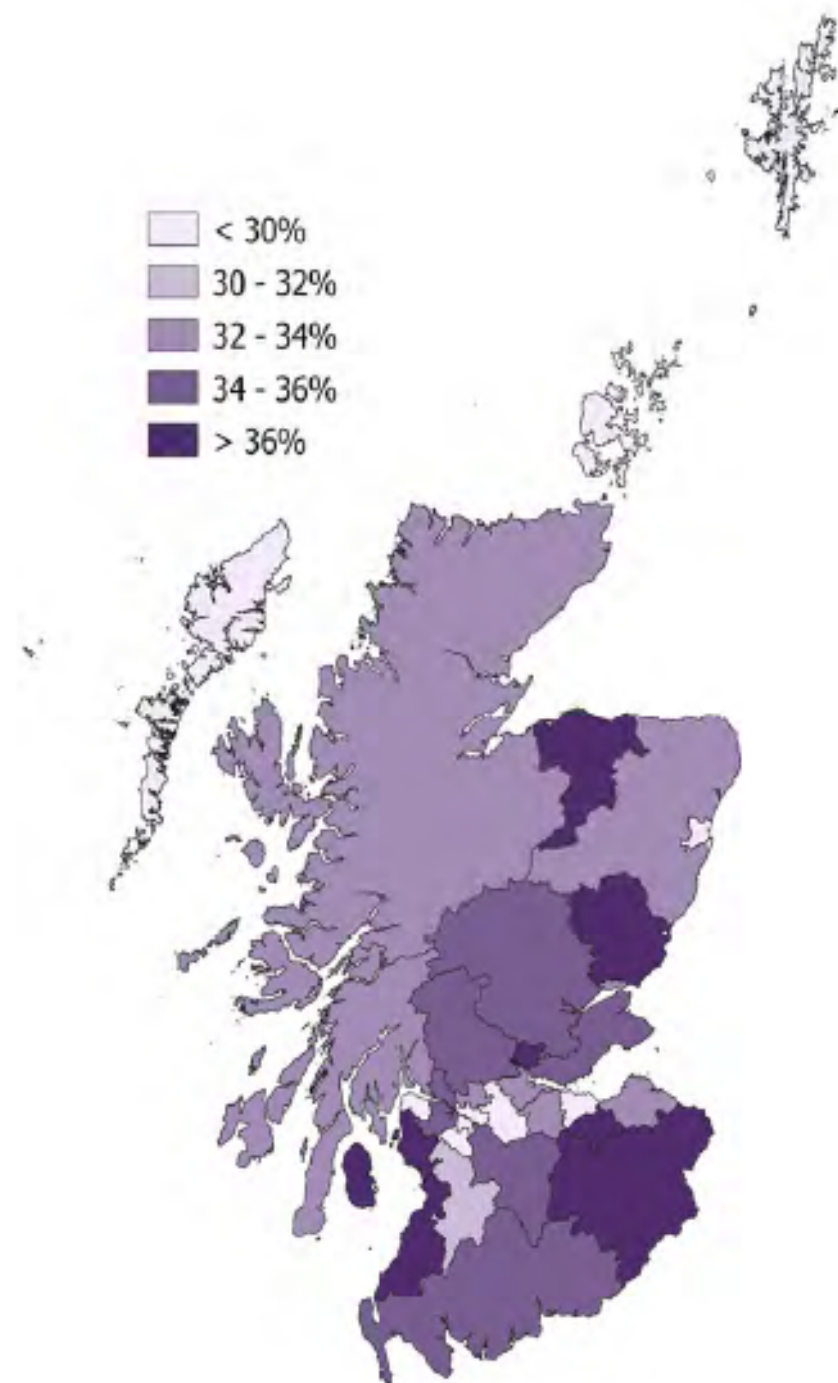
- Even before coronavirus, around a million people in Scotland were in poverty, living precarious and insecure lives.
- By May 2020, there was a 65% increase in the number of households in receipt of Universal Credit (UC) compared to the start of the year.
- The coronavirus pandemic has had a detrimental effect on jobs and financial security, with workers on low wages or in poverty deeply affected.
- The proportion of workers in (Covid-19) at-risk industries vary across Scotland, with Scottish Borders being in the highest at-risk group of greater than 36%.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/poverty-income-inequality-scotland-2016-19/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/poverty-scotland-2020>

**Figure 4: The proportion of workers in at-risk industries varies across Scotland**



Note: At-risk industries are defined as Accommodation and food, Retail and wholesale, Manufacturing, and Arts and entertainment.

Source: Business Register and Employment Survey (2018), Contains OS data, Crown copyright 2020.



## LOCAL

There is poverty in the Scottish Borders. Evidence of this poverty is seen in “Scottish Borders Picture of Poverty” (Appendix A). Key findings include:

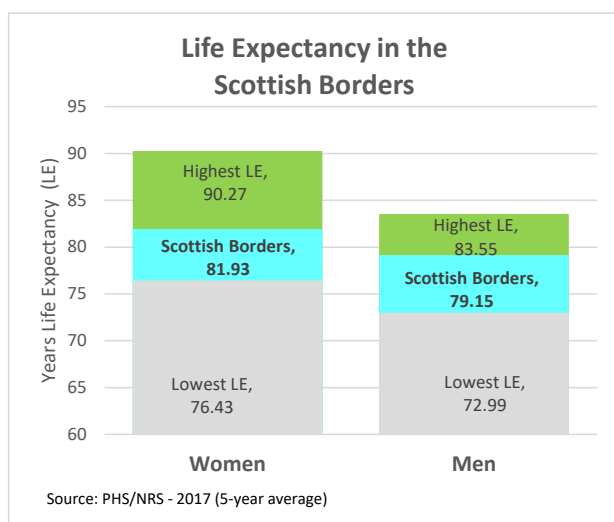
The **dependency ratio** is the relationship between the non-working age (0-15 years and 65+) population compared to those of working age.

A ratio of 70% (Scottish Borders for 2018) means that for every 1,000 people of working age there are 700 of non-working age.

### Dependency ratio 2018 and 2043

Dependency ratio for the <b>Scottish Borders</b>	
2018: <b>70%</b>	2043: <b>80%</b>
Dependency ratio for <b>Scotland</b>	
2018: <b>56%</b>	2043: <b>60%</b>

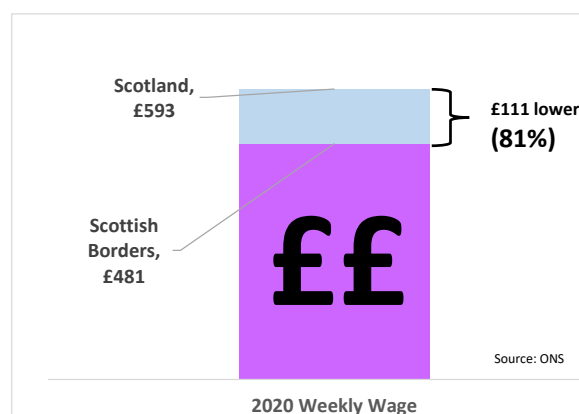
The dependency ratio for the Scottish Borders is higher than Scotland and is expected to increase.



**Life expectancy for women** in the Scottish Borders is **81.9** years, ranging from 76.4 to 90.3. For **men, life expectancy is 79.2** years, ranging from 73.0 to 83.6. Within the Scottish Borders, like other areas, there is a clear relationship between an area's percentage of people that are income deprived and life expectancy; the higher the percentage income deprived the lower the life expectancy.

In 2020, the **median gross weekly pay** (workplace based) for full time workers in the Scottish Borders was £481, **£111 below** the £593 for Scotland or **81%**. (figure)

In 2020, the **median gross weekly pay** (residence based) for full time workers in the Scottish Borders was £522, **£73 below** the £595 for Scotland or **87%**.



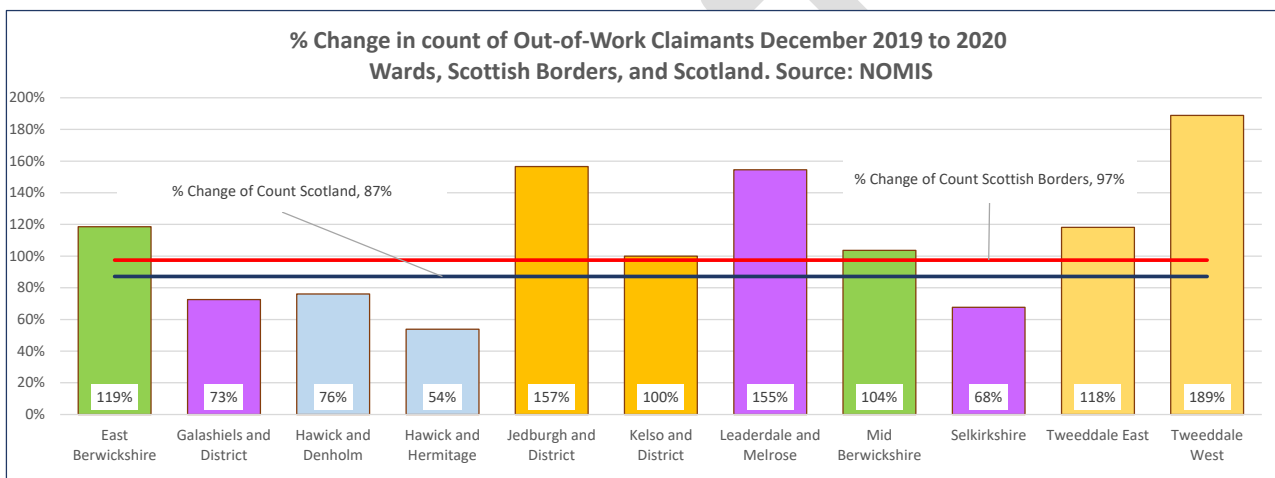
The median gross weekly pay (workplace based) for full time workers in the Scottish Borders has consistently been below the level for Scotland (83% between 2000 and 2020).





Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, **16.3%** of the **households** in the Scottish Borders were **workless**, slightly below the 17.7% for Scotland

Between December 2019 and December 2020, the number of people claiming **Out-of-Work benefits** aged 16 to 64 **increased by 97%** (1,730) from 1,775 (2.6%) to 3,505 (5.2%) respectively.

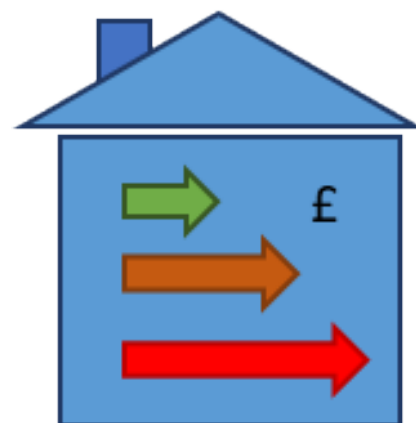


### Gross Value Added (GVA) for Scottish Borders is 73% of the GVA for Scotland.

GVA is the measure of the value of goods and services produced in an area, industry or sector of an economy.

Around **29%** of all households in the Scottish Borders are fuel poor, equivalent to approximately **16,000 households**. There seems to be a higher level of fuel poverty in the Scottish Borders compared to Scotland (25%), although it is not statistically different.

Households with higher levels of fuel poverty in the Scottish Borders are those that are Older (38%) and those in Social Housing (51%).

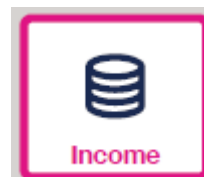




**9.5%** of the Scottish Borders population is income deprived, although there are 12 Intermediate Zones with more than **10%**.



**12.6%** children live in low-income families in the Scottish Borders, although there are 10 Intermediate Zones with more than **15%**.



**8.7%** of the people of working age are employment deprived, although there are 12 Intermediate Zones with more than **10%**.

According to DWP, in February 2020 there were **2,840** people claiming Pension Credit in the Scottish Borders. This equates to about 101 pension credit claimants per 1,000 people aged 65 and older. Within the Scottish Borders, the rate of pension credit ranges from a low of 54 per 1,000 to a high of 216 per 1,000. (It is thought that there is an under-claiming of Pension Credit in the Scottish Borders.)

# 2,840

People aged 60+ claiming Pension Credit



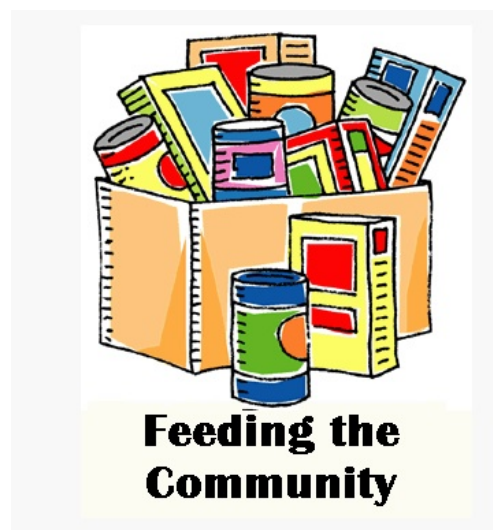
**81.3%** of households have home internet access in the Scottish Borders compared to 85% for Scotland.

**13%** of the Scottish Borders are unable to access decent broadband (USO) compared to 4% for Scotland, this varies across the Scottish Borders.

9% of adults in Scotland reported food insecurity (as defined by being worried during the past 12 months that they would run out of food due to lack of money or resources).

In January 2020 there were **17** Foodbanks / Fareshare Partners across the Scottish Borders. By July 2020 there were **40**.

All of these report increased demand.



### The impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic so far in the Scottish Borders includes:

The number of **Universal Credit claimants** in the Scottish Borders **increased** by **80%** (3,700) from 4,600 in March 2020 to 8,300 in November 2020.



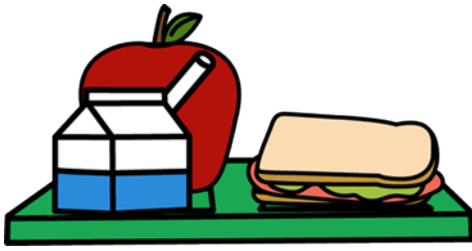
**80%**  
March to  
November 2020



**3,300 jobs furloughed** in the Scottish Borders (31 October 2020), accounting for 1.7% of Scotland's furloughed workforce.

The SDS's Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE) aims to help minimise the impact for people and businesses facing redundancy. Between April and October 2020 **PACE** has engaged with **420** individuals and **15** employers.





There was a **20%** increase in free school meal awards from **1,659** in September 2019 to **2,075** in September 2020.

There has been a significant increase in the use of foodbanks, FareShare outlets and community kitchens.

In 2019-20 the Citizens Advice services in the Scottish Borders had **5,125** clients, gave advice 21,950 times, and gained over **£3.1** million for clients.



**5,125 Clients**

**Client Gain £3.1 m**

The Citizens Advice service in the Scottish Borders said to the Anti-Poverty Working Group:

“Various measures have been put in place by the Government through the DWP to combat the impact of COVID-19 i.e., temporary increase in Universal Credit payments, payment break in repaying benefit overpayments and delay in decisions on disability benefit applications and renewals. However, these are all temporary measures and will impact greatly on income going forward.

Similarly, furlough payments have saved job losses and redundancies, but the reduced income has caused financial difficulties and resulted in increased the use of credit for essential purchases.

Payment holidays on mortgages, loans and credit cards will also lead to increases in monthly repayments in due course. All of which will cause financial hardship.”

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

We must take account of challenges and opportunities identified so far as set out below. We will use these to work and consult with people to understand the issues involved and to improve service design and delivery to make a positive change for individuals, families, and communities.

### Challenges – what we need to address

<b>Demographics - dependency ratio and young adults moving out of the Scottish Borders -</b> The dependency ratio for the Scottish Borders is higher than Scotland and is expected to increase.	<b>Impact of Covid-19 –</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased use of Universal Credit</li> <li>• 3,300 jobs furloughed</li> <li>• Increase use of food banks and community kitchens</li> <li>• Challenges to emotional wellbeing</li> </ul>
<b>Impact of Brexit -</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friction in the transport of goods between the UK and EU</li> <li>• Local businesses complying with new regulations and paperwork may result in delays and prove challenging</li> <li>• UK's economy predicted to be smaller</li> <li>• Compounded by Covid-19 pandemic (and restrictions)</li> </ul>	<b>Low wages/low skill -</b> The median gross weekly pay (workplace based) for full time workers in the Scottish Borders has consistently been below the level for Scotland (83% between 2000 and 2020).
<b>Access to good broadband and mobile coverage –</b> The rurality of the Scottish Borders is an issue, as is affordability for some	<b>Fuel Poverty –</b> The proportion of households who are defined as <b>'fuel poor'</b> in the Scottish Borders has consistently been higher than the Scottish Average.
<b>Rurality of the Scottish Borders -</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to affordable and timely transport</li> <li>• Equitable access to all services</li> </ul>	<b>Public Sector Budget Constraints –</b> The Council continues to face significant challenges as it aims to provide the best possible services within available resources available.

Opportunities – what is in place?			
<b>South of Scotland Enterprise</b> - sustainable economic and social development of the area, including improving the amenity and environment.		<b>Connecting Scotland</b> - over 700 devices issued that are supporting 300 individuals, 321 families, 63 care leavers and 25 vulnerable people including Digital Champions to support them.	
<b>Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal</b> - £394.5M to narrow the productivity gap, increase the working age population and deliver inclusive growth.		<b>Health and Social Care Partnership</b> – delivering health and social care services across the Borders.	
<b>Covid-19 Recovery</b> – A Strategic Recovery Board is in place which advises the Council on appropriate recovery actions. The Council will make use of a Covid-19 Vulnerability Index to assist in decision making around recovery.	<b>Wellbeing Service</b> – delivering health and wellbeing advice and support across the Borders.	<b>Living Wage Group / Living Wage Area (Eildon)</b> SBC is an accredited Living Wage Employer and is encouraging more local employers to pay their staff the real Living Wage.	
<b>Strong and resilient communities</b> - 59 Resilient Community Teams, 69 Community Councils and numerous third sector organisations and groups working together to support those in need within their communities.		<b>Regional Economic Partnership</b> – Strategy and Action Plan being developed. £2.7M invested in South of Scotland Destination Alliance.	
<b>5 Community Assistance Hubs</b> - SBC and CPP Partners providing person centred support and assistance to individuals across the Scottish Borders.	<b>Money Worries App</b> - being launched in February 2021 to provide further support to those in financial hardship		
<b>City Deal - accelerating growth</b> Investing funding in innovation, skills, and infrastructure, to accelerate economic growth while tackling	<b>Borders College</b> – 450 devices and data packages distributed to students. Young Guarantee – no-one left behind - ensuring those between 16 and 24 has the opportunity of work, education, or		

inequality and deprivation.	training.
<b>Inspire Care</b> - digital devices for Scottish Borders Care Home Residents	<b>Housing Associations supporting tenants</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital Access Programmes (supporting tenants to get online)</li> <li>• Debt advice</li> <li>• Signposting to other support services</li> <li>• Supporting tenancies</li> </ul>
<b>Inspire Learning</b> - digital devices and online learning for Scottish Borders school children	<b>External funding</b> - over £2.5M dispersed to local third sector organisations in the Scottish Borders
<b>Food Growing Strategy</b> – currently in development	<b>SBC's Response to the Employability Challenge</b> Sets out Scottish Borders Council's approach to employability and training.

# REAL LIFE EXPERIENCES

## Gaining confidence and trust - SBHA

*"Last year I couldn't get myself out of the financial hole I was in.... I buried my head deep in the sand, ignoring letters, phone calls, whilst my rent arrears were piling up until my home was at risk of being taken off me. "SBHA's Welfare Benefits Officer talked me through it all and then helped me apply online. Universal Credit has changed my life.... before I thought my only option was to declare myself bankrupt. I work 20 hours a week and was completely surprised at what I'm entitled to. "Don't give up hope - there is help out there! "Ms Y*

*"It's important, particularly for older people who might not be used to being online, to know that there's help like this available. And also, for people who have never claimed benefits before to know what's available. It's just great to know that there is help there. I feel better about things now" Mr X*

## SBHA Team Feedback

*"Having that local knowledge of my Tenants circumstances helped me to target support to those who I knew have health issues and would be worried about getting food and medicine. Having the support of the Hub and the resilience group was great." SBHA Neighbourhood Housing Officer*

*"We are dealing with a lot of anxious people really worried about money." SBHA Welfare Benefits Officer*

## Quotes from Food Insecurity and Learning Loss Pilot Evaluation Report conducted for YouthLink Scotland

*Forget the programme, the biggest key part here was the relationship that TD1 have got with families in the community... They have got a phenomenal relationship, they're well-known, and they go over and above for young people. So, there was trust there from the parents from the beginning. TD1 had full buy-in and the support, whether that be food, whether that be the activity packs, whether it be online sessions, there was trust there, and that was key.*

## Teacher, Scottish Borders

*A multi-agency approach was definitely key, it meant that no young people were missed out.*

## Teacher, Scottish Borders



## OUR 7 PRINCIPLES

Poverty in Scotland needs to be addressed. The Scottish Borders Council Anti-Poverty Strategy plans to improve the lives of individuals and families who are experiencing poverty and deprivation for whatever reason, including the recent impact of Covid-19. We will work together and involve all stakeholders in the process.

The following principles support our approach:

1. **Respect:** Treating everyone with dignity and valuing every contribution.
2. **Resilience:** Helping individuals and households to manage their own affairs and make informed choices and decisions about their lifestyle and prevent them falling into poverty; building resilience in people and communities.
3. **Person Focused:** Tailoring services and support to the different types and places of poverty and the different needs and characteristics of all our communities and identities, acknowledging that one solution does not suit all.
4. **Fairness:** Removing barriers that prevent some people from taking part in life, socially and economically. Promoting a society in which individuals and groups are treated fairly and receive a just share of the opportunities that our region has to offer.
5. **Sustainable:** Plan our actions for the long term, in an ongoing discussion with our residents. Designing and building services, infrastructure and organisations that are affordable and accessible.
6. **Shared:** Making sure there is a joint understanding of the issues around poverty in our region and working together in partnership.
7. **Communication:** Listening to and involving our residents, understanding their experiences, and using their advice.

## THEMES AND OUTCOMES

Our themes are structured around the ‘pockets, prospects, places’ measurement framework adopted by the Scottish Government Child Poverty Strategy with our own additions of ‘people,’ ‘partnerships,’ and ‘pathways.’

The actions contained in the Draft Action Plan in Appendix C are designed to meet the outcomes shown in the following table.

Theme	Outcome
<b>Pockets</b>	<b>Outcome 1:</b> Maximise financial resources of households on low incomes and reduce out-going costs. Low-income households can access services and be socially, digitally, and financially included.
<b>Prospects</b>	<b>Outcome 2:</b> Households on low incomes are sustaining employment and are re-skilling to enable them to seek alternative employment. <b>Outcome 3:</b> Reduce health inequalities and promote wellbeing.
<b>Places</b>	<b>Outcome 4:</b> Increase the number of people who live in warm, affordable homes.
<b>People</b>	<b>Outcome 5:</b> Increase opportunities and empower people to fully participate in their communities and bring about change.
<b>Partnerships</b>	<b>Outcome 6:</b> Improve partnership networks through use of technology and media channels and training opportunities to be more poverty aware and reduce poverty related stigma.
<b>Pathways</b>	<b>Outcome 7:</b> Develop and implement pathways to support people to move from dependence to independence.

# KEY PLANS & STRATEGIES CONTRIBUTING TO REDUCING POVERTY IN THE SCOTTISH BORDERS

There are already many plans and strategies in existence which contribute to reducing poverty in the Scottish Borders and we have shown those that are considered key below. Other plans and strategies are in existence which have links to achieving the outcomes in the Anti-Poverty Strategy and they are detailed in Appendix B.

<a href="#"><u>South of Scotland Enterprise – Operating Plan 2020/21</u></a> South of Scotland Enterprises vision: <i>“We want to drive inclusive growth, increase competitiveness, and <b>tackle inequality</b> within the region. We want to establish the South of Scotland as a centre of opportunity, innovation and growth.”</i>	<a href="#"><u>City Region Deal: Edinburgh &amp; South East Scotland</u></a> City Region Deal is a mechanism for accelerating growth by pulling in significant government investment. By investing this funding in innovation, skills and infrastructure, performance will be significantly improved, and we will <b>tackle inequality</b> and deprivation.	<a href="#"><u>Scotland’s Public Health Priorities</u></a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Live in vibrant, healthy and safe places and communities</li> <li>• Flourish in our early years</li> <li>• Have good mental health</li> <li>• Reduce the use of and harm from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs</li> <li>• Have a sustainable, inclusive economy with equality of outcomes for all</li> <li>• Eat well, have a healthy weight and are physically active</li> </ul>
South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy Currently in development	Employability Challenge Response Currently in development	
<a href="#"><u>Community Planning Partnership – Key Priorities 2020/21</u></a> An Action Plan developed by Scottish Border Community Planning Partnership in response to the ongoing pandemic. Themed around the following: Structure (Community Assistance Hubs), Digital, Employment & Economy, Education & Skills, Built Estate, Early Intervention & Prevention, Health & Wellbeing and <b>Poverty</b> .	<h2>Key Plans and Strategies to Reduce Poverty in the Scottish Borders</h2>	<a href="#"><u>Community Learning and Development</u></a> Community learning and development (CLD) aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improve life chances for people of all ages, through learning, personal development and active citizenship</li> <li>• develop stronger, more resilient, supportive, influential and inclusive communities</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Affordable Warmth &amp; Home: Energy Efficiency Strategy 2019-2023</u></a> Affordable Warmth and Home Energy Efficiency Strategy vision “More people live in energy efficient and affordably warm homes.”	<a href="#"><u>Child Poverty Report Action Plan 2020/2021</u></a> Sets out planned activities to help <b>alleviate Child Poverty in the Scottish Borders</b> , and in particular, provides specific actions in relation to the impact of COVID-19.	<a href="#"><u>Fit for 2024: Digital Borders</u></a> A key pillar of SBC’s Fit for 2024 is progressing the Digital Borders programme to help drive forward change and improve the quality of lives of residents.

## **DELIVERING THE STRATEGY**

The Strategy will be delivered through an Action Plan. The Action Plan is still in development and a draft is shown at Appendix C.

We see the Action Plan as a live document and new actions are likely to be included as a result of the consultation exercise to be carried out, and the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

The Action Plan is based on our key priorities and the actions are designed to achieve the outcomes set out for these as well as reflecting on the challenges and opportunities we have identified.

Key plans and strategies already contributing to reducing poverty have their own specific actions and these will be taken into account in our monitoring and evaluation methodology.

Many of the actions are already underway as part of service delivery carried out by SBC and Partners. Our Community Assistance Hubs, Resilient Community Teams, and our Third Sector Partners all make significant and valuable contributions towards the delivery of actions - many of them in partnership.

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Monitoring and evaluating the Strategy will be carried out in several ways -

- Using the Covid-19 recovery matrix / index as a baseline.
- Updates will be provided by Partners as part of regular progress reporting of the Action Plan.
- Existing indicators in other plans will be reported where they relate to the Action Plan.
- Other measurement indicators will be developed as part of the Action Plan where they do not already exist.

In the longer term an assessment of the impact of the Strategy will be required. This will allow -

- A deeper understanding of poverty in the Scottish Borders
- Specific interventions and projects to be planned
- Recommendations to be made for future Strategy development

## **ANTI-POVERTY TASK FORCE**

An Anti-Poverty Task Force will be established to develop an approach to ensuring delivery of the Action Plan. The Task Force will be made up of representatives from Scottish Borders Council, NHS Borders, and other key Partners. The Task Force will deal with operational issues and problem solving as well as reporting progress to Scottish Borders Council, the Community Planning Partnership Joint Programme Board, and the Community Planning Partnership Strategic Board.

### **SUMMARY**

Scottish Borders Council and Partners are committed to making a difference to people's lives by reducing poverty in the Scottish Borders.

There are significant challenges ahead which must be addressed, and this Strategy will help us to do that.

We look forward to undertaking a consultation and engagement process and plan to reach as many people as possible, particularly those with lived experience of poverty. This will help us to create an Action Plan which is truly reflective of the work that needs to be done to plan and deliver services with a poverty informed approach in mind.

The longer term impact of Covid-19 is becoming clearer too, and we plan to address this by keeping the Action Plan live and aligned to current challenges and opportunities as a result.

We are determined to play our part by using our combined resources to achieve the best outcomes to tackle poverty, remove the stigma attached, and create opportunities for positive change.

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix A – Scottish Borders Picture of Poverty 2021

Appendix B - Links to other key Strategies and Plans

DRAFT

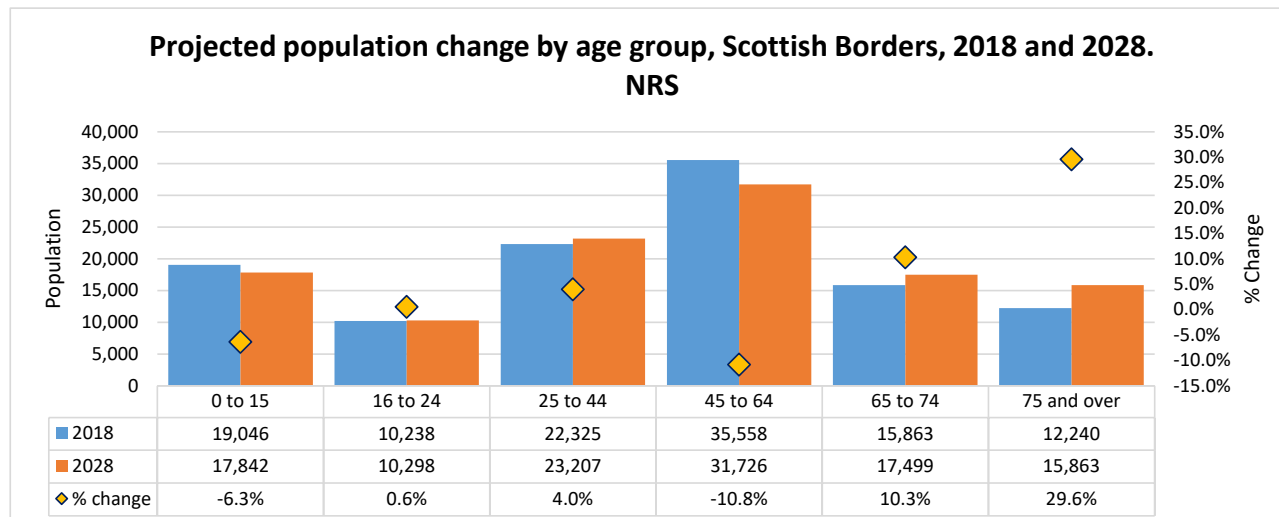
# Scottish Borders Picture of Poverty

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## Demographic Challenge

According to NRS<sup>1</sup> the population of the Scottish Borders is expected to increase by 1% (from 115,270 to 116,435), below the 1.8% for Scotland. However, the population changes within different age groups shows a different story; a 6.3% reduction in those aged 0 to 15 and a 10.8% reduction in those aged 45 to 64 compared to a 10.3% increase in those aged 65 to 74 and a 29.6% increase in those aged 75 and older, as seen in the graph below.



The change in population impacts on the dependency ratio for the Scottish Borders. The dependency ratio considers the non-working age (0-15 years and 65+) population compared to those of working age. A ratio of 70% (Scottish Borders for 2018) means that for every 1,000 people of working age there are 700 of non-working age. By 2043, it is estimated that will increase to 80% for the Scottish Borders compared to 60% for Scotland.

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) - <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/47100/rsa-infographic-scottish-borders.pdf>



<sup>1</sup> [National Records of Scotland – Scottish Borders profile](#)



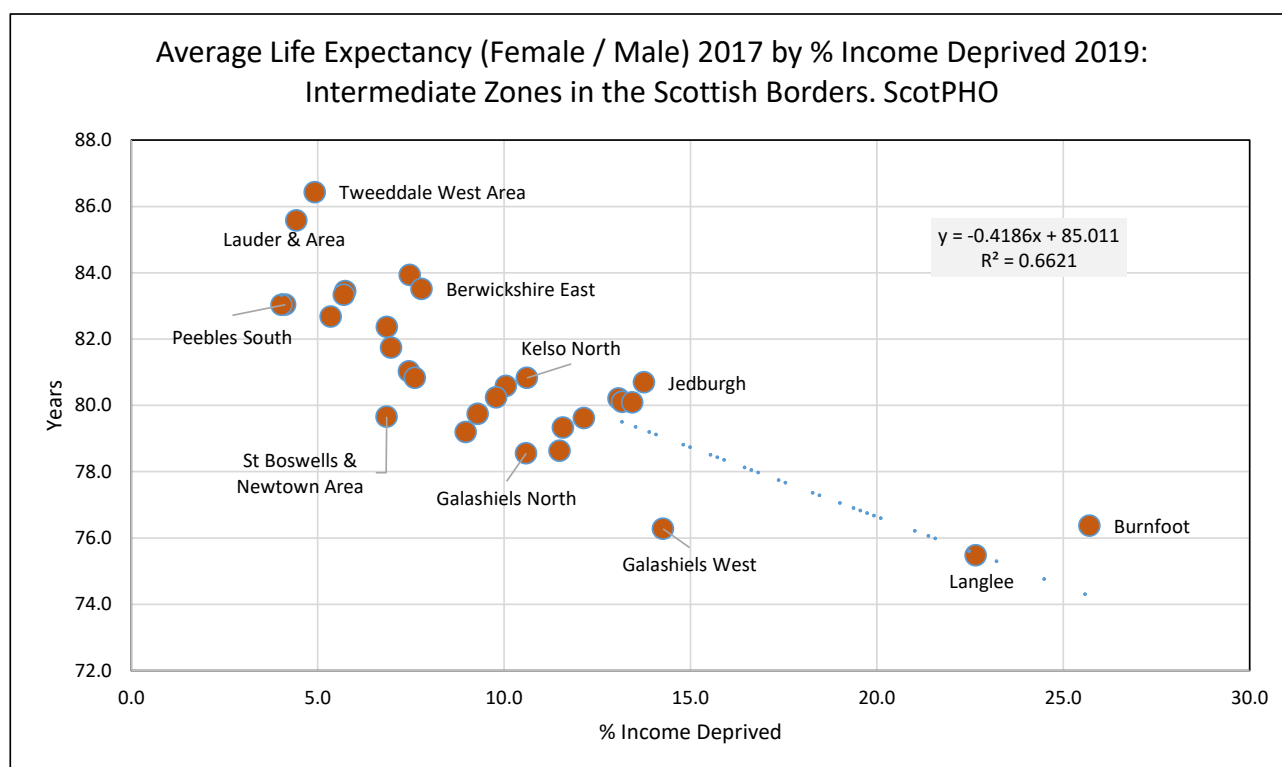
## Life Expectancy

While life expectancy is increasing overall, there are significant differences in the life expectancy and health of people across Scotland, depending on factors such as where they live, their age and gender, and their ethnic group. People living in less affluent areas of Scotland have a shorter life expectancy than those living in wealthier areas.

Life expectancy is a key indicator for reducing inequalities as poverty can reduce people's life expectancy. In the Scottish Borders, both the female (81.9 years) and male (79.2 years) life expectancy is similar to Scotland. Within the Scottish Borders, there is a 13.8-year gap for female life expectancy and a 10.6-year gap for male life expectancy, resulting in an 11.0-year gap for the combined life expectancy.

Area	Female Life Expectancy (Years) - 2018	Male Life Expectancy (Years) - 2018	Combined Life Expectancy (Average of Female and Male) 2018
Scotland	81.1	77.2	79.2
Scottish Borders	81.9	79.2	80.5
Scottish Borders Highest Life Expectancy (IZ)	90.3	83.6	86.4
Scottish Borders Lowest Life Expectancy (IZ)	76.4	73.0	75.5
Scottish Borders Gap in Life Expectancy	13.8	10.6	11.0

Within the Scottish Borders, similar to other areas, there is a clear relationship between an area's percentage of people that are income deprived and the average life expectancy (female / male); the higher the percentage income deprived the lower the life expectancy.



## Health Impact on Poverty

Poverty is a key influence on people's life experiences and health outcomes. Living in deprivation impacts both on how long people will live (life expectancy) and, importantly, how long people will live in good health (healthy life expectancy).

The health-related harms of relative poverty are complex. This strategy sets out how factors such as access to fuel, good housing, food and digital access are all impacted by poverty. The places we live, work and play, the connections we have with others and the extent to which we feel able to influence the decisions that affect us all have impact on our health and wellbeing. The [Marmot Report](#)<sup>2</sup> outlines that socio-economic factors (e.g., education, employment, and income) that contribute to our health more than individual health behaviours. However, ill-health and premature death disproportionately affects people living in poorer areas, e.g., the rate of mental ill-health and coronary heart disease are higher in more deprived areas in Scotland and people in those areas are more likely to be admitted to hospital with alcohol and/or drug problems compared to the least deprived areas.

In addition, it is straightforward to understand how living in poverty and its associated stresses and limits on people's lives in turn can lead to ill-health.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/fair-society-healthy-lives-the-marmot-review>

## Income and Employment

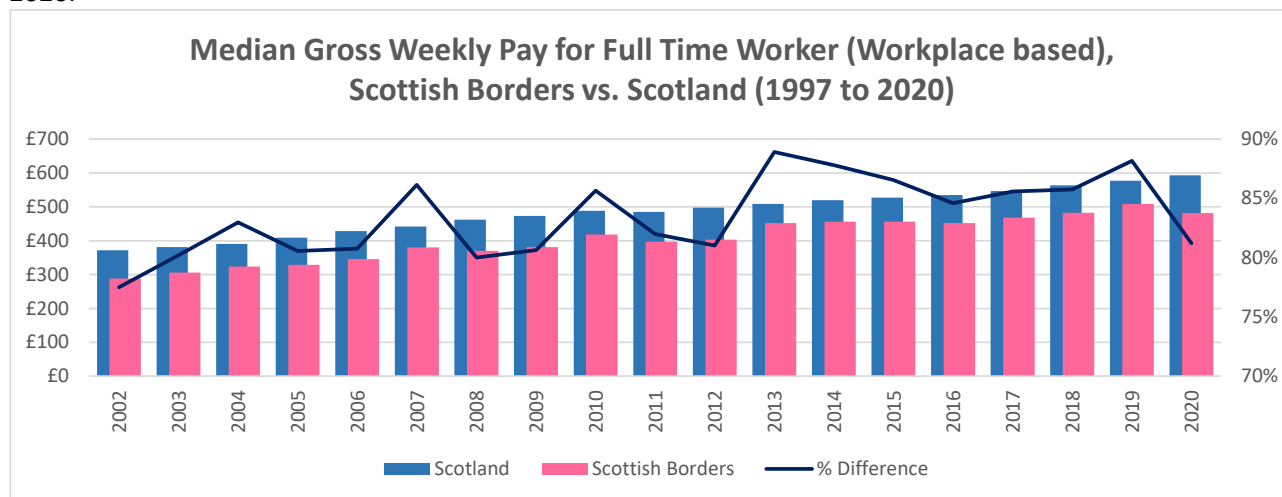
### Wages

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings produced by ONS and published on NOMIS<sup>3</sup> contains information on wages.

The median gross weekly pay (workplace based) for full time workers in the Scottish Borders has consistently been below the level for Scotland (83% between 2002 and 2020).

In 2020, the median gross weekly pay (workplace based) for full time workers in the Scottish Borders was £481, £111 below the £593 for Scotland or 81%.

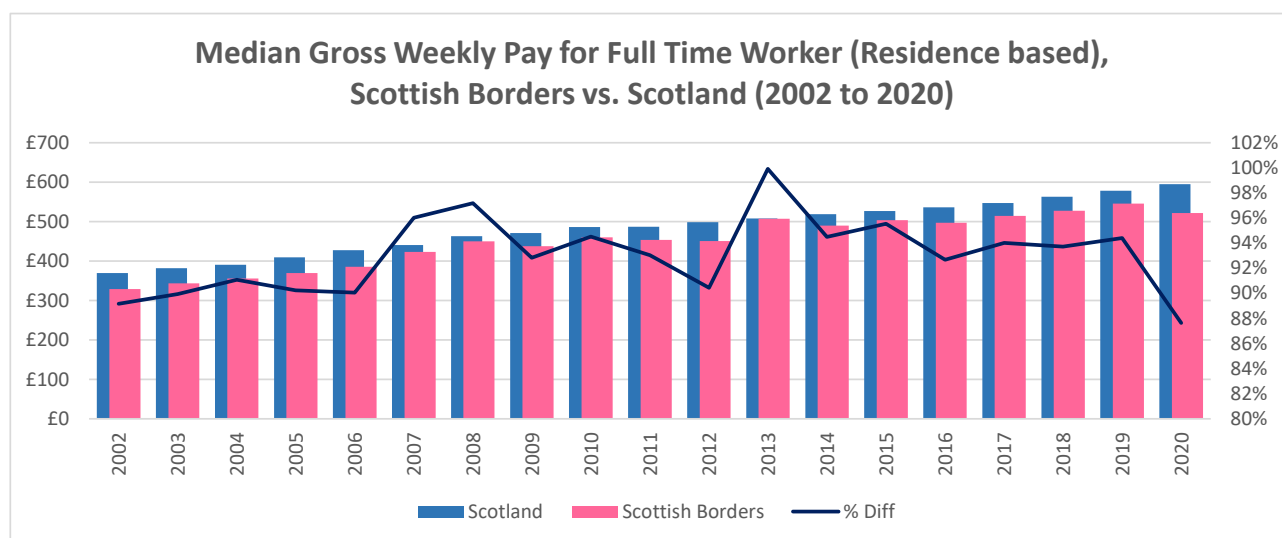
The graph below shows the workplace-based pay for both Scotland and the Scottish Borders from 2002 to 2020.



The same pattern can be seen in residence based weekly pay.

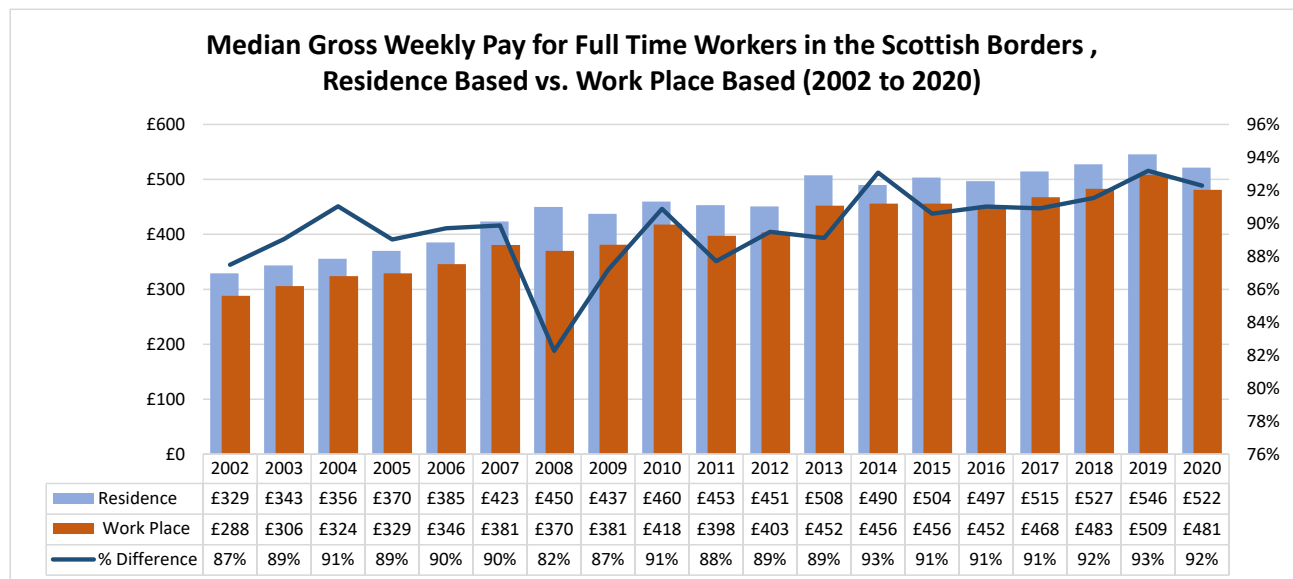
The median gross weekly pay (residence based) for full time workers in the Scottish Borders has consistently been below the level for Scotland (93% between 2002 and 2020).

In 2020, the median gross weekly pay (workplace based) for full time workers in the Scottish Borders was £522, £74 below the £595 for Scotland or 88%.



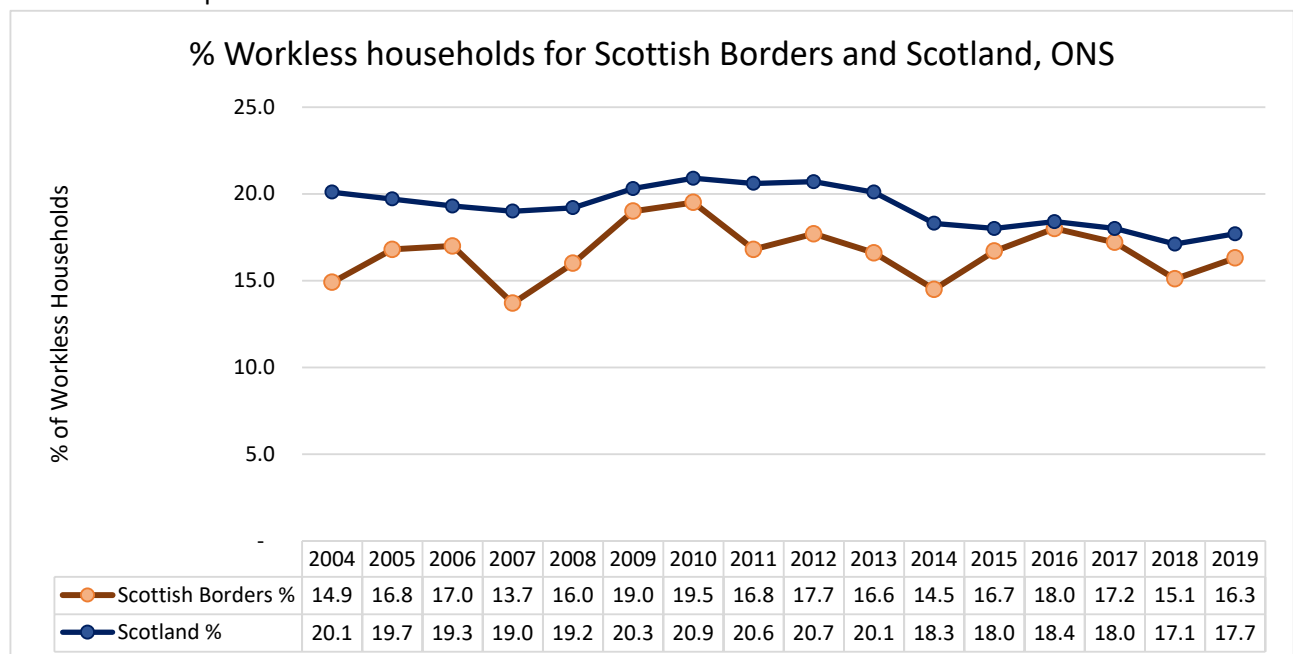
<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>

Within the Scottish Borders the workplace-based wages have consistently been below those that are residence based. This shows there are a proportion of people who live in the Scottish Borders but earn their wages elsewhere. Whereas those who earn their wages in the Scottish Borders are more likely to also live in the Scottish Borders.



### Workless Households

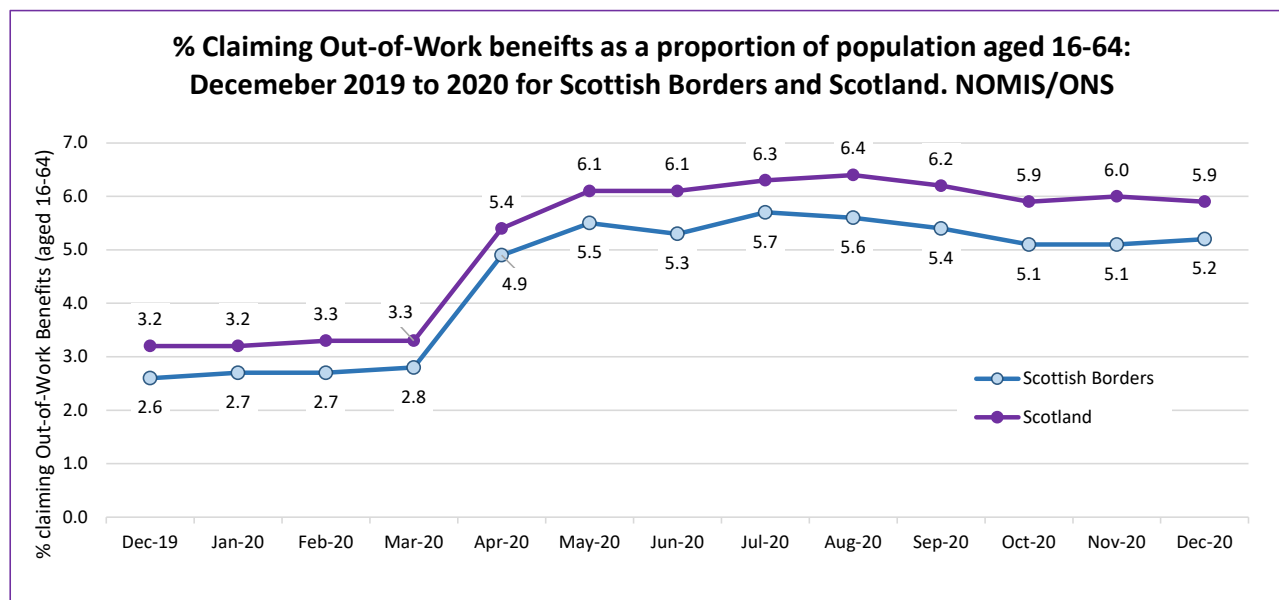
Prior to the Sars-Cov-2 pandemic (2019), **16.3%** of the households in the Scottish Borders were **workless**, slightly below the 17.7% for Scotland. Scottish Borders has consistently had a lower proportion of workless households compared to Scotland.



## Out-of-Work Benefits

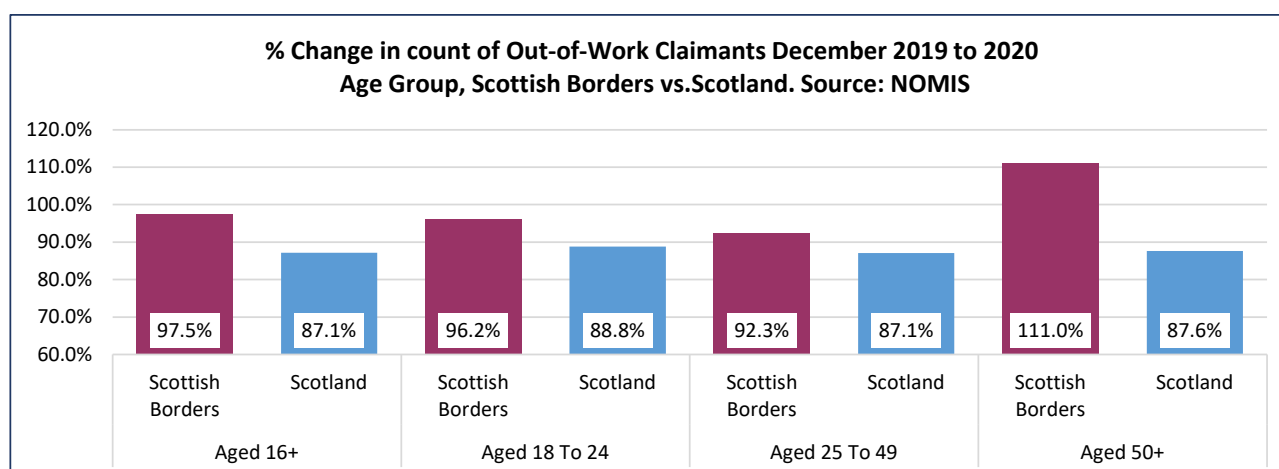
### Claimant Count in the Scottish Borders and Scotland<sup>4</sup>

Between December 2019 and December 2020, the number of people claiming **Out-of-Work benefits** aged 16 to 64 increased by **97.5% (1,730)** from 1,775 (2.6%) to 3,505 (5.2%) respectively.



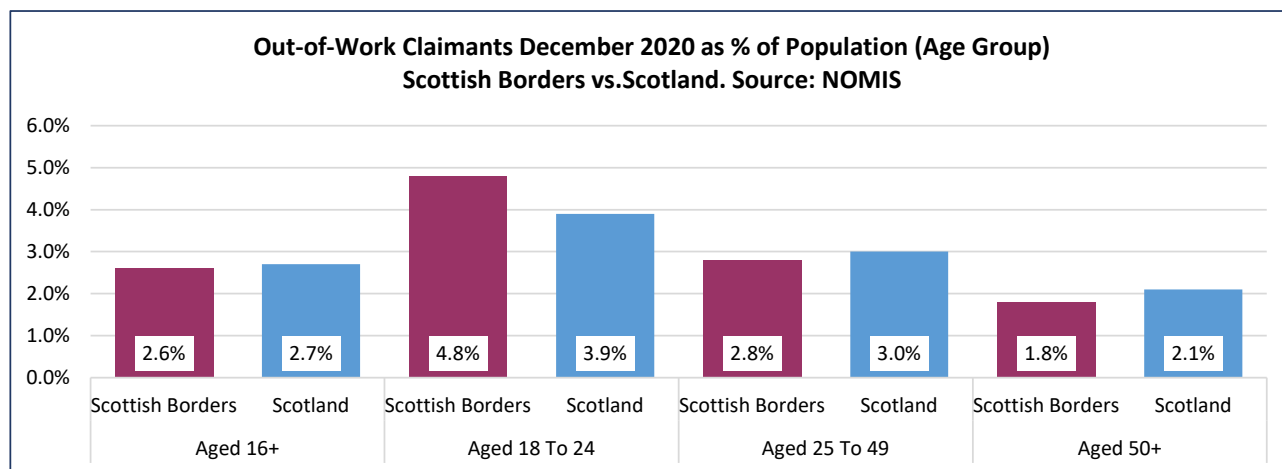
Area	Age Group	December 2019		December 2020		Change 2020 Less 2019		
		Claimaint Count	% of Pop	Claimaint Count	% of Pop	Claimant Count	% Change of Count	% of Pop
Scottish Borders	Aged 16+	1,775	2.6%	3,505	5.2%	1,730	97.5%	2.6%
	Aged 18 To 24	390	5.0%	765	9.8%	375	96.2%	4.8%
	Aged 25 To 49	915	3.0%	1,760	5.8%	845	92.3%	2.8%
	Aged 50+	455	1.7%	960	3.5%	505	111.0%	1.8%
Scotland	Aged 16+	110,705	3.2%	207,180	5.9%	96,475	87.1%	2.7%
	Aged 18 To 24	20,420	4.4%	38,550	8.3%	18,130	88.8%	3.9%
	Aged 25 To 49	62,075	3.5%	116,130	6.5%	54,055	87.1%	3.0%
	Aged 50+	27,405	2.4%	51,420	4.5%	24,015	87.6%	2.1%

Across all age groups the Scottish Borders had a higher **change in count of Out-of-Work claimants** compared to Scotland.



<sup>4</sup> [Nomis - Official Labour Market Statistics \(nomisweb.co.uk\)](https://nomisweb.co.uk)

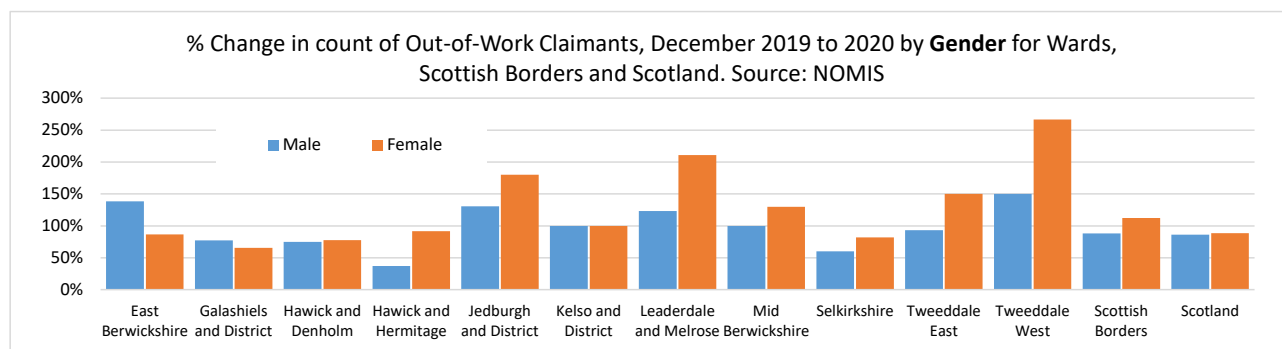
In December 2020, the Scottish Borders had a higher **proportion of population** aged 18-24 claiming Out-of-Work benefits compared to Scotland.



### Claimant Count in the Scottish Borders by Gender

Between December 2019 and December 2020 there was a **112%** increase in the number of women claiming Out-of-Work benefits in the Scottish Borders, higher than the increase for men in the Scottish Borders (88%) and for both men (86%) and women (88%) in Scotland. Two wards, Tweeddale West and Leaderdale and Melrose, had a greater than 200% increase in the number of female claimants, details are in the table and graph below.

Ward / Area	Dec 2019 Age 16+		Dec 2020 Age 16+		% Change 2020 Less 2019	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
East Berwickshire	65	75	155	140	138%	87%
Galashiels and District	220	145	390	240	77%	66%
Hawick and Denholm	140	90	245	160	75%	78%
Hawick and Hermitage	135	60	185	115	37%	92%
Jedburgh and District	65	50	150	140	131%	180%
Kelso and District	75	55	150	110	100%	100%
Leaderdale and Melrose	65	45	145	140	123%	211%
Mid Berwickshire	80	50	160	115	100%	130%
Selkirkshire	100	55	160	100	60%	82%
Tweeddale East	75	40	145	100	93%	150%
Tweeddale West	60	30	150	110	150%	267%
Scottish Borders	1,085	690	2,040	1,465	88%	112%
Scotland	68,780	41,925	128,165	79,015	86%	88%

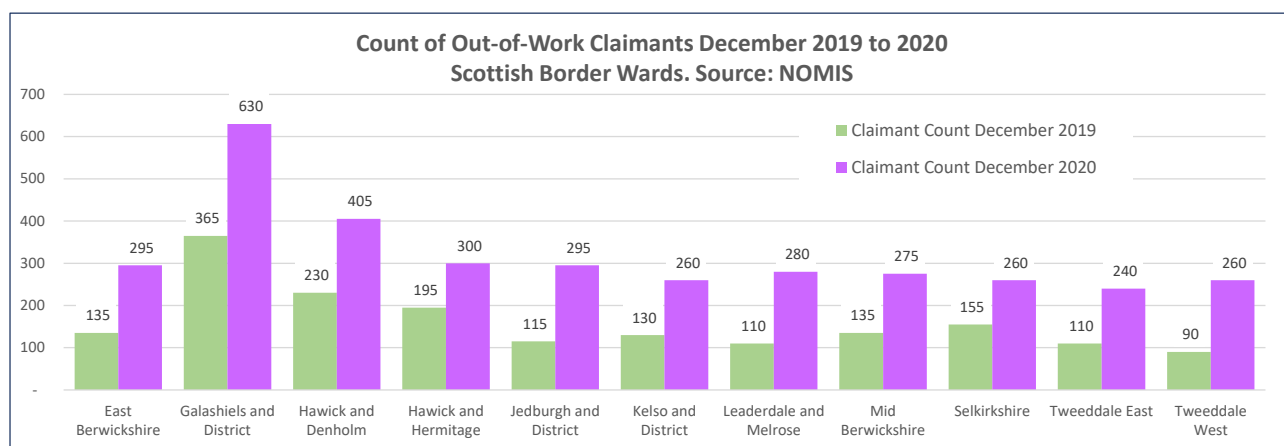


## Claimant Count in the Scottish Borders

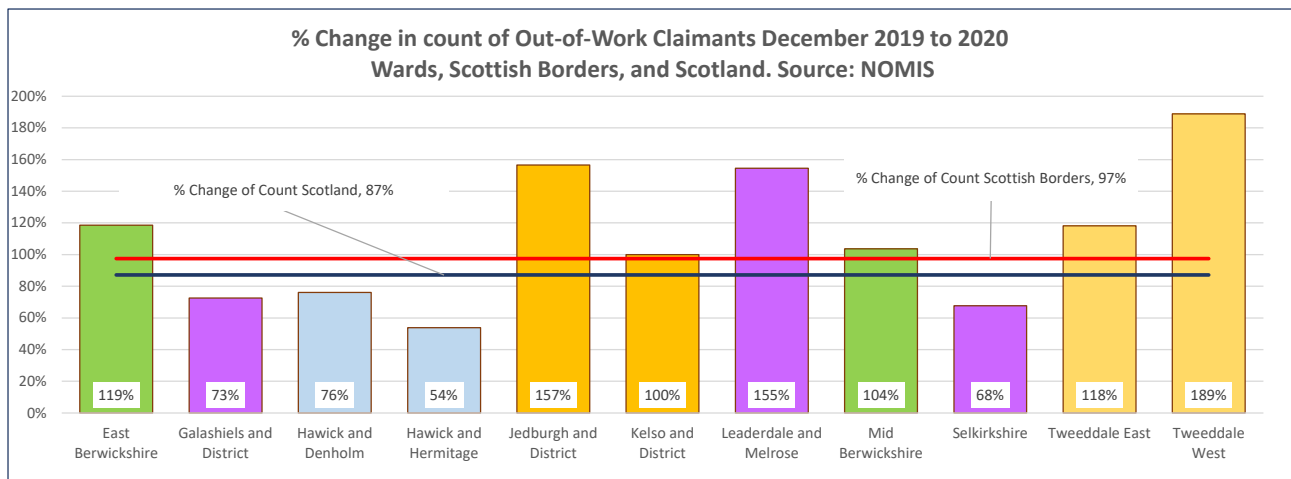
The table below shows the claimant count by ward and percent of population.

Ward / Area	Dec 2019 Age 16+		Dec 2020 Age 16+		Change 2020 Less 2019		
	Claimant Count	% of Pop	Claimant Count	% of Pop	Claimant Count	% Change of Count	% of Pop
East Berwickshire	135	2.3%	295	4.9%	160	119%	2.6%
Galashiels and District	365	3.7%	630	6.4%	265	73%	2.7%
Hawick and Denholm	230	4.2%	405	7.4%	175	76%	3.2%
Hawick and Hermitage	195	3.9%	300	5.9%	105	54%	2.0%
Jedburgh and District	115	2.2%	295	5.6%	180	157%	3.4%
Kelso and District	130	2.3%	260	4.6%	130	100%	2.3%
Leaderdale and Melrose	110	1.8%	280	4.4%	170	155%	2.6%
Mid Berwickshire	135	2.2%	275	4.5%	140	104%	2.3%
Selkirkshire	155	2.8%	260	4.6%	105	68%	1.8%
Tweeddale East	110	1.8%	240	3.8%	130	118%	2.0%
Tweeddale West	90	1.5%	260	4.2%	170	189%	2.7%
<b>Scottish Borders</b>	<b>1,775</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	<b>3,505</b>	<b>5.2%</b>	<b>1,730</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>2.6%</b>
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>110,705</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>207,180</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>96,475</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>2.7%</b>

The graph below shows the Out-of-Work claimant count for both December 2019 and 2020. It is important to note that Galashiels and District is a larger ward compared to the others.



The graph below shows the percentage change in count of Out-of-Work Claimants between December 2019 and December 2020 for the 11 Scottish Borders wards compared to the % change for the Scottish Borders (97%) and Scotland (87%). Wards with the highest change are Tweeddale West, Jedburgh and District and Leaderdale and Melrose.

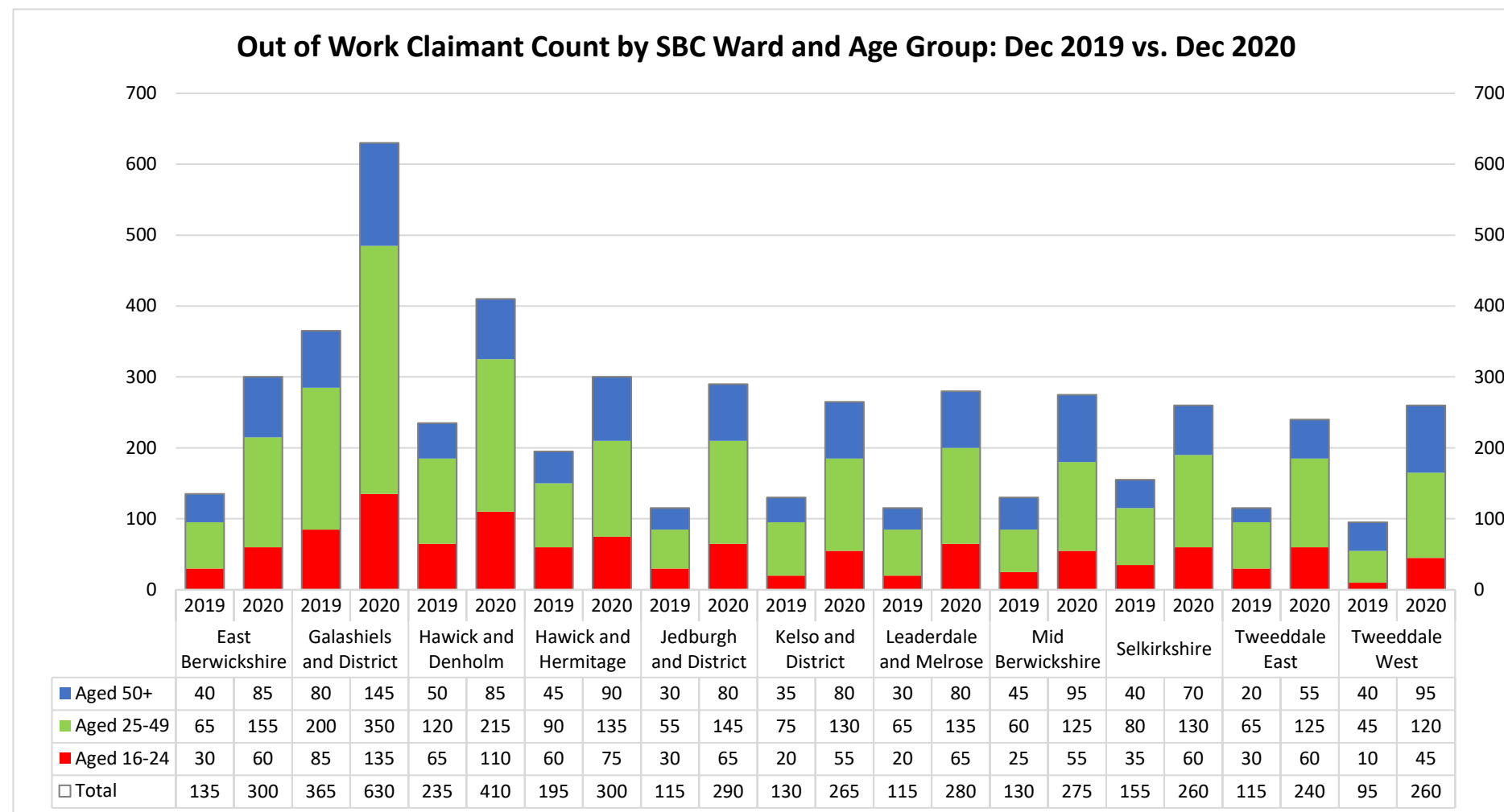




## Out of Work Claimant Count by SBC Wards and Age Group.

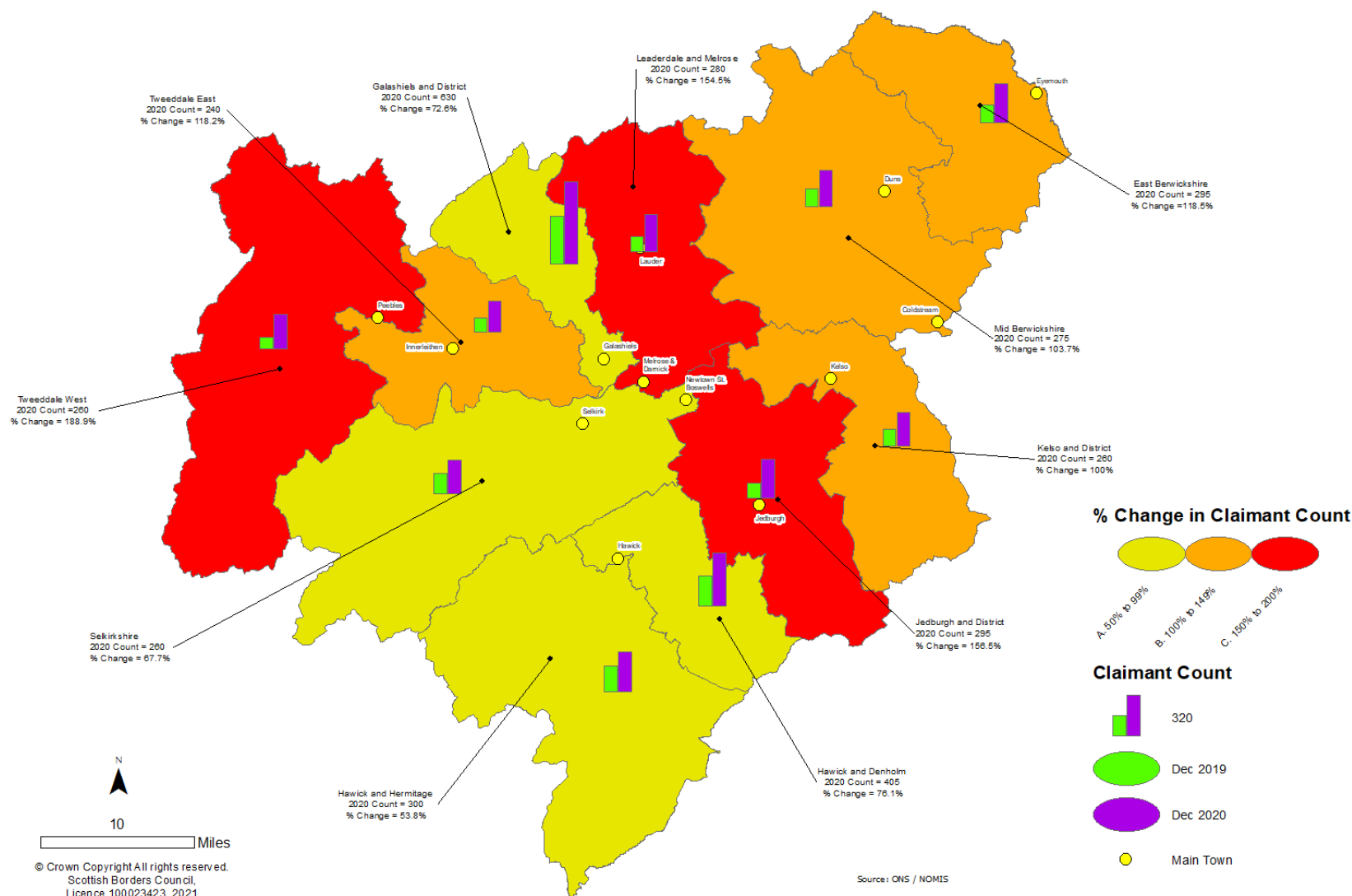
The graph / table below shows the count of claimants in each SBC Ward by age group. All wards had an increase in claimants for all age groups.

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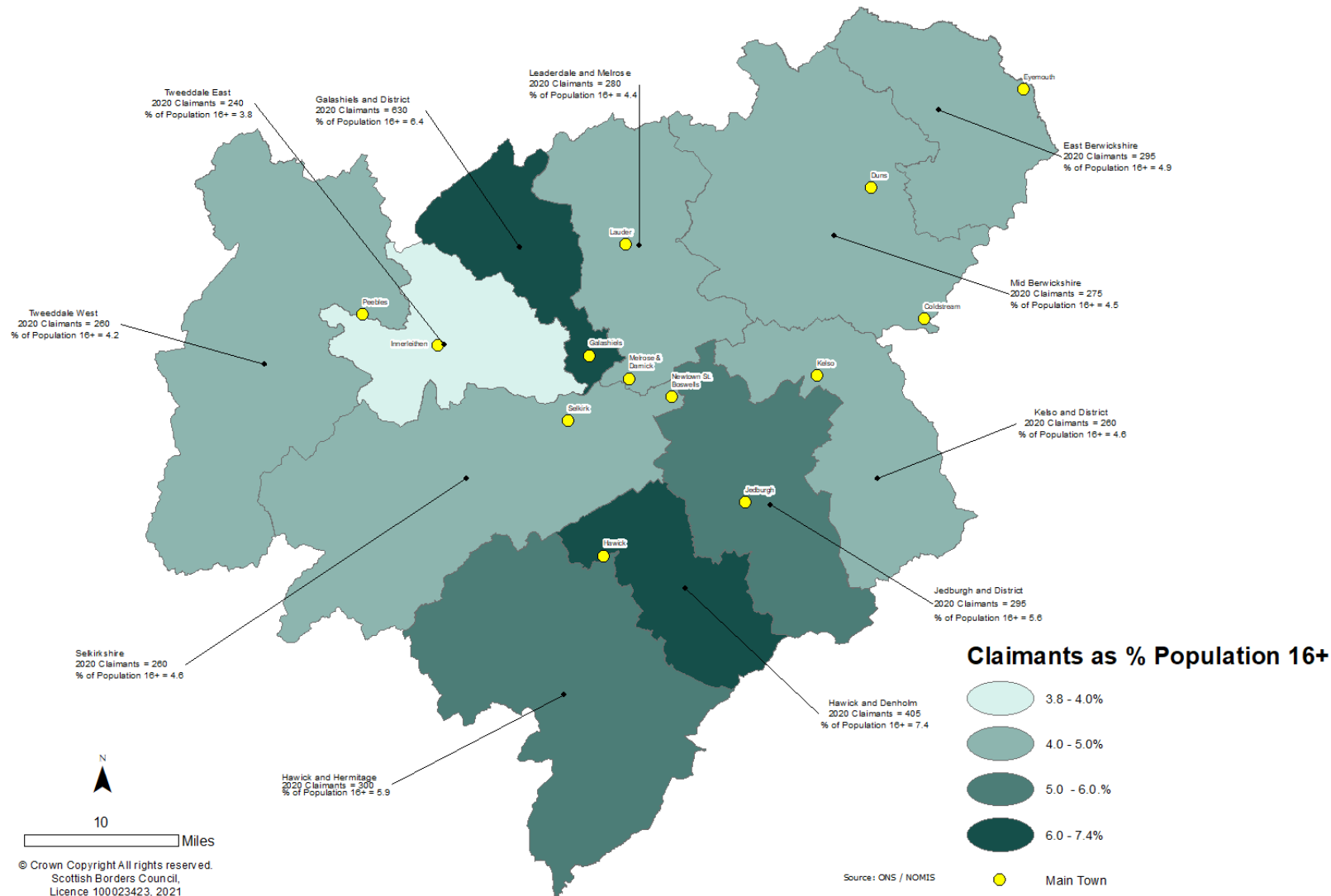


## Scottish Borders Wards - Out of Work Claimant Change Dec 2019 to Dec 2020

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## Scottish Borders Wards - Out of Work Claimants % of Population Aged 16+



## Impact of Covid-19 on Employment and Businesses

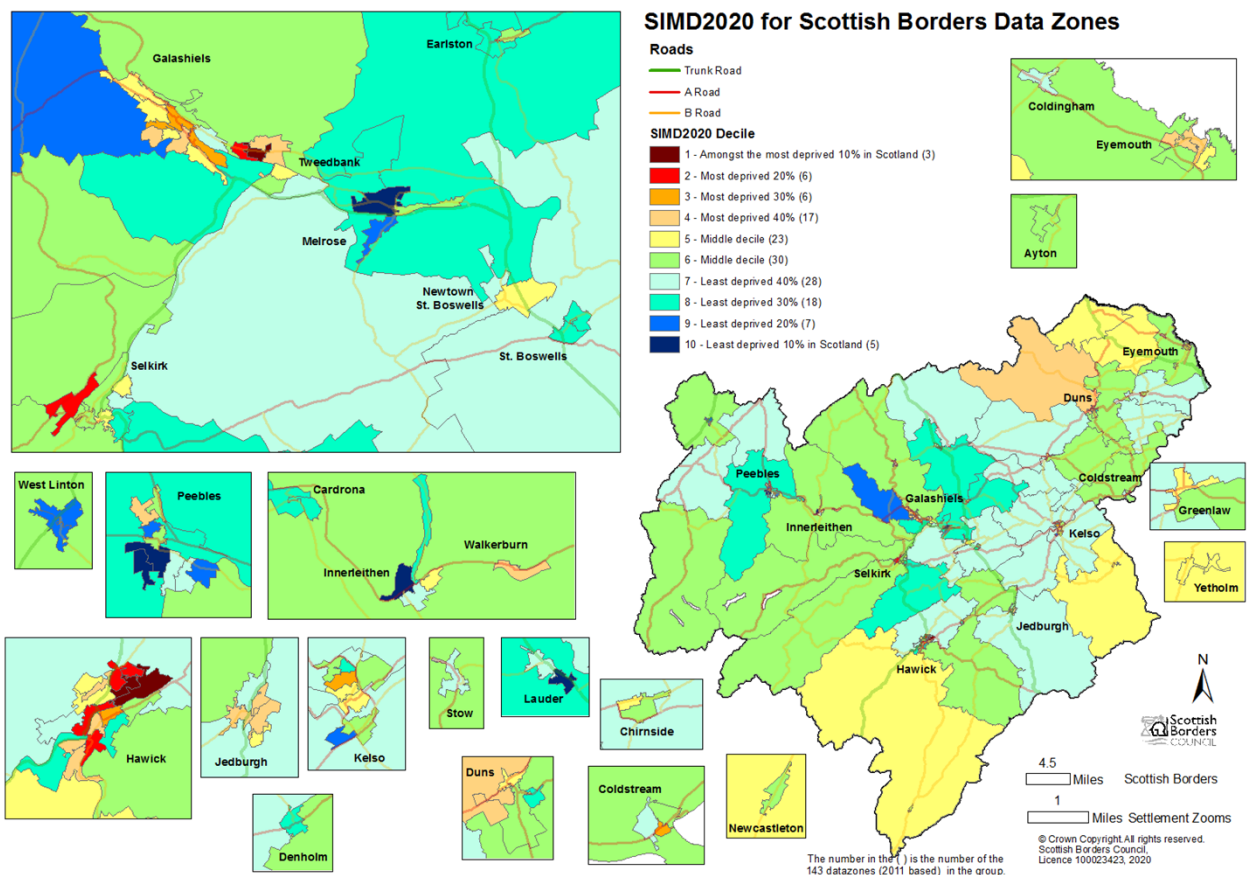
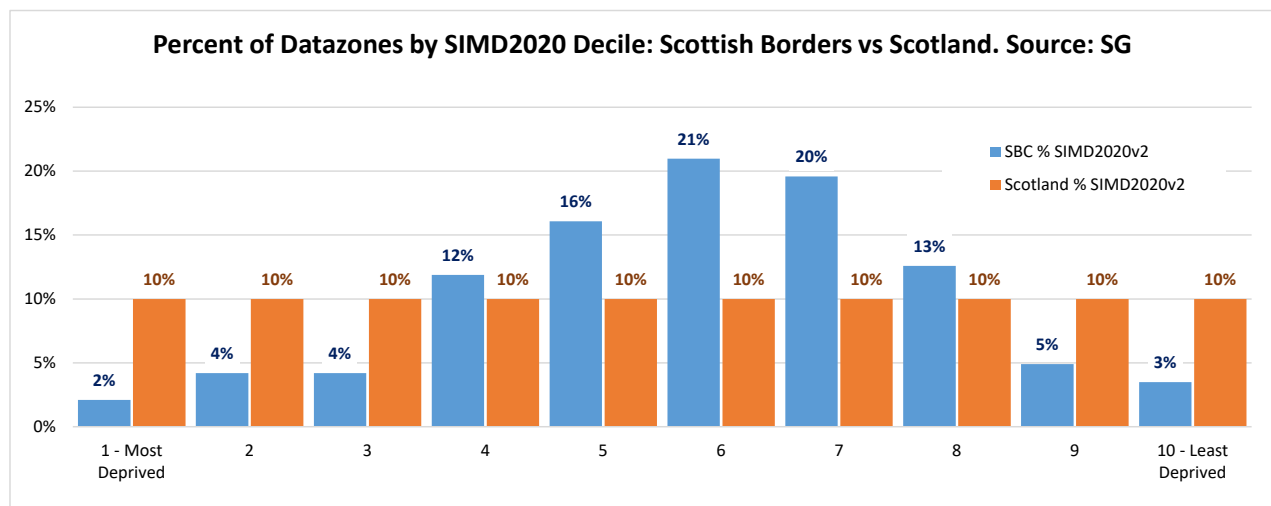
In the [Regional Skills Assessment for the Scottish Borders](#) (December 2020), Skills Development Scotland (SDS) reported:

- The number of **Universal Credit claimants** in the Scottish Borders **increased by 80%** (3,700) from 4,600 in March 2020 to 8,300 in November 2020.
- **3,300** jobs **furloughed** in the Scottish Borders (31 October 2020), accounting for 1.7% of Scotland's furloughed workforce.
- The SDS's Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE) aims to help minimise the impact for people and businesses facing redundancy. Between April and October 2020 **PACE** has engaged with **420** individuals and **15** employers.

## Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is the official tool for finding the most deprived areas in Scotland<sup>5</sup>. The [SIMD2020](#) consists of over 30 indicators across 7 Domains: Employment, Income, Education, Health, Access, Crime and Housing.









The SIMD2020 shows that the 6% (9) of the 143 data zones in the Scottish Borders are part of the 20% most deprived of all of Scotland. A further 16% (24) of the data zones in the Scottish Borders are amongst the 21-40% most deprived in Scotland. The distribution of the 143 data zones in the Scottish Borders can be seen in the graph and map below.



<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/collections/scottish-index-of-multiple-deprivation-2020/>

When specifically looking at the income and employment domain 9% of the Scottish Borders population is income deprived compared to 12% for Scotland. 8% for the Scottish Borders working age population is employment deprived compared to 9% for Scotland.

Within the domains of the SIMD the proportion of data zones that are in the 20% most deprived of Scotland varies.

	<b>9 (6%)</b> of the 143 data zones in the Scottish Borders are part of the 20% most deprived of all of Scotland		<b>8 (6%)</b> of the 143 data zones in the Scottish Borders are in the 20% most income deprived data zones in Scotland.
	<b>10 (7%)</b> data zones in the Scottish Borders are in the 20% most employment deprived.		<b>8 (6%)</b> data zones in the Scottish Borders are in the 20% most education deprived.
	<b>9 (6%)</b> data zones in the Scottish Borders are in the 20% most health deprived.		<b>46 (32%)</b> data zones in the Scottish Borders are in the 20% most geographically access deprived.
	<b>20 (14%)</b> data zones in the Scottish Borders are in the 20% most crime deprived.		<b>3 (2%)</b> data zones in the Scottish Borders are in the 20% most housing deprived.

## Fuel Poverty

The source for Fuel Poverty information is the [Scottish House Condition Survey 2016-2018](#), which is part of the Scottish Household Survey.

The Fuel Poverty (Targets, Definition and Strategy (Scotland) Act 2019 establishes a new two-part definition whereby a household is considered fuel poor if:

- after housing costs have been deducted, more than 10% (20% for extreme fuel poverty) of their net income is required to pay for their reasonable fuel needs; and
- after further adjustments are made to deduct childcare costs and any benefits received for a disability or care need, their remaining income is insufficient to maintain an acceptable standard of living, defined as being at least 90% of the UK Minimum Income Standard (MIS).

To take account of the generally higher costs of living in Scotland's remote, rural and island communities, the legislation provides for uplifts to be applied to the MIS for households in these areas.

Around **29%** of all households in the Scottish Borders are fuel poor, equivalent to approximately 16,000 households. There seems to be a higher level of fuel poverty in the Scottish Borders compared to Scotland (25%), although it is not statistically different.

Households with higher levels of fuel poverty in the Scottish Borders are those that are Older (38%) and those in Social Housing (51%).

Around **15%** of all households in the Scottish Borders are in extreme fuel poverty, which is not significantly different to the 12% for Scotland.

## Child Poverty

The following table illustrates the % of children in the Scottish Borders living in poverty, below 60% median income after housing costs. The table includes other local authorities which are part of the same Local Government Benchmarking Framework family as a comparison. The Scottish Borders percentage point change from 2015 to 2019 is the second highest in the family.

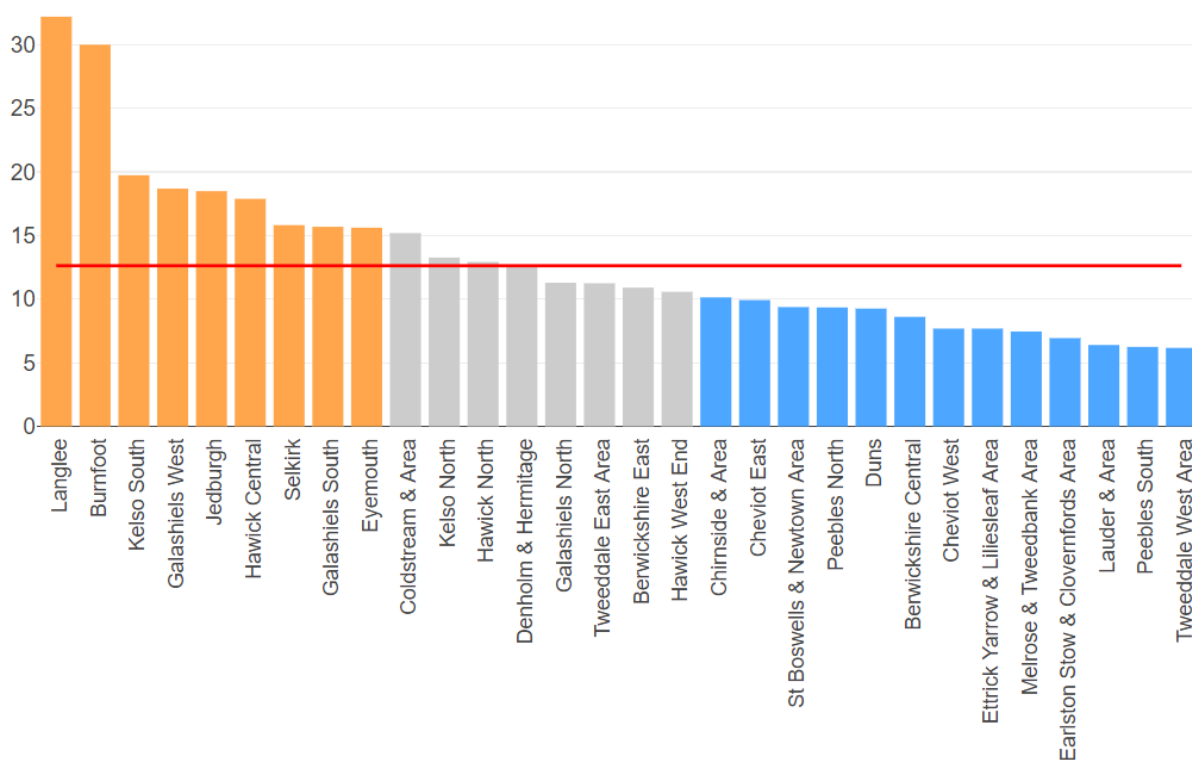
Local Authority	2014/15	2018/19	% point change (2015-19)
Scottish Borders	21.6%	23.9%	2.3%
Moray	21%	22.4%	1.5%
Stirling	20.5%	21.3%	0.8%
East Lothian	22.3%	23.3%	1.0%
Angus	21.6%	24.0%	2.4%
Highland	21.5%	23.0%	1.6%
Argyll and Bute	21.2%	23.4%	2.2%
Midlothian	22.8%	23.2%	0.4%

Source: [www.endchildpoverty.org.uk](http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk)

### Children in low-income families

#### Children in low income families

Intermediate zones compared against Scottish Borders - 2016



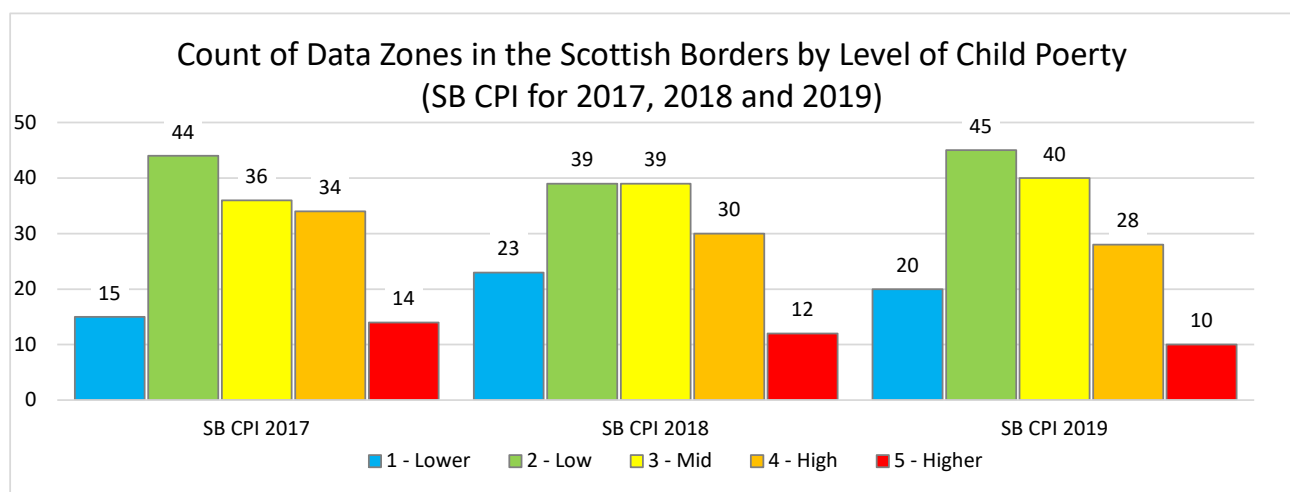


## The Scottish Borders Child Poverty Index

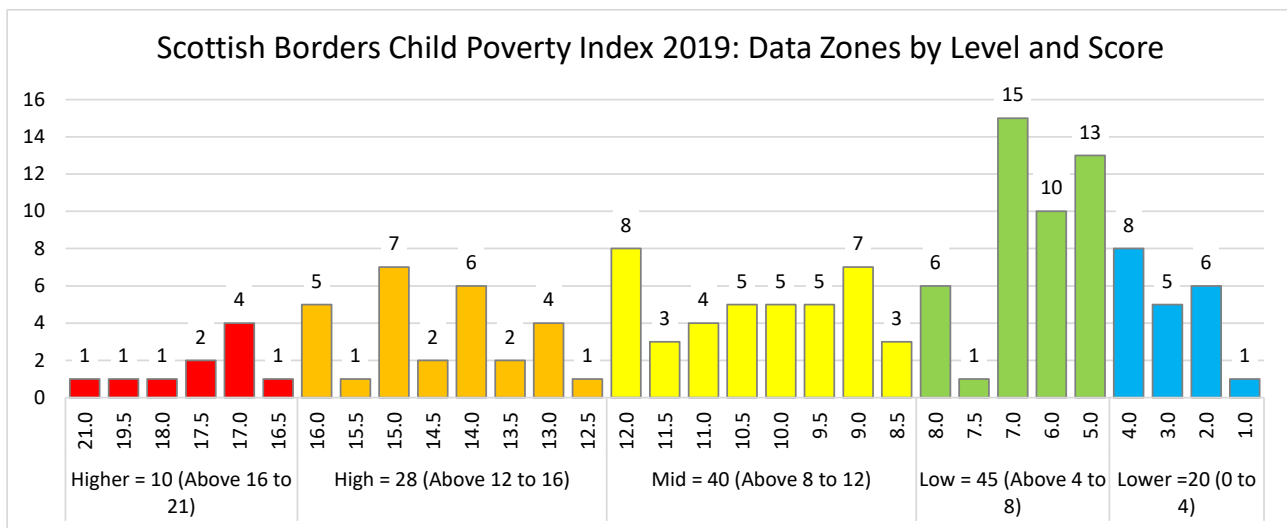
Poverty and low income remain an issue in an area with one of the lowest wages in Scotland, with many families “just getting by.” This has led to “poverty proofing” in all schools, supported by the development of the Scottish Borders Child Poverty Index (CPI), which provides schools and other partners with a more detailed understanding of child poverty as it affects communities locally.

These are experimental statistics using HMRC Children in low-income families, free school meals, clothing grants and educational maintenance allowance. The index shows that there are unexpected areas of child poverty. The Scottish Borders Child Poverty Index has 3 years of data and over time, the areas of high or higher levels of child poverty have reduced, however there are areas that consistently have high levels of child poverty.

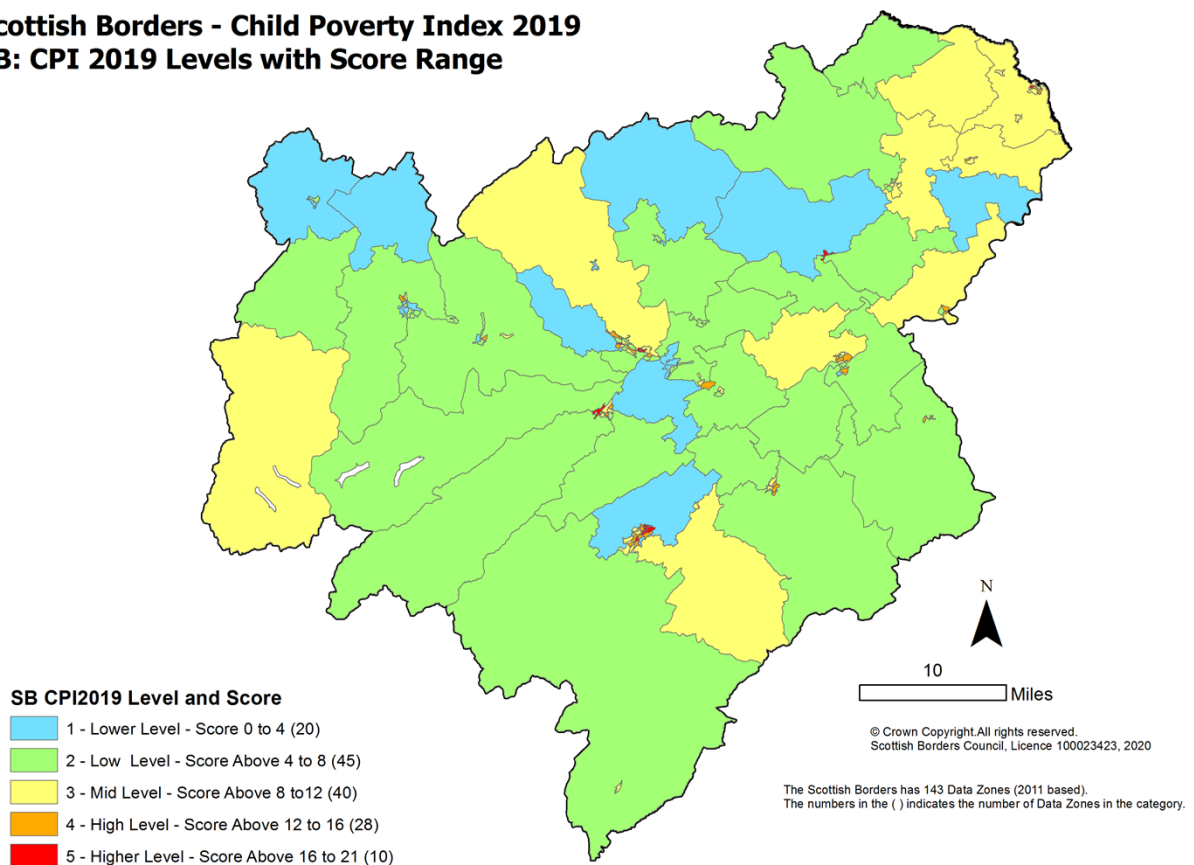
The graph below shows the distribution of data zones by level of child poverty for 2017, 2018 and 2019. The SB CPI 2019 had the fewest data zones in the ‘higher’ grouping of child poverty. Over the three years the number of data zones in the ‘high’ or ‘higher’ grouping as decreased; from 48 in 2017 to 38 in 2019.



The graph and map below shows the Scottish Borders data zones based on the SB CPI 2019 score, grouped into levels of Child Poverty.



### Scottish Borders - Child Poverty Index 2019 SB: CPI 2019 Levels with Score Range



## Covid-19 Recovery Matrix / Index

### Covid-19 Recovery Matrix

The SB CRI are experimental statistics to help identify areas in the Scottish Borders that may need more support to recover from Covid-19 and what those vulnerabilities may be. The areas used are the 30 Intermediate Zones within the Scottish Borders grouped by locality. The components of the SB CRI and accompanying matrix cover ScotPHO Covid-19 Vulnerability Index, Economic and Geographic Setting and population, details are in the table below. Those indicators with (\*) are components of the index.

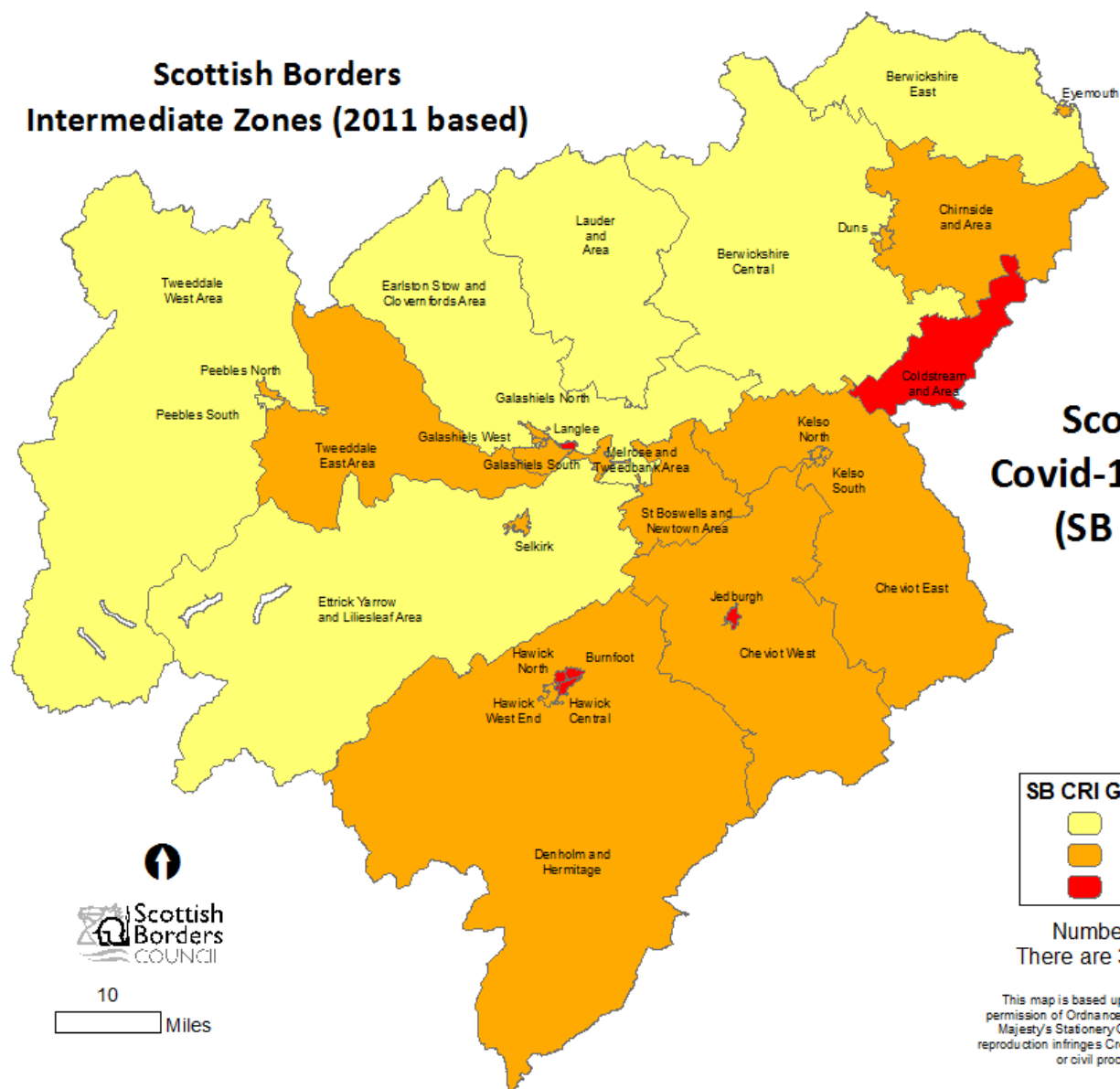
Area	Indicator
ScotPHO COVID-19 Vulnerability Index	ScotPHO Covid19 Index Social/Clinical Quintile
	ScotPHO Covid19 Index Demographic Quintile
	ScotPHO Covid19 Index Overall Quintile
	ScotPHO Covid19 Index Overall Quintile into SB CRI Points (*)
Economic / Geographic Setting	Town / Rural (*)
	% Children in Low Income Families 2016
	Child Poverty Index 2019 - Level (*)
	Population Income Deprived 2018 (*)
	Working age Population Employment Deprived 2018 (*)
	Employees in Covid-19 Vulnerable Industry 2018 (*)
	Single Adult Dwellings 2018 (*)
2018 Mid-Year Population Estimates	2018 Mid-Year Population
	2018 Children (under 16 years)
	2018 Working Age (16 - 64)
	2018 Pensionable Age (65 and over)
	2018 Age 75+
% in Age Group	2018 Children (under 16 years)
	2018 Working Age (16 - 64)
	2018 Pensionable Age (65 and over)
	2018 Age 75+ (*)

### SB Covid-19 Recovery Index

The eight indicators with a (\*) are components of the SB CRI. Each area gets points based on the value of each component. The points range from 9 to 30, divided into 3 groups. 9 to 15 in Yellow (Needs Support), 16 to 22 in Orange (Needs More Support), and 23 to 30 in Red (Needs Most Support). The higher the points the more support the area may need to recover from Covid-19. All areas will need support to recover from Covid-19, although some had concerns prior to Covid-19 that may exacerbate to recovery.

Within the Scottish Borders the areas potentially needing the most support to recover from Covid-19 are: Burnfoot, Langlee, Coldstream and Area, Jedburgh, Hawick Central and Hawick North. These can be seen in the upcoming the map and data table.

# Scottish Borders Intermediate Zones (2011 based)



## Scottish Borders Covid-19 Recovery Index (SB CRI Grouping)

SB CRI Group	
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:yellow; border:1px solid black;"></span>	A. Needs Support
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:orange; border:1px solid black;"></span>	B. Needs More Support
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:red; border:1px solid black;"></span>	C. Needs Most Support

Number in ( ) is count of IZs.  
There are 30 IZ in Scottish Borders.

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# Scottish Borders COVID-19 Recovery Matrix ScotPHO COVID-19 Vulnerability Index

<https://scotland.shinyapps.io/scotpho-covid-vulnerability/>

## Economic / Geographic Setting

## 2018 Mid Year Population Estimates

## % in Age Group

		Scottish Borders		4	1	3	3															
								12.6%	3 - Mid	9.5%	8.7%	45.8%	35.8%	115,270	19,046	68,121	28,103	12,240	16.5%	59.1%	24.4%	10.6%
Locality (Best Fit for IZ)	IZcode	IZ Area Name	ScotPHO Covid19 Index Social/Clinical Quintile	ScotPHO Covid19 Index Demographic Quintile	ScotPHO Covid19 Index Overall Quintile	ScotPHO Covid19 Index Overall Quintile into SB CRI Points (*)	Town / Rural (*)	% Children in Low Income Families 2016	Child Poverty Index 2019 - Level (*)	Population Income Deprived 2018 (*)	Working age Population Employment Deprived 2018 (*)	Employees in Covid-19 Vulnerable Industry 2018 (*)	Single Adult Dwellings 2018 (*)	2018 Mid Year Population	2018 Children (under 16 years)	2018 Working Age (16 - 64)	2018 Pensionable Age (65 and over)	2018 Age 75+	2018 Children (under 16 years)	2018 Working Age (16 - 64)	2018 Pensionable Age (65 and over)	2018 Age 75+ (*)
Berwickshire	S02002303	Berwickshire Central	4	3	4	2	Rural	8.6%	2 - Low	6.5%	7.3%	42.5%	26.8%	4,170	708	2,521	941	343	17.0%	60.5%	22.6%	8.2%
	S02002305	Berwickshire East	4	3	4	2	Rural	10.9%	3 - Mid	9.7%	7.5%	38.1%	28.5%	3,698	496	2,215	987	379	13.4%	59.9%	26.7%	10.2%
	S02002307	Chirnside & Area	4	3	4	2	Rural	10.1%	3 - Mid	7.8%	7.1%	77.5%	28.4%	3,986	650	2,333	1,003	400	16.3%	58.5%	25.2%	10.0%
	S02002308	Coldstream & Area	4	1	1	5	Rural	15.2%	4 - High	10.2%	10.5%	44.2%	36.5%	2,753	337	1,478	938	462	12.2%	53.7%	34.1%	16.8%
	S02002304	Duns	3	1	3	3	Town	9.3%	3 - Mid	9.7%	8.6%	60.7%	40.6%	2,824	483	1,634	707	333	17.1%	57.9%	25.0%	11.8%
Cheviot	S02002306	Eynmouth	3	1	2	4	Town	15.6%	4 - High	14.3%	12.5%	64.3%	38.0%	3,538	726	1,953	859	372	20.5%	55.2%	24.3%	10.5%
	S02002309	Cheviot East	5	2	3	3	Rural	9.9%	2 - Low	7.8%	6.8%	71.5%	28.4%	4,701	698	2,643	1,360	576	14.8%	56.2%	28.9%	12.3%
	S02002312	Cheviot West	5	2	4	2	Rural	7.7%	2 - Low	5.2%	4.9%	72.2%	27.0%	2,965	396	1,748	821	304	13.4%	59.0%	27.7%	10.3%
	S02002314	Jedburgh	3	1	2	4	Town	18.5%	4 - High	13.5%	10.6%	61.6%	40.4%	3,885	657	2,262	966	458	16.9%	58.2%	24.9%	11.1%
	S02002310	Kello North	3	1	2	4	Town	13.3%	4 - High	10.7%	10.1%	30.6%	40.1%	3,186	499	1,828	859	440	15.7%	57.4%	27.0%	13.8%
Eldon	S02002311	Kello South	3	1	2	4	Town	19.7%	3 - Mid	8.8%	9.3%	56.7%	46.4%	2,176	314	1,286	776	381	18.2%	54.1%	32.7%	16.0%
	S02002313	St Boswells & Newtown Area	4	1	1	3	Rural	9.4%	3 - Mid	8.3%	7.9%	33.7%	37.4%	3,746	607	2,156	983	446	16.2%	57.6%	26.2%	11.9%
	S02002296	Earlston Stow & Clovenfords Area	4	4	5	1	Rural	6.9%	2 - Low	5.4%	4.5%	36.0%	30.3%	5,749	1,107	3,524	1,118	456	19.3%	61.3%	19.4%	7.9%
	S02002320	Ettreck Yarrow & Lilliesleaf Area	5	2	4	2	Rural	7.7%	2 - Low	5.4%	4.3%	5.7%	27.4%	2,696	416	1,513	767	282	15.4%	56.1%	28.4%	10.5%
	S02002297	Galashiels North	2	3	3	3	Town	11.3%	3 - Mid	11.4%	11.0%	31.2%	42.0%	3,686	534	2,510	642	252	14.5%	68.1%	17.4%	6.8%
Teviot	S02002299	Galashiels South	3	1	2	4	Town	15.7%	3 - Mid	9.2%	9.2%	54.0%	39.8%	3,272	453	1,952	867	393	13.8%	59.7%	26.5%	12.0%
	S02002298	Galashiels West	1	3	2	4	Town	18.7%	4 - High	13.5%	11.7%	36.9%	42.5%	3,039	463	2,048	528	208	15.2%	57.4%	17.4%	6.8%
	S02002300	Langlands	4	1	1	5	Town	32.2%	5 - Higher	23.2%	20.7%	42.5%	46.9%	2,591	502	1,666	423	162	19.4%	64.3%	16.3%	6.3%
	S02002302	Lauder & Area	4	4	5	1	Rural	6.4%	2 - Low	4.2%	4.1%	62.5%	27.2%	3,082	665	1,821	596	245	21.6%	59.1%	19.3%	7.9%
	S02002301	Melrose & Tweedbank Area	4	2	3	3	Rural	7.5%	2 - Low	7.2%	6.6%	40.1%	34.6%	5,387	895	3,167	1,325	595	16.6%	58.8%	24.6%	11.0%
Tweeddale	S02002321	Selkirk	3	1	2	4	Town	15.8%	4 - High	11.6%	10.6%	39.2%	42.2%	5,570	857	3,215	1,498	696	15.4%	57.7%	26.9%	12.5%
	S02002316	Burnfoot	1	4	1	3	Town	30.0%	5 - Higher	25.0%	18.9%	67.6%	43.0%	2,986	801	1,750	435	149	26.8%	58.6%	14.6%	5.0%
	S02002315	Denholm & Hermitage	4	1	3	3	Rural	12.6%	3 - Mid	6.6%	6.4%	58.1%	22.5%	4,053	511	2,348	1,194	482	12.6%	57.9%	29.5%	11.9%
	S02002317	Hawick Central	2	1	1	3	Town	17.9%	4 - High	12.4%	14.1%	57.0%	44.4%	4,185	594	2,456	1,135	523	14.2%	58.7%	27.1%	12.5%
	S02002319	Hawick North	2	2	2	4	Town	12.9%	3 - Mid	13.7%	14.0%	70.9%	42.0%	3,385	539	2,079	767	358	15.9%	61.4%	22.7%	10.6%
Tweeddale	S02002318	Hawick West End	3	1	1	5	Town	10.6%	3 - Mid	10.6%	10.5%	40.0%	42.7%	3,316	455	1,905	956	497	13.7%	57.4%	28.8%	15.0%
	S02002293	Peelies North	3	1	2	4	Town	9.4%	2 - Low	10.0%	8.3%	62.2%	45.3%	4,250	621	2,471	1,158	552	14.6%	58.1%	27.2%	13.0%
	S02002294	Peelies South	5	3	5	1	Town	6.3%	2 - Low	3.6%	1.9%	21.8%	28.3%	4,323	862	2,436	1,025	432	19.9%	56.3%	23.7%	10.0%
	S02002295	Tweeddale East Area	4	3	4	2	Rural	11.3%	3 - Mid	7.0%	6.6%	67.3%	34.5%	5,716	1,025	3,430	1,261	561	17.9%	60.0%	22.1%	9.8%
	S02002292	Tweeddale West Area	5	4	5	1	Rural	6.2%	2 - Low	4.4%	3.8%	51.6%	26.3%	6,156	1,175	3,773	1,208	503	19.1%	61.3%	19.6%	8.2%

## Scottish Borders COVID-19 Recovery Index (SB CRI)

Maximum SB CRI Points	30	5	2	5	3	4	5	3	3
Minimum SB CRI Points	9	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1
Scottish Borders									
	16	3	1	3	1	2	2	2	2

Locality (Best Fit for IZ)	IZ Code	IZ Area Name	SB Covid-19 Recovery Index Points	ScotPHO Covid19 Index Overall Quintile into Index Points	Town / Rural (*)	Child Poverty Index 2019 - Level (*)	Population Income Deprived 2018 (*)	Working age Population Employment Deprived 2018 (*)	Employees in Covid-19 Vulnerable Industry 2018 (*)	Single Adult Dwellings 2018 (*)	2018 Age 75+ (*)
Berwickshire	S02002303	Berwickshire Central	13	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	1
	S02002305	Berwickshire East	14	2	2	3	1	2	1	1	2
	S02002307	Chirnside & Area	18	2	2	3	1	2	5	1	2
	S02002308	Coldstream & Area	18	3	2	4	2	3	2	2	3
	S02002304	Duns	19	3	2	3	1	2	4	3	2
Cheviot	S02002306	Eynmouth	22	4	1	4	2	3	4	2	2
	S02002309	Cheviot East	18	3	2	2	1	2	5	1	2
	S02002312	Cheviot West	16	2	2	2	1	1	5	1	2
	S02002314	Jedburgh	28	4	1	4	2	3	4	3	2
	S02002310	Kello North	20	4	1	4	2	3	1	3	2
Eldon	S02002311	Kello South	21	4	1	3	1	2	3	1	2
	S02002313	St Boswells & Newtown Area	16	3	2	3	1	2	1	2	2
	S02002296	Earlston Stow & Clovenfords Area	11	1	2	2	1	1	1	2	1
	S02002320	Ettreck Yarrow & Lilliesleaf Area	12	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	2
	S02002297	Galashiels North	17	3	1	3	2	3	1	3	1
Teviot	S02002299	Galashiels South	18	4	1	3	1	2	3	2	2
	S02002298	Galashiels West	19	4	1	4	2	3	2	3	1
	S02002300	Langlands	24	5	1	5	3	4	2	3	1
	S02002302	Lauder & Area	13	1	2	2	1	1	4	1	1
	S02002301	Melrose & Tweedbank Area	16	3	2	2	1	2	2	2	2
Tweeddale	S02002321	Selkirk	20	4	1	4	2	3	1	3	2
	S02002316	Burnfoot	20	5	1	3	1	4	4	3	1
	S02002315	Denholm & Hermitage	17	3	2	3	1	2	3	2	2
	S02002317	Hawick Central	23	5	1	4	2	3	3	3	2
	S02002319	Hawick North	23	4	1	3	2	3	5	3	2
Tweeddale	S02002318	Hawick West End	22	5	1	3	2	3	2	3	3
	S02002293	Peelies North	20	4	1	2	2	2	4	3	2
	S02002294	Peelies South	10	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2
	S02002295	Tweeddale East Area	17	2	2	3	2	3	4	2	1
	S02002292	Tweeddale West Area	12	1	2	2	1	3	3	1	1

## Components of Scottish Borders Covid-19 Recovery Index (SB CRI)

Prepared 23 July 2020 by E.R. Murray, Scottish Borders Council

This is experimental statistics to help identify areas in the Scottish Borders that may need more support to recover from Covid-19 and what those vulnerabilities may be.

### SB Covid-19 Recovery Index Points

The points range from 9 to 30, divided into 3 groups. 9 to 15 in Yellow, 16 to 22 in Orange, and 23 to 30 in Red. The higher the points the more support the area may need to recover from Covid-19.

### SB Covid-19 Recovery Index Points ScotPHO Covid19 Index Overall Quintile into Index Points (\*)

Using the 'reverse' of the ScotPHO Covid19 Vulnerability Index Overall Quintile. Points range from 1 to 5 where 1 is the least vulnerable and 5 is the most vulnerable.

### Town / Rural (\*)

The intermediate zones are grouped into town (1 point) or rural (2 points). The rural areas have 2 points reflecting the challenges there may be in delivering or getting access to services.

### Child Poverty Index 2019 - Level (\*)

The Scottish Borders Child Poverty Index is a points based index, the components are Children in Low Income Families, % Free School Meals, % Clothing Grant, and % Pupils aged 16 with EMA. Sources are SBC and HMRC. For Intermediate Zones the SBCPI levels range from 2-Low to 5-Higher levels of Child Poverty.

### Population Income Deprived 2018 (\*)

The proportion of population that is Income Deprived (2018) is a component of the SIMD. For the SB CRI points range from 1 to 3. Under 10% = 1 point, 10% to Under 20% = 2 points, and 20% or More = 3 points.

### Working age Population Employment Deprived 2018 (\*)

The proportion of working age population that is Employment Deprived (2018) is a component of SIMD. For the SB CRI points range from 1 to 4. Under 5% = 1 point, 5% to Under 10% = 2 points, 10% to Under 15% = 3 points, and 15% or More = 4 points.

### Employees in Covid-19 Vulnerable Industry 2018 (\*)

Covid-19 Vulnerable Industries, based on OCEA analysis, are identified as manufacturing, construction, retail and wholesale, accommodation and food services, and arts, entertainment and recreation. These sectors are most at risk because of their reliance on face-to-face and on-site working. Source is NOMIS. For the SB CRI points range from 1 to 5. Under 40% = 1 point, 40% to Under 50% = 2 points, 50% to Under 60% = 3 points, 60% to Under 70% = 4 points, 70% or More = 5 points.

### Single Adult Dwellings 2018 (\*)

Areas with higher proportion of Single Adult Dwellings may have more vulnerable people. Source is NRS. For the SB CRI the points range from 1 to 3. Under 30% = 1 point, 30% to Under 40% = 2 points, and 40% or More = 3 points.

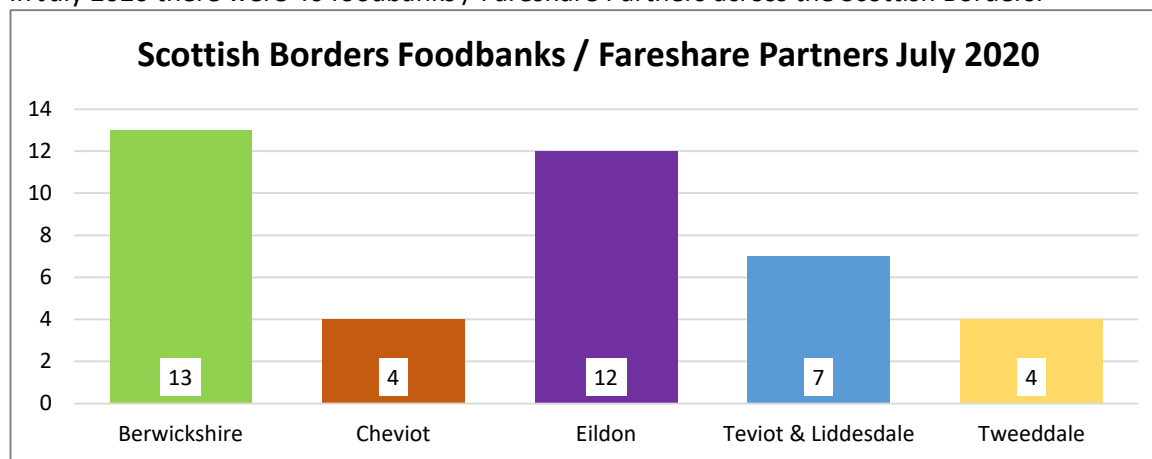
### 2018 Age 75+ (\*)

Areas with higher proportion of people aged 75 or more may have more vulnerable people. Source is NRS. For the SB CRI the points range from 1 to 3. Under 10% = 1 point, 10% to Under 15% = 2 points, and 15% or More = 3 points.

## Food Security / Growing

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, food security was identified as an issue in the Scottish Borders. Since then, there has been a marked increase. For example, in January 2020 there were 17 FareShare Partners in the Scottish Borders by July 2020 that number increase to 40.

In July 2020 there were 40 foodbanks / Fareshare Partners across the Scottish Borders.



Scottish Health Survey: Food insecurity levels (as defined by being worried during the past 12 months that they would run out of food due to lack of money or resources) remained at 9% in 2019.

## Older People Poverty – Pension Credit

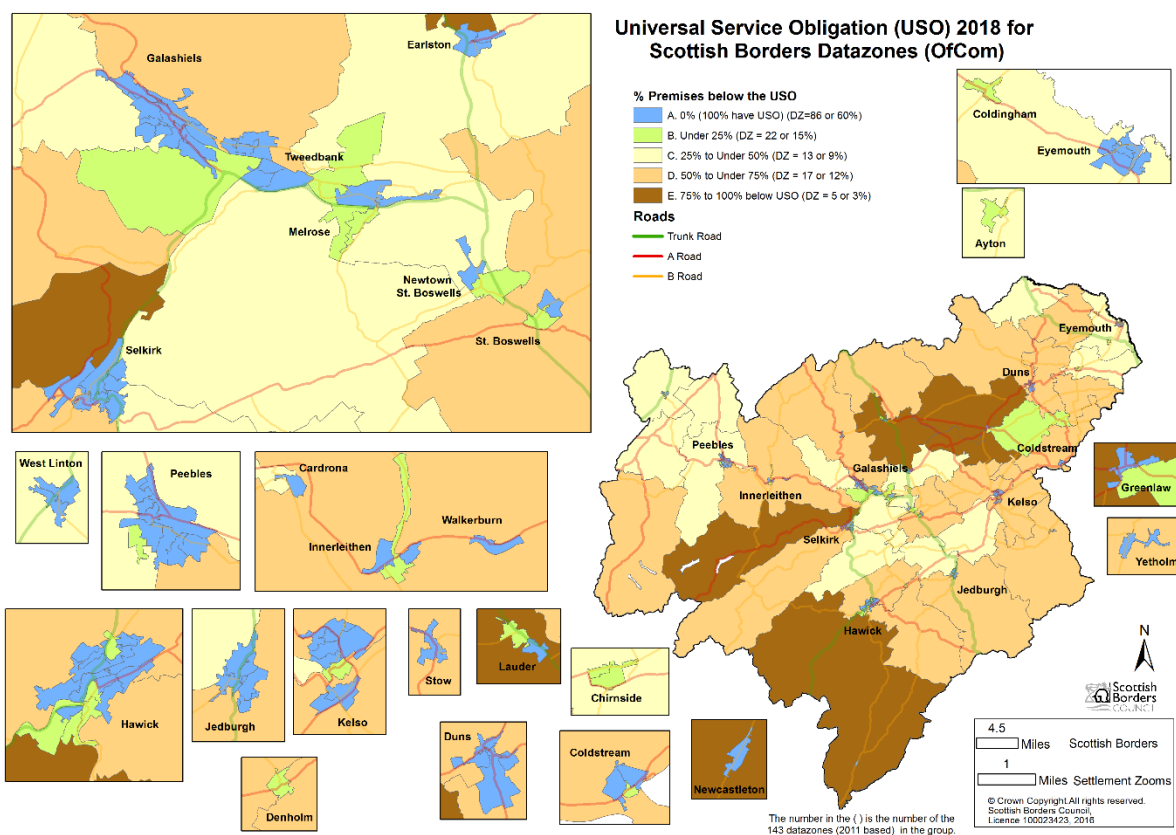
According to DWP, in February 2020 there were 2,840 people claiming Pension Credit in the Scottish Borders. This equates to about 101 pension credit claimants per 1,000 people aged 65 and older. Within the Scottish Borders, the rate of pension credit ranges from a low of 54 per 1,000 to a high of 216 per 1,000.

It is thought that there is an under-claiming of Pension Credit in the Scottish Borders.

## Digital / Connectivity

Ofcom's [Connected Nations](#) report for 2018 is a key source for understanding the provision of digital connectivity.

- 81.3% of households have home internet access in the Scottish Borders compared to 85% for Scotland.
- The Scottish Borders has good 4G mobile coverage from all operators in 78% of indoor premises and 51% of geographic coverage.
- 83% of the Scottish Borders has access to Superfast Broadband (30 Mbit/s) compared to 92% for Scotland.
- Full Fibre (1 Gbit/s) is available to 1% of the Scottish Borders compared to 4% for Scotland.
- 13% of the Scottish Borders are unable to access decent broadband (USO) compared to 4% for Scotland. This varies across the Scottish Borders as seen in the map below.



Scottish Borders Council has the Inspire Learning programme and now the Inspire Care programme.



## SBC's Financial Inclusion Team

On 15/12/2020, SBC's financial inclusion team, reported to the Anti-Poverty Strategy Working Group:

Universal Credit cases in the Borders Have increased from 3,731 in October 19 to 7,899 in October 20 which is an increase of 112%. Even though some of the increases are due to migration from other benefits, it does reflect an increasing number of people relying on benefits.

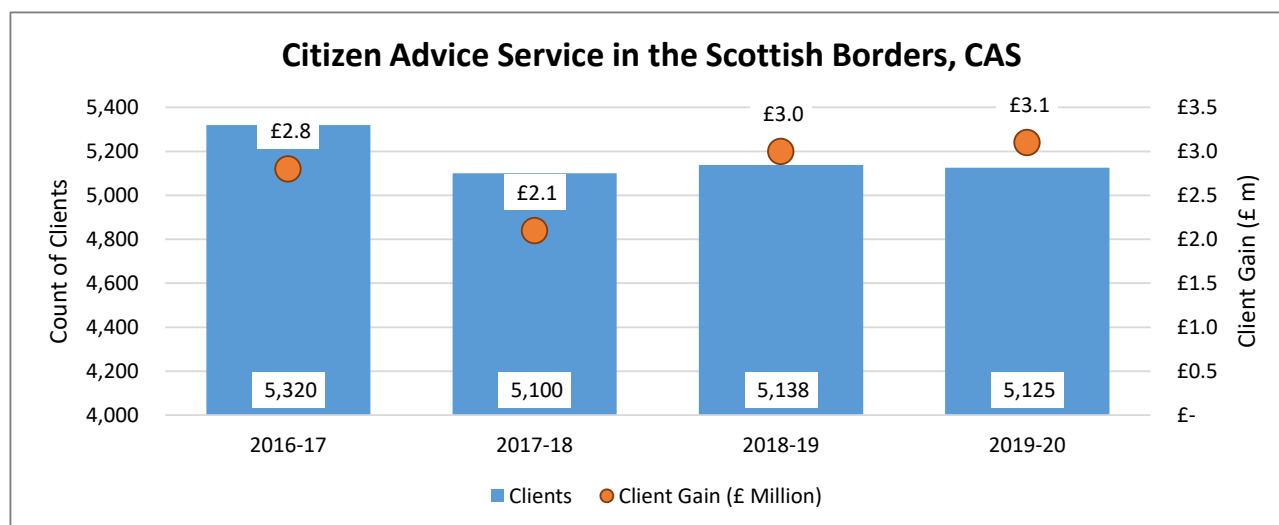
Council Tax Reduction caseload has increased from 7,983 in November 19 to 8,571 in November 20. It is an increase of 7.36% but as Council Tax recovery processes only started around a month ago (and is normally in April/May) and arrears have increased. That could mean that the increase might not reflect the true picture and there may be more people who have not applied, and we know that there is likely to be redundancies this month.

Our year-to-date Crisis Grant awards have increased from £47,914 in November 2019 to £76,585 in November 2020. It is an increase of 37%. There were significant increases in April and May but even in November awards were up 10% on the same month last year.

Our free school meal awards have increased from 1,659 in September 2019 to 2,075 in September 2020 which is an increase of 20% but looking back to 2018, awards have increased by 35% from September 2018 to September 2020.

## Citizen Advice Activity

In the Scottish Borders<sup>[1]</sup> there are 3 CABx: Central Borders CAB, Peebles CAB, and Roxburgh and Berwickshire CAB. The graph below shows the number of clients and the financial gain for Scottish Borders clients between 2016-17 and 2019-20. In 2019-20 the CABx in the Scottish Borders achieved £3.1 million for 5,125 clients.



Citizens Advice Scotland records the topics of enquiries under 16 topic areas. The table below shows the advice given in the Scottish Borders by these topics for 2016-17 to 2019-20.

Area of Advice	2016-17		2017-18		2018-19		2019-20	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
<b>Benefits</b>	<b>8,999</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>8,056</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>7,609</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>7,873</b>	<b>36%</b>
Consumer	449	2%	410	2%	376	2%	301	1%
<b>Debt</b>	<b>8,934</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>4,424</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>3,563</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>3,990</b>	<b>18%</b>
Discrimination		0%	43	0%	26	0%	43	0%
Education	127	0%	109	0%	83	0%	112	1%
Employment	1,990	7%	1,408	6%	1,215	6%	1,304	6%
Finance and Charitable Support	1,954	7%	2,202	10%	2,506	12%	2,673	12%
Health and Community Care	422	1%	418	2%	401	2%	393	2%
Housing	1,216	4%	1,116	5%	996	5%	951	4%
Immigration, Asylum and Nationality	136	0%	152	1%	164	1%	746	3%
Legal Proceedings	790	3%	809	4%	897	4%	637	3%
NHS Concern or Complaint	714	2%	393	2%	190	1%	668	3%
Relationship	949	3%	724	3%	578	3%	551	3%
Tax	1,170	4%	858	4%	730	4%	851	4%
Travel, Transport and Holidays	273	1%	235	1%	242	1%	208	1%
Utilities and Communications	1,066	4%	620	3%	589	3%	649	3%
<b>Total Advice Given</b>	<b>29,189</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>21,977</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>20,156</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>21,950</b>	<b>100%</b>

In a statement the CABx of the Scottish Borders said:

“Various measures have been put in place by the Government through the DWP to combat the impact of COVID-19 i.e., temporary increase in Universal Credit payments, payment break in repaying benefit overpayments and delay in decisions on disability benefit applications and renewals. However, these are all temporary measures and will impact greatly on income going forward.

Similarly, furlough payments have saved job losses and redundancies, but the reduced income has caused financial difficulties and resulted in increased the use of credit for essential purchases.

Payment holidays on mortgages, loans and credit cards will also lead to increases in monthly repayments in due course. All of which will cause financial hardship.”

<sup>[1]</sup> <https://www.cas.org.uk/about-us/scottish-citizens-advice-network-statistics/local-authorities>

# SCOTTISH BORDERS ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY 2021

## LINKS TO OTHER STRATEGIES AND PLANS

Strategies and plans that support the delivery of the vision and objectives within this Anti-Poverty Strategy:

- SBC Corporate Plan 2018/23
- SBC Community Planning Partnership – Key Priorities/Action Plan 2020/21
- Scottish Borders Community Plan 2018
- Community Planning Locality Plans 2020
- Scottish Borders Child Poverty Annual Report and Action Plan 2020/21
- Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2021/26
- Local Housing Strategy 2017/22
- The Housing Needs and Aspirations of Young People 2019/24
- CLD Strategic Plan 2015/18
- Corporate Parenting Strategy 2018/21
- Integrated Children and Young People's Plan 2018-2021
- Smart Rural Region – Digital Action Plan
- Scottish Borders Council Digital Strategy
- Borders Director of Public Health Report 2018
- Six ways to be well in the Scottish Borders 2017
- Living Wage
- Scottish Borders Economic Strategy
- South of Scotland Enterprise Operating Plan 2020/21
- Affordable Warmth & Home Energy Efficiency Strategy 2019/23

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## PROPOSED PLACE MAKING APPROACH

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### Report by Service Director, Assets and Infrastructure

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## SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

**25 FEBRUARY 2021**

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### **1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report proposes a phased introduction and development of a Place Making approach to community engagement and participation across Borders communities.**
- 1.2 At its meeting on 17 December 2020 Scottish Borders Council considered outline proposals for community engagement over future service delivery and associated investment of resources in meeting the needs of local people in the most effective and sustainable way. It was agreed that detailed proposals for an estate wide, community engagement led review of services would be brought to February Council.
- 1.3 The place making proposals set out in this report are rooted in the Council's *Fit for 2024* programme, in particular the theme of *Enhanced Community Engagement, Participation and Empowerment*, and aim to build on, and link with, a wide range of existing and planned national, Council-led, partnership and community work outlined in section 3 of the report. This includes the launch of the national Place Based Investment Programme, developing the Place Principle commitment adopted by Scottish Government and COSLA and the anticipated national draft Planning regulations on Local Place Plans which are expected ahead of the Scottish Parliamentary elections in May.
- 1.4 In particular, the proposals aim to build on the learning and experience of joint working with Communities and Partners in responding to the current Covid-19 pandemic and to reflect the national ambition for a Resilient Recovery which seeks greater integration building on Social Renewal, inclusive growth and low carbon. The ambition is more place-based collaboration for improved outcomes.
- 1.5 The place making approach will include consideration of the changing and challenging financial landscape, strategic change across the Borders, existing commitments and policy requirements, and some initial engagement on Borders wide service review. It will also include a review and mapping of all related activity taking place across organisations and communities at region and local level.

- 1.6 Section 5 and Appendix 1 of the report sets out a route map for the development and implementation of the place making approach which has 4 distinct phases (with indicative timescales) as follows:
- 1) Preparation and Planning (March – July)
  - 2) Production of Initial High Level Place Briefs (August – October)
  - 3) Develop and Agree Place Programmes (September – November)
  - 4) Delivery, Monitoring and Review (November onwards)
- 1.7 This phasing recognises that cyclical, place making arrangements need to be built jointly over time with all partners. Developing a sustainable model is an important outcome to achieve. The approach also recognises that there is no “one-size-fits-all”. Each locality and each community has its own characteristics and capabilities and will start from different places.
- 1.8 Section 6 of the report sets out the next steps in progressing the first phase (again, with indicative timescales):
- 1) Establishing a Programme Team (March)
  - 2) Initial Conversations with key partner reps (March/April)
  - 3) Synthesis (April – June) detailed review and mapping of recent, current and planned work across communities
  - 4) Place-Based Framework (May – July) – developing and agreeing the principles, the detailed approach including an implementation plan
- 1.9 A report will be brought to Council at the completion of Phase 1 and prior to the commencement of Phase 2.
- 1.10 In support of the above, officers have engaged with Scottish Futures Trust (SFT). SFT were established by the Scottish Government as a centre of infrastructure expertise, providing additional skills, resource and knowledge to public sector organisations, they are experienced in developing and facilitating place making across communities in Scotland. SFT will provide support in both the development and delivery of the place making programme, providing both expertise and an objective voice in facilitating engagement.
- 1.11 As per the December 20 Council report, service profiles and proposals will be drafted in parallel with – and feed into – the first phase of the route map and, along with other issues, will inform the place making engagement. These profiles will form a series of reports to Council in late spring/early summer in parallel with Phase1 of the proposed place making approach.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **2.1 I recommend that Council:**

**a) Approve the model of engagement proposed**

**b) Note the timescales set out in the report including the intention to bring further reports to Council.**

### 3 BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

- 3.1 At its meeting on 17 December 2020 Scottish Borders Council considered outline proposals for community engagement over future service delivery and associated investment of resources in meeting the needs of local people in the most effective and sustainable way. It was agreed that detailed proposals for an estate wide, community engagement led review of services would be brought to February Council
- 3.2 This place making proposals set out in this report are rooted in the Council's *Fit for 2024* programme and in particular the theme of *Enhanced Community Engagement, Participation and Empowerment*. In addition, it is anticipated that the proposals will also support service redesign under other key themes of Fit for 2024 Programme including:
- *Service by service reviews*
  - *Making better use of physical assets*
  - *Investment in digital solutions*
- 3.3 The proposals aim to build on, and link with, existing and planned National, Council, Partnership and Community work including:
- Community Empowerment Act
  - The Review of Area Partnerships
  - Locality Planning – and the refreshment of existing Locality Plans
  - Community-led action plans
  - Community Assistance Hubs and the development of the Locality Model
  - Climate Change Action Plans
  - Borderlands
  - Service Redesign
  - Investment in the Learning & Care Estate
- 3.4 The proposals seek to anticipate the launch of the national Place Based Investment Programme, developing the Place Principle commitment adopted by Scottish Government and COSLA. 'Place' is already at the forefront of key policy areas, including the Programme for Government, the Infrastructure Investment Plan and the emerging National Planning Framework. The purpose of the Programme is to provide a consistent framework used by all partners in places which aligns investments and change plans in a place context, to ensure that: [a] changes made in a place are relevant to that place; [b] change benefits all the people in a place.
- 3.5 Every place is already subject to many national, regional, and locally determined policies across most areas of peoples' lives. A place based approach does not seek to supplant or otherwise divert these legitimate priorities. However, it does seek to ensure that they are delivered in the best way possible when seen in the local context and when considered in tandem with various other initiatives that also impact locally. This requires a real understanding of local circumstance and the local narrative within which these often stand-alone policies operate.
- 3.6 The proposal seeks to adopt an integrated place based approach to service design, best use of assets and digital solutions. It seeks to strengthen

collaboration to enable aligned investments and shared use of space, assets and capacities to realise strategic ambitions and shared local outcomes. And it seeks to inform future planning and economic development at a local level.

- 3.7 The place making approach will include consideration of the changing and challenging financial landscape, strategic change across the Borders, existing commitments and policy requirements, and some initial engagement on Borders wide service review. It will also include a review and mapping of all related activity taking place across organisations and communities at region and local level.

#### **4. LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC**

- 4.1 The experience of responding to Covid-19 across the Scotland has changed the landscape of the planning and delivery of essential public services. At a local level, the response to the pandemic has strengthened community collaboration, collective leadership and ambition. Our learning from this experience falls under a number of headings including:

- Localism – The importance of community identity and strength of local social partnerships and Community Resilience arrangements; the ability and awareness of local people to respond quickly to local needs and to be innovative, resourceful and adept at bridging gaps and delays in statutory services; the way in which communities became a focal point or hub for the delivery of support and services
- Capabilities – The importance of local knowledge and networks, trusted people and local leadership and the ability to bring together and direct talents skills and the people power of volunteers who, above all, made the response to the pandemic work.
- Common Purpose - Community groups and public and 3rd sector partners have worked more effectively together, been more agile in finding solutions and making decisions. Our experience of this joint working through the Community Assistance Hubs is being used to form Locality Models
- Vulnerabilities – with a focus on protecting the shielding and the vulnerable, the response to Covid brought to light the social inequalities across our communities and the challenges we face in ensuring equality of access to support, advice and services as we move into recovery and as we develop new models of service delivery.

- 4.2 At a national level, the ambition for a Resilient Recovery, seeks greater integration building on Social Renewal, inclusive growth and low carbon. The ambition is more place-based collaboration for improved outcomes.

- 4.3 As we move to a period of sustained recovery, the lessons learned from the response to the pandemic provide an opportunity to build on local energy to transform local futures and enable:

- 1) More opportunities for community empowerment and participation
- 2) A better way of providing access to public services with a faster pace of service transformation which is addresses local need



3) A more efficient way of providing services through a better use of our shared resources

4) Better leverage of investment opportunity to create more and better jobs

4.4 The above resonates with the recent work on the review of governance arrangements for Area Partnership and in particular the engagement work undertaken by the Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) which identified an overriding message that people want to be involved in shaping Area Partnerships and ensuring they are fully inclusive, meet the needs of communities and achieve meaningful involvement and community engagement.

4.5 The subsequent report to August 2020 Council on the Review of the Area Partnerships also drew attention to the lessons from Covid and the opportunities to build on the learning and experience of the Community Assistance Hubs including:

- A reinvigorated Community Planning approach based on different ways of engagement and feedback
- Services redesigned to reflect user and community needs/requirements in light of the pandemic
- Locality Plans refreshed to reflect what communities require whilst both in recovery mode and longer term
- Build on the ways in which communities have been working which has seen them taking ownership to deliver Covid-19 related assistance in ways which best suit their town/village;

4.6 The report also highlighted the findings of the Best Value Assurance audit of Scottish Borders Council in 2019 which included:

*The Council now needs to make better progress with its community planning partners in delivering crucial elements of their community empowerment obligations, including resourced locality plans which identify community need and help community wellbeing.*

With the subsequent recommendation:

*Improve how the Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership involves communities and the third sector, through greater involvement in local decision-making and by accelerating implementation of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.*

4.7 The proposals set out below aim to complement the review of Area Partnership arrangements in addressing this recommendation.

## **5. PROPOSED APPROACH**

5.1 Officers have engaged with Scottish Futures Trust (SFT) in the development of these proposals. SFT were established by the Scottish Government as a centre of infrastructure expertise, providing additional skills, resource and knowledge to public sector organisations, they are experienced in developing and facilitating place making across communities in Scotland. SFT would provide support in both the development and delivery of the

place making programme, providing both expertise and an objective voice in facilitating engagement.

- 5.2 Based on early discussions with SFT, a proposed high level route map for developing and implementing a cyclical place-making engagement approach is set out in Appendix 1. The route map is based around 4 distinct phases:

- 1) **Preparation and Planning (March – July)** – This phase involves the buy-in and alignment of key stakeholders. It includes:
  - i. The development of a governance structure which will ensure that place making is aligned and integrated with Area Partnerships, Community Planning Partnership, Locality Planning and the strategic and operational planning cycles of the Council and its partners.
  - ii. Consideration of the changing and challenging financial landscape, strategic change across the Borders, existing commitments and policy requirements, and some initial engagement on Borders wide service review.
  - iii. A review and mapping of all related recent, current and planned activity and investment (including planned investments in digital services as well as the learning and care estate) taking place across organisations and communities. The purpose is to identify strategic, shared priorities and a common understanding of a place based approach across regional and local partners and policy areas including community and economic development.
  - iv. The development of a detailed phased framework for engagement. It is anticipated that some initial engagement on strategic service change options will inform this framework.
  - v. How the place making work will be resourced

The phase ensures that the necessary preparation and agreement is in place before engagement begins.

- 2) **Production of Initial High Level Place Briefs (August – October)** – High level place briefs setting out needs and priorities would be completed at a Locality level via Area Partnerships and enable a high-level, Borders-wide picture to be formed that will, in turn, identify priorities for more detailed community engagement. The output would be a place brief setting out an agreed shared story and articulation of priorities for the localities and its communities. In simple terms the brief answers the following questions:
  - a. What kind of place is this?
  - b. Why does it need to change?
  - c. What should the future be?
  - d. What are the priorities?

The engagement would revolve around a number of questions which would be used consistently in each community. Tools and resources such as the emerging Place Based Investment Programme and national [Place Standard Tool](#) may be used where appropriate.

The approach will be mindful that not all communities or localities are starting from the same position and that some will already have – or be developing – community-led action plans.

**3) Develop and agree Place Programmes (September – November) –**

This phase involves analysis from the high level locality place briefs to identify common themes and priority collaborations. The Place Programmes will be developed at a locality level – again through the Area Partnerships - and inform the refreshment of locality plans. The Programmes will look at opportunities for a more collaborative use of space, assets and local capacities, making better use of the totality of resources that already exist in places, to realise strategic ambitions and local outcomes. And it will look at opportunities and approaches to make better use of planned public sector capital investment to support community needs and economic development potential. It is expected that this work will identify a number of priority pathfinder communities and will involve more localised community place-making engagements over emerging areas of focus.

**4) Delivery Monitoring and Review (November onwards) –**

Once locality Place Programmes have been agreed, short-term quick wins could be implemented and longer-term actions could be fed into Council and other partners' service and strategic planning processes and timelines. Progress and achievement would be monitored as part of the governance arrangements set up under phase 1 and would include Area Partnership level.

- 5.3 Indicative timescales are shown above and illustrated in Appendix 2. These timescales will be reviewed and refined as part of the preparation and planning in phase 1.
- 5.4 It is perhaps worth emphasising that Area Partnerships - and through them, Community Councils, local groups and agencies - are central to the proposed approach and would be involved in preparation and planning, the initial high level place making engagements at the locality level, through the development and agreement of locality Place Programmes, to the monitoring of delivery and achievement.
- 5.5 Local Area Partnership provide elected members with an extensive opportunity to collaborate with community stakeholders including Community Councils.
- 5.6 As per the December 20 Council report, Service Profiles and proposals around service redesign will be drafted in parallel with – and feed into – the first phase of the route map and, along with other issues, will inform the place making engagement.

## **6. NEXT STEPS**

- 6.1 If the approach set out above is agreed, the following next steps will be taken between March and July:
- 1) Establishing a Programme Team
  - 2) Initial Conversations with key partner reps – drafting a set of principles and an initial mapping of recent/current and planned locality-based work to inform subsequent phases

- 3) Synthesis - detailed review and mapping of recent, current and planned work across communities
- 4) Place-Based Framework – developing and agreeing the principles, the detailed approach including an implementation plan

6.2 A report would be brought to Council at the completion of Phase 1 and prior to the commencement of phase 2.

## **7 IMPLICATIONS**

### **7.1 Financial**

While there are no immediate costs attached to any of the recommendations contained in this report it is anticipated that the first development phase of the approach will identify resource requirements required to sustain the approach (see also Risks and Mitigations below).

### **7.2 Risk and Mitigations**

- a) Resourcing – the successful development and delivery of the place making approach will require the appropriate resource and capacity. The first development stage of the approach will seek to review both the scope for refocussing existing resource (within the Council and across partner organisations) and what additional resource may be required. This will need to be reviewed again in Phases 3 and 4 as actions and projects take shape under the locality Place Programmes.
- b) Buy-In – collective leadership and buy-in from all stakeholders groups is a condition for success. A co-productive approach to the development and implementation of the approach seeks to ensure buy-in at all levels.
- c) Expectations – while the approach seeks to identify local needs, ambitions and priorities, these need to be grounded in the reality of the changing and challenging financial landscape. The first development phase of the approach aims to ensure that these and other challenges are fully identified and articulated ahead of the subsequent phases.
- d) Ensuring all voices are heard – it is important that the process enables all voices to be heard, not just the loudest and including those who are out-with the main towns of the Borders. Consideration of how this is achieved and managed will be addressed in Phase 1 of the approach and be kept under review throughout.
- e) Of not doing this – if we do not undertake this place making approach there is a risk that we do not make the best use of our resources, that we do not build on the opportunities and lessons learned from the pandemic and that our collective services do not address local needs effectively.

### **7.3 Integrated Impact Assessment**

An integrated impact assessment has been completed. It is anticipated that there will be no negative impacts under either the Equality Duty or the Fairer Scotland Duty

#### 7.4 **Acting Sustainably**

It is anticipated that there will be a positive effect on the following community and participation outcomes:

- a) involve the community in developing and implementing the project;
- b) take into account under-represented or excluded groups;
- c) take into account equal opportunities;
- d) improve community quality of life;
- e) improve community capacity;
- f) encourage local action and decision making.

#### 7.5 **Carbon Management**

There are no direct effects on carbon emissions as a result of this report.

#### 7.6 **Rural Proofing**

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

### 8 **CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 The Executive Director (Finance & Regulatory), the Monitoring Officer/Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Service Director HR & Communications, the Clerk to the Council and Corporate Communications have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated into this report.

#### **Approved by**

**John Curry**  
**Service Director,**  
**Assets & Infrastructure**

**Signature .....**

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

Name	Designation and Contact Number
James Lamb	Portfolio Manager

**Background Papers:** Nil

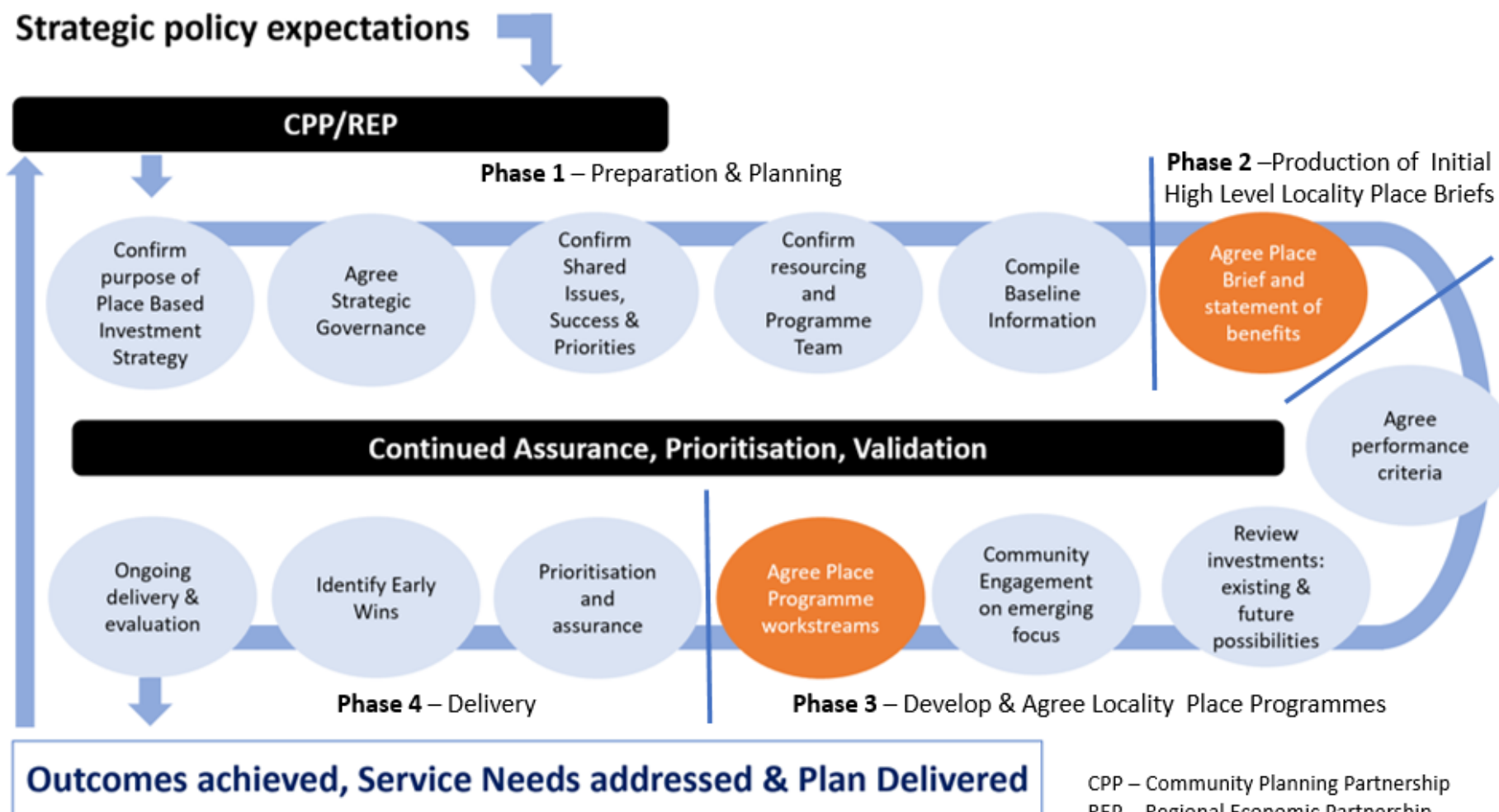
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## Proposed Place-Making Process – Route Map

Appendix 1





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## **EMERGENCY POWERS REPORTING**

**Report by Executive Director, Finance & Regulatory Services**

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### **SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL**

**25 February 2021**

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

- 1.1 This report proposes a method for formally notifying Members of any decisions made using Emergency Powers under Standing Order No. 49(a)(i).**
- 1.2 Standing Order No. 49(a)(i) enables the Chief Executive to take decisions under Emergency Powers, having consulted with various Elected Members. The power is not used frequently and there were five such reports in 2020.
- 1.3 In the past, these Emergency Powers reports were detailed in the Members' bulletin and copies were placed in the Members' library. However, there is no longer a Members' bulletin and a gap therefore exists as there is no process in place for reporting those decisions to all Members and the public.
- 1.4 It is therefore proposed that, in future, any decision made under Emergency Powers is then included in the next available Scottish Borders Council agenda as a separate item for noting. Subject to the provisions of the 1973 Act, these will either be considered in public or private, depending on the content of the report. Members may wish to ask for further explanation but there will be no opportunity to change the actual decision(s).
- 1.5 Changes are proposed to the Council's Standing Orders and Scheme of Administration to formalise this.

#### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 I recommend that the Council agrees that:**
  - (a) once concluded, all Emergency Powers decisions are referred to the next available meeting of Scottish Borders Council for noting;**
  - (b) a further sentence is added at the end of Standing Order No. 49(a)(i) – "Such Emergency Powers decisions shall be reported**

**to the next available meeting of Scottish Borders Council for noting.”; and**

- (c) the following addition is made to the “Other Functions” of Scottish Borders Council contained in Section III of the Scheme of Administration:**

**“34. Note decisions taken under Emergency Powers in Standing Order No. 49(a)(i).”**



### **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Scottish Borders Council, as with most other Local Authorities, includes in its Standing Orders a provision to deal with matters of urgency, to cover a situation whereby a decision which would normally be taken by Council or one of its committees needs to be taken before the next meeting of such a body. In those circumstances, Standing Order No. 49(a)(i) enables the Chief Executive to take those decisions, having consulted with various Elected Members. Standing Order 49(a)(i) is detailed thus:

“Notwithstanding the terms of Standing Orders and the Scheme of Administration, including in relation to delegated matters, where a situation or condition arises which is, in the opinion of the Chief Executive, whom failing another Director appointed by the Chief Executive, of such urgency as to make it unwise to delay a decision until the next meeting of the committee concerned with the function in question or the next Ordinary Meeting of the Council, a system of Emergency Powers shall be exercisable. In such circumstances, the appropriate Officer specified shall, following consultation with (a) the Convener, whom failing the Vice-Convener, (b) the Leader of the Council, whom failing one of the Depute Leaders of the Council, and (c) a member of the Executive having the Portfolio for the matter concerned, whom failing any other member of the Executive, have power to take all steps and make any decisions considered necessary to deal with the situation, which steps and decisions shall be binding upon the Council.”

- 3.2 It is important to note that this standing order can only be used where a decision needs to be taken as a matter of urgency. It is therefore important to ensure that these decisions, once made, are certain and are not therefore subject to ratification or change.
- 3.3 Emergency Powers reports are subject to the same guidelines as all other Committee reports regarding consultation. Equally, they can be “public” or “private” in accordance with the normal rules contained in the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (the “1973 Act”), depending on their content. The power is used infrequently and there were five such reports in 2020. This does not include the Covid emergency powers which were also used in 2020, but dealt with under a separate Standing Order and published through the Modern.gov committee system.
- 3.4 In the past, these Emergency Powers reports were detailed in the Members’ bulletin and copies were placed in the Members’ library. However, there is no longer a Members’ bulletin and a gap therefore exists as no process is in place for reporting those decisions to all Members and the public.

### **4 EMERGENCY POWERS DECISIONS REPORTING**

- 4.1 It is important to put a system in place for the reporting of emergency powers decisions to ensure openness and transparency in decision making. However, it is also important to recognise that these decisions have already been made, and that they are binding to the Council. The proposed process does not therefore create an opportunity to approve or otherwise amend the decisions.

- 4.2 It is therefore proposed that, in future, once concluded and the decision made, any Emergency Power report is then included in the next available Scottish Borders Council agenda as a separate item for noting. Subject to the provisions of the 1973 Act, these will either be considered in public or private, depending on the content of the report. Members may wish to ask for further explanation but there will be no opportunity to change the actual decision(s).
- 4.3 In this respect, it is proposed to add a further sentence at the end of Standing Order 49(a)(i) "Such Emergency Powers decisions shall be reported to the next available meeting of Scottish Borders Council for noting." An addition is also proposed to the "Other Functions" of Scottish Borders Council contained in Section III of the Scheme of Administration:
- "34. Note decisions taken under Emergency Powers in Standing Order No. 49(a)(i)."

## **5 IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 Financial**

There are no costs attached to any of the recommendations contained in this report.

### **5.2 Risk and Mitigations**

There is a risk that by not reporting Emergency Powers decisions more widely, the Council could be seen as operating behind closed doors. By reporting these decisions to full Council, this will ensure that all formal decisions are recorded and published, thus ensuring openness and transparency for all Members, and the wider public.

### **5.3 Integrated Impact Assessment**

The proposals in this report will not discriminate against people who share a characteristic (age, disability, gender re-assignment, trans/transgender identity, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race groups, religion or belief, sex-gender identity, and sexual orientation) and those who do not.

### **5.4 Acting Sustainably**

There are no economic, social or environmental effects by carrying out the proposals in this report.

### **5.5 Carbon Management**

There is no impact on the Council's carbon emissions from carrying out the proposals in this report.

### **5.6 Rural Proofing**

The proposals in this report will apply across the Borders.

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

Changes are being proposed to Standing Orders and the Scheme of Administration and are detailed in the report.

## 6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Service Director HR & Communications, and Corporate Communications have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

**Approved by**

**David Robertson** Signature .....  
Executive Director, Finance & Regulatory Services

**Author(s)**

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Jenny Wilkinson	Clerk to the Council, Tel: 01835 825004
Nuala McKinlay	Chief Legal Officer/Monitoring Officer

**Background Papers:** Nil  
**Previous Minute Reference:** Nil

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Contact us at Jenny Wilkinson, Scottish Borders Council, Council HQ, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA. Tel: 01835 825004 Email: [jjwilkinson@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:jjwilkinson@scotborders.gov.uk)

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