

Public Document Pack



SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL THURSDAY, 25 MARCH, 2021

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

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

BUSINESS																										
1.	Convener's Remarks.																									
2.	Apologies for Absence.																									
3.	Order of Business.																									
4.	Declarations of Interest.																									
5.	<p>Minute (Pages 5 - 16)</p> <p>Consider Minute of Scottish Borders Council held on 25 February 2021 for approval and signing by the Convener. (Copy attached.)</p>	2 mins																								
6.	<p>Committee Minutes</p> <p>Consider Minutes of the following Committees:-</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tbody> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">(a) Tweeddale Area Partnership</td> <td style="text-align: right;">19 January 2021</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">(b) Hawick Common Good Fund</td> <td style="text-align: right;">20 January 2021</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">(c) Cheviot Area Partnership</td> <td style="text-align: right;">27 January 2021</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">(d) Selkirk Common Good Fund</td> <td style="text-align: right;">10 February 2021</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">(e) Audit & Scrutiny</td> <td style="text-align: right;">15 February 2021</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">(f) Civic Government Licensing</td> <td style="text-align: right;">19 February 2021</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">(g) William Hill Trust</td> <td style="text-align: right;">23 February 2021</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">(h) Lauder Common Good Fund</td> <td style="text-align: right;">23 February 2021</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">(i) Planning & Building Standards</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1 March 2021</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">(j) Pension Board</td> <td style="text-align: right;">4 March 2021</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">(k) Sustainable Development</td> <td style="text-align: right;">5 March 2021</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">(l) Executive</td> <td style="text-align: right;">16 March 2021</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>(Please see separate Supplement containing the public Committee Minutes.)</p>	(a) Tweeddale Area Partnership	19 January 2021	(b) Hawick Common Good Fund	20 January 2021	(c) Cheviot Area Partnership	27 January 2021	(d) Selkirk Common Good Fund	10 February 2021	(e) Audit & Scrutiny	15 February 2021	(f) Civic Government Licensing	19 February 2021	(g) William Hill Trust	23 February 2021	(h) Lauder Common Good Fund	23 February 2021	(i) Planning & Building Standards	1 March 2021	(j) Pension Board	4 March 2021	(k) Sustainable Development	5 March 2021	(l) Executive	16 March 2021	5 mins
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7.	<p>Committee Minute Recommendation (Pages 17 - 94)</p> <p>Consider the recommendation made by the Executive Committee at their meeting on 16 March 2021 relating to the Food Growing Strategy.</p>	5 mins																								

	(Copy Minute Extract and Executive Report attached.)	
8.	Review of Community Fund 2021/2022 (Pages 95 - 108) Consider report by Service Director Customer & Communities. (Copy attached.)	15 mins
9.	Fit for 2024: Review of Area Partnerships - Outcomes and Next Steps (Pages 109 - 120) Consider report by Service Director Customer and Communities. (Copy attached.)	15 mins
10.	Borders Discretionary Support Fund For Business (Pages 121 - 126) Consider report by Executive Director, Finance & Regulatory. (Copy attached.)	15 mins
11.	Consultation on New Powers to License Sexual Entertainment Venues (Pages 127 - 134) Consider report by Executive Director, Finance & Regulatory. (Copy attached.)	15 mins
12.	Open Questions	15 mins
13.	Any Other Items Previously Circulated	
14.	Any Other Items Which the Convener Decides Are Urgent	
15.	Private Business Before proceeding with the private business, the following motion should be approved:- “That under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the aforementioned Act.”	
16.	Minute (Pages 135 - 136) Consider private Section of Minute of Scottish Borders Council held on 25 February 2021. (Copy attached.)	1 mins
17.	Committee Minutes Consider private Sections of the Minutes of the following Committees:- (a) Hawick Common Good Fund 20 January 2021 (b) Selkirk Common Good Fund 10 February 2021 (c) Civic Government Licensing 19 February 2021 (d) Executive 16 March 2021 (Please see separate Supplement containing private Committee Minutes.)	2 mins

NOTES

- 1. Timings given above are only indicative and not intended to inhibit Members' discussions.**

- 2. Members are reminded that, if they have a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest in any item of business coming before the meeting, that interest should be declared prior to commencement of discussion on that item. Such declaration will be recorded in the Minute of the meeting.**

Please direct any enquiries to Louise McGeoch Tel 01835 825005
email lmcgeoch@scotborders.gov.uk

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SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL held via Microsoft Teams on Thursday, 25 February 2021 at 10.00 a.m.

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 Customer & Communities, Service Director HR & Communications, Service Director Young People, Engagement & Inclusion, Chief Operating Officer Adult Social Work & Social Care, Clerk to the Council.

1. **CONVENER'S REMARKS**

The Convener congratulated the following:-

- (a) the volunteers, the Emergency Services, McLaughlin & Harvey (the Hawick Flood Protection Scheme Contractors) and Scottish Borders Council staff for their work in Hawick and Newcastleton during the recent flooding, and extended the Council's sympathies to those who had been impacted; and
- (b) Denise Hanks who had been awarded the Tweeddale Citizen of the Year for her contribution to the community over many years and in particular during the recent coronavirus pandemic.

DECISION

AGREED that congratulations be passed to those concerned.

2. **MINUTE**

The Minute of the Meeting held on 28 January 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) 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 |

DECISION

APPROVED the Minutes listed above.

4. BUDGET COMMUNICATION STRATEGY 2021/22

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Executive Director, Finance and Regulatory, detailing the steps taken to engage with stakeholders as part of a consultation exercise on the budget. The report outlined the budget Communication Strategy used and provided feedback gathered from the Scottish Borders Budget Challenge. This feedback had been considered as part of the 2021/22 Financial Planning process. 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 would set our next budget and early in 2021 we would 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 that were allocated 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 were for the Scottish Borders. As at 31 January 2021, 314 members of the public completed the Simulator and gave us their views on prioritisation of high-level challenges the Council was facing. The report detailed the output from the budget simulator and the highest 4 priority areas were maintaining investment in roads and public infrastructure; investment in supporting businesses and creating jobs; doing more to help the environment and address climate change; and jobs, skills and training. Mr Robertson answered Members' questions regarding the level of flexibility in the budget, which was limited to approximately 20%, and the possible inclusion of a question asking if the public wished to spend less in any area.

DECISION

NOTED:-

(a) the budget Communication Strategy used; and

(b) the feedback from the Scottish Borders Budget Challenge.

5. COUNCIL TAX 2021/22

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Executive Director, Finance and Regulatory, providing 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. The report explained that on 28 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. The Borders' share of these resources totalled £1.955m which was broadly equivalent to a 3% increase in the Council Tax product for financial year 2021/22. The funding was provided on a one-off basis and to date there was no confirmation that the resources provided to freeze the Council tax in 2021/22 would 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 was 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. Members were also asked to note that the draft Financial Plan shared with political groups assumed this funding would be permanently provided through RSG from 2021/22 in order that the Council Tax base was not eroded through this freeze. Members supported the proposal not to increase the Council Tax given the current financial situation of many in the Scottish Borders but expressed concern regarding the possible situation next year if this funding was not provided in future years.

DECISION

AGREED to:-

- (a) accept the additional funding of £1.955m through the 2021/22 Local Government Finance Settlement to freeze Council Tax at 2020/21 levels; and
- (b) approve 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.

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

6. DIGITAL STRATEGY

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Executive Director, Finance and Regulatory presenting a new digital strategy for the Council developed with CGI. The strategy "Digital Borders" was designed to realise the vision of Scottish Borders becoming a Smart Rural Region. The Strategy would 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 responded to the key recommendations of a recent study by the Accounts Commission. The report explained that in September 2020 the Council 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 was designed to help address a range of key challenges facing the Borders. The Strategy would form a key part of the Council's Fit for 2024 transformation programme designed to deliver better outcomes 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. The Digital Borders Strategy was consistent with the understanding of evolving national strategy. It would 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 were expected to be achieved. Significant detailed analysis work had been undertaken to date, as highlighted in Appendix 2 to the report, to assess how the opportunities identified by the Strategy should be prioritised. Further diligence was now required to further work to refine the Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) benefits identified to date. The Strategy therefore advocated 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 would also be delivered to enable sustainable change, track savings, achieve process efficiencies and deliver improved outcomes. Members

welcomed the report but highlighted the need to ensure that those without digital access were not left behind. Councillor Bell, seconded by Councillor A. Anderson, moved an amendment to recommendation (b) to read “Agrees that further work be undertaken to develop the digital road map, detailed benefits realisation and change management plans for the individual projects, and that this is brought back to Council for approval”. This amendment was unanimously accepted. In response to a request from Councillor Thornton- Nicol it was agreed that any references to “the elderly” would be changed to “older people”.

**DECISION
AGREED:-**

- (a) to approve the Digital strategy outlined in the report;**
- (b) that further work be undertaken to develop the digital road map, detailed benefits realisation and change management plans for individual projects, and that this was brought back to Council for approval; and**
- (c) to note that update reports would be brought to future Executive meetings in line with routine FF24 transformation programme updates.**

7. DRAFT ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY

With reference to paragraph 10 of the Minute of 25 September 2020, there had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Customer and Communities presenting for approval the draft Scottish Borders Council Draft Anti-Poverty Strategy that had been developed following a Motion to Council by Councillor Tatler in September 2020 and set out the next steps that Scottish Borders Council and Partners planned to take in tackling poverty in the Scottish Borders. The report explained that a Working Group had been set up to review the extent of poverty in the Scottish Borders. The Working Group had taken a forward-thinking, sustainable approach to the development of the Draft Anti-Poverty Strategy and had taken account of:-

- Economic poverty and income
- Fuel poverty
- Housing poverty
- Food poverty
- Impact on family and community health and wellbeing
- Digital poverty

A copy of the draft Strategy was appended to the report. It was recognised that the draft Strategy had been developed from a mainly internal perspective to date, and that full consultation with partners, communities and other organisations would be required in order to enable the draft Strategy and Action Plan to be brought back to Council in June 2021 for final approval. The Council was continuing to respond to the current Covid-19 pandemic and working with communities through the Community Assistance Hubs. The learning from this work would be taken into account and how ongoing arrangements evolved. Councillor Tatler paid tribute to those who had been involved in getting the Strategy to this point and that it had been achieved so quickly. Members welcomed the report and the Convener added his thanks to all those involved.

**DECISION
AGREED:-**

- (a) to approve the Scottish Borders Draft Anti-Poverty Strategy as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report;**
- (b) to proceed to Public Consultation to take place from the beginning of March to the end of May 2021;**

- (c) **that the Anti-Poverty Working Group would develop an approach to public consultation and create a Final Strategy and Action Plan for approval; and**
- (d) **to receive a further report in June 2021 from the Service Director Customer & Communities which would present a final Anti-Poverty Strategy and an Action Plan for approval.**

8. **PROPOSED PLACE MAKING APPROACH**

With reference to paragraph 9 of the Minute of 17 December 2020, there had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Assets and Infrastructure proposing a phased introduction and development of a Place Making approach to community engagement and participation across Borders communities. The place making proposals set out in the report were rooted in the Council's *Fit for 2024* programme, in particular the theme of *Enhanced Community Engagement, Participation and Empowerment*, and aimed to build on, and link with, a wide range of existing and planned national, Council-led, partnership and community work. This included 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 were expected ahead of the Scottish Parliamentary elections in May. In particular, the proposals aimed 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 sought greater integration building on Social Renewal, inclusive growth and low carbon. The ambition was more place-based collaboration for improved outcomes. The place making approach would 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 would also include a review and mapping of all related activity taking place across organisations and communities at region and local level. The report set out a route map for the development and implementation of the place making approach which has 4 distinct phases (with indicative timescales) as follows:

- Preparation and Planning (March – July)
- Production of Initial High Level Place Briefs (August – October)
- Develop and Agree Place Programmes (September – November)
- Delivery, Monitoring and Review (November onwards)

A further report would be brought to Council at the completion of Phase 1 and prior to the commencement of Phase 2. Mr Curry asked that the recommendation at 2.1(b) be amended to read "Note the proposed timescales as a guide as to the ambition of the project, including the intention to bring further reports to Council. A gateway review will be completed at the conclusion of each stage with timeframes amended accordingly based on feedback from stakeholders. These reviews will be reported to Council at the conclusion of each stage." Members welcomed the paper, unanimously approved the amendment, and emphasised the importance of public involvement.

DECISION

AGREED to:-

- (a) **approve the model of engagement proposed; and**
- (b) **note the proposed timescales as a guide as to the ambition of the project, including the intention to bring further reports to Council. A gateway review would be completed at the conclusion of each stage with timeframes amended accordingly based on feedback from stakeholders. These reviews would be reported to Council at the conclusion of each stage**

9. **EMERGENCY POWERS REPORTING**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Executive Director, Finance & Regulatory, proposing a method for formally notifying Members of any decisions made using Emergency Powers under Standing Order No. 49(a)(i). The report explained that Standing

Order No. 49(a)(i) enabled the Chief Executive to take decisions under Emergency Powers, having consulted with various Elected Members. The power was not used frequently and there had been five such reports in 2020. In the past, these Emergency Powers reports were detailed in the Members' bulletin and copies were placed in the Members' library. However, there was no longer a Members' bulletin and a gap therefore existed as there was no process in place for reporting those decisions to all Members and the public. It was therefore proposed that, in future, any decision made under Emergency Powers were included in the next available Scottish Borders Council agenda as a separate item for noting. Subject to the provisions of the 1973 Act, these would either be considered in public or private, depending on the content of the report. Members might wish to ask for further explanation but there would be no opportunity to change the actual decision(s). Changes were proposed to the Council's Standing Orders and Scheme of Administration to formalise this.

DECISION

AGREED that:

- (a) once concluded, all Emergency Powers decisions would be referred to the next available meeting of Scottish Borders Council for noting;**
- (b) a further sentence would be 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 would be 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).”

10. MOTION BY COUNCILLOR GREENWELL

Councillor Greenwell, seconded by Councillor Tatler, moved approval of his Motion as detailed on the agenda in the following terms subject to the removal of the word “looming” after the word “Brexit”

“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”.

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.

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. 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.

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.

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:

- **Reward Local Government Workers** - Local Government workers have been the hidden heroes of this pandemic. Their invaluable contribution to the COVID-19 response should be recognised and rewarded.
- **Secure the long-term financial stability of Local Government** – Local Government needs long term stability to protect essential jobs and services for the future. The salami slicing of services needs to stop.

- **Shape Local Government Fit for the Post-Pandemic Future** – 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 recognised and their job evaluation reviewed as a result.
- **Fully Consolidate the Living Wage** – 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.”

Councillor Greenwell spoke in support of his Motion. Councillor H. Anderson, seconded by Councillor Moffat moved as an amendment that at paragraph 5 be amended by deleting “calls on” and inserting “welcomes the steps taken by”; and at bullet point “Reward for Local Government Workers” the words “should be” be replaced with “has been”

The amended paragraph 5 would now read “This Council therefore pledges its support for UNISON’s campaign and calls on *welcomes the steps taken by* the Scottish Government to Plug the Gap in Local Government finance in the 2021/22 budget to:

- **Reward Local Government Workers** – Local Government workers have been the hidden heroes of this pandemic. Their invaluable contribution to the COVID-19 response should be *has been* recognised and rewarded.”

Councillor Greenwell agreed to accept this amendment.

DECISION

AGREED to approve the Motion detailed above as amended.

11. **OPEN QUESTIONS**

The questions submitted by Councillors Robson and H. Scott were answered.

DECISION

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

12. **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

13. **Committee Minutes**

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

14. **Borderlands**

Councillor approved a report by the Executive Director Corporate Improvement & Economy to enter the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal Agreement.

MEMBER

Councillor H. Scott left during consideration of the item above.

The meeting concluded at 12.55 p.m.

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL
25 FEBRUARY 2021
APPENDIX I

Questions from Councillor Robson

1. To Executive Member for Adult Wellbeing

Can the Executive Member advise whether the Council intends to respond to publication of the Independent Review of Adult Social Care (the Feeley Review) and whether it is involved in consultations about the implications of the Review's findings?

Reply from Councillor Weatherston

The Feeley review published on the 3rd February, is an independent review commissioned directly from Scottish Government. The report is now being considered by the Scottish Ministers, and whilst we understand the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care is supportive of the review, we have yet to hear whether the Government will accept all 53 recommendations.

COSLA has responded formally to the Government, and at this time there has not been any requests for Local Authorities, NHS Boards or local Integration Joint Boards to formally reply.

The Council does not at this stage therefore intend to respond directly to the publication of the Feeley Review but will engage fully with COSLA in responding to Scottish Government's proposals once these are published for consultation.

2. To Executive Member for Enhancing The Built Environment And Natural Heritage

Can the Executive Member advise whether the Council was consulted by the Scottish Government about the establishment of the pilot Regional Land Use Partnership for the South of Scotland?

Reply by Councillor Mountford

The short answer is 'yes'.

The more detailed answer is that the Council submitted an expression of interest last month for the south of Scotland to become a Regional Land Use Partnership (RLUP) pilot. This reflects an approach to developing the Scottish Borders and the South of Scotland's strengths in relation to environment and economy as an area of competitive advantage for our region. Natural capital is one of our greatest assets and is central to our future net zero and wellbeing economy, developing thriving rural economies based around woodland creation, peatland restoration and biodiversity as well as sustainable tourism, food and drink and energy. The Regional Economic Strategy, the Indicative Spatial Strategy, Borderlands and specifically the Natural Capital Proposition within Borderlands are all relevant to these efforts. We are determined to promote a Green Recovery, and positive socio-economic and environmental outcomes for the region through our engagement with stakeholders.

The Regional Land Use Partnership will: build on existing partnerships, and best practice; and develop a strategic vision for land use at a landscape scale in the public interest aligned to national policy. Engagement will be at the heart of our approach: ensuring that we, in the South of Scotland, develop an approach to land use which is designed and optimised for the South of Scotland.

As Executive Member for Enhancing the Built Environment and Natural Heritage, together with the Leader and the Executive Members for Finance and Sustainable Development, I was sighted on the announcement.

Unfortunately, Scottish Government's timeframe for expressions of interest, the timing of the announcement to coincide with the Convention of the South of Scotland on 8 February, and the need to schedule discussion with Scottish Government have constrained the opportunities around a wider briefing. Further discussion between Council officers and the Scottish Government about

the parameters of the pilot are due to take place shortly, and it is intended that these will be followed by a briefing to Members.

Supplementary

Councillor Robson asked that the briefing would cover how land use partnership would relate to the previous report on place making. Councillor Mountford advised that he was sure this would be possible.

Questions from Councillor H. Scott

To Executive Member for Infrastructure, Travel & Transport

1. In August 2018 I asked if the kerb at the foot of Ladhope Bank, Galashiels, could be dropped to allow the safe passage of constituents using wheel chairs, buggies, and other mobility aids. This work has not been carried out despite repeated requests from me asking for a date of completion. This work is essential for the safety of those with mobility needs who wish cross the main A7 road to access the bus stop and shop in High Buckholmside. When will the work be done?

Reply from Councillor Edgar

I have looked into this matter and note that this is an approved small scheme, works are being programmed currently. Unfortunately this has been impacted by the sustained winter response and weather conditions. Now that conditions are improving, the programme of works will be confirmed and officers will confirm exact dates with Cllr Scott in due course.

Supplementary

Councillor Scott expressed his disappointment with the response and asked that the importance of the work be impressed on officers and that a date be provided for this work for the most vulnerable members of the community. Councillor Edgar confirmed he would provide a date and investigate further why this work had not been carried out.

2. In January 2021 Scottish Borders Housing Association reported that trees on the banking between the Gala Park housing complex and the High Street Car Park, Galashiels, had fallen against the complex. The banking is also littered with rubbish and other detritus. Combined with the run of the Mill Lade at the foot of the banking there is the possibility of encouraging rat infestation. A question to the Estates Department of SBC revealed that the ground is apparently owned by Trillium (Prime) Property, based in London.

Whilst not being responsible for the maintenance of the ground, SBC has a responsibility for the health, welfare, and safety of its constituents.

What steps will SBC take to contact Trillium (Prime) Property to remind them of what their responsibilities are with regard to the health, welfare, and safety, of the residents and others who surround their property?

Reply from Councillor Edgar

I can confirm that the trees and banking behind Gala Park housing complex are not in the ownership of Scottish Borders Council. Our records indicate the land may not be in a single ownership and we are putting together an ownership plan in accordance with the information available to us. This is likely to take some time to conclude.

Under the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 it is the duty of the owner/occupier of the land to keep it free from rat and mice infestation. Environmental Health may serve notice on the owner/occupier requiring steps be taken within a specified time period for the destruction of rats/mice on the land or for otherwise keeping the land free from rats and mice if the owner fails to do this himself.

There are powers within the Planning Act to deal with land and property which is causing the amenity of area to be adversely affected by its condition. However, the bar to allow this power to be utilised is set very high and the condition of the land has to be very poor before Officers become involved as it is likely any Notice we serve could be the subject of an Appeal.

There are no records of complaints from the public regarding the condition of this particular area of land, in order to come to a view on the matter Officers would need to undertake an investigation to determine whether it is appropriate to become involved, however, we would not want to create any false expectations that something can be done when it may transpire we have no locus to become involved.

3. I and other elected members are receiving an increasing number of complaints about dog fouling on footways and public parks. I have raised the issue with Police Scotland in an effort to raise awareness, but the police service cannot be everywhere. It is an issue which needs to be addressed by the police service, the general public, and Scottish Borders Council working together.

Dog Fouling (Scotland) Act 2003, Section 4, states, "Every local authority shall authorise in writing at least one person and such other number of persons as they consider necessary or expedient to issue fixed penalty notices in their area in accordance with this Act."

Will Scottish Borders Council now consider authorising staff, in addition to the Police Community Action Team who already have the power, in terms of Section 4 of the Act, and provide them with the necessary training, resource, and appropriate support to enable them to carry out the function of enforcement with regard to the offence listed in Section 1 of that Act?

Reply from Councillor Edgar

Historically the Council had an Environmental Warden Service within Neighbourhoods that served dog fouling FPNs. The decision was made many years ago to disband this service. A pilot program was then trialled as a new approach to dog fouling enforcement whereby third party 3GS were used to patrol the Borders and serve FPNs for littering and dog fouling when witnessed. The idea being that monies made from the service of FPNs would at the very least offset the cost of using a private company. Very few fouling FPNs were served in the trial period and it resulted a huge expense for the Council and the project was not rolled out.

The Dog Control Officer was authorised under section 4 of the Dog Fouling (Scotland) Act 2003 solely to meet the Council's legal requirement to have an authorised Officer and it was agreed enforcement and service of FPNs is the sole responsibility of the CAT team and Police Scotland as a whole.

Budget was provided for the creation of the Dog Education Officer post within Protective Service to promote responsible dog ownership through education in order to change and/or modify dog owners' behaviour in an efficient, effective and targeted way and to co-ordinate all strands of dog related work undertaken across several Council departments e.g. dog control, dog barking, stray dogs and dog fouling.

When dog fouling is reported to the Council, the Dog Education Officer assesses the complaint to establish if the fouling was witnessed, if the accused can be identified and if the complainant is willing to be a witness, information is issued to Police Scotland for their consideration on further action. There is a seven day window for the enquiry to be undertaken. Without this information there is little prospect of a FPN being issued.

It is of note that **all** Police Officers will take action if a dog fouling offence is observed. Before a FPN is issued the dog owner or person in charge has an opportunity to clean up the mess, everyone does.

Our Parks & Environment Team have also erected signs and spray footpath stencils.

There are no plans to authorise further council staff under the Act as there are no resource available.

Our Partnership Analyst has considered the information for SBC, a summary is outlined below.

- Between 1/4/20 & 31/12/20 there have been 176 reports to SBC relating to dog fouling in the Scottish Borders.
- 22% of the total related to cleaning an area.
- 78% of the total related to specific complaints.
- Of those deemed suitable to pass to the Police, 1 FPN was issued and 1 corrective advice due to the age of the person in charge of the dog.

Officers are looking at the public reporting process with a view to improving the identification of those deemed cases suitable for enquiry by the Police.

Supplementary

Councillor Scott referred to a report to the Executive Committee in March 2004 which identified the posts and stated that an annual report on fines issued and paid would be provided. He asked that this report be provided and Councillor Edgar confirmed he would raise this with officers.

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SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL 25 MARCH 2021**STARRED ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE MINUTES****EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 16 MARCH 2021****PROPOSED FINALISED FOOD GROWING STRATEGY**

With reference to paragraph 10 of the Minute of 15 September 2020, there had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director of Assets & Infrastructure. The report presented the finalised Food Growing Strategy 'Cultivating Communities', for proposed adoption following a 12 week public consultation. The 5 year Strategy was a legislative requirement under Part 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. The report summarised the consultation process and outcomes, next steps in delivering on the Strategy Action Plan, and sought approval for the adoption of the Strategy. The Food Growing Strategy supported the Locality Plans for the Scottish Borders and was itself supported with the proposed creation of new policy EP17 in the Local Development Plan. The report further detailed the background to the development of the Strategy, the process undertaken to achieve the final strategy which was attached to the report and the consultation feedback. It was highlighted that the Strategy placed emphasis on participation and self-mobilisation, supporting and facilitating the linking up of volunteers to projects, new growing aspirations to existing resources, and skills sharing across the Borders. Within the Scottish Borders there are a wealth of projects and growing groups who worked collaboratively, sharing skills and volunteers. There were also opportunities to work with local schools. Clarification was sought on how decisions would be made on competing proposals for the use of former play parks. Mr Hedley advised that they were looking for creative solutions and each request would be considered on its merit. Councillor Tatler, seconded by Councillor Rowley moved the following amendment to the recommendation;-

“Approve the finalised Strategy and Action Plan for adoption including an additional section outlining the potential benefits from collective management of Council-owned allotments by plot holders.”

DECISION

(a) **NOTED** the feedback provided during the consultation on the Draft Food Growing Strategy.

*

(b) **AGREED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL** of the finalised Strategy and Action Plan for adoption including an additional section outlining the potential benefits from collective management of Council-owned allotments by plot holders.

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PROPOSED FINALISED FOOD GROWING STRATEGY

Report by Service Director Assets & Infrastructure

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

16 MARCH 2021

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1. Following a 12 week public consultation, this report presents the finalised Food Growing Strategy, 'Cultivating Communities', for proposed adoption. The 5 year Strategy is a legislative requirement under Part 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. This report summarises the consultation process and outcomes, next steps in delivering on the Strategy Action Plan, and seeks approval for the adoption of the Strategy.**
- 1.2. The Food Growing Strategy supports the Locality Plans for the Scottish Borders and is itself supported with the proposed creation of new policy EP17 in the Local Development Plan.
- 1.3 The Consultation Draft Food Growing Strategy was previously presented to Executive on 15 September 2020.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Executive Committee:-**
 - (a) Notes the feedback provided during the consultation on the Draft Food Growing Strategy.**
 - (b) Approves the finalised Strategy and Action Plan for adoption.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Part 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 introduces new duties on Local Authorities. A key requirement of the Legislation is for every Local Authority to develop a Food Growing Strategy under section 119 of the Act. Each Authority must set out in its strategy how it will provide land to meet demand for food growing as allotments or other forms of cultivation of vegetables, fruit, herbs or flowers for community or individual growing.
- 3.2 While Part 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act came into effect in 2015, the detailed government guidance on preparing the Food Growing Strategy was published in November 2018. Since then Officers have been engaging with stakeholders and undertaking a review of Allotments and Community food growing in the Scottish Borders. The Strategy was originally programmed to be adopted in Spring 2020, but due to Covid-19 and the resultant restrictions and resource pressures this has been delayed.
- 3.3 The Food Growing Strategy is prepared in direct response to this legislative driver. The scope and content of the Strategy is set out in the legislation. The remit is clear, to support community growing in all its guises. The Food Growing Strategy is a legislative requirement, but it is also our vehicle for nurturing and developing community food growing across the Scottish Borders, in line with the national food growing agenda. It is important to note that, while there are linkages, the legislation and resultant Strategy does not directly extend to socio-economic issues or commercial food growing and agricultural land use planning.

4 THE STRATEGY

- 4.1 The legislation outlines that Food Growing Strategies are required to cover 5 year periods, therefore the Food Growing Strategy will run from 2021 to 2026, and will be reviewed thereafter every 5 years developing and furthering community food growing in the Scottish Borders. In preparing this new Strategy, Officers have undertaken various appraisals and measures;
- Benchmarking of other Local Authorities has been undertaken, as well as seeking out advice and guidance from various partners (Greenspace Scotland, etc).
 - A survey of community food growing sites in the region has been prepared and mapped digitally (now available online).
 - A survey of SBC owned allotment sites has been undertaken to identify plot sizes and features.
 - Officers have been working to identify land for potential new food growing sites where there is known demand.
 - Resources (the volunteer co-ordinator) has been brought in-house from Live Borders to better meet the needs of the Strategy.
 - Ensure the Council's flagship food growing project, the Wilton Lodge Park walled garden (part of the HLF legacy), continues to flourish through secured investment in refurbishment of the dilapidated glasshouse.

- Engagement with Community Planning Partners (CPPs) and 3rd sector organisations is underway to identify opportunities.
- 4.2 Prior to preparing the Draft Strategy, a 12 week public consultation was launched on 24 July 2019. Stakeholders such as Community Planning Partners, local 3rd sector organisations, Allotment Associations/Societies and Community growing project managers were engaged with (where possible) through a series of meetings. The aim of this was to gain insight into current/potential local food growing activity and demand for future capacity building, to guide the development of the Strategy. It had a very good response, with 300 respondents. Following the feedback received during this process, a Draft Strategy was prepared and approved by Executive in September 2020 for public consultation.
- 4.3 The Strategy has been developed based on the findings of the consultation process. The aim of this Strategy is to support and facilitate anyone who wants to get growing, through existing growing opportunities and new approaches to growing. The key objectives of the Food Growing Strategy are:
- To provide a central resource for community growing information
 - To raise awareness around community growing in the Scottish Borders
 - To show you how to get growing: where, how and who can help you/your community group
 - To help you get your community growing project off the ground
 - To help identify potential allotment sites and growing spaces
- 4.4 In developing the Food Growing Strategy, Scottish Borders Council acknowledges the wider benefits associated with food growing including:
- Improving health and wellbeing outcomes
 - Promoting opportunities for social interaction
 - Environmental improvement including climate change and food waste
 - Skills development
 - Economic development and sustainability.
- 4.5 Survey responses identified a need for support to individuals and communities interested in food growing, broadly falling into three themes which form the structure of the strategy:
- Getting started: how can I get growing?** Support for getting started - Skills and Advice; training, confidence and resources to get started.
- Where can I grow?** Help to find space – existing sites and new growing spaces and getting the right permissions in place.
- Where can I get support for my growing project/growing activities?**
How to resource your project: Funding, networking and skills sharing
- 4.6 The Strategy places emphasis on participation and self-mobilisation, supporting and facilitating the linking up of volunteers to projects, new growing aspirations to existing resources, and skills sharing across the Borders. Within the Scottish Borders there are a wealth of projects and

growing groups who work collaboratively, sharing skills and volunteers. There are opportunities to work with local schools.

- 4.7 The Strategy also sets out new growing opportunities within the Scottish Borders, thinking creatively about how and where communities can get growing. The extensive network of amenity greenspace owned by Scottish Borders Council presents an opportunity for communities to 'adopt' areas for growing: former bedding plant areas and amenity grass areas may lend themselves to adoption for community food growing and the strategy invites exploration of these opportunities within communities.
- 4.8 As part of the Strategy, information on all growing opportunities within the Scottish Borders – existing community growing sites, allotment sites and other growing sites - are listed and mapped to be made available online. This is a 'live' resource that can be updated as new sites become available.
- 4.9 As well as supporting and facilitating self-deployment of individuals and community groups to get growing, the Strategy sets out the Council's commitments through the Action Plan:

Action	
1. Develop Policy Framework	1.1. Investigate and explore opportunities to develop further policies in support of food growing and community growing with Community Planning Partners
	1.2. Adopt new planning policy - EP17 Food Growing and Community Growing spaces – as part of the Local Development Plan, safeguarding food growing spaces and enabling increased provision.
	1.3. Review of corporate policies and strategies to support Food Growing and Community Food Growing.
2. Review provision and Management of Allotments	2.1. Co-ordinate waiting list information with appropriate Allotments Associations to ensure data collection is handled accurately and appropriately
	2.2. Investigate new allotment sites in areas of demand, working with community groups and private landowners where possible
	2.3. Review and implement new Allotment Regulations, including the setting of fair rent charges
	2.4 Prepare an Annual Allotment Report
3. Support the Community Growing Network	3.1. Develop a networking event(s) for community growers and volunteers
	3.2. Explore the creation of 'Growing Ambassadors', as part of the #yourpart Corporate Programme
	3.3. Consolidate resources for food growing through the development of the Volunteer Co-ordinator role

5 CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

- 5.1 Following Executive approval, the Consultation process ran for 12 weeks from 15 September to 8 December 2020. This consultation was promoted to all Community Councils, In Bloom groups, various 3rd sector organisations, publicly via a press release and via website and social media. It received 34 responses.
- 5.2 Responses to the consultation included a number of suggestions and a broad range of support (see Appendix 2 for redacted transcript and full SBC response).
- 5.3 Practical issues such as food growing in private gardens, garden waste, composting services, seed banks and seed swaps were raised as possible opportunities. Some responses noted interest in local growing project sites, which can be further developed within the strategy and action plan. The Strategy has been amended to include reference lists and clearer links to the online map of growing sites to reflect feedback.
- 5.4 Issues such as resources were raised by several respondents, with responses outlining suggestions of creating more posts to support community food growing and outreach. Currently the Council has not allocated additional resources to the Food Growing Strategy and Action Plan. However, the Volunteer Co-ordinator post role is currently being developed to provide more outreach and support across the Scottish Borders, building on the successfully established project at Wilton Lodge Park walled garden, and a capital project is underway refurbishing the glass house which will enable an expansion of what is grown and increase in volunteering numbers.
- 5.5 Some felt that the lack of reference to commercial growing in the draft Strategy was a weakness. As outlined previously in this report, the legislation provides a clear remit for the Strategy, which encompasses community food growing on local authority owned land. The wider issues of commercial food growing and agricultural land use planning fall outside the scope of this Strategy.
- 5.6 Furthermore, two respondents felt the Strategy title was misleading, and should instead be renamed something that more clearly expressed this remit. The two suggestions were "Local Community Food Growing Strategy" and "Scottish Borders Grow Your Own Food Strategy". In response, the Strategy title has been changed from 'Scottish Borders Food Growing Strategy' to 'Scottish Borders Community Food Growing Strategy'.
- 5.7 Promotion of organic gardening and the impact of pesticide use on pollinators in relation to biodiversity loss were also raised. The Council continues to consider how it will respond to the Climate Emergency through the Climate Action Plan. These matters, and other related challenges, can be explored and developed as part of this strategy and/or other Corporate Strategies as set out in action 1.3.

6 NEXT STEPS

- 6.1 When approved, the Strategy will be adopted and launched on the Council's website, social media and local press and through the current network within the Scottish Borders who have shown interest in the development of the strategy. Additionally, some community engagement perhaps under the

banner of Floral Gateway will be considered to further raise awareness, identify successes and opportunities to further aims of the strategy.

- 6.2 The Actions within the Strategy will be implemented and Officers will work with colleagues across Community Planning Partners and the different Services, to deliver on the commitments contained in the Action Plan.

7 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Financial

- a) There are no financial implications associated with this report.
- b) Within the Parks & Environment Service a Volunteer Co-ordinator post exists, as detailed at 5.5 this post role is currently being developed to provide support across the Scottish Borders.
- c) Work at the Hawick Walled Garden Glasshouse is due to complete in 2021/22 and will enable an expansion of volunteer numbers and growing capacity.

7.2 Risk and Mitigations

- a) In order to meet the requirements of the legislation Scottish Borders Council has undertaken a consultation exercise and engaged with stakeholders, and their views have been taken into account in shaping the Strategy. The Action Plan aims to ensure that the Strategy is implemented and mitigates potential risks to success.
- b) The Action Plan requires resource to be implemented. There is a risk to delivery if insufficient resource is allocated to the Actions contained therein, e.g. supporting community growing, sourcing land and associated infrastructure for growing etc. There are various options available which will be explored further to mitigate against this.
- c) Due to Covid-19, signs have been erected across outdoor volunteering and allotment sites advising the public to follow government social distancing and other guidance regarding Covid-19 in accordance with Government guidance. The same information is included in the Strategy as a central point of reference.

7.3 Integrated Impact Assessment

An IIA has been undertaken and it is anticipated that there are no adverse impact or unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; equality of opportunity between 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. Indeed, reducing socio-economic inequality is inferred in the promotion and facilitation of local food growing opportunities to all.

7.4 Acting Sustainably

There are no adverse direct economic, social or environmental issues identified within this report.

7.5 Carbon Management

There are no direct carbon emissions impacts as a result of this report; there may be net reduction in emissions related to reduced food miles from the likely increase in locally grown produce.

7.6 Rural Proofing

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

7.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

There are no changes to the Scheme of Administration of Scheme of Delegation.

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 the final report.

Approved by

David Robertson

Executive Director, Finance and Regulatory Signature

Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Jason Hedley	Chief Officer Roads. Ext 8037
Carol Cooke	Urban Designer, Ext 5537

Background Papers:

Previous Minute Reference: Executive Committee - Tuesday, 15th September, 2020 at 10.00 am, Agenda item 10.

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

Contact - Jacqueline Whitelaw, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, TD6 0SA, 01835-824000, ext. 5431.

APPENDIX 1 – DRAFT FOOD GROWING STRATEGY (see separate pdf)

APPENDIX 2 – CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

Organisation name if given/applicable	Please provide your comments on the draft Scottish Borders Food Growing Strategy.	Response
	Agreed	Noted
Galashiels	<p>Fabulous. Taking the credit for other people's hard work as always 😊</p> <p>Why do you want to push people to grow their own but not help them to do so. Why don't you collect garden waste and compost it to give it back to people who can use it in their gardens and spaces for growing.</p> <p>Why not sponsor a seed bank or give away seeds. Why not allow keen gardeners to plant up Bank St Gardens etc using flowers you have paid for. Why no grants for people wanting to garden etc?</p>	<p>SBC does not provide a green waste collection service. However a number of commercial operators do within the Scottish Borders, see web link below for details. Sustainably produced and peat free compost can be pre-purchased and picked up from our a number of our Community Recycling Centres, for further details see web link below: https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20001/bins_rubbish_and_recycling/465/garden_waste</p> <p>While the Council doesn't currently have the resources to run or sponsor a seed bank, this may be something we explore with 3rd sector organisations.</p> <p>The provision of the planting at Bank Street Gardens and Old Gala House is being organised by Galashiels in Bloom, funded by Galashiels Pay & Display monies this year, with future funding options currently being investigated.</p>
Newstead Village Committee	<p>Glad to hear there is support for communities who are thinking about starting growing projects.</p> <p>Scottish Borders Council must work hard to protect a variety of green spaces from potential development to prepare for more community groups coming forward over the coming years. Reassuring to see this talked about with regards to the Local Plan, but imperative that commitment results in protected green spaces in and around communities. Especially old orchards which could be given a new lease of life.</p>	Noted.

Retired... member community council	Shame Eddleston does not have a space There seems to be an unused area behind the water works. Not sure who owns it. It's over grown and quite big.	Noted re: possible site in Eddleston.
Reston Community Company LTD	<p>The strategy was informative and highlighted several issues, one being of funding and the other planning. Funding, although may be small to start an allotment or growing area, it is still required initially especially if it is a community Garden/allotment.</p> <p>Planning, groups or organisations starting a community garden/allotment may find they need a shed/hut to store tools/equipment, however the erection of a shed or hut may require planning permission, to which this is an expense that may be a difficult to fund. Assistance from the planning department by means of waiver of the fee would be beneficial.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Where planning consent is required for a change of use of land to form allotments, the planning authority would encourage a single application for the allotments and any structures that may be erected on individual plots such as greenhouses, sheds or poly tunnels. A condition would be added to any consent requiring a design code for these structures to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The design code would include details of the maximum height and size of the structures, or would provide series of styles and types of structures that would be acceptable. The fee for this type of application would be £401 and there is no option for the Council to waive this fee.</p> <p>In the case of existing allotments, where there is no design code in place, planning permission would normally be required for any new structure that may be erected on individual plots. The fee for this type of application would be calculated on the floor space created by the development. Where the floor space does not exceed 40 square metres, the fee would be £202.</p> <p>In both cases, there is no provision for this fee to be waived, unless the applicant is the Community Council, where the fee would be half the normal fee.</p>

<p>Hawick extension to Langholm Chill Club and Langholm digs for Victory Project</p>	<p>Hi , I am not great at putting my words across on paper, so Every little bit of unused land should be shared so long as people are willing to take of it. I started last year growing chillis in hawick and have got 3 charities in Hawick on board, Burnfoot Hub, Katherine elliot centre and Wilton School (cheeky monkeys club). I have a shared drying area and with agreement from the other residents we all have created an amazing array of 47 chilli varieties in a space the size of a double garage. Garlic, tomatoes, potatoes, onions all in homemade planters. We build a waist level retractable poly tunnel for £20. I have been on CH5 news, The Times, Sunday Herald, numerous papers, local radio etc, all because of a newly acquired love for grow and eating what you grow, it's crazy. I am planning on a 3m x 4m poly tunnel to extend for next year and between Hawick and Langholm create a world record for the largest variety of chilli plants in one display any where in the world 400 varieties. We do have 175 varieties at the moment making us the Chilli Capital place to come in the UK.</p>	<p>Noted – great work!</p>
	<p>This seems an excellent, well thought out piece of work.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>

	Looks as though there is lots happening already, and there is plenty of information available.	
Hawick community council	<p>I don't understand why planning permission for greenhouses on allotments is required, and I don't understand why this is not made much clearer in the document. It took me over 3 years to confirm this.</p> <p>If this is a Scottish Government regulation, then the SBC should fill in the application template and pay for the application given that a greenhouse is improving public land and that the tenant is paying for the greenhouse itself.</p>	<p>For allotments, where there is no design code in place, planning permission would normally be required for any new structure that may be erected on individual plots. The fee for this type of application would be calculated on the floor space created by the development. Where the floor space does not exceed 40 square metres, the fee would be £202.</p> <p>There is no provision for this fee to be waived, unless the applicant is the Community Council, where the fee would be half the normal fee. There is no provision for local authorities to complete application forms on behalf of applicants.</p>
HAPi Hawick Acorn Project initiative	HAPi was set up to allow young adults with limited ability to grow harvest and eat healthily	Noted.
Greener Melrose	<p>Great to see that you have put this together. Lots of great contact information.</p> <p>The name is misleading, as most food produced in the Borders is from farms, so perhaps 'local community food growing strategy' would have been better.</p> <p>I help to organise the Greener Melrose Community Orchard (over 100 trees now 7 years old and producing well) and allotments - we have 10 couples/individuals with raised beds for</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>We can consider amending the name to Community Food Growing Strategy</p>

	<p>vegetables and flowers, in a deer and rabbit fenced area, and have recently received funding for an area of c 0.25ha to be rabbit and deer fenced to create a Forest Garden where we will plant perennials and climbers all to produce food. This is all on land owned by Borders Forest Trust and managed by GM under an agreement. We could not find land in Melrose to create allotments. We need to provide you more information for the map.</p> <p>I think you could have provided sections to make comments in, not just one block.</p> <p>I now live in lauder (I helped set up Greener Melrose when I lived 3 miles from Melrose) and in lauder we have no provision for allotments, and I was not aware that SBC were obliged to provide areas for allotments, so i would like to follow this up. There was a great loss of opportunity when the new houses were built on the proposed school site. But there is probably land around the edges of Lauder which can be identified - also the Lauder Common Good Land - there may be space there too. A lot of land is used by recreational horse owners, so there is plenty space, but it all needs expensive fencing against livestock, deer and rabbits and a water supply and parking area provided.</p>	<p>Noted, many thanks - the map is a 'live' resource and can continue to be updated with new and additional information.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted – Scottish Borders Council will take all reasonable steps to meet local demand for allotments as per the legislation, please contact neighbourhoodservice@scotborders.gov.uk to discuss any local community growing aspirations.</p>
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	<p>Is there a map showing all the SBC public spaces I can access?</p> <p>The most important thing is that allotments are very close to where you live, so even a mile can be a bit too far for most people.</p> <p>Working with schools is very difficult at the best of times and currently not an option during c-19 restrictions.</p> <p>The planning restrictions seem very onerous, especially if a fee is required for say, a hut. This needs to be reviewed as planning fees can scupper a project. I can't see the link or the details of EP17 referred to in p24 of the draft consultation document.</p>	<p>SBC owned greenspace is all mapped, and there are plans to include this information in the online map available here</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Where planning consent is required for a change of use of land to form allotments, the planning authority would encourage a single application for the allotments and any structures that may be erected on individual plots such as greenhouses, sheds or poly tunnels. A condition would be added to any consent requiring a design code for these structures to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The design code would include details of the maximum height and size of the structures, or would provide series of styles and types of structures that would be acceptable. The fee for this type of application would be £401 and there is no option for the Council to waive this fee.</p> <p>In the case of existing allotments, where there is no design code in place, planning permission would normally be required for any new structure that may be erected on individual plots. The fee for this type of application would be calculated on the floor space created by the development. Where the floor space does not exceed 40 square metres, the fee would be £202.</p> <p>In both cases, there is no provision for this fee to be waived, unless the applicant is the Community Council, where the fee would be half the normal fee.</p>
	<p>Looks great, lots of good tips.</p> <p>A comma missing between Gala and Eyemouth on page 7.</p> <p>Will the council set plans for financial security for projects.</p> <p>I live near Innerleithen and know the funding for the school garden co-ordinator is a yearly uncertainty. I would be nice if the council could</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>The resourcing challenge is noted.</p>

	financially support such important schemes, to allow room for planning ahead and attract good staff and stability.	
None	I am impressed, this is what the Council should be promoting. All assistance should be given to community projects .	Noted.
Borders Organic Gardeners (member of)	<p>This is surprisingly comprehensive and I commend the work that has gone into it. I am pleased to see the support for increasing allotments and other ways of food growing. The inclusion of Policy EP17 is great, but it would be good to know that the Council has some leverage with private developers in pushing for this. (Scottish Gov policy support?). The incessant building of large houses on small plots is disturbing but if open space for community gardening is enforced in new developments that would be a huge improvement.</p> <p>I don't know if there is any way in which all the links scattered throughout the document could be in one place to make locating them easier?</p> <p>The networking event when possible, is welcome. Our experience in Borders Organic Gardeners is its hard to cover the whole area with a single event unless its</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>We can add in a referenced list at the back</p> <p>Noted with thanks – SBC would be keen to discuss this further with Borders Organic Gardeners</p>

	<p>huge appeal, like Potato Day. So east and west events may be more useful and also reduces CO2 travel emissions.</p>	
	<p>The strategy appears to allow massive transfer of common ground to third parties to grow poor quality produce on the basis that somehow this is going to feed people better than buying produce from retailers. This is a deluded strategy that plays into the shrill screeches from the green brigade who pretend that it is possible to grow sufficient food from a small piece of land to sustain families. I predict that large parts of land currently used for recreational purposes will be annexed by middle class people who have sold their large garden as a building plot and now want to “grow their own” as it is the latest fad. I’m sure that after the first harvest of a slug ridden lettuce that even the rabbit won’t touch, after hours of back breaking</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>The socio-economic benefits of community growing are well researched and documented, and are embedded in Government legislation.</p> <p>Careful monitoring of sites will be essential to avoid any greenspace becoming abandoned/neglected.</p>

	<p>digging and watering, they will abandon their dream and go back to Waitrose deliveries, allowing the annexed land to fall fallow, but still out of bounds to the many. And anyone complaining about the annexing will be treated as persona non grata. This strategy is a disaster waiting to happen, and will do nothing but exacerbate the reduction in fully accessible council land that can be used for all, instead transferring it to a loud, sharp elbowed group of the worst kind of middle class virtue signallers.</p>	
	<p>A brilliant strategy to encourage more people to grow their own food. I am part of Greener Melrose so keen to see this sort of strategy being picked up by SBC. My husband and I have a vegetable plot in our garden so have been growing food for many years. Creating and supporting school gardens is very important. And also encouraging lower income families to consider growing food. I look forward to hearing about how this strategy progresses and wholeheartedly</p>	<p>Noted.</p>

	support it.	
Allotments 4 Chirside	<p>Good, clearly set out and good signposting to information. Might be useful to have a contact within SBC planning office who can be designated for/to the growing strategy as experience has shown it is difficult to find the right person within the council who can directly help.</p> <p>Chirside have privately run allotments which are open to the residents of the surrounding area but this is not on the map for growing strategy.</p>	<p>Noted. We can include a main contact within SBC for enquiries.</p> <p>Noted – the mapped information available here is live and can be regularly updated with new/additional information. Please contact neighbourhoodservice@scotborders.gov.uk with details and these can be added in.</p>

Abundant Borders	<p>While I appreciate the work that has gone into the document, it is not a STRATEGY document. It is a report which records the activity of some of the community food growing in the Borders. Community food growing is small scale and can only be a small part of any overall strategy.</p> <p>The vast majority of food growing in the Borders is by farms and they are completely absent from this document. SBC should have a comprehensive strategy for food growing in the Borders which should cover all aspects of land use. This should be an integral part of the councils wider strategy. There is no use SBC declaring a climate emergency without tackling industrial scale food growing - including growing animals for food. The country as a whole will only reach net zero carbon in the target period if we tackle farm outputs.</p>	<p>The Council is required to respond to the Community Empowerment Act Part 9 Allotments and produce a food growing strategy for community food growing. Commercial food growing and the wider Land Use planning context are outwith this remit. However, a South of Scotland Regional Land Use Partnership is to be established to develop a Regional Land Use Framework by 2023 with a focus on delivering net zero emissions through sustainable land management. This RLUP will involve both SBC and D&GC.</p>
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Greener Melrose	<p>This is a welcome Strategy which contains a great deal of information and inspiration.</p> <p>It is unfortunately misnamed as it doesn't refer at all to local commercial food growers. It should really be called the Scottish Borders Grow Your Own Food Strategy.</p> <p>It is a reactive document addressing the current levels of demand. Greener Melrose believes that we are living in a Climate and Ecological Emergency which is soon going to get worse. Long supply chains delivering often mediocre food will be increasingly under threat. Growing more of our own food is part of the solution and has many benefits.</p> <p>We welcome the support being given by SBC to this sector but it was unclear which department is doing this, how contact should be made and what form that help would take.</p> <p>We would like to see an additional three full-time outreach posts being established, one in each of the east, central and west parts of the Borders. They could be hosted by existing organisations such as Abundant Borders, Greener Melrose and Peebles CAN. These posts are necessary to reach out to individuals, groups and</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>We will consider amending the name of the Strategy based on the feedback provided. The Council is required to respond to the Community Empowerment Act Part 9 Allotments and produce a food growing strategy for community food growing. Commercial food growing and the wider Land Use planning is outwith this remit. A South of Scotland Regional Land Use Partnership is to be established to develop a Regional Land Use Framework by 2023 with a focus on delivering net zero emissions through sustainable land management. This RLUP will involve both SBC and D&GC.</p> <p>Noted - contact details can be added in.</p> <p>Noted – SBC acknowledge the financial realities it is faced with in responding to this duty. Funding advice and guidance is available to communities wishing to pursue projects supporting the Councils Food Growing Strategy. The Council does employ a community food growing volunteer co-ordinator and this resource is accessible to communities wishing to receive advice and training on food growing in their community.</p>
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	<p>schools, to link people up, promote the benefits of growing your own food, demonstrate good practice, run training sessions, link with funders, etc., etc.</p> <p>Many local green groups, such as Greener Melrose, would respond well to approaches made by such a Grow Your Own Officer and organise events, promote on social media, etc. It would be a good collaboration which would allow interest to build more quickly and to address issues of food resilience in the Scottish Borders.</p>	<p>Noted – we would welcome such collaboration as the Strategy develops.</p>
	<p>An excellent idea which I hope can be expanded to provide initiatives and education in all areas of the Borders</p>	

	<p>I wish you would put as much effort into providing allotments as you do into creating glossy publications with photos etc like this consultation document. I live in Duns and know several people that would be interested in an allotment, but there are none. I would also add that I only came across this consultation by accident (mis-typed google search) so how you feel this is really “consulting” when I suspect that less than 1% of people in the Borders area are aware of it is beyond me.</p>	<p>Noted – SBC are in discussion with various communities about meeting local demand for allotments, if you would like to have a detailed discussion about your local needs and aspirations, please contact neighbourhoodservice@scotborders.gov.uk .</p> <p>We had 300 respondents to our initial survey, which is a good response rate. We would normally have a physical presence in local contact centres, and Floral Gateway events to further promote the consultation however this year this has unfortunately not been possible.</p>
Member of Greener Melrose	<p>Very comprehensive document and well put-together given the time-frame given after SBC's getting onboard. A few comments :</p> <p>1 Much should be made of Abundant Borders' experience and knowledge, to save other groups 'reinventing the wheel';</p> <p>2 The feedback clearly identifies that lack of skills or knowledge is a prime factor holding people back. Given that combined growing and cooking guidance is apparently much more successful than growing alone, that's an area of emphasis for SBC;</p> <p>3 Much should also be made of working with schools, not only because schools provide a forum and leadership from teaching but also there's huge value in catching youngsters early and instilling knowledge and interest;</p> <p>4 That's especially so during the pandemic,</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>1.Abundant Borders are doing fantastic work and we have been in discussion with them about their various initiatives.</p> <p>2.Noted. The inclusion of education within the strategy is recognised as important. The Council does employ a community food growing volunteer co-ordinator and this resource is accessible to schools wishing to receive advice and training on food growing in their community.</p> <p>3.The benefits of food growing within schools is well documented – SBC have been investigating opportunities for schools to link up to local skills and knowledge within their communities, however the recent restrictions on physical gathering have impeded this.</p> <p>4.Noted</p> <p>5.Noted, this definitely observed in our communities</p> <p>6.Where demand is identified, SBC are currently exploring possible sites for community gardens and allotments. This is an ongoing process that will evolve during the period of the Strategy.</p> <p>7.This depends on the individual owner and their own aspirations, however we are working with Community Planning Partners (CPP's) to investigate opportunities within their estate for community growing sites.</p> <p>8.This isn't something that has been done by a local authority in Scotland as yet, and is not part of our current budget.</p>

	<p>where outside activities are at a premium; 5 The pandemic and recovery can be used as a way to realign people's activities and values and encourage grow-your-own, more personal care and attention to diet and well-being - SBC can focus on and encourage this, especially given the increased interest in gardening this year; 6 Can SBC look at its property holding and identify redundant land for allotments / grow-your-own? 7 Can SBC encourage all private landowners and Council Tax payers to do the same i.e. review any spare lots of land that may be turned over to better use? 8 Can SBC provide incentives for grow-your-own, using any form of Council Tax incentive?</p>	
Burnfoot Community Council	<p>i would like to see more being done to help individuals to begin growing food in their own gardens. SBC could work with housing associations to assist anyone who wishes to begin home growing. They could organize weed killing or to turn over the garden for a small charge or for free if people are on low income. There could be a borders community plant and seed buying group set up to keep the prices down. They could place orders each season and by buying in bulk the savings would be passed on to groups and individuals Re start the garden waste pick ups and</p>	<p>Noted – all are invited to make use of the advice and resources provided via the Strategy, whether growing at home or in a community garden/allotment. Support for growing within land owned by Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) is managed by the RSLs themselves, with examples such as the Abundant Borders garden in Duns. SBC does not provide a green waste collection service. However a number of commercial operators do within the Scottish Borders, see web link below for details. Sustainably produced and peat free compost can be pre-purchased and picked up from our a number of our Community Recycling Centres, for further details see web link below: https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20001/bins_rubbish_and_recycling/465/garden_waste</p>

	begin a community composting area. When people bring in items to compost, this could be weighed and for every deposit this could allow them to collect an amount of compost for free. The rest could be sold to local gardeners to help cover any costs	
Tweedsmuir Community Company	I think this is a really useful document, well set out. Great links to useful resources Clear and easy to follow	Noted.
	This seems a good document, clearly set out, albeit a bit long!! I enjoyed the visuals and the personal positive examples of people already involved in projects. I agree with most of the suggestions and comments already put forward from previous consultation.	Noted.
	This is the kind of strategy that makes you wonder why SBC exists. On the one hand SBC allows houses to be built with tiny gardens or allows homeowners to sell their large garden as a building plot, and on the other hand, SBC extols the virtues of taking public land and turning it into allotments for the same middle class people who have bought the tiny house or sold their garden for a housing plot. It would be impossible to make this stuff up.	Noted.
Individual	I think its a good strategy and links into anti-poverty / reducing inequalities work.	Noted.

	<p>On the whole, this document was a well put together resource for ‘who to talk to’ for someone who wants to start growing their own food in the Scottish Borders. It was heartening and positive, but I fear it doesn’t go far enough. In the face of our present existential crisis, it would more appropriately be a few pages at the end of the sort of document that is really needed. According to the science, our current situation is dire, We have to face up to the reality of the climate emergency and the loss of our biodiversity. We have to do this on a local as well as a national and international level.</p> <p>I was disappointed that the document itself didn’t address the real issues, namely, that we need to have a strong, resilient and sustainable food network that respects the environment whilst providing low cost nutritious food for the local population.</p> <p>In my view, the document should have covered the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A discussion about local farming, which needs to move to a carbon-free, sustainable model that increases biodiversity. This might, for example, involve shifting away completely from the present model, away from sheep and 	<p>Noted.</p> <p>The Council is required to respond to the Community Empowerment Act Part 9 Allotments and produce a food growing strategy for community food growing. Commercial food growing and the wider Land Use planning is outwith this remit. However, a South of Scotland Regional Land Use Partnership is to be established to develop a Regional Land Use Framework by 2023 with a focus on delivering net zero emissions through sustainable land management. This RLUP will involve both SBC and D&GC.</p> <p>The issues around farming and the low carbon agenda will be covered through the South of Scotland Regional Land Use Partnership. This is being established to develop a Regional Land Use Framework by 2023 with a focus on delivering net zero emissions through sustainable land management. This RLUP will involve both SBC and D&GC.</p>
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	<p>cattle - the consensus among scientists seems to be that, as a population, we will probably have to shift to a more plant based diet in order to tackle the climate emergency. We may also need to switch to organic forms of food production to try to halt biodiversity loss. These are the sorts of questions I would like to have seen in this document.</p> <p>What sort of help and guidance is being offered to farmers? Is there a way of the council working in partnership with farmers in order to meet the needs of the local people and the environment?</p> <p>2. I would also like to have seen a discussion on the banning of pesticide use both in farms and gardens as well as all council property, verges, pavements etc. Increasing evidence is coming out about the danger to human health from these toxins - both in terms of being exposed to the spray and also the residue in our food. I would like to have seen a discussion around these issues leading to what action the council is taking to protect local people and wildlife. Apart from the threat to human health, we cannot separate the loss of our insect pollinators with our food growing strategies.</p> <p>3. I would like to have seen the council leading the way in helping local people</p>	<p>The Council continues to minimise its use of pesticides and only use pesticides which are licenced for use in the management and maintenance of amenity land including roads and footways. It does so using trained competent staff and contractors and in line with the guidance associated with the application of pesticides. Alternative solutions will continue to be considered in order to continue to drive down use, including less intensive maintenance practices and non-intervention where practicable.</p> <p>Noted – SBC acknowledge the financial realities it faces in responding to this duty. Funding advice and guidance is available to communities wishing to pursue projects supporting the Councils Food Growing Strategy.</p>
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	<p>growing their own food. Rather than waiting for individuals and groups to approach the council (and then potentially ending up on a five year waiting list) I would like to have seen the council take the initiative. Why isn't the council setting up local allotment sites, preparing raised beds or getting forest gardens started and inviting local people to get involved?</p> <p>The council could set up a bank of volunteers and some funded positions that could get the whole thing going. In my view, allotments should be free, people should not have to pay anything to have access to a parcel of land to grow their own food.</p> <p>The council could have a waste collection service that makes compost and then distributes the compost to the local allotments. The council took an incredibly passive role in this document. Why isn't the council taking a proactive role in helping local people to start growing their own food?</p> <p>There needs to be a vision - what is the council hoping to achieve? In my view, that vision needs to be more of us growing our own food ourselves, backed up by local farms, alongside lots of trees and wild spaces.</p>	<p>The Council does employ a community food growing volunteer co-ordinator and this resource is accessible to communities wishing to receive advice and training on food growing in their community. There is a strong record of success in this area locally where the Council responds to and supports people wishing to get involved in food growing in their community, in a partnership model and this model is likely to yield the most success for both Community and Council in addressing and responding to this issue going forward. Scottish Borders Council will take all reasonable steps to meet local demand for allotments as per the legislation, please contact neighbourhoodservice@scotborders.gov.uk to discuss any local community growing aspirations.</p> <p>The issue of allotment regulation including fees is subject to a separate report.</p> <p>SBC does not provide a green waste collection service. However a number of commercial operators do within the Scottish Borders, see web link below for details. Sustainably produced and peat free compost can be pre-purchased and picked up from our a number of our Community Recycling Centres, for further details see web link below: https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20001/bins_rubbish_and_recycling/465/garden_waste</p> <p>Noted.</p>
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	The present document doesn't go anywhere near far enough.	
	I think that this is something that Jedburgh could benefit from.	Noted.
	I think it's a fantastic idea. Would it be possible for schools to benefit from this? As a Home Economics teacher I despair as our fruit and veg are delivered from Glasgow. Sustainability, using local produce and seasonality are all part of our curriculum!	The benefits of food growing within schools is well documented – SBC have through the Strategy been investigating opportunities for schools to link up to local skills and knowledge within their communities, however the recent restrictions on physical gathering have impeded this.
	As someone who would like to start up a committee garden here at Lindean I would welcome any help and advice from people who actually have been involved in food growing projects already up and running in the birders. Also funding would be most welcome.	Please get in touch on neighbourhoodservice@scotborders.gov.uk to discuss local community growing aspirations. Funding advice and guidance is available to communities wishing to pursue projects via the Food Growing Strategy.
n/a	Its an excellent basis to build on in local communities.	Noted.

	<p>recognises the benefits of community growing in its many forms and through this Strategy seeks to support and promote community growing across the region."</p> <p>SO IS THIS STATEMENT - 'Our vision for community growing in the Scottish Borders is that people wishing to grow their own fruit and vegetables can access or develop a range of community growing opportunities in their area.'</p> <p>THIS IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT, GIVEN THE NUMBERS OF INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES AROUND THE BORDERS WHO FIND THEMSELVES IN NEED OF USING FOODBANKS. I WORK AS A VOLUNTEER WITH THE GALASHIELS FOODBANK, AND AM DISAPPOINTED TO FIND NO REFERENCE (IN THE DRAFT POLICY) TO, OR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF, THE GROWING DEPENDENCY ON, FOODBANKS IN THE SCOTTISH BORDERS AND HOW THE COUNCIL MIGHT ADDRESS THIS ISSUE, (ALTHOUGH MENTION IS GIVEN IN PASSING TO SOME OF THE COMMUNITY FOOD GROWING PROJECTS THAT SUPPORT THEIR LOCAL FOODBANKS). OK IT'S A NATIONAL PROBLEM, BUT STILL ONE THAT REGIONAL AUTHOTIES NEED TO ADDRESS IMAGINATIVELY AND WITH GREATER CONCERN THAN HITHERTO.</p>	<p>The strategy responds to the Community Empowerment Act duties, and while there are clear links to food poverty and education and awareness it cannot address the economic and socio-political issues which are at play behind the issue of community food banks and their increased use. There are recognised challenges around Food Banks and the distribution of perishables, however various models such as the Burnfoot Hub have successfully piloted a 'Fareshare' approach to sharing community grown produce.</p>
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	<p>COMMUNITY FOOD GROWING COULD BE ONE OF THESE IMAGINATIVE RESPONSES TO THIS ISSUE, ESPECIALLY GIVEN THE ADDITIONAL BENEFITS OF THIS AS OUTLINED BELOW.</p> <p>I WELCOME THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE BENEFITS THAT COMMUNITY FOOD GROWING CAN PROVIDE WHICH ARE LISTED IN THE POLICY DRAFT - Health, Environmental, Economic, Social, Educational, Food Security, etc. THE STATEMENT 'Our vision for community growing in the Scottish Borders is that people wishing to grow their own fruit and vegetables can access or develop a range of community growing opportunities in their area' IS ALSO WELCOME.....ALONG WITH THE STATEMENT THAT FOLLOWS - 'The aim of this strategy is to support and facilitate anyone who wants to get growing, through existing growing opportunities and new approaches to growing. '</p> <p>WILL SBC EMPLOY EXTRA STAFF AND PROVIDE EXTRA FUNDING FOR COMMUNITIES TO ENABLE THIS TO HAPPEN? I WOULD ANTICIPATE A MINIMUM OF 3 PART-TIME POSTS SPREAD GEOGRAPHICALLY ACROSS THE BORDERS.</p> <p>THE FOLLOWING LIST OF OBJECTIVES IS</p>	<p>Noted – SBC acknowledge the financial realities it is faced with in responding to this duty. Funding advice and guidance is available to communities wishing to pursue projects supporting the Councils Food Growing Strategy. The Council does employ a community food growing volunteer co-ordinator and this resource is accessible to communities wishing to receive advice and training on food growing in their community.</p>
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	<p>ALSO WELCOME -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To provide a central resource for community growing information - To raise awareness around community growing in the Scottish Borders - To show you how to get growing: where, how and who can help you/your community group - To help you get your community growing project off the ground - To help identify potential allotment site and growing spaces <p>NOTING THAT 'Scottish Borders Council has a wealth of over 600 hectares of publicly accessible green space that may lend itself to accommodating food growing. From amenity bedding areas to tracts of grass in our towns and villages...', AND ALSO THAT 'The Community Empowerment Act asks all local authorities to identify land for food growing where demand exists...' AND THAT 'Across communities there are also areas of amenity green space owned by our other Community Planning Partners (NHS Borders, Scottish Fire and Rescue, Police Scotland, and Scottish Enterprise),</p> <p>IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF ALL OF THESE BODIES DREW UP LISTS OF WHERE APPROPRIATE SPACES EXIST THAT COULD</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>We are working with 3rd sector organisations on mapping available sites where they are most needed.</p>
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	<p>BE USED FOR COMMUNITY FOOD GROWING PROJECTS. THIS WOULD ENABLE, ENCOURAGE AND ACCELERATE THE EXPANSION OF FOOD GROWING PROJECTS AROUND THE REGION - ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT IN TIMES OF PANDEMIC AND POST BREXIT FOOD SECURITY, AND SAVE THE TIME OF INDIVIDUAL GROUPS HAVING TO GO THROUGH THE PROCESS DESCRIBED IN THE DRAFT DOCUMENT - '...Should officers feel that a suitable opportunity could be realised through the 'adoption' of land within the Council's ownership, the proposal would be subject to a council report and permissions/consultations with other services...'</p> <p>I WELCOME THE STATEMENT THAT 'Planning Officers are finalising a new policy EP17 entitled 'Food Growing & Community Growing Spaces' within the proposed new Local Development Plan, which seeks to safeguard food growing sites wherever possible and integrate community food growing needs into new development. IT SHOULD BE MANDATORY (AS CHILDREN'S PLAY AREAS ARE) THAT ANY NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT INCLUDES ADEQUATE SPACE FOR COMMUNITY FOOD-GROWING ON SITE.</p> <p>I WELCOME THIS STATEMENT -</p>	<p>Noted .</p>
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	<p>We (SBC?) will help by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating specific policy safeguarding for Allotments and food growing sites in the Local Development Plan. • Support community growing within council land where possible • Planning for future allotment sites in new developments and securing land for growing to meet demand • Identifying potential community growing sites and Sharing information on what’s happening in your area. <p>AGAIN, THE DRAFT DOES NOT MENTION THE CREATION OF NEW POSTS AND FUNDING WITHIN SBC TO ENABLE THESE WAYS OF HELPING. THIS WILL BE ESSENTIAL IF THE PROPOSALS ARE TO TAKE OFF EFFECTIVELY, EVEN THOUGH OTHER AGENCIES, GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS ARE LISTED THAT CAN PROVIDE SOME ADVICE AND EXPERTISE. THEY ALREADY HAVE THEIR OWN WORK TO DO, AND AGENDAS TO FOLLOW, AND CANNOT BE EXPECTED TO TAKE ON MORE.</p> <p>SBC DRAFT REPORT IS PROPOSING HELP IN A NUMBER OF WAYS -</p> <p>We (SBC?) will help by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting groups in submitting grant applications for their community growing 	<p>Noted – SBC acknowledge the financial realities it is faced with in responding to this duty. Funding advice and guidance is available to communities wishing to pursue projects supporting the Councils Food Growing Strategy. The Council does employ a community food growing volunteer co-ordinator and this resource is accessible to communities wishing to receive advice and training on food growing in their community.</p>
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	<p>project(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creating opportunities for groups to share resources to make growing affordable to more people.• Providing information for networking with other groups who have a growing project• Providing information on organisations and businesses that can help community projects as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility commitments <p>Share up-cycling and recycling opportunities, for example by connecting community growing groups with wood recycling projects</p> <p>ALL OF THIS HAS POTENTIAL FOR CREATING ZERO CARBON GREEN JOBS AND IS WORTH FUNDING.</p> <p>I WELCOME THIS STATEMENT - ‘With our partners, we will: Explore the feasibility of ‘sharing events’ hosted by different organisations bringing growers together to share plants and seeds...’</p> <p>COULD THIS ALSO TAKE THE FORM OF SBC SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF WEEKLY ‘FOOD MARKETS’ IN EVERY BORDERS TOWN - NOT JUST THE ONCE-A-MONTH ARRANGEMENT IN DIFFERENT PLACES THAT IS CONFUSING AND NOT</p>	
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	<p>LOCALLY BASED ON A REGULAR ENOUGH BASIS. WEEKLY MARKETS WOULD HELP KEEP THE CARBON FOOTPRINT OF CAR TRAVEL DOWN AS WELL. CONSIDERATION COULD ALSO BE GIVEN TO ENABLING EMPTY SHOPS ON THE HIGH STREETS OF OUR TOWNS TO HOST INDOOR SPACES FOR MARKET STALL HOLDERS, AS WELL AS MAKING OUTDOOR VENUES AVAILABLE. VISITORS TO THE REGION WOULD APPRECIATE THE PRESENCE OF LOCAL WEEKLY MARKETS TOO.</p> <p>‘...Liaise with the Council’s Unpaid Work team (Community Justice Service) who may be able to provide help with clearing your plot and preparing the ground for planting; Share information about potential funding sources and work together to maximise opportunities for all community growing groups in the Scottish Borders...’</p> <p>I WELCOME ALL THE POINTS IN THE FIVE-YEAR ACTION PLAN, BUT AGAIN AM NOT SEEING ANY MENTION OF EXTRA JOBS BEING CREATED WITHIN THE SBC TO FACILITATE AND ENABLE THIS TO HAPPEN.</p> <p>ONCE THE FINAL VERSION OF THE DRAFT DOCUMENT HAS BEEN COMPLETED, EVERY</p>	<p>SBC themselves don’t have the capacity or remit to run weekly markets.</p> <p>Noted – SBC acknowledge the financial realities it is faced with in responding to this duty. Funding advice and guidance is available to communities wishing to pursue projects supporting the Councils Food Growing Strategy. The Council does employ a community food growing volunteer co-ordinator and this resource is accessible to communities wishing to receive advice and training on food growing in their community.</p> <p>Noted.</p>
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	<p>HOME IN THE BORDERS SHOULD BE ISSUED WITH A COPY, TO STIMULATE ACTION AND INTEREST IN GETTING INVOLVED IN LOCAL COMMUNITY FOOD GROWING PROJECTS. PERHAPS COMMUNITY COUNCILS COULD BE GIVEN THE TASK OF HOSTING DISCUSSIONS ABOUT THE BENEFICIAL OPPORTUNITIES OF LOCAL COMMUNITY FOOD GROWING PROJECTS AS WELL.</p>	
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COMMUNITY FOOD GROWING STRATEGY



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CULTIVATING COMMUNITIES SCOTTISH BORDERS FOOD GROWING STRATEGY

1. INTRODUCTION

Community growing is for all. Community growing is about creating and sustaining places where people can grow together - where they can produce healthy food locally and experience the social, environmental and health benefits of growing. Anyone who wants to grow their own fruit and vegetables should be able to - growing should be accessible and affordable for everyone.

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 aims to help empower communities across Scotland and improve access to land for food growing purposes, for those wanting to grow your own. Scottish Borders Council recognises the benefits of community growing in its many forms and through this Strategy seeks to support and promote community growing across the region.

Community growing can offer a whole range of benefits:

Health

Fruit and vegetable consumption increases when people are involved in community growing. As well as the nutritional benefits, the physical and mental health benefits of gardening and community growing are well documented.

Environmental

Community growing can mean enhanced space and habitat for wildlife, such as pollinator friendly planting and the management of green infrastructure linking to adjacent wildlife corridors. Community growing can contribute to reducing carbon emissions through reduced food miles and improving air quality, as well as reducing waste packaging and food waste (people are less likely to waste food that they grow, with any grow-your-own waste being composted).

Economic

Community gardens tend to spend grant funding locally, utilising local goods and services, employing local people and training up local volunteers. Growing your own can be a cost effective part of household food spending, saving families money. The Social Value of community gardening has been measured through studies and clearly demonstrates benefits to stakeholders, volunteers and local people; the skills and training opportunities, both formal and informal, support the local economy indirectly by preparing people for employment.

Social

A sense of community is encouraged when people participate in good growing activities. Community growing can offer 'social horticulture' creating social inclusion for individuals or groups who may otherwise feel excluded, isolated or lonely.

Educational

Community growing can contribute to learning, offering both practical skills development and a therapeutic environment. Food growing is for all ages and encompasses a broad range of learning areas including biodiversity, provenance, horticulture, climatology, ecology, cookery, history and health and wellbeing.

Food Security

Food security, as defined by the United Nations' Committee on World Food Security, means that all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life. Grow-your-own and locally grown produce ensures sustainable, safe access to produce in the Scottish Borders.

Our vision for community growing in the Scottish Borders is that people wishing to grow their own fruit and vegetables can access or develop a range of community growing opportunities in their area.



Community food garden ©Abundant Borders

CULTIVATING COMMUNITIES

SCOTTISH BORDERS FOOD GROWING STRATEGY

2. AIMS OF THE STRATEGY

The aim of this strategy is to support and facilitate anyone who wants to get growing, through existing growing opportunities and new approaches to growing. Scottish Borders Council has consulted with communities and groups already involved in Community Food Growing initiatives to help us develop this Strategy.

The key objectives of the Food Growing Strategy are:

- To provide a central resource for community growing information
- To raise awareness around community growing in the Scottish Borders
- To show you how to get growing: where, how and who can help you/your community
- To help you get your community growing project off the ground
- To help identify potential allotment sites and growing spaces

In preparing this Strategy we consulted with members of the public and with community groups. Survey responses identified a need for support to individuals and communities interested in food growing, broadly falling into three themes:



Wilton Lodge Park Walled Garden ©Lisa Brydon

Getting started: how do I get growing?	Support for getting started - Skills and Advice; training, confidence and resources to get started...
Where can I grow?	Help to find space – existing sites and new growing spaces and getting the right permissions in place...
Where can I get support for my growing/project/growing activities?	How to resource your project: Funding, networking and skills sharing...

In the following sections the Strategy sets out the context of Community Growing in the Scottish Borders, addressing these three questions, drawing together resources and information from across the Region to help you get started. Finally, the Action Plan sets out the Council's commitment to develop Community Growing over the next 5 years.



Wilton Lodge Park Walled Garden ©Lisa Brydon

Volunteer experiences of community growing at Wilton Lodge Park

"K has spent over a year and a half volunteering at the walled garden. He had never considered gardening before and was quite apprehensive... and was totally surprised at how enjoyable it was. He remarked on how it was like a 'family' and everyone 'looked out' for each other, he was amazed at how sociable it felt.

He has learned a lot about gardening over the year and even passed on tips and ideas to others such as companion planting, planting chives round the pear trees to help keep the aphids away. He also liked the fact that the gardening was all organic and learning how to make our own liquid fertiliser with comfrey and nettles.

One of the huge benefits of the experience is having company and being with other volunteers; it's something to look forward to and a routine to help get him out. This has contributed to increased self-confidence and he has been able to obtain a SQA Volunteering Skills Award. This, along with all the other skills gained and confidence on a personal level has helped with his illness and contributed to his general wellbeing and feeling part of a community project. Due to his new found confidence he now volunteers on another project, talking to the public and looking after an exhibition. This is a huge step, and his time spent in the garden has contributed to his much improved mental health."

CULTIVATING COMMUNITIES SCOTTISH BORDERS FOOD GROWING STRATEGY

3. COMMUNITY GROWING

Supported by digital activity, develop a network of community growers and volunteers, with activities including events

3.1. Allotments

Allotments are plots of land made available for non-commercial gardening and food growing, leased by an individual or community group for that sole purpose. The standard sized according to most current legislation is 250m² for a full plot or 125m² for a half plot. As well as those managed by Scottish Borders Council, there are others leased and managed by Allotment Associations, or run privately by 3rd party groups. See the [map](#) for locations in your area. If you are interested in leasing an allotment, you can apply online for a Council site [here](#). If you are on the waiting list, there are other growing opportunities that you might want to consider in the meantime – such as local community gardens, garden shares schemes, or adopting a bed in your local public park!



Lee Brae Allotments



Mossilee Allotments

Scottish Borders Council manages 82 allotment plots at various sites in Peebles, Innerleithen and Hawick.

There are also privately run allotments sites across the region, in towns such as Peebles, Galashiels, Eyemouth, Tweedbank, Hawick, Kelso, Selkirk, and Traquair.

3.2 Orchards

Orchards are areas where there are a minimum of 5 fruit trees. Greener Melrose have established a community orchard at Drygrange Community Woodland and plans are afoot for Kelso Community Orchard. According to a recent inventory* there is a rich legacy of orchard sites within the Scottish Borders. Jedburgh was once famous for its orchards and the 'Jethart Pear' - Queen of Scots House in Jedburgh still has remnants of the original infamous orchard where Lord Darnley was allegedly found upon his death. [* https://www.orchardrevival.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/BORD-Orchard-Inventory-Area-Report-v1-2018-web.pdf](https://www.orchardrevival.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/BORD-Orchard-Inventory-Area-Report-v1-2018-web.pdf)



Apples ©Abundant Borders

3.3 Community gardening and food growing in public spaces

Community growing is about growing food within a shared space, where communities can come together and share the workload, learn, connect, and grow in a way that works for them. There are lots of different kinds of community gardens and growing sites, from therapeutic growing projects to community gardens, to 'public' beds that are adopted by community groups for growing plants, flowers, herbs or fruits and vegetables.



Courthouse Beds ©Adam Skelton

3.4 Schools

Across the Scottish Borders there are a large number of growing projects within Primary and Secondary schools already happening as an integral part of delivering the Curriculum for Excellence, Outdoor learning, Learning for sustainability and School Improvement Plans. From polytunnels to community gardens, there are opportunities to develop these further and for volunteers to get involved.

3.5 Community Planning Partners

There are opportunities to change the way Community Planning Partners manage their land. Within the NHS, there is scope to develop sites within their estate for community and therapeutic food growing. The Space to Grow Project in Melrose is a great example of what can be achieved, with the therapeutic benefits of gardening and food growing being offered to patients and volunteers alike.

3.6 Social enterprise and Business

There are a number of ways that community growing projects can be developed through Social Enterprise and Business. For example, Borders Food Communities has piloted an approach to getting locally grown produce from community gardens to the market place. Community farming can offer opportunities for community growing. Local Businesses such as Jarvis Pickle in Eyemouth have worked in partnership with organisations such as Abundant Borders to develop their own community herb gardens.

There are also opportunities for better connecting local growers and growing groups to communities who may benefit from their produce. Schemes such as Community Fridges, Fareshare, etc help to distribute food to anyone who needs it.

3.7 Other ways of growing

There are, of course, other ways of growing your own food – be it on your doorstep, balcony, garden, or even hydroponics. While the Strategy focusses on Community gardening and allotments, we recognise the hugely important role of ‘growing your own’ in all its many forms. If you are simply in need of some guidance and advice, then please check out section 4 and 6 for links to resources and training opportunities.



Food Communities Food Share ©Adam Skelton



Food Communities Food Share ©Adam Skelton



Food Communities Food Share ©Adam Skelton



Courthouse Garden, Peebles ©Adam Skelton

CULTIVATING COMMUNITIES SCOTTISH BORDERS FOOD GROWING STRATEGY

4. GETTING STARTED: HOW CAN I GET GROWING?

Through consultation for this strategy you said (42%) you would like support for growing activities. If you or your group are needing help there are lots of organisations that can assist you to get started and develop your skills.

Scottish Borders Council in partnership with Live Borders, has operated a community volunteering project at Wilton Lodge Park, Hawick since 2010. This provides opportunities for a wide range of volunteers and voluntary groups to access and support for skills development in food growing, under a supervised programme offered by the Council. During the last 10 years, the project has made a huge difference in terms of supporting volunteers with specific needs to get involved in community food growing.

Anyone wishing to consider how to get their project off the ground is welcome to visit the garden at Hawick and meet the volunteer coordinator to discuss their project. The volunteer coordinator can offer real support to new groups, in terms of 'dos and don'ts' and provide tips and advice in setting up your project. The Volunteer Co-ordinator and team of volunteers have a wealth of experience about the creation and management of raised beds for people with access issues and we can help ensure that you get the best possible start for your project. Anyone wishing to find out more can contact Lisa Brydon on lisa.brydon@scotborders.gov.uk

4.1 Skills training, workshops and advice

Who Can Help?	Support Available
Assistance with funding	
The Bridge https://onlineborders.org.uk/community/thebridge	Finding the right funding for your idea How to apply for funding
BAVS http://www.bavs.org.uk/ Communities & Partnership Team, SBC	Can advise on local funds to get you started - full list of local funds available online here; https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20076/community_grants_and_funding/261/community_fund
Men's Sheds https://scottishmsa.org.uk/find-a-shed/	Can help you explore funding for your project
Keep Scotland Beautiful – Climate Challenge Fund https://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/sustainability-climate-change/climate-challenge-fund/	Funding and sustainability advice
Support and Training	
Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society http://www.sags.org.uk/	Advice on setting up your allotment group. Links to other Allotment Societies.
Sustainable Thinking Scotland CIC The Conservation Volunteers Scottish Borders Public Health Team Scottish Borders Social Enterprise Borders	Offer a programme of "How to" workshops, for example composting, preserving, cooking, wildflowers and companion planting
Drygrange Community Orchard	Orchard development: Tree identification, planning, planting and maintaining an orchard
Scottish Orchards http://www.scottishorchards.com/new_scottish_Orchards/Welcome.html	Advice on orchard growing
Borders Food Communities https://www.foodcommunities.org/	Gardening and food growing skills sharing Skills development Growing and cooking classes Organic gardening skills sharing

SBC Volunteer Coordinator Lisa Brydon	Advice, guidance and skills sharing
Burnfoot Community Futures https://en-gb.facebook.com/BurnfootCommunityFutures/	Community gardening skills development
Borders Organic Gardeners http://www.bordersorganicgardeners.org/	Organic gardening skills sharing
Trellis Scotland, https://www.trellisscotland.org.uk/	Skills sharing, help setting up your site
Abundant Borders http://abundantborders.org.uk/	Permaculture – no-dig gardening, skills development, cookery courses

Volunteer experiences of community growing at Wilton Lodge Park

“In 2018 the garden became an official site which was classed ‘Macmillan Friendly’. This allows cancer patients either in treatment or remission to access the garden and join the project along with their family members should they wish to participate. P, along with his wife, started in the spring of 2018. His cancer was in remission and he wanted to get out and join a volunteer project to help him be more physically active. Both P and his wife have thrown themselves into the project and loved every minute of it. For them this has helped on various levels and P’s diabetes has seen a marked improvement in his sugar levels since being in the garden, and also said that some of his friends have remarked on his weight loss since joining.”

Volunteer experiences of community growing at Wilton Lodge Park

“B started volunteering at the Wilton Lodge Park project in 2014. Being part of a community project was very important to her and she felt it was very important to give something back. Within the garden B helps with seed preparation, digging of the beds, stone removal, planting and pruning.

She loves the social aspect of volunteering in particular the walled garden group and takes great pride in the maintenance and upkeep of the vegetable and perennial areas of the walled garden. Being part of the group has helped with her feeling part of the local community and having a routine and purpose in life.”

4.2 Setting up your group

If you are interested in setting up your own growing group, there are several places to go for advice and guidance. Social Farms and Gardens have a comprehensive Community Growing Resources Pack. Other local groups are happy to share their extensive knowledge of getting started.

Who Can Help?	Support Available
The Bridge CVS Communities & Partnership Team	Setting up your group Becoming constituted, etc.
Social Farms and Gardens	Resources for getting started; https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/resources/community-growing-resource-pack-scotland
Borders Food Communities	Can put you in touch with local groups who are happy to share their experience of getting started.

4.3 Joining a group/getting an allotment

If you would like to find out more about getting involved in growing in your area, there are various groups across the region who would be very happy to hear from you - for a list of growing groups in your area, please see section 5.2. If you are interested in finding out more about allotments in your area, please consult the map [here](#), and read on to find out about groups in your area.



Abundant Borders Team ©Abundant Borders

CULTIVATING COMMUNITIES SCOTTISH BORDERS FOOD GROWING STRATEGY

5. WHERE CAN I GET GROWING?

Through consultation for this strategy, **you said (28%)** you would like **help finding suitable space for growing** fruit and vegetables, herbs and flowers. If you or your group wants to grow fruit and vegetables there are a variety of ways to get growing or joining in with those who might already be doing this in your area.

The priority for our support will be to match people wanting to grow or to get involved to liaise with those on these sites before creating new growing spaces.

5.1 Allotment Sites

The Council is committed to ensuring a sustained supply of allotment sites to meet demand. If you are interested in an allotment please let us know. There are currently public and private allotments sites across the region, and while there are waiting lists in some areas, we are required to ensure that no one waits longer than 5 years. We are also required to support a sufficient supply of land for allotments to ensure demand can be met.

For information on where the allotments in your area are and who to contact please check out [the map](#) online.

Community Growing Map

We have developed a map of all community growing sites across the Scottish Borders. To find out more about sites in your area click [here](#), or if you have any updates you wish to add please get in touch at neighbourhoodservice@scotborders.gov.uk



If you are a community group looking to start your own allotment site, please see below for information on finding land and accessing support. Or have you thought about the community growing model?



Space to Grow, Melrose©Jan Moffat

5.2 Community Gardens and Orchards

There are existing community gardens across the region, such as that in Peebles, Hawick, Innerleithen, Galashiels, Melrose, Eyemouth, and Ayton. As described in part 2 these are about sharing the load, supporting each other and making growing your own more accessible. Community orchards also offer a unique chance to come together. If you are interested in your local Community garden or orchard see the list of contacts below:

Community Growing Project	Description	Contact
Tweeddale		
The Courthouse Garden Beside Peebles Parish Church, Peebles High Street EH45 8SW	Community food garden created by volunteers from Peebles Food Community. Meeting times can vary so please contact Adam for details.	https://www.foodcommunities.org/
The Secret Garden Deans Wynd, off the High Street, Peebles EH45 8SW	Growing and learning community garden: sessions every Saturday 11-2 and daily.	https://www.tweedgreen.org.uk/community-garden
St Ronans Wells Garden St Ronans Wells Wells Brae, Innerleithen EH44 6RB	St Ronan's Wells community garden with lots for all abilities to do including a ground level herb bed. Volunteers meet from 11.00 - 3.00 on Thursdays and usually the 2nd Saturday each month. As the garden is at the top of a steep slope transport can usually be arranged	https://otbds.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/garden_flyer_web_reduced-2.pdf

Community Growing Project	Description	Contact
Tweeddale (cont'd)		
Peebles CAN Garden Kingsmeadows Road, Peebles EH45 9BH	Volunteer sessions (Tuesdays and Fridays from 10.00 -12.00) welcome gardeners of all ages and abilities, from those who would like to share their knowledge, to supporting people who are learning to grow fruit and vegetables. The garden promotes sustainable living, inclusive communities and living a healthy lifestyle.	https://www.peeblescan.org/contact
Lamancha Community Hub	Old School House, West Linton, Scottish Borders, EH46 7BD	http://www.lamanchacommunityhub.org.uk/contact.html
The Glebe Project The Manse, Innerleithen Road, Peebles, EH458BD	The Glebe Project is a therapeutic growing project for people in the Tweeddale area with a mental health or cancer diagnosis who are in the recovery phase of their illness and have low to moderate support needs. People are welcome to come on a Wednesday between 10.00 and 4.00 for a coffee/tea and a chat, or to work in the garden. Volunteers welcome.	https://otbds.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/garden_flyer_web_reduced-2.pdf
The Edible Garden St. Ronan's Primary School, St Ronan's Rd, Innerleithen EH44 6PB	The Edible Garden is a community garden behind St Ronan's Primary School in Innerleithen, run by volunteers and a steering group. Their aim is to inspire, motivate and build confidence in adults and children of all ages and abilities to learn how to grow their own food in order to promote a healthy lifestyle. They provide workshops about gardening, growing and reducing your carbon footprint. Volunteers meet on Friday mornings 10.00 - 11.00 to tend the garden and pick produce.	http://www.youcangrow.org.uk/
Teviot and Liddesdale		
Abundant Borders Hawick Community Food Garden Behind Salvation Army Store, High Street, Hawick TD9 9EE	Abundant Borders support community food gardens across the Scottish Borders. They run training courses and workshops on all aspects of food from sustainable food growing, cooking healthy, affordable meals through to food preservation and avoiding food waste. In Hawick the garden is behind	http://abundantborders.org.uk/contact/

Community Growing Project	Description	Contact
Teviot and Liddesdale (cont'd)		
	the Salvation Army Community Store on the High Street. Volunteers meet Tuesdays and Fridays 10.30 - 12.30 in the winter and 10.30 to 12.30 in the summer. There is a volunteer co-ordinator on site to support volunteers who may have additional needs.	
Burnfoot Grows Together Community Garden Burnfoot Community Hub, 89 Burnfoot Rd, Hawick TD9 8EJ	The Burnfoot Grows Together project is Burnfoot Community Future's ambitious community growing and eating project. The group has transformed the current outside space at the Burnfoot community hub into a new growing, demonstration and educational area.	www.facebook.com/groups/657099337996052/
Wilton Lodge Community Garden Wilton Lodge Park, Hawick TD9 7LG	Volunteer group meets Monday and Wednesday 10am until 3pm, April to November, and every Tuesday and Wednesday 10am until 3pm, December - March. If staying all day folk need a packed lunch but teas, coffees and biscuits provided!	https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20032/parks_and_outdoors/833/wilton_lodge_park_volunteering
Eildon		
Selkirk Community Shed The Argus Centre Goslawdales Cottage Goslawdales, Selkirk TD7 4EP		http://selkirkshedders.org.uk/
Space to Grow Community Garden Huntlyburn, Borders General Hospital TD6 9BD	The 'Space to Grow' garden project at Huntlyburn is an innovative concept that allows patients the opportunity to leave the boundaries of the ward to spend time in the natural environment and is located only a stone's throw away from Huntlyburn Mental Health unit. The project provides an opportunity to utilize a sustainable resource which impacts positively on mental and physical wellbeing contributing to the patients' recovery and return to independent living by allowing patients to participate in Social Therapeutic Horticulture (STH), be active outdoors and engage/explore/absorb the natural environment.	https://www.facebook.com/nature4mentalhealth/
Community Allotments, Orchard & Woodland Drygrange, Melrose TD4 6AG		https://en-gb.facebook.com/AGreenerMelrose/

Community Growing Project	Description	Contact
Berwickshire		
Abundant Borders Ayton Community Food Garden Summerhill Park, Ayton, Berwickshire	Abundant Borders support community food gardens across the Scottish Borders. They run training courses and workshops on all aspects of food from sustainable food growing, cooking healthy, affordable meals through to food preservation and avoiding food waste. In Ayton the garden is just off The Beanburn. The garden is open to volunteers each day, though volunteers meet on Monday and Thursday afternoons between 1.30-3.30	http://abundantborders.org.uk/contact/
Abundant Borders Eyemouth Community Food Garden Eyemouth, Berwickshire	Abundant Borders support community food gardens across the Scottish Borders. They run training courses and workshops on all aspects of food from sustainable food growing, cooking healthy, affordable meals through to food preservation and avoiding food waste. In Eyemouth the garden is part of Eyemouth Allotments, off the Harbour Road. The garden is open to volunteers each day, though volunteers meet on Friday mornings between 10.30 – 12.30	http://abundantborders.org.uk/contact/
Abundant Borders Duns Community Food Garden, Todlaw, Duns	Abundant Borders support community food gardens across the Scottish Borders. They run training courses and workshops on all aspects of food from sustainable food growing, cooking healthy, affordable meals through to food preservation and avoiding food waste. In Duns the garden is part of the BHA Housing Development at Todlaw (between Knoll Hospital and Pearsons Garden Centre). The garden will be open from Spring 2020. Contact robin@abundantborders.org.uk for more details	http://abundantborders.org.uk/contact/
Abundant Borders Coldingham Community Food Garden, Coldingham Priory, Coldingham	Abundant Borders support community food gardens across the Scottish Borders. They run training courses and workshops on all aspects of food from sustainable food growing, cooking healthy, affordable meals through to food preservation and avoiding food waste. In Coldingham the garden is alongside Coldingham Priory. The garden will be open from Spring 2020. Contact robin@abundantborders.org.uk for more details	http://abundantborders.org.uk/contact/

5.3 Public spaces

Scottish Borders Council has a wealth of over 600 hectares of publicly accessible greenspace that may lend itself to accommodating food growing. From amenity bedding areas to tracts of grass in our towns and villages. 'Guerrilla gardening' is one term used for those engaged in adopting perhaps neglected pockets of ground and turning it over to local food production. 'Incredible edibles' is a network of community food growers who have adopted public spaces in their communities. Or you may see a corner of a park or greenspace near where you live that you simply feel could be turned over to food growing for the community. There may be scope within this network for sites to be informally 'adopted' by community growers on an agreed basis.

The Community Empowerment Act asks all local authorities to identify land for food growing where demand exists. Scottish Borders Council recognise this green network as a tremendous opportunity, and in order to ensure that land for food growing is identified collaboratively with communities, and is in the right location to meet local demands, we welcome enquiries for any sites within your area.

As a community or individual, if you wish to enquire about availability of land in your area, contact us at Scottish Borders Council Parks and Environment service – via email at neighbourhoodservice@scotborders.gov.uk or telephone 01835 824000 and ask to speak to someone about community food growing. We can then explore the opportunities with individuals or groups to better understand their needs and consider the suitability of any spaces the Council may manage/maintain, for food growing. Should officers feel that a suitable opportunity could be realised through the 'adoption' of land within the Council's ownership, the proposal would be subject to a council report and permissions/consultations with other services. Where the Council does not believe that it has an appropriate site capable of meeting the local food growing needs, then it may consider what alternatives it can offer, including sites in settlements that may not be local to the individual or group.

Scottish Borders Council is monitoring demand and supply of Allotment sites, using the tools set out in the legislation such as demand thresholds and Annual Allotment Reports. Where necessary, the Council may consider the acquisition of appropriate land to meet the needs of the area, taking into account reasonable distance and travel times.

The Council will always wish to work in partnership to respond to enquiries about access to land for food growing.

Where Council land is not an option then you or your group may have other ideas for places where you would like to grow, and you may wish to consider leasing land from landowners or be interested in community growing as part of new development. We don't intend to be too prescriptive, but we are happy to discuss any local ideas you may have. Section 5.7 of the strategy sets out the permissions required for you and your group to begin using a space for growing.

Across communities there are also areas of amenity greenspace owned by our other Community Planning Partners (NHS Borders, Scottish Fire and Rescue, Police Scotland, and Scottish Enterprise). Community groups can apply for these sites to be transferred to Community ownership (for more information please see https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20062/strategies_plans_and_policies/764/asset_transfer) as community growing sites.

If you are interested in these kinds of opportunities for growing sites in your area, please see the following.

5.4 Schools

A number of schools within the Scottish Borders have an active gardening area which focuses on growing fruit and vegetables. This can enhance the outcomes and experience delivered within Curriculum for Excellence. There can be links made to all the curriculum areas.

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/a-summary-of-learning-for-sustainability-resources>

Initiatives within schools are very happy to hear from those wishing to get involved in food growing and will welcome some support – many hands make light work, particularly through the summer break. If you are interested in finding out more about what's going on in your local school(s) then please get in touch.

5.5 Garden share

Schemes such as 'Lend and Tend', where a garden owner shares their garden with individuals or groups of growers, can be a great way to get growing. Schemes like this are already happening in Hawick and Peebles.

5.6 Making space for growing

Where council land isn't an option, you or your group may have other ideas for places where you would like to grow, and you may wish to consider leasing land from farmers or be interested in community growing as part of new development. Partners such as Eildon Housing Association are developing opportunities for food growing within their network. We don't intend to be too prescriptive, but we are happy to discuss any local ideas you may have. This section of the strategy sets out the permissions required for you and your group to begin using a space for growing.



Community food garden ©Abundant Borders

Case Study: St Ronan's Primary School, Innerleithen

The Edible Garden at St. Ronan's School in Innerleithen was established in 2014 in partnership with a local social enterprise company, You Can Cook. This was the first growing project of its kind to be set up in a school in Scotland. The initial project was funded by a grant from the Climate Change Fund and was professionally designed and staffed, all in conjunction with the children as a learning experience. In 2018/19, the direct input of the social enterprise partnership ended and the management of the garden became part of the St. Ronan's Youth & Community Centre, with a designated a sub-group, as part of a carefully planned transition for sustainability. The community centre committee presented a bid to the SBC Locality Bid Fund and was successful in obtaining funding to continue to employ a part-time gardener and make material improvements to the garden.

The gardener leads classroom sessions, alongside school staff, in sowing and propagating.

The children are then involved in the whole growing and harvesting process. The garden produces a range of fruit, vegetables and herbs. Produce is used in cooking projects, can be harvested for home use by all members of our community, are sent home with children from time to time as a family gift or sold in local shops. All ages of children, from Nursery-P.7, are involved, with a Friday afternoon gardening club open to all children and their parents/carers. There are also regular seasonal opportunities for adult gardening drop-in sessions.



Case Study: Tweedbank Allotments

Tweedbank Allotment Society was founded in 2012 by a group of enthusiastic local residents who, with the help of Scottish Borders Council worked to identify a site and secure funding. The site at Essenside Drive is former amenity grass adjacent to an informal kickabout area. It is leased from the Council and was opened in 2013. The site is managed and run by a group of volunteer members of the Society and accommodates 15 plots, a communal shed and water butts.



Case Study: Courthouse, Peebles

The Courthouse Garden is a community garden run by Peebles Food Community, on an area of private land that the owners have allowed access to. In the space of two and a bit years, from a disused weed jungle, the community now has a brilliant space growing an abundance of organic fruit, veg and herbs. The garden is maintained by volunteers and produce is shared amongst volunteers and the owners.

All materials such as tools, seeds and plants have been donated by group members while others have been sourced for free locally (polythene, manure, cardboard, pallets, etc), with greenhouses, cold frames, compost bins, and planters all built by the volunteers. Local people of all ages have been involved in the progress of the garden, including great help

from five high school children doing their Duke of Edinburgh Awards. The garden is run without community funding, and has no outgoings such as rent so is a self-sustaining project that can adapt and evolve to community needs.



Case Study: Salvation Army Garden, Hawick

Abundant Borders is a Charity aimed at giving everyone, regardless of personal circumstances access to freshly grown produce. In 2018, Abundant Borders joined together in partnership with the Salvation Army to develop the grounds behind the Salvation Army shop on the High Street in Hawick. This site offers growing and training opportunities for volunteers, as well as fresh produce to those in the town and immediate area who are using the food banks.

In partnership with the Community Hub, they also employ a sessional worker to deliver healthy cooking and healthy eating initiatives in the town,

for whom in turn they share knowledge and experience in helping to grow the community garden space at The Hub.



5.7 What about planning?

Early discussions with landowners and the Planning department about any community growing project is advised – they will explain what consents you may need and what information they need from you to help you get your project moving forward. If you are looking to enclose an allotment site, you may need to submit a planning application seeking consent to do this. You may also need planning permission for new structures, like sheds, and possibly raised planting beds. We would prefer that this be done for the site as a whole as part of the Allotment Management Group's initial planning application, rather than being done on an individual basis each time a plot holder wishes to put up a tool shed, which will also enable a consistent approach to buildings and structures. If there are any designations on the land that might be impacted by your allotment site, the Council will advise you about what you can and can't do. Designations to look out for include:

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Landscape Areas, Special Areas for Conservation, Wildlife Sites and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation
- Conservation Areas and Areas of Townscape Value
- Designed Landscapes and Historic Gardens

Designations can be seen on the relevant proposals map of the Scottish Borders Local Development Plan [here](#).

Planning consent is likely to be required for:

- Any works within a Conservation Area
- Structures on site, including:
- Outbuildings and sheds on each individual plot;
- Communal buildings;
- Fencing; and
- Parking facilities

To begin growing you will need to liaise with the landowner or developer. It's worth noting that new development will now be assessed against policy EP17 (see below) which seeks to safeguard food growing sites wherever possible and integrate community food growing needs into new development.

Planning Officers are finalising a new policy EP17 entitled 'Food Growing & Community Growing Spaces' within the proposed new Local Development Plan. In essence the policy confirms the requirement for the safeguarding and enhancement of any existing food growing area and lays down criteria tests for considering proposals for new or extended food growing areas which meet community needs.

Scottish Borders Council has details of land in its ownership. If the site belongs to the Council, there is a process you need to follow to agree how you intend to use the growing space. Scottish Borders Council Property and Estates team will be involved in agreeing lease arrangements for Council-owned land.

Contamination

When you have found your potential food growing site you should liaise with the contaminated land specialists within Scottish Borders Council's Environmental Health department to establish if land contamination presents a potential constraint which requires further consideration.

How potential land contamination is considered will depend upon the requirement for planning consent for the land's new use. In the first instance a request may be made to Scottish Borders Council for any relevant environmental information held about the proposed site (an Environmental Information Request). Please note that there may be a charge for this. The information provided may assist in understanding the history of the site, its former uses/

operations, neighbouring uses, if previous ground investigations have been undertaken and their findings, and if land contamination is a potential constraint likely to require further assessment.

If land contamination is identified as a potential constraint an appropriate phased risk assessment will also be required, where planning consent is necessary.

Where planning consent is not required the creation of a food growing site may still result in liabilities under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. In considering such liabilities investigations can be undertaken on a voluntary or due diligence basis. SBCs Contaminated Land specialist can be consulted in regard to such investigations to ensure the site is demonstrated to be suitable for its proposed use, and to ensure future regulatory intervention is not necessary.

It is recommended that you liaise with the contaminated land team at an early stage, and throughout the process as necessary - we would be very happy to hear from you!

An overview flow chart of the land contamination evaluation process is presented in Appendix 1.

We will help by:

- Creating specific policy safeguarding for Allotments and food growing sites in the Local Development Plan.
- Support community growing within council land where possible
- Planning for future allotment sites in new developments and securing land for growing to meet demand
- Identifying potential community growing sites
- Sharing information on what's happening in your area.



Beds ©Abundant Borders

Who else can help	Support available
Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society (SAGS)	Maintenance of online resources and database of growing sites http://www.sags.org.uk/
Private Landowners	May provide space for your growing and/or allotment project
Community Planning Partners	If you are interested in taking on a community asset such as greenspace around a local community facility, you can apply for a Community Asset Transfer; https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20062/strategies_plans_and_policies/764/asset_transfer
Registered Social Landlords	Eildon Housing Association Berwickshire Housing Association Scottish Borders Housing Association Waverley Housing Association Hanover Housing Association
Community Land Advisory Service	Help finding land and agreeing lease arrangements with the landowner. https://sc.communitylandadvice.org.uk/
Land Register of Scotland	Information about who owns land in Scotland. Please note, there is a charge for obtaining land ownership information. https://www.ros.gov.uk/our-registers/land-register-of-scotland
Borders Food Communities	Garden share opportunities; information on local community growing projects; networking with other interested growers. https://www.foodcommunities.org/

CULTIVATING COMMUNITIES SCOTTISH BORDERS FOOD GROWING STRATEGY

6. WHERE CAN I GET SUPPORT FOR MY GROWING PROJECT/ GROWING ACTIVITIES?

During the consultation **you said** (25%) you needed advice about funding your growing project or activities. As well as highlighting some key funding sources, we can help by facilitating sharing of resources and of skills, so that food growing is affordable and accessible to all who want to get involved. In the Borders there are various different models of community growing, from grant-funded to self-sustaining, and it depends on the individual needs and vision of your project which model may be best. There are many ways of achieving your goal of getting involved in growing, so don't feel overwhelmed or alone – please get in touch.

6.1 Resourcing your project

Resources – funding, materials, skills, volunteers – are vital to sustaining community growing in its many different forms. During the consultation various specific issues came up as well as funding such as linking up with volunteers, sourcing materials (e.g. timber for raised beds, seeds); lack of tools; a need for training/skills sharing.

We will help by:

- Supporting groups in submitting grant applications for their community growing project(s)
- Creating opportunities for groups to share resources to make growing affordable to more people.
- Providing information for networking with other groups who have a growing project
- Providing information on organisations and businesses that can help community projects as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility commitments
- Share up-cycling and recycling opportunities, for example by connecting community growing groups with wood recycling projects



With our partners, we will:

Explore the feasibility of 'sharing events' hosted by different organisations bringing growers together to share plants and seeds

Liaise with the Council's Unpaid Work team (Community Justice Service) who may be able to provide help with clearing your plot and preparing the ground for planting

Share information about potential funding sources and work together to maximise opportunities for all community growing groups in the Scottish Borders.

Who else can help	Support available
Communities & Partnership Team	Community funding applications; advice on local funds available; Community Planning Partners liaison
Social Farms and Gardens	<p>Free enquiry service to talk through any aspect of your project, available to everyone</p> <p>Resource pack available, "Getting Started – Community Growing Resource Pack" for projects based in Scotland.</p> <p>Regional Training and Networking Events</p> <p>https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/resources</p> <p>https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/resources/community-growing-resource-pack-scotland</p>
Community Food Social Enterprise Network (SEN)	<p>Support for any community food organisation that is aspiring to be a social enterprise.</p> <p>https://www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/2012/social-enterprise/</p>
Business sponsorship and Corporate Social Responsibility volunteer days	<p>Seek opportunities for groups to use "end of season" stock and donated materials.</p> <p>Many businesses provide Corporate Social Responsibility volunteering opportunities for their staff. Business volunteers could help you create and plant your growing space.</p> <p>Assistance may be available in developing your groups Risk Register through the Institute of Internal Audits UK – Risk Auditors</p> <p>Corporate Social Responsibility volunteering commitments</p> <p>Funding sources and assistance with funding bids</p> <p>Capacity building for local groups and organisations</p>
The Conservation Volunteers	Linking up Corporate volunteering to projects
Criminal Justice Team	<p>Unpaid workers are those who are required to undertake community payback work as part of a sentence. They may be able to help get your project started by helping with preparing your site (clearing the ground, preparing paths, etc).</p> <p>To find out more get in touch with the Unpaid Work Coordinator via</p> <p>https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20037/justice_services/89/community_based_services</p>

6.2 Other Resources

Community food growing has a role to play in carbon reduction, improving health and wellbeing, tackling poverty and enhancing biodiversity. There are a wealth of resources to help you develop your growing group in any one of these aspects.

The Joint Health Improvement Team

The Joint Health Improvement Team (JHIT) aims to work in partnership to reduce health inequalities and build community capacity for health improvement. There are six public health priorities for Scotland, Community Growing makes a contribution to many of these and in particular Public Health Priority 6: A Scotland where we eat well, have a healthy weight and are physically active. The Joint Health Improvement Team leads and co-ordinates a range of projects with communities and vulnerable groups, helping to initiate and develop community led activity. Projects include community cooking classes, good food partnerships and summer holiday programmes for children and families.

The Joint Health Improvement Team uses a model of wellbeing called 'Six Ways to be Well' that fits well with the community growing approach. It encourages people to nurture themselves by eating well, being active, belonging to inclusive communities, enjoying and learning new things, building kind supportive networks and being mindful. Being outside and noticing nature is a good way of being mindful. The Joint Health Improvement Team also provides a range of training opportunities that support the development of community food work. For more information about the Joint Health Improvement Team please e-mail us: Health.Improvement@borders.scot.nhs.uk.

You can find out more about the Six Ways to Be Well here:

www.nhsborders.scot.nhs.uk/wellbeingpoint

Find out more about Scotland's Public Health Priorities here:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-public-health-priorities/>

The Cyrenians operate the Fareshare network across the region, linking up people to produce. They are also interested in the link between food growing and production and healthy food for all.

<https://cyrenians.scot/social-enterprise/fareshare>

Volunteer experiences of community growing at Wilton Lodge Park

"I spent years in a very stressful job, needed to get out amongst people once I retired. I didn't want to be inside so decided to go to the community garden. I love the camaraderie, discussions, laughs and that we work as a group, discuss everything and decide what we want to grow and produce."



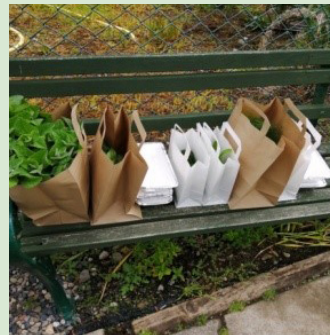
Abundant Borders Team ©Abundant Borders

Case Study: Greenhouse Project

The Joint Health Improvement Team works in partnership with Scottish Borders Council's Unpaid Work Team to grow a wide range of seasonal produce at a Greenhouse site in Galashiels. Produce is distributed back into the community through service settings and activities that support children and families.

The project has developed incrementally to offer new activities:

- REHIS training & cooking classes with Justice Service Users
- Live cookery classes in early years settings
- Recipe bags to support home cooking and healthier meals
- Welfare boxes & food distribution during COVID
- Distribution of plants to encourage home growing



Produce distributed included:

Spring onions, onions, leeks, rocket, mint, coriander, sage, rosemary, fennel, oregano, spinach, parsley, basil, cucumbers, sweet peppers, carrots, beetroot, radish, pea pods, jalapeno chilli, rhubarb, courgettes, thyme, cayenne chilli, broad beans, tomatoes, potatoes.

Galashiels Early Years Centre:

The Early Years Centre used the produce to top up 300 food parcels for children and families. Families reported:

- Eating more varied and healthier diets
- Tasting new foods
- Cooking more home-made meals



Quotes from families & staff confirm the benefits:

"Thank you so much for the fresh veg last week, I managed to make a pan of soup and a tomato sauce for pasta. We are currently in rent arrears and struggling to get through the week, your food top ups make a huge difference." (Parent)

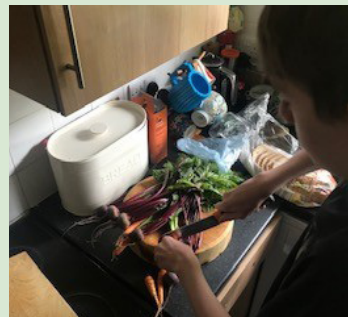
"Overall I am extremely glad and grateful for the opportunity to work with Mos, the Gala Greenhouse project, and the NHS health Team, I hope the partnership will continue." (EYC Manager)

New partnerships have developed in the last year with:

- Children 1st
- Action for Children
- LINKS Eyemouth

Feedback from all services suggests the produce helped:

- Families to cook healthier meals & grow their own produce
- Services to maintain connections with families



Quotes from staff confirm the benefits:

"Being part of this project has been an especially wonderful experience for our service during the lockdown –the fresh vegetables were highly appreciated by the families we support (single mothers especially found it difficult to go grocery shopping, and receiving those herbs and vegetables made their day); it also gave us at Children 1st an opportunity to see them and keep connected during times of lockdown, even if just at their doorstep" (Children 1st Staff Member)

CULTIVATING COMMUNITIES

SCOTTISH BORDERS FOOD GROWING STRATEGY

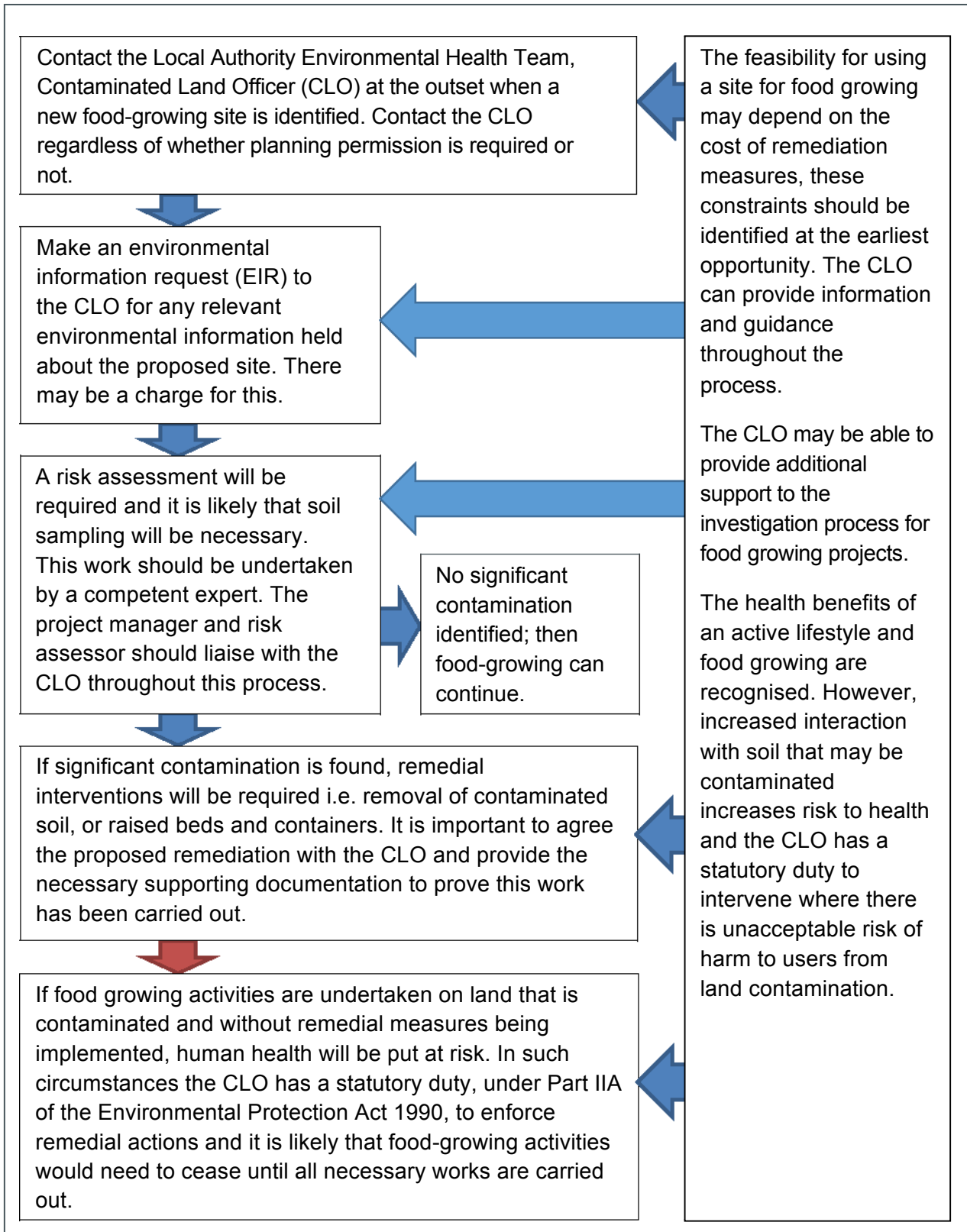
7. ACTION PLAN

This Food Growing Strategy covers a five year period from 2021-2026. As well as the activities listed above, Scottish Borders Council will undertake to deliver against the legislative requirements via the Action Plan:

Action	
1. Develop Policy Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. Investigate and explore opportunities to develop further policies in support of food growing and community growing with Community Planning Partners 1.2. Adopt new planning policy - EP17 Food Growing and Community Growing spaces – as part of the Local Development Plan, safeguarding food growing spaces and enabling increased provision. 1.3. Review of corporate policies and strategies to support Food Growing and Community Food Growing.
2. Review provision and Management of Allotments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1. Co-ordinate waiting list information with Allotments Associations on leased out sites to ensure data collection is handled accurately and appropriately 2.2. Investigate new allotment sites in areas of demand, working with community groups and private landowners where possible 2.3. Implement new Allotment Regulations 2.4. Prepare an Annual Allotment Report
3. Support the Community Growing Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1. Develop a networking event(s) for community growers and volunteers 3.2. Explore the creation of 'Growing Ambassadors', as part of the #yourpart Corporate Programme 3.3. Consolidate resources for food growing through the development of the Volunteer Coordinator role

APPENDIX ONE

CONTAMINATED LAND PROCESS



REFERENCES

Contacts at Scottish Borders Council for more information:

All community growing and allotments enquiries – Craig Blackie, Parks & Environment Manager - neighbourhoodservice@scotborders.gov.uk / 01835 824000

Planning issues – https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20050/planning_applications

Contaminated land - https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20004/business/114/health_and_safety

Community funding - https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20062/strategies_plans_and_policies/773/communities_and_partnerships

WHO CAN HELP	
Skills and Advice	
BAVS	http://www.bavs.org.uk/
Communities & Partnership Team, SBC	https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20076/community_grants_and_funding/261/community_fund
Men's Shed	https://scottishmsa.org.uk/find-a-shed/
Keep Scotland Beautiful – Climate Challenge Fund	https://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/sustainability-climate-change/climate-challenge-fund/
Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society	http://www.sags.org.uk/
Scottish Orchards	http://www.scottishorchards.com/new_scottish_Orchards/Welcome.html
Borders Food Communities	https://www.foodcommunities.org/
Burnfoot Community Futures	https://en-gb.facebook.com/BurnfootCommunityFutures/
Borders Organic Gardeners	http://www.bordersorganicgardeners.org/
Trellis Scotland	https://www.trellisscotland.org.uk/
Abundant Borders	http://abundantborders.org.uk/
Setting up your group	
Social Farms and Gardens	https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/resources/community-growing-resource-pack-scotland

Community Gardens and Orchards	
Tweeddale	
The Courthouse Garden, Peebles	https://www.foodcommunities.org/
The Secret Garden, Peebles	https://www.tweedgreen.org.uk/community-garden
St Ronans Wells Garden, Innerleithen	https://otbds.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/garden_flyer_web_reduced-2.pdf
Peebles CAN Garden, Peebles	https://www.peeblescan.org/contact
Lamancha Community Hub	http://www.lamanchacommunityhub.org.uk/contact.html
The Glebe Project, Peebles	https://otbds.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/garden_flyer_web_reduced-2.pdf
The Edible Garden, Innerleithen	http://www.youcangrow.org.uk/
Teviot and Liddesdale	
Abundant Borders Hawick	http://abundantborders.org.uk/contact/
Burnfoot Grows Together, Hawick	www.facebook.com/groups/657099337996052/.
Wilton Lodge Community Garden, Hawick	https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20032/parks_and_outdoors/833/wilton_lodge_park_volunteering
Eildon	
Selkirk Community Shed, Selkirk	http://selkirshedders.org.uk/
Space to Grow Community Garden, BGH	https://www.facebook.com/nature4mentalhealth/
Community Allotments, Orchard & Woodland, Drygrange	https://en-gb.facebook.com/AGreenerMelrose/
Berwickshire	
Abundant Borders, Ayton	http://abundantborders.org.uk/contact/
Abundant Borders, Eyemouth	http://abundantborders.org.uk/contact/
Abundant Borders, Duns	http://abundantborders.org.uk/contact/
Abundant Borders, Coldingham	http://abundantborders.org.uk/contact/

Planning	
Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society (SAGS)	http://www.sags.org.uk/
Community Planning Partners	https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20062/strategies_plans_and_policies/764/asset_transfer
Community Land Advisory Service	https://sc.communitylandadvice.org.uk/
Land Register of Scotland	https://www.ros.gov.uk/our-registers/land-register-of-scotland
Borders Food Communities	https://www.foodcommunities.org/
Support	
Social Farms and Gardens	https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/resources https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/resources/community-growing-resource-pack-scotland
Community Food Social Enterprise Network (SEN)	https://www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/2012/social-enterprise/
Criminal Justice Team	https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20037/justice_services/89/community_based_services
Other Resources	
The Borders Healthy Living Network (HLN)	mailto:Health.improvement@borders.scot.nhs.uk Health.improvement@borders.scot.nhs.uk
The Cyrenians, Fairshare network	https://cyrenians.scot/community-and-food/good-food/fareshare/.

Volunteering in our communities

To all the wonderful volunteers in our communities, thanks for playing #yourpart to keep our towns and villages looking their best. If you are planning to help with things like tidy-up operations and flower planting please take into account the following guidance:

SOCIAL DISTANCING



Please adhere to the Scottish Government's latest guidelines regarding social distancing measures.

01

TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT



The sharing of tools, gloves, etc is strongly discouraged. Volunteers should bring their own gloves wherever possible. When working on Council land, please stick to non-motorised equipment only to avoid any accident or injury.

02

PRACTICE GOOD HYGIENE



Wash hands before arriving at the site. Use hand sanitiser and wipe down with disinfectant any shared equipment or communal areas after use.

03

TAKE CARE OF WASTE



Please dispose of green waste/litter appropriately, via your local recycling centre if required.

04

BE RESPONSIBLE



You are responsible for the safety of yourself, others around you and the general public.

05

KEEP IN TOUCH



Let us know how you plan to help out and we can offer further advice and support. Email neighbourhoodservice@scotborders.gov.uk or call us on 0300 100 1800.

06



REVIEW OF COMMUNITY FUND 2021/22

Report by Service Director, Customer and Communities

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

25 March 2021

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of the recent review of the Community Fund and proposes a number of changes to the fund for 2021/22.**
- 1.2 At its meeting on 27 August 2020, Council agreed that each Area Partnership established a mechanism to review the findings of the Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) Report on the Community Fund and to make recommendations for further public consultation within each locality.
- 1.3 This report proposes a number of immediate changes to the Community Fund to take effect from 1 April 2021, and that a report is brought back to Council on the outcomes of these changes after one year of operation, with further recommendations as appropriate.
- 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) Agrees to continue to ring fence grants made to Community Councils, Village Halls and Festival Grants within the Community Fund for 2021/22.**
- b) Agrees to the changes to the Community Fund highlighted in Section 5 of this report, to come into effect on 1 April 2021, with a review after one year of operation.**
- c) Agrees to receive a further report on the outcome of these changes after one year of operation, and to make further recommendations as appropriate.**

- d) Notes that in parallel to these changes, the review of Area Partnerships will continue to progress and the thinking around future models will evolve.**
- e) Notes the Community Fund budget as detailed at Section 6.**
- f) Notes the development and next steps for the Community Fund as detailed at Section 7.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At its meeting on 27 August 2020, Council agreed that each Area Partnership establish a mechanism to review the findings of the Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) Report on the Community Fund and make recommendations for further public consultation within each locality.
- 3.2 The findings of the SCDC Report highlighted the need for clarity between the Community Fund and the Council's participatory budgeting process (initially Localities Bid Fund 1 and 2), improved transparency of the grant making process, including decision making, and that grants to Community Councils, Village Halls and Festival Grants should remain ring-fenced at this time.
- 3.3 Council also agreed to receive a further report from the Service Director Customer & Communities on the outcome of the Area Partnership findings and the next steps thereafter. As requested by Council, this report gives details of the approach that each Area Partnership has undertaken, the findings from each Area Partnership, and makes recommendations as a result of these findings for the Community Fund 2021/22.

4 THE APPROACH OF AREA PARTNERSHIPS INCLUDING COMMON PROPOSALS:

- 4.1 Berwickshire and Cheviot agreed to form working sub-groups to consider the findings of the report and to make proposals to their next Area Partnership for further discussion.
- 4.2 Eildon and Tweeddale discussed the report within their Area Partnership meeting, and the Area Partnership Chairs held further community meetings to gather views for further discussion.
- 4.3 Community Councils within Teviot & Liddesdale met with Elected Members and agreed a proposal which was discussed with Council officers to obtain feedback and then presented to the Area Partnership for discussion.
- 4.4 All five Area Partnerships brought their initial findings and proposals back to their next Area Partnership for further discussion and agreement
- 4.5 There are a number of common themes regarding the proposals received to date in relation to the Community Fund:
 - For each Area Partnership to have flexibility within the Fund for agreeing criteria, timescales, the purpose of the Fund and evaluation and monitoring arrangements
 - A Fund that supports the development of locality and place plans
 - The desire in some areas to establish Assessment Panels or Sub-Committee that would develop aspects of the Fund in relation to local need and demand – including:

- Developing an open and transparent scoring mechanism within the assessment process.
 - Assessment Panels that would make recommendations to the Area Partnership in regards to applications for consensus and decision making.
 - Sub-committees that would have decision making powers regarding making awards from the Community Fund, reporting these to the Area Partnership for noting.
- 4.6 A number of proposals in relation to the Community Fund included **both** establishing sub-committees in order to make decisions and Assessment Panels to make recommendations. This report makes proposals in relation to Assessment Panels only.
- 4.7 The possibility of establishing sub-committees requires further consideration and will be progressed as part of the review of Area Partnerships.
- 4.8 The output from each Area Partnership is detailed at **Appendix 1**.

5 COMMUNITY FUND - PROPOSED CHANGES FROM 01 APRIL 2021

- 5.1 With regards to the Community Fund, based on feedback and the above proposals from each Area Partnership, Elected Members and taking into account SCDC's recommendations - a number of immediate changes are being proposed to the Community Fund to take effect from 1 April 2021. These proposed changes reflect the local nature of the funding, provide further flexibility and enhance the role of Area Partnerships, through empowerment, to decide on the priorities for the funding.
- 5.2 In parallel to these changes, the review of Area Partnerships will continue to progress the thinking on how the Partnerships can be more effective and representative of the locality and communities it represents. The findings from the review process of the Area Partnerships will be brought back to Council at a later date.
- 5.3 Community Fund - proposed changes from 1 April 2021:
1. **Assessment Panels.** Each Area Partnership if desired, may create an Assessment Panel to work with officers to assess, develop a scoring mechanism and make recommendations on Community Fund applications. Training and officer support will be provided to ensure that there is a level of consistency regarding a standard assessment framework across the five Area Partnerships.
 2. **Assessment Panel Recommendation Process.** For the purpose of openness and transparency, all applications (including scoring and recommendations) will then go forward to their Area Partnership for decision making. The current process will then apply, with consensus from the attendees of the Area Partnership being required, and if this was not reached, Elected Members would vote with the Chair having the casting vote.

3. **Assessment Panel Membership:** Any Assessment Panel established **must/should invite and include** wider community representation in line with the SCDC recommendations of wider participation and engagement.

Suggested Assessment Panel membership – representation *could* be from the following:

- Elected Members
 - Community Councils
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - Community Planning Partnership – Police Scotland, Fire & Rescue, NHS Borders, SOSE, Registered Social Landlords
 - Third Sector/Community Representatives: i.e. Parent Council, Older People’s Forum, Community of interest, Youth Group, Disability Forum, general public etc.
4. **Community Fund criteria.** Each Area Partnership may review the criteria for their Community Fund and gain approval for any changes to the criteria from each Area Partnership. All applications must demonstrate sustainability and compliance with all legal requirements as well as the Council’s Following the Public Pound code of practices.
 5. **Community Fund allocation and promotion of the Fund.** Each Area Partnership may if desired, allocate their funds to different schemes, priorities and timescales, for example Quality of Life/Member Priority Fund, VE Celebration Fund, or to a third party to undertake local participatory budgeting on their behalf. It is likely that each of these of sub-fund schemes will have set outcomes and criteria. Each Area Partnership may also allocate funding to market and promote the Community Fund as they see fit.
 6. **Funding tranches.** Each Area Partnership may set funding allocation cycles within the calendar year and can open and close their Community Fund in set phases.
 7. **Evaluation and Monitoring.** Each Area Partnership may review the evaluation and monitoring arrangements for successful funding applications and make changes to these arrangements at a local level after approval has been gained at Area Partnerships. Standard evaluation tools will be provided to ensure a level of consistency across the five Area Partnerships, and to enable appropriate audit and scrutiny of the Community Fund.
 8. **Review of arrangements.** Agree that all of these changes above will be piloted and reviewed after one year.

- 5.4 The above proposals give the flexibility within each Area Partnership to make local arrangements based on engagement within their communities which will be required to be captured by a range of evaluation, feedback and survey options.

- 5.5 In taking cognisance of the findings and developing this report, officers have considered views from Elected Members, Community Councils, Scottish Borders Community Councils' Network, Third Sector Interface, Area Partnership attendees and Area Partnership Working Groups.
- 5.6 Due to the tight timescales involved in bringing a report to Council for the start of the financial year, it has not been possible to undertake wider consultation in a meaningful way. However, a review of the Community Fund arrangements will be brought back to Council after one year of operation, and this will include feedback from communities throughout the year collated through both Area Partnerships and other means.

6 COMMUNITY FUND BUDGET 2021/22

- 6.1 The Community Fund budget for 2021/22 is £470,718. Based on this figure, the allocations for each Area Partnership based on population estimates is shown at table 2 below:

Base Budget 2021/22	£ 470,718
Community Councils	58,159
Village Halls	50,074
Community Council Network*	1,250
Festival Grants	85,110
Balance	276,125

*Contribution to Borders-wide Network

Table 1

Area	Population	£
Berwickshire	20,969	50,230
Cheviot	19,433	46,551
Eildon	35,598	85,273
T&L	17,925	42,938
Tweeddale	21,345	51,131
Total	115,270*	276,125

*2018 Population Estimate (NRS)

Table 2

- 6.2 Earmarked balances reported to Executive 16 March 2021:

Area Partnership	Earmarked Balances reported to Executive 16 March 2021 £	Likely balance after March Area Partnerships £
Berwickshire	33,989	0
Cheviot	1,529	1,529
Eildon	62,030	11,522
T&L	42,541	0
Tweeddale	43,121	2,784
Total	183,210	15,835

Table 3

7 COMMUNITY FUND – FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AND NEXT STEPS

- 7.1 The outcomes of the changes to the Community Fund being proposed within this report will be reviewed after one year and brought back to Council with further recommendations as appropriate.
- 7.2 It is acknowledged that there will be a number of areas that will require further support in order to build capacity, engage with more diverse communities and develop the Community Fund for the future to ensure that it is fit for purpose and reduces inequalities:
- i. Training and support will be required to ensure that each Area Partnership fulfils its duties in both the dispersion of funds, to build capacity and engagement, and to reduce inequalities
 - ii. Investment in digital technology is required to enable better connectivity and engagement with our communities, and will form part of the Digital Strategy.
 - iii. Communication platforms and tools will require to be developed and invested in, to provide seamless ways of engaging and interacting with communities, and in specific relation to the Community Fund, to allow online application and evaluation forms to be easily completed, downloaded and shared.
 - iv. Investment in resources to build capacity to ensure that we have strong community networks that have the skills and expertise to deliver the aims and aspirations of their projects and funding applications to completion.
 - v. There may be a desire in the future to disperse the Community Fund to other entities/incorporated bodies. If so, this will need to be supported and explored further both with communities and those interested organisations to examine appropriate governance, best practice and develop models for further consideration.

8 PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

- 8.1 There was little appetite from those consulted within the current review of the Community Fund to take forward participatory budgeting at a local level, however there was recognition that this may be due to a lack of capacity and something that the Area Partnership may wish to consider further.
- 8.2 Proposals to further develop the Council's approach to Participatory Budgeting were detailed in a separate report to Council on 19 March 2021.

9 IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Financial

There are no further financial implications other than those detailed within the body of the report.

9.2 Risk and Mitigations

Not acting upon the review of the findings of the SCDC Report by Area Partnerships and Area Partnership Working Groups would have a negative impact on both the Area Partnerships and the Council's reputation as an organisation that listens to the community

9.3 Integrated Impact Assessment

- (a) It is anticipated that there will be no negative impacts under either the Equality Duty or the Fairer Scotland Duty.
- (b) It is anticipated that the ongoing effects of the proposals will help to eliminate discrimination, help to promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations with those who have equality characteristics as the way in which the recommendations are addressed will be chosen and agreed by the membership of the Area Partnership and the wider community. The recommendations will be working to avoid exclusion, tackle inequality and empower local communities.
- (c) The aim is for the evolution of the Community Fund and local participatory budgeting to be undertaken at grass roots level. In order for this to happen, there can be no predetermined shape for the work to take, but rather the community representatives will be empowered to do this. Although the outcomes generated through this work are not known, it is anticipated that they, and the implementation of the wider recommendations, will identify and overcome any inequalities and/or discrimination, perceived or otherwise, that may exist.

9.4 Acting Sustainably

A sustainable development assessment has been carried out on the proposals contained in this report and it is anticipated that there will be a positive effect on the following community 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.

9.5 Carbon Management

There are no anticipated effects on carbon emissions as a result of the recommendations contained in this report

9.6 Rural Proofing

Not applicable

9.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

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

10 CONSULTATION

10.1 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 are being consulted and any comments received will be reported at the meeting.

10.2 The views of the Scottish Borders Community Councils' Network, individual Community Councils and the Third Sector Interface have been considered in developing this report.

Approved by

Jenni Craig

Service Director – Customer & Communities Signature

Author(s)

Jenni Craig	Service Director Customer & Communities
Shona Smith	Communities & Partnership Manager

Background Papers: None

Previous Minute Reference: Scottish Borders Council 27 August 2021

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The approach of each Area Partnership including proposals:

BERWICKSHIRE APPROACH:

At Berwickshire Area Partnership on 3 December 2020, it was agreed that a working group be convened to discuss and make recommendations. This working group met on 26 January 2021 9 February 2021 and again on 23 February. A sub-group was also established to specifically focus on the Community Fund. The working group then made a presentation to the Berwickshire Area Partnership on 4 March 2021 to discuss recommendations and make the following proposals:

- Establish a sub-committee of 10 members with full delegated powers - Berwickshire Community Fund Assessment Group (BCFAG) that will include 3 Elected Members to review the current Community Fund and develop new criteria, application form and guidance in response to local need and demand
- A single process that will include – assessment against basic eligibility criteria, scoring and assessment, consolidation of scores and then notification to applicants
- Decision to be made by the BCFAG who will subsequently report their decisions to the Berwickshire Area Partnership
- Applications processed 4 times per year
- Evaluation and monitoring of projects being awarded funding will also be monitored by the BCFAG
- Community Council, Festival and Village Hall grants should be ring-fenced for 2021/22

CHEVIOT APPROACH:

Cheviot Area Partnership met and discussed the Area Partnership and Community Fund on 25 November 2020. A working group was set up and met on 14 January 2021 to discuss and make recommendations to the Cheviot Area Partnership on 27 January 2021 and again on 18 February. The proposals from Cheviot in relation to the Community Fund were as follows:

- No change required to the criteria
- A Funding Panel (if it has the ability to make awards) to include Elected Members, Community Councils and community representation
- Voting to be expanded for when consensus not reached
- Officers to do technical checks prior to a funding panel scoring the application and making a recommendation to the Cheviot Area Partnership
- A Quality of Life Fund be established for devolving to Community Councils in regards to local priorities
- Village Hall Grants should remain core funded
- Festival Grants should continue to be ring-fenced
- Community Council Grants should remain core funded although this will be included in the Community Council Scheme Review
- Funding could be devolved to Community Councils for local priorities

EILDON APPROACH:

Eildon Area Partnership met on 12 November 2020 and the attendees were asked for comments back via the Chair. 2 further sessions with communities were held on 17th December and 22nd December 2020, and the findings presented back to the Area Partnership on 28th January 2021. The proposals from Eildon with regards to the Community Fund were as follows:

- Would be keen to explore how a funding panel might work
- Would like more involvement of Community Council representatives in the assessment process
- Encourage Community Councils to consult with their committees
- Local communities should be able to commission SBC to carry out particular work within an agreed budget – road speed signage/improvements, additional lighting/potholes
- To continue to fund Festival Grants, Community Councils and Village Halls at current levels

TEVIOT & LIDDESDALE APPROACH:

After discussion at the Teviot & Liddesdale Area Partnership on 17 November 2020, the eight Community Councils met with Elected Members and agreed a proposal which was discussed with Council officers, and feedback was provided by those officers. A presentation was then made by representatives of the Community Councils to the Teviot & Liddesdale Area Partnership on 12 January 2021 and the feedback incorporated into the final proposals. In relation to the Community Fund, the following was proposed:

- Representation from each CC (8) & elected members (6), Chair/vice voted by committee
- Spent on anything defined under OSCR' charitable purposes, not statutory items
- Must have support of the community, endorsed by the CC it represents
- Recommendations reviewed and scored by the committee
- Assessments published and open to scrutiny, no scoring = no voting.
- Papers shared in advance of meetings (website enables potential to include public voting/feedback)
- Proposals shared at Forum for wider discussion/endorsement/approval
- After ring-fenced budgets provided for (CC grants, village halls, festivals etc.)
 - SBC Fund A 50%: Community based projects decided by community allocated into 10 shares, HCC & Burnfoot = 2 shares, rest = 1
 - SBC Fund B 50%: AP catchment, bids related to place plans, reviewed by 'Admin' to assess criteria fit/relevance/benefit prior to scoring
 - Partnership Funds: determined by contributor, likely project/task specific. Ideally have flexibility to 'match fund' SBC or other funders

- Management of the community fund needs to be taken out of the day to day function of the AP but reviewed in each meeting.
- To ensure transparency and accountability it is proposed applications should be scored and assessed against the relevant criteria with scorecards published so each sponsor can see what they were awarded and know the views of the management team.
- Each scoring panel member must score/publish or their votes don't count.
- Following assessment and review, projects should be published and reviewed at the AP for wider discussion and approval.
- A web based facility to publish paperwork to support bids will engage more people across the catchment and enable wider voting, if this was felt to be appropriate for projects which impact the wider catchment.
- Panel representation proposed is from CCs and elected members with Chair and Vice roles as well as admin support.
- A panel of 14, all having a wide understanding of community need and fit and able to collectively make a recommendation for the AP to consider and approve.
- The ability to seek match funding, and working in partnership to achieve the ambition of the Area Partnership

TWEEDDALE APPROACH:

Tweeddale Area Partnership discussed the findings and recommendations of the SCDC report at a meeting on 3 November 2020. The Chair then held a number of drop in surgeries to discuss proposals and presented these on the 19 January 2021. These proposals were:

- **Criteria for funding** – Each Area Partnership should agree its own criteria for funding from the Community Fund. These should be established by contribution and discussion at an Area Partnership meeting dedicated to this process.
- **The process** – It is vital that people feel they are being involved in the assessment of each application and that the process more transparent. Consider a shortlisting process.
 - Short-listed applications should be advertised and information provided in advance of the AP meeting
 - Concern that bigger communities secure more funding than smaller ones. Need a mechanism to make sure distribution is fair.
 - Giving a proportion of what is asked for (where fund is over-subscribed for example) is not always a good solution – need to check what effect this would have on the viability of the project
- **Decision-making** – as is currently the agreed process, where there is consensus for an application it will be approved by an Area Partnership

meeting without any vote. Short-listing would help to provide consensus as would providing information in advance



FIT FOR 2024: REVIEW OF AREA PARTNERSHIPS – OUTCOMES AND NEXT STEPS

Report by Service Director, Customer & Communities

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

25 MARCH 2021

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report presents the outcomes of each Area Partnership's review in relation to the report from the Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC).**
- 1.2 At its meeting on 27 August 2020, Council agreed that each Area Partnership established a mechanism to review the findings of the SCDC Report regarding the future of Area Partnerships and to make recommendations for further public consultation within each locality.
- 1.3 It was agreed that arrangements in each locality are to be developed at a grass roots level using a bottom up approach. This paper presents proposals for wider public consultation, and supports the empowerment of each Area Partnership to discuss, agree and implement further improvement mechanisms within each of their localities.
- 1.4 Council agreed on 27 August 2020 to receive a further report on the outcome and next steps. This report also proposes the requirement to build community capacity in order to support the further development of Area Partnerships.
- 1.5 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 in regards to how ongoing arrangements evolve.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 I recommend that Scottish Borders Council:-

- (a) Notes the emerging common proposals from the recent review by each Area Partnership as detailed at Section 4 and the ongoing involvement of the current arrangements in line with community empowerment and the findings of the SCDC report;**

- (b) Agrees that the outcomes of the review are taken forward for local public consultation in each locality to be held from April – June 2021, with a further report being brought back to Council in the autumn;**
- (c) Notes that community capacity building requirements will be needed to fully support the further evolution of Area Partnerships within each locality; and**
- (d) Notes that digital requirements will be needed to fully support the further evolution of Area Partnerships within each locality, and that these will be addressed through the Council's Digital Strategy.**

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 At its meeting on 27 August 2020, Scottish Borders Council agreed that each Area Partnership establish a mechanism to review the findings of the Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) Report regarding the future model for Area Partnerships and to make recommendations for further public consultation within each locality.

3.2 The findings of the SCDC Report highlighted that:

- After 18 months of operation, the Area Partnerships had yet to realise the level of community engagement and involvement that was envisaged when they were established.
- In general, feedback overall was mixed although the majority, of those that expressed a view, felt that the partnerships were very good/good or acceptable.
- The need to involve Community Councils, along with other community groups, to shape the Area Partnerships going forward. The need for improved community engagement, support to enable a wider range of people to attend the meetings, agenda setting, meeting structure and ways in which the meetings are facilitated.
- It was acknowledged that not one size fits all and that, through continued engagement with communities, separate operational and governance arrangements may develop across the five areas
- Good and real community empowerment is central to the success of the Area Partnerships
- There is a desire from communities to be involved in shaping the Area Partnerships to ensure that they are effective forums for supporting and delivering the locality plans and wider community planning agenda

3.3 Following the receipt of SCDC's Report, immediate changes were made to Area Partnerships, including:

- a) Once Area Partnerships re-commenced in November 2020, all those attending are invited to suggest agenda items for future meetings, and an information pack regarding the Community Empowerment Act is included within every agenda.
- b) The inclusion of an update on the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 as a standing agenda item.
- c) Service information included within the agenda, and officer presentations as appropriate.
- d) Additional promotion of Area Partnerships is taking place within social media, but more needs to be done using digital tools to increase awareness and encourage more diverse groups to attend.

3.4 With regards to capacity building, officers are aware that the level of community capacity varies widely across the Scottish Borders. It is therefore essential that community capacity building is available to support all our communities to play a central role in Area Partnerships. Participants

in the Area Partnership review process felt that there is not enough community capacity building support to sustain local activity.

- 3.5 A Fit for 2024 review is already currently underway which will consider the recommendations from the public consultation and will look at a range of options to improve capacity building within communities.

4 THE APPROACH OF AREA PARTNERSHIPS INCLUDING KEY PROPOSALS

- 4.1 Berwickshire and Cheviot Area Partnerships agreed to form working sub-groups to consider the findings of the report and to make proposals to their next Area Partnership for further discussion.
- 4.2 Eildon and Tweeddale discussed the report within their Area Partnership meetings, and the Area Partnership Chairs held further community meetings to gather views for further discussion.
- 4.3 Community Councils within Teviot & Liddesdale met with Elected Members and agreed a proposal which was discussed with Council officers to obtain feedback and then presented to the Area Partnership for discussion.
- 4.4 All five Area Partnerships brought their initial findings and proposals back to their next Area Partnership for further discussion and agreement. These are detailed at **Appendix A**.
- 4.5 There are a number of common proposals received to date in relation to Area Partnerships:
- The majority would like to see Area Partnerships remain a committee of the Council, although some see this as an interim position until further capacity can be built to take on more of the Area Partnership functions in the future.
 - A consideration to be given for all Committee Members to have equal voting rights or the flexibility to establish a separate entity or body at a future date which focuses on strategic issues.
 - A revision and refreshment of Locality Plans & Action Plans to ensure that they are fit for purpose and reflect local needs and demands.
 - The flexibility to set up sub-groups or sub-committees in the future that could take on specific tasks or projects.
 - A desire to become more involved in setting the Area Partnership Agendas and to include other partners and agencies in relation to service updates.
 - Being consulted on the appointment of Area Partnership Chairs, and the flexibility of rotating Chairs or sharing Chairing responsibilities in the future.
 - The flexibility to hold Area Partnerships on different days and times and promotion of Area Partnerships to a wider audience.

5 AREA PARTNERSHIPS – FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AND NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 It is proposed that public consultation is undertaken on all of the above within each locality from April-June 2021. This will include as wide engagement as possible with Community Councils, Community Planning and other third sector partners, access groups, other key organisations and

stakeholders. A report will be brought back to Council which will detail the outcomes of the consultation for further discussion.

- 5.2 Alongside the consultation, officers will give further consideration to the proposals and how these could be implemented given the types of models in operation in other areas.
- 5.3 The experience from setting up the five Community Assistance Hubs (CAHs) has already provided significant learning and benefits, which we need to build on and maximise the opportunities for the future. There is wide acknowledgement that the Community Assistance Hubs are a very successful and effective model at providing a sense of community, and they should continue to input to Area Partnership agendas in relation to providing a co-ordinating role for local issues and solutions.
- 5.4 Since Area Partnerships re-commenced in November 2020, all those attending are invited to suggest agenda items for future meetings, and an information pack regarding the Community Empowerment Act is included on every agenda. Promotion of the Area Partnership is taking place within social media, but more needs to be done using digital tools to increase awareness and encourage more diverse groups to participate.
- 5.5 It is acknowledged that there will be a number of areas that will require further support in order to build capacity, engage with more diverse communities and develop the Area Partnerships for the future to ensure that they are fit for purpose and reduce inequalities.
 - i. Investment in digital technology is required to enable better connectivity and engagement with our communities, which will be addressed within the Council's Digital Strategy.
 - ii. Communication platforms and tools will require to be developed and invested in, to provide seamless ways of engaging and interacting with communities, and in specific relation to Area Partnerships, to provide a one stop portal where relevant community information, advice and support can be easily accessed.
 - iii. Investment in resources to build capacity to ensure that we have strong community networks that have the skills and expertise to deliver the aims and aspirations of their locality plans and projects to completion.
- 5.6 As part of the place making approach to community engagement and participation that will be required to fully support the review and refreshment of each Area Partnership's Locality Plan, the engagement model approved by Council on 25 February 2021 will provide additional skills, facilitation, resource and knowledge to undertake this work.
- 5.7 High level place briefs setting out needs and priorities would be completed at 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.

- 5.8 This place making 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. The output will also allow services to be redesigned to reflect user and community needs and requirements in light of the pandemic.
- 5.9 As requested by Council, this report gives details of the approach that each Area Partnership has undertaken, the findings from each Area Partnership, and next steps in regard to further public consultation and future development of Area Partnerships.

6 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

There are no further financial implications other than those detailed within the body of the report. It is acknowledged that investment will be required as detailed in section 7, but the implications of this overall investment is still to be determined.

6.2 Risk and Mitigations

Not acting upon the recent review of the findings of the SCDC Report by each Area Partnership would have a negative impact on the development of Area Partnerships and the Council's reputation as an organisation that listens to the community.

6.3 Integrated Impact Assessment

- (a) It is anticipated that there will be no negative impacts under either the Equality Duty or the Fairer Scotland Duty.
- (b) It is anticipated that the ongoing development of Area Partnerships will help to eliminate discrimination, help to promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations with those who have equality characteristics as the way in which the recommendations are addressed will be chosen and agreed by the membership of the Area Partnership and the wider community. The development and aims of Area Partnerships will be working to avoid exclusion, tackle inequality and empower local communities.
- (c) The aim is for the evolution of the Area Partnerships to be undertaken at grass roots level, and that communities and their representatives will be empowered to do this. Although the outcomes generated through this work are not known, it is anticipated that they, and the implementation of any future recommendations, will identify and overcome any inequalities and/or discrimination, perceived or otherwise, that may exist.

6.4 Acting Sustainably

A sustainable development assessment has been carried out on the proposals contained in this report and it is anticipated that there will be a positive effect on the following community 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.

6.5 Carbon Management

There are no anticipated effects on carbon emissions as a result of the recommendations contained in this report

6.6 Rural Proofing

It is anticipated that the ongoing evolution of Area Partnerships will have a positive effect in enabling more rural locations to participate in the process and encourage local action and decision making.

6.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

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

7 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The 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 the final report.
- 7.2 Scottish Borders Community Councils' Network, individual Community Councils and the Third Sector Interface have been consulted on the review of the findings of the SCDC review and inclusion of information in this report.

Approved by

Jenni Craig

Service Director, Customer & Communities Signature

Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Jenni Craig	Service Director Customer & Communities
Shona Smith	Communities and Partnership Manager

Background Papers: None

Previous Minute Reference: Scottish Borders Council, 27 August 2020

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Appendix A

BERWICKSHIRE APPROACH: At Berwickshire Area Partnership on 3 December 2020, it was agreed that a working group be convened to discuss and make recommendations. This working group met on 26 January 2021 9 February 2021 and again on 23 February. The working group made a presentation to the Berwickshire Area Partnership on 4 March 2021 to discuss recommendations and make the following proposals:

- The Area Partnership should continue as a Council Committee
- Continuation of the current role, remit and purpose of Area Partnerships
- Modifications regarding the operational characteristics of the Area Partnership will be required to ensure core functions are discharged in a more effective and participatory manner
- Sub-groups/sub-committees to be introduced with responsibility for setting and facilitation future meeting topics
- A “grass roots up” revision of the Berwickshire Locality Plan to include local place plans to be undertaken
- Geographical area meetings could be held that will feed into the Area Partnership
- Flexibility regarding process within and outcomes of the Area Partnership
- Capacity building will be required in order to operate more effectively as a partnership
- Recognised that although the Chair is an elected member appointed by the Council, the view of the partnership prior to appointment should be sought

CHEVIOT APPROACH: Cheviot Area Partnership met and discussed the Area Partnership and Community Fund on 25 November 2020. A working group was set up and met on 14 January 2021 to discuss and make recommendations to the Cheviot Area Partnership on 27 January 2021 and again on 18 February. The proposals from Cheviot in relation to Area Partnerships were as follows:

- Remain a Council Committee, to include Elected Members, Community Councils and 3rd Sector but only if all Committee Members had equal rights to include voting rights
- If unable to give all members equal voting rights then consider a separate entity/structure which focuses on strategic issues rather than very localised issues – which could be achieved by separating operational matters and more strategic matters
- Mechanisms for discussions on very localised issues to be identified
- More emphasis on sharing responsibility for the role of Chair if a separate entity is required
- More use of technology
- Ensure people are not disenfranchised by holding them the same day and time – explore meeting on different days and times

- A short meeting more frequently may be beneficial
- Committee need to agree which items are placed on the agenda
- Presentations for discussion allotted 15 mins
- All parties have a say on what goes on the agenda which could include a topic of interest
- The agreed identified priorities within the Cheviot Locality Plan should be to be re-visited to ensure that place plans are reflected
- Support to develop Local Place Plans
- Area Partnership must spend more time to look at and reflect on the SCDC report and address the findings
- Sustainability crisis needs to be built into Cheviot Locality Plan

EILDON APPROACH: Eildon Area Partnership met on 12 November 2020 and the attendees were asked for comments back via the Chair. 2 further sessions with communities were held on 17th December and 22nd December 2020, and the findings presented back to the Area Partnership on 28th January 2021. The proposals from Eildon with regards to the Area Partnership were as follows:

- A sub-group/sub-committee would be useful to gather thoughts and opinions and make it manageable
- From the comments there is an enthusiasm for this to be a community meeting but that there is a worry that no actions will take place and that the meeting would hold less value.
- Who would provide administration support etc if it was a community meeting?
- The aim of the area partnership in the meantime could therefore be to build capacity so that these can become community meetings long term
- A rotating chair could be a good start at this, with the support of SBC officers and Elected Members
- A theme at each meeting, based on one of the priorities of the Locality Plan & Action Plan. This would allow an officer from that Directorate presenting and laying out any progress, or otherwise, and then being questioned by the attendees, or receiving suggestions and advice
- A member from one of the emergency services presenting on what progress their local plans are having, and answering questions
- Make sure that the action plan has merit and any actions are reported on This will demonstrate that the community voice is being heard and that Area Partnerships have an influence
- Link volunteers and resilient community groups better into this process
- Allow a place for community council issues to be discussed or issues to be raised
- Allow the partnership to have their say and make decisions on any consultations that there may be, this would allow Area Partnerships to become the vehicle of decision making

- Rotate the Chair. If that works then move further in ensuring more volunteers rather than elected SBC Councillors have a formal role
- Re meeting time - evenings are preferable – to encourage attendance from people at work and school pupils. Virtual meetings have a future where public transport is a problem – but access to technology and internet connection shouldn't rule out attendance – blended approach may be the answer longer term
- At least once a year it should be during the day when those not available at night might attend
- Make the actions on the action plan more accountable – report more on progress (or lack of) and use the action plan as a way of making sure things get done
- Reflect the action plan to local issues and not just high level requests

TEVIOT & LIDDESDALE APPROACH: After discussion at the Teviot & Liddesdale Area Partnership on 17 November 2020, the eight Community Councils met with Elected Members and agreed a proposal which was discussed with Council officers, and feedback was provided by those officers. A presentation was then made by representatives of the Community Councils to the Teviot & Liddesdale Area Partnership on 12 January 2021 and the feedback incorporated into the final proposals. In relation to the Area Partnerships, the following was proposed:

- More transparency and say – co-production & collaboration with partners and share learning & experience
- Greater influence in service provision that impact each of us in different ways – strategic development & place planning
- Community sustainability through economic growth; developing what we've got, maximising its uses and attracting new investment
- New approach with digital resources allows us to cover more, quickly and efficiently
- Different types of meetings, agendas and participants – key partners to be invited to attend
- An overarching AP with different functions, sub groups/committees of relevance: *'bring back the IJB –Health and Wellbeing group'*
- Recognising a different approach: a new environment with new challenges needing a different solution that reflect local needs
- *Community engagement and participation assessed differently:*
- *Communities 'it must work for us, we must be heard and actions taken'*
- SBC and public agency partners *'need to deliver true community empowerment'*

TWEEDDALE APPROACH: Tweeddale Area Partnership discussed the findings and recommendations of the SCDC report at a meeting on 3 November 2020. The Chair then held a number of drop in surgeries to discuss proposals and presented these on the 19 January 2021. These proposals were:

- We need to find subjects and speakers that will attract the community to engage
- Meetings need to have a focus and be more specific. Debates could be held on major changes to Council policy as a stage in the process
- Consider meeting timings – remember people work
- Area Partnerships should be Council Committees
- There needs to be a clearer picture of the purpose of the Area Partnership
- It is important that larger communities are not able to dominate decision-making over smaller communities
- The Community Assistance Hub is a very successful and effective model at providing a sense of community
- Most people do not know about the Area Partnerships – need to promote them
- What are the outcomes of discussions and decisions? Good ideas need to be translated into actions
- Resource should be provided to increase community engagement – “meaningful listening”
- Resources should be provided to assist Community Councils with projects



BORDERS DISCRETIONARY SUPPORT FUND FOR BUSINESS

Report by Executive Director, Finance & Regulatory

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

25 March 2021

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This paper provides Elected Members with an update on the Borders Discretionary Support Fund and a proposed methodology for delivering this funding to local businesses**
- 1.2 The Council was initially provided with a grant of £672,021 from Scottish Government to administer a COVID-19 Local Authority Discretionary Fund. This funding package was subsequently increased from £672,021 to £3,100,000.
- 1.3 The key aim of the fund, agreed by Executive on 19 January 2020 is to help mitigate the short-term financial challenges that are currently being experienced by local businesses that have not been able to access support from Scottish Government since October 2020.
- 1.4 The application process for the fund was available on line during the month of February, with approximately 500 applications received through an on-line application process. A methodology and suggested funding allocation based on need and the number of eligible applicants has been developed by officers to try to distribute the funding in a fair and reasonable manner to businesses throughout the Scottish Borders. In doing so officers have placed emphasis on the range of support available to businesses, the need to ensure the support provided to each business is material enough to make a difference and also as far as possible to ensure the funding provided recognises the relative size of businesses. The intention is to fully expend the one off funding available.
- 1.5 Subject to Council approval it is intended to initiate payments to businesses by the end of March.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that Council:

- a) Agrees the methodology and funding allocations proposed to distribute the funding for the Borders Discretionary Support Fund as set out in this report;**

- b) Note that based on current information and subject to final checks 447 local Borders based businesses will benefit from the discretionary fund; and,**
- c) Note that a final report will be brought back to Executive by the end of May 2021 setting out the final numbers and types of businesses assisted by the Borders Discretionary Support Fund.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 A variety of support packages have been delivered and are currently in place to help support businesses experiencing financial impacts as a result of COVID-19.
- 3.2 In November 2020, the Scottish Government announced a commitment to establish a £30 million Discretionary Fund to help enable Local Authorities to provide additional support to businesses in their local area.
- 3.3 The Scottish Government subsequently increased the value of this fund to £120 million nationally, with the allocation for Scottish Borders Council finally totalling £3.1 million.
- 3.4 The key aim of the fund agreed by Executive Committee on 19 January was to provide financial support for businesses that have not received financial support from the Scottish Government, despite experiencing disruption due to COVID-19 regulations and restrictions introduced since October 2020.
- 3.5 An on-line application process was developed and launched by the Council in February and approximately 500 applications were received following a four-week application process. Based on current information, 447 have been assessed as valid applications.

4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The following criteria as detailed in Table 4.1 was agreed at Executive Committee on 19 January 2021.

Table 4.1 – Discretionary Fund Criteria

To be Eligible for a one off discretionary support grant, Businesses or Sole Traders should
Be based in the Scottish Borders, or able to demonstrate that a significant element >40% of annual turnover, trade or employment is generated within the Scottish Borders Council area.
Have less than 50 employees.
Be registered as a Business, Limited Company, LLP, Company Limited by Guarantee, sole trader, partnership, self-employed individual, or charitable trust with HMRC for PAYE, tax and trading purposes at 1 October 2020.
Be able to provide evidence of active trading up to and including October 2020 (unless closed by Covid 19 Restrictions).
Be able to provide evidence they intend to continue

trading in the tax year 2021-22.
Be able to demonstrate the financial impact on the business caused by Covid 19.
Be able to demonstrate how the funding would benefit business for example in preserving local jobs.
Not have received other COVID-19 related business support (including but not limited to, Corporate Finance Fund, Future Fund, R&D Focussed SMEs Fund, HMRC Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, Non-Domestic Rates relief, Small Business Grant or other business support, Newly self-employed scheme, Strategic Business Support Fund or grant schemes targeted at specific sectors) since 1 October 2020.
Should not be in line to receive payments from forthcoming schemes such as the Taxi and Private Hire Driver Support Fund and those funds supporting the wedding sector.
Businesses that are in administration, insolvent, or where a striking-off notice has been made; or businesses who are in receipt of an enforcement notice as a result of breaching COVID-19 Regulations are not eligible for funding.
Individuals in receipt of state unemployment related benefits are excluded.

4.2 Following analysis of the applications received, officers have separated businesses into the following categories:

- The Self-Employed;
- Businesses with 1-10 employees;
- Businesses with 11-25 employees; and
- Businesses with 26 – 50 employees.

As anticipated, the majority of the applications were contained within the self-employed and smaller sized business categories which reflects the business model that is prevalent throughout the Scottish Borders.

4.3 As part of the evaluation process officers sought information to assess the financial impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the individual business by utilising profit and loss and previous financial and sales related information. This final proposal in this paper allocates funding for each category of business, based on the number of employees.

4.4 Table 4.2 below provides details of the suggested funding allocation for each eligible business, based on the number of employees.

Table 4.2 – Proposed Funding Allocation

Business Category	Number of Businesses in Category	Suggested Allocation per Business	Total Allocation
Self-Employed	247	£4k	£988,000
Businesses with 1 – 10 Employees	182	£10k	£1,820,000
Businesses with 11 – 25 Employees	16	£15k	£240,000
Businesses with 26 – 50 Employees	2	£25k	£50,000
Overall Total*	447		£3,098,000

* subject to final checking.

4.5 Based on current information, 37 applicants were not able to be supported by the fund because they were already receiving financial support, or had previously received financial support through the various Scottish Government Support Funds for business that have been available since October 2020 such as the Strategic Framework Business Fund. This fund has provided support payments every four weeks to eligible businesses.

4.6 The Scottish Government has recently announced that businesses that are currently receiving funding through the Strategic Framework Business Fund will be eligible for Start-Up Grants delivered as part of the Barnett consequential from the UK Government budget. It is anticipated that these grants will be administered by Local Authorities and delivered during April 2021.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

There are no additional financial implications associated with this report, noting that the contents refer specifically to the distribution of a £3.1 million grant from the Scottish Government.

5.2 Risk and Mitigations

The grant scheme is wholly discretionary, thereby mitigating any risk to The Council.

5.3 Integrated Impact Assessment

There is no impact associated with an Integrated Impact Assessment.

5.4 Sustainable Development Goals

There is no impact in relation to sustainable Development Goals.

5.5 Climate Change

There is no impact in relation to Climate Change.

5.6 Rural Proofing

There is no impact in relation to rural proofing.

5.7 Data Protection Impact Statement

There are no personal data implications arising from the proposals Contained in this report.

5.8 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

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

6 CONSULTATION

6.1 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 yet to be consulted and any comments received will be incorporated into the final report.

Approved by

David Robertson
Executive Director, Finance and Regulatory Services

Signature

Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Graeme Johnstone	Lead Officer x5138

Background Papers: Executive Committee – 19 January 2021
Previous Minute Reference:

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Sexual Entertainment Venues

Report by Executive Director Finance and Regulatory Services

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

25 MARCH 2021

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report advises members of the responses received to the Stage 1 consultation on whether the Council should resolve to licence sexual entertainment venues ("SEV's) in the Scottish Borders area.**
- 1.2 At its meeting on 27 August 2020, Council agreed that a Stage 1 consultation on whether the Council should resolve to licence SEV's should be carried out and instructed the Executive Director Finance and Regulatory Services to do so. Following the conclusion of the stage 1 consultation on 14 February 2021, 80 responses have been received and these responses are detailed in Appendix 1.
- 1.3 The responses received to the stage 1 consultation were overwhelmingly in favour of the Council adopting a Resolution to licence SEV's. It is therefore recommended that Council do so. Thereafter Council will need to prepare a SEV Policy Statement and a further stage 2 consultation will be required on the content of that policy.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that Council**
 - (a) adopts a resolution to licence SEV's and**
 - (b) instructs the Executive Director Finance and Regulatory Services to prepare a draft SEV Policy Statement and to subsequently report to Council on the content of that Draft prior to the stage 2 consultation.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Air Weapons and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2015 has, from 26 April 2019, amended the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 to introduce a discretionary power for Local Authorities in Scotland to licence SEVs within their individual areas.

A SEV is any premises at which sexual entertainment is provided before a live audience for financial gain and where its purpose is the sexual stimulation of members of the audience.

There are no SEV's in the Scottish Borders area, and as far as the Council is aware, there are no plans to open one. There are SEV's in some of the cities or larger towns in Scotland.

- 3.2 Since the new power falls within the Council's responsibilities for Civic Government Licensing, its introduction was intimated to the Civic Government Licensing Committee at an informal meeting held on 25 October 2019. Members of the Committee expressed support for the idea that Council should consider adopting a Resolution. They were keen to explore the option of having a regulatory framework in place that would be operative if an SEV seeks to operate within the Scottish Borders area in future.
- 3.3 The Committee Members asked that a short term working group consisting of Members, SBC Officers and multi-agency representatives be formed to ensure that the statutory objectives in relation to SEV activity are properly considered. The working group met twice and their findings formed the basis of the recommendation in the report considered by Council on 27 August 2020.
- 3.4 At the meeting on 27 August 2020 Council agreed that a stage 1 consultation on whether the Council should resolve to licence SEV's should be carried out and instructed the Executive Director Finance and Regulatory Services to do so. The stage 1 consultation was carried out over a period of 12 weeks between 19 November 2020 and 14 February 2021.
- 3.5 A total of 80 responses were received as detailed in Appendix 1.
- 66 were in favour of a Resolution to licence SEV's being adopted.
 - 13 were not in favour of a Resolution although members will note from Appendix 1 that some of the comments accompanying a "no" response indicated that there should be no SEV's. Of course, the only way the Council can achieve control of such venues and to limit their numbers is by adopting a Resolution.
- 1 responder stated that they were not sure if a Resolution should be adopted but commented that they thought a Resolution would protect and safeguard those who work in the sexual entertainment industry.
- 3.6 The short term working group have considered all the responses received and that group is satisfied that there is a desire and a need for the Council to adopt a Resolution and to thereafter produce a SEV policy statement.

4 Effect of the changes to the legislation.

4.1 The introduction of a discretionary licensing system gives Local Authorities the option to adopt a Resolution to licence SEVs in its area.

If a Resolution is adopted, any SEV wishing to operate legally would require to apply for a licence.

If a Local Authority does not adopt a Resolution, anyone can operate a SEV without any direct regulation from the Local Authority.

4.2 If a Resolution is passed by the Local Authority, then the following would apply:

- Council must determine the appropriate number of SEVs (if any) for its area and for each relevant locality.
- It must prepare a SEV Policy Statement in respect of its functions in relation to the licensing of SEVs taking into account the licensing objectives of public nuisance, crime and disorder, public safety, protecting children and young people from harm and violence against women.
- Any SEVs would require a SEV Licence to operate.
- Thereafter there are various grounds for the refusal of a SEV Licence including that the number of SEVs in the Local Authority area or the relevant locality at the time that the application is made is equal to or exceeds the number which the Local Authority consider is appropriate for that locality.
- The Resolution must not come into force any earlier than one year from the date the Resolution is made by the Local Authority.
- An SEV Policy Statement must be published by the Local Authority 28 days prior to the Resolution coming into effect.

In relation to the above, Members should note that if sexual entertainment has not been provided at a premises on more than three occasions within a 12 month period then the premises is not to be treated as a SEV.

5 PROCESS

5.1 If a Resolution is adopted, the Council has a statutory duty to publish a Draft Policy Statement. The stage 2 consultation will then ask for views on that Draft Policy Statement. The policy will include matters such as the proposed appropriate number of SEVs (if any) to be permitted in the Scottish Borders, what localities are considered suitable (or unsuitable) for the operation of a SEV and what measures the Council would expect applicants to have in place to address the following objectives:

- preventing public nuisance, crime and disorder;
- securing public safety;
- protecting children and young people from harm; and
- reducing violence against women.

A Resolution will come into force no earlier than a year after it is adopted.

6 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

There are no costs attributed to any of the recommendations contained in this report. There are no costs associated with the publication of the Resolution as this will be published online.

6.2 Risk and Mitigations

The carrying out of the consultation and the consideration of the responses received allow the Council to determine whether to exercise the new discretionary power to adopt a Resolution to licence SEV's

6.3 IIA

An IIA has been carried out. Both a decision to licence and a decision not to licence SEVs have the potential to create considerations for our Fairer Scotland duties. In terms of Equalities, the decision is one which has the potential to create impact in relation to the protected characteristics of Sex and of Religious Belief. It is therefore important that any groups representing those potentially impacted are made aware of this Consultation and their views be actively sought.

6.4 Acting Sustainably

There are no economic social or environmental effects as a result of the proposals contained in this report.

6.5 Carbon Management

There is no impact on the Council's carbon emissions as a result of the proposals contained in this report.

6.6 Rural Proofing

Not applicable as although this is a legislative requirement a new Policy is not being proposed at this stage.

6.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

No changes to either the scheme of administration or the scheme of delegation are required as a result of the recommendations in this report.

7 CONSULTATION

The Chief Financial Officer, the Chief Legal Officer (Monitoring Officer), the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Chief Officer Human Resources and the Clerk to the Council and any comments received have been incorporated in the final report.

Approved by

David Robertson

Executive Director Finance and Regulatory Services

Signature

Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Nuala McKinlay	Chief Legal Officer (Monitoring Officer)
Ron Kirk	Managing Solicitor – Property and Licensing

Background Papers: None

Previous Minute Reference: 27 August 2020

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

Contact us at Legal & Licensing, Scottish Borders Council, Council Headquarters,
Newtown St. Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA, 01835-825225, Legal@scotborders.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Should a Resolution be made?

Total 80 responses received

No - 13

Comments

There should be no sexual entertainment venues. I believe this is not entertainment and degrades human beings and encourages human trafficking and other despicable behaviours.

Due the exploitative nature of SEV - the link to VAW and unhealthy narratives that SEV promote about gender roles and stereotypes - and the normalisation of sex and women being commoditised for and by men.

SEV are not necessary and goes against the progress for equality for women. SEV reinforces gender stereotypes and prejudices against women and girls reinforcing masochist behaviours and attitudes.

Not sure -1

I feel if the resolution would protect and safe guard those who work in the industry it is positive move. I do consider we need ensure against exploitation and laws to protect the workers. Basically as nation we have to protect women where it might move into prostitution and people trafficking.

Yes - 66

Most other aspects of daily life are regulated to ensure some form of decency and decent level of fair service. Why should SEV be any different.

I think it is important that these type of venues are monitored in today's society to safeguard members of the public.

If they are licenced, if they break the rules the licence can be taken away.

It seems sensible that all profit making establishments should be regulated

It seems sensible that all profit making entertainment establishments should be regulated

Although I totally object to any form of sexual entertainment venue being allowed to operate the fact that if it did happen, at the very least it would be subject to a licence, and so, to some kind of monitoring/ control measures.

SEVs should be licensed and regulated.

There needs to be a decision made by the council in line with its own position eg these are a form of Vawg.

SEV'S should jump through every hoop possible to discourage them from coming to the Scottish Borders.

As long as SBC would grant licences and not just say no...it would be much safer to make sure the women were safe if licenced but not sure if the council is forward thinking enough and wouldn't want it to be used against women in the sex business

It is vital for SEV to be licenced, as this is an industry where standards must be met so everything possible can be done to protect people who work in the industry who may be vulnerable to exploitation

Should not be allowed in the Borders

The ADP Support Team are members of the Violence Against Woman Partnership and are aware of the conflict between Equally Safe: Scotland's strategy for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls and licencing sexual entertainment venues. Equally Safe defines violence against women and girls as including commercial sexual exploitation, including prostitution, lap dancing, stripping, pornography and human trafficking.

There are clear links between gender based violence and substance use.

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