

# Public Document Pack



## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TUESDAY, 5 DECEMBER 2023

A MEETING of the EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE will be held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS, NEWTOWN ST BOSWELLS, TD6 0SA on TUESDAY, 5 DECEMBER 2023 at 10.00 am.

**All Attendees, including members of the public, should note that the public business in this meeting will be livestreamed and video recorded and that recording will be available thereafter for public view for 180 days.**

N. MCKINLAY,

Director Corporate Governance,

24 November 2023

<b>BUSINESS</b>		
1.	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>	
2.	<b>Order of Business</b>	
3.	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
	<b>Economic Development Business</b>	
4.	<b>Economic Development Update</b> Briefing paper by Director, Resilient Communities. (Copy to follow.)	10 mins
5.	<b>Cycling World Championships Impact Report</b> A presentation from Director, Resilient Communities.	15 mins
6.	<b>Place Making Update Report</b> Copy to follow.	10 mins
7.	<b>Stranraer Place Plan</b> A presentation from Director, Resilient Communities.	15 mins
	<b>Other Business</b>	

8.	<b>Minute</b> (Pages 3 - 12)  Minute of meeting held on 14 November 2023 to be noted for signature by the Chairman. (Copy attached.)	2 mins
9.	<b>Scottish Borders Council's Quarter 2 2023/24 Performance Information</b> (Pages 13 - 46)  Consider report and appendices by Director People, Performance & Change. (Copies attached.)	10 mins
10.	<b>Second Homes Council Tax Affordable Housing Investment Budget Proposals</b> (Pages 47 - 58)  Consider report by Director – Infrastructure & Environment. (Copy attached.)	10 mins
11.	<b>Kalemouth Suspension Bridge</b> (Pages 59 - 72)  Consider report from Director Infrastructure and Environment. (Copy attached.)	10 mins
12.	<b>Any Other Items Previously Circulated</b>	
13.	<b>Any Other Items which the Chairman Decides are Urgent</b>	

#### NOTES

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

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**Membership of Committee:-** Councillors E. Jardine (Chair), C. Cochrane, L. Douglas, M. Douglas, J. Greenwell, C. Hamilton, S. Hamilton, J. Linehan, S. Mountford, D. Parker, J. Pirone, E. Robson, M. Rowley, F. Sinclair, R. Tatler, E. Thornton-Nicol and T. Weatherston

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**SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

MINUTES of the Blended Meeting of the EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE held in Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells and via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday, 14 November 2023 at 10.00 am

Present:- Councillors E. Jardine (Chairman), L. Douglas, M. Douglas, J. Greenwell, S. Hamilton, J. Linehan, D. Parker, E. Robson, M. Rowley, F. Sinclair, R. Tatler, E. Robson, E. Thornton-Nicol, and T. Weatherston.

Apologies:- Councillors C. Cochrane, and C. Hamilton

In Attendance:- Director – Corporate Governance, Director - Finance and Procurement, Director- Infrastructure and Environment, Director - Resilient Communities, Democratic Team Leaders (D. Hall and L. McGeoch)

1. **MINUTE**

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the meeting held on 3 October 2023.

**DECISION**

**APPROVED for signature by the Chairman.**

2. **MONITORING OF THE CAPITAL FINANCIAL PLAN 2023/24**

With reference to paragraph 3 of the Minute of the meeting held on 15 August 2023 there had been circulated copies of a report by the Director – Finance and Procurement which provided an update on the progress of the delivery of the 2023/24 Capital Financial Plan and sought approval for the virements and reallocation of funds required following the review of funding and forecasts as at the September Month end. The monitoring tables on actual expenditure to 30 September 2023 and the key issues and highlights identified in those numbers were summarised within the report. The September month end position reflected a projected outturn of £116.6m against a budget of £130.4m, a net budget variance of £13.8m. That budget variance included net timing movements from 2023/24 into future years of £17.0m offset by funding increases of £3.2m. Further timing movements from 2023/24 were likely as the year progressed and the delivery timescales of major projects became clearer. The construction materials supply chain continued to experience disruption which was causing delays in sourcing essential materials and impacting on project timelines, therefore spend projections should be viewed as indicative and may change materially. However, experience had demonstrated it was likely that significant slippage would be experienced at the year-end compared to initial budgetary estimates. That would offset pressures in year but delay them into future years. A number of macro-economic factors continued to affect the Capital Plan in 2023/24. Recent levels of inflation, along with disruption in the construction materials supply chain, continued to impact on the wider economy and consequently the Council. A surge in demand coupled with constraints on supply had led to price increases, material shortages and longer lead times. The impact on tender prices for major projects and the wider Capital Plan continued to be assessed and built into forecast costs as they were identified. Current legally committed projects had a smaller risk of impact and block programmes of work could operate within a cash constrained budget and were considered lower risk; although it was likely to impact on the scale of project delivery within the blocks. The most significant risk lay in the contracts that were being tendered this year, including Galashiels Academy, Peebles High School and Tweedbank Care Home, which would result in budget pressures in future years - as had been highlighted through reports taken to Council during the first 6 months of the year. The financial implications from those unfavourable market conditions would continue to be reported through the regular budget monitoring cycle with the longer-term impacts reflected in the financial planning process.

During the 2023/24 budget setting process a Planned Programming Adjustment budget line was added to the Financial Plan, that was offset where unspent project budgets became available through the year. The balance to address in 2023/24 remains at £0.833m as no further budget had been identified as available since the Q1 report was completed. As highlighted to Council through separate reports, pressures in new build projects at Earlston Primary School, Galashiels Academy, Peebles High School, and Tweedbank Care Village had increased the Planned Programming Adjustment in future years of the plan by £19.8.5m. The funding of those pressures would be considered as part of the 2024/25 financial planning process. Appendix 2 to the report contained a list of the block funding allocations currently approved for the year as well as the approved projects, actual spend to the end of September and the movement requiring virements within the blocks. Appendix 3 to the report contained the list of estimated whole project capital costs for projects which in the main would not be completed in the current financial year. In response to a question regarding potential capital receipts for the 2023/24 financial year, the Director – Finance and Procurement, Mrs Suzy Douglas, explained that no buildings were expected to be disposed of in the current year. The Director – Infrastructure and Environment explained that whilst there were no assets due to be disposed in the year, work was ongoing regarding future sales and a report on the rationalisation of the Council’s estate would be brought to a future meeting.

## **DECISION**

### **AGREED:-**

- (a) the projected outturn in Appendix 1 to the report as the revised capital budget and approved the virements required;**
- (b) to note the list of block allocations in Appendix 2 to the report and approved the required virements; and**
- (c) to note the list of whole project costs detailed in Appendix 3 to the report.**

## **3. MONITORING OF THE GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2023/24**

- 3.1 With reference to paragraph 4 of the Minute of the meeting held on 15 August 2023 there had been circulated copies of a report by the Director – Finance and Procurement which provided budgetary control statements for the Council’s General Fund based on actual expenditure and income to 30 September 2023 along with explanations of the major variances identified between projected outturn and the current approved budget. Budget pressures continued to be experienced across the Council as a result of activity levels, statutory requirements and the ongoing impact of high inflation levels. That posed a significant risk to the Council’s ability to balance the 2023/24 budget. Unfunded pressures of £1.3m were currently being reported at this point in the current year which had arisen as a result of further demand and inflationary cost increases associated with placements within Children and Families Social Work. Further pressures of £3.1m associated with inflation and the ongoing implications of COVID recovery had been identified across the Council and were being managed within existing service budgets. In response to those significant budget pressures the Council Management Team (CMT) had agreed a number of management actions to enable the Council to deliver a balanced year end position. Those actions were intended to fund the identified pressures of £1.3m in Children and Families Social Work and also support services to manage their services within existing budget. The measures included the introduction of a 6-week recruitment delay to non-frontline staffing to increase savings from natural staff turnover; restriction on discretionary spend budgets not yet committed over the remainder of the year; and limiting future earmarking to that specifically agreed by Council Policy e.g. DSM, Second Homes council tax at this time. Financial plan savings of £11.5m required to be delivered in 2023/24. An analysis of deliverability was shown in Appendix 3 to the report. Following the September 2023 month end £6.2m (53%) savings had been delivered permanently by September, £3.8m (33%) were profiled to be delivered by 31 March 2024 and £1.6m (14%) had been delivered on a temporary basis through alternative savings.

- 3.2 The Director – Finance and Procurement presented the report and responded to Members questions. In response to a question regarding the cost of utilities, Mrs Douglas explained that the Council purchased its utilities in advance, which was of benefit when costs were increasing. Discussions were ongoing at local and national level to understand the implications of the cost of utilities decreasing. Regarding the ongoing early years review, Mrs Douglas confirmed that the review was focused on allowing service managers to operate with a lower funding envelope and undertook to provide further details at a future meeting. In response to a question regarding the 6-week freeze on the hiring of non-frontline staff, Mrs Douglas explained that there was no strict definition of staff to be considered as frontline. Staff working in schools, care and roads were to be considered frontline. It was confirmed that Directors could proceed with hiring in instances where they had deemed filling a post essential. The Chief Executive confirmed that a report on out of area children’s placements was expected to be presented in December. Regarding the impact of savings on the older people budget, Mrs Douglas outlined that as part of the financial planning process money that was ring fenced by the Scottish Government for the delivery of specific services was placed in holding locations. Virements reflected the reporting of the movement of those funds to where they were needed. It was confirmed that work to review saving plans was undertaken on a continual basis.

#### **DECISION**

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

- (a) **note the projected corporate monitoring position reported at 30 September 2023, the remaining pressures identified, the underlying cost drivers of this position and the identified areas of financial risk as reflected in Appendix 1 to the report;**
  - (b) **note the CMT management actions agreed to mitigate the pressures contained within Appendix 1 and request a report on Placements within Children and Families Social Work to explain the current challenges within the service and how the Council intends to address the issues;**
  - (c) **note the impact of ongoing service pressures on the 2024/25 Financial planning process**
  - (d) **note the Recovery Fund resources detailed in Appendix 2 to the report;**
  - (e) **note the progress made in achieving Financial Plan savings in Appendix 3 to the report and**
  - (f) **approve the virements attached in Appendices 4 and 5 to the report.**
4. **BALANCES AT 31 MARCH 2024**

With reference to paragraph 5 of the Minute of the meeting held on 14 August 2023, there had been circulated copies of a report by the Director – Finance and Procurement which provided an analysis of the Council’s balances as at 31 March 2023 and advised of the projected balances at 31 March 2024. The Council’s General Fund useable reserve (non-earmarked) balance was £9.980m at 31 March 2023. The General Fund useable reserve was projected to be around £8.4m at 31 March 2024 in line with the Council’s Financial Strategy and recognised the requirement to draw down from reserves during 2023/24 to fund the 2023/24 pay award which was yet to be agreed. The total of all useable balances, excluding development contributions, at 31 March 2024 was projected to be £60.531m as summarised in the report. The projected balance on the Capital Fund of £10.677m would be affected by any further capital receipts, development contributions, interest received, and any expenditure authorised to be financed from the Fund during the remainder of the financial year.

## **DECISION**

### **NOTED:-**

- (a) **the audited 2022/23 revenue balances as at 31 March 2023;**
- (b) **the projected revenue balances as at 31 March 2024 as contained in Appendices 1 and 2 to the report; and**
- (c) **the projected balance in the Capital Fund as contained in Appendix 3 to the report.**

## **5. CORPORATE DEBTS – WRITE OFFS IN 2023/24 MID YEAR UPDATE**

With reference to paragraph 6 of the Minute of their meeting held on 15 November 2022 there had been circulated copies of a report by the Director – Finance and Procurement which detailed the aggregate amounts of debt written off during the first 6 months of 2023/24 under delegated authority, as required by the Financial Regulations. The report covered the areas of Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rates, Sundry Debtors, Housing Benefit Overpayments, and aged debt from the balance sheet. The total value of write-offs between 1 April 2023 and 30 September 2023 was £198.1k. The Director presented the report and highlighted that the annual budget provision for Council Tax was in fact £887k, not the originally reported figure of £839k. In response to a question regarding variations to the amount of time barred debt written off, Mrs Douglas explained that the Council was proactive in its pursuit of debt and that variations to the amount recouped over time was not unexpected. Mrs Douglas confirmed that outside agencies were used in the recovery of debt, and that the cost associated with that was reported as part of the Finance service budget through revenue monitoring.

## **DECISION**

**NOTED the debtor balances written off under delegated authority of the period 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023.**

## **6. SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL'S ANNUAL COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE REPORT: 2022/23**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Director – Resilient Communities which presented a summary of Scottish Borders Council's "Complaints Annual Performance Report for 2022/23". The report set out how many complaints had been received, how effectively complaints had been dealt with, trends over time and how Scottish Borders Council (SBC) compared to other similar rural Local Authorities and the national average. It also provided a summary of eight performance indicators, four of which the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) required all Local Authorities to report against. The Annual Report was a requirement for all Local Authorities and allowed the SPSO to assess the effectiveness of Councils' Complaint Handling Procedures (CHP). It also ensured an ongoing focus on learning from complaints received, to inform continuous improvement. During 2022/23, SBC received 1131 complaints, of which 866 were defined as valid. In 2022/23 Scottish Borders Council's performance relating to the processing of complaints performed well against the Scottish National averages in some indicators, specifically those relating to Stage One, but performance was poorer in relation to indicators that measure timeliness of responses. In that area there had been a decline for a number of years. The Director – Resilient Communities, Mrs Jenni Craig, presented the report and responded to Members questions. In request for a breakdown of complaints by subject matter, Mrs Craig explained that the data was not available for such a breakdown but confirmed that there was an expectation that such information could be provided as part of the reporting in future years. Members highlighted that a considerable number of complaints received related to services which were not provided by the Council. The Council had a responsibility to signpost those making complaints to the correct organisation. In response to a question regarding multi-faceted complaints, Mrs Craig confirmed that if there were multiple complaints submitted over a range of time by

the same individual then they would be treated as individual complaints, but otherwise would be considered as a single complaint. Mrs Craig undertook to provide a breakdown of complaints by directorate to Members via email. In response to a question regarding the increase in the number of complaints received since 2017/18, Mrs Craig outlined that there had been a trend seen nationally whereby the number of complaints received by local authorities had risen. The ability to make complaints had become simpler and the public had been encouraged to submit complaints where appropriate. It was agreed that a briefing on the complaints system be held.

## **DECISION**

**NOTED the performance of handling complaints for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.**

### **7. REVIEW OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO COMMUNITY COUNCILS**

- 7.1 With reference to paragraph 10 of the Minute of the meeting held on 13 June 2023 there had been circulated copies of a report by the Director – Resilient Communities which set out a series of recommendations following the review of financial support to community councils which was undertaken by a short life working group following agreement by the Executive Committee in June 2023. Scottish Borders Council currently provided in the region of £80,696 of financial support to community councils per year. That could vary due to the amount of funding claimed via reimbursement or changes to insurance premiums. Areas of financial support considered during this review were Annual support grants; insurance; local community paths maintenance grants; hall hire reimbursement; and data protection renewals. A comprehensive survey of community councils was carried out between 20/07/23 – 16/08/23, the results of which were used alongside information obtained from annual accounts, to understand the financial pressures on community councils and to inform the review. A total of 38 community councils responded to the survey. That represented a 55% response rate. Community councils from all localities responded representing at least 50% of operational community councils in each annual support grant bracket. When asked whether the support grant covered all costs five community councils responded that it did whilst 33 said it did not. Of those, 20 community councils said that they took steps to identify funding elsewhere, whereas 13 said that they were limited in what they did.
- 7.2 The Director – Resilient Communities presented the report and responded to Members questions. In response to a question on whether the grant for path maintenance had to be applied for, Mrs Craig confirmed that an application was required, and that work was ongoing to prepare community councils so that they were aware what they automatically received and what they needed to apply for. Mrs Craig confirmed that defibrillators were considered as assets for insurance purposes. Work was planned to ensure that appropriate signposting was undertaken for third party organisations following community councils being disallowed from using their annual support grant to provide support. Members highlighted that it was of the utmost importance that communications with community councils ensured they were aware of the different types of financial and grant support available. Mrs Craig acknowledged the disappointment at the return rate of 55%. It was confirmed that community councils would be made aware of their obligations for the insurance of new events. In response to a question regarding whether it would be possible for the Council to sell end of life equipment to community councils, the Director – Infrastructure and Environment explained that enquiries had previously been received but there was no formal process in place for such sales. Mr Curry undertook to assess whether a formal process could be put in place, however advised that end of life equipment was typically not suitable for further use. Mrs Craig confirmed that a briefing note on what support was available to community councils could be prepared. As part of work on the new council website, there was expected a space for up-to-date information on support for community councils.
- 7.3 Following extensive discussion on whether the recommendations in the report were adequate, there was a difference of opinion so a vote was required as follows:

## VOTE

*Councillor Pirone, seconded by Councillor Leigh Douglas, moved that the recommendations as contained in the report be approved.*

*Councillor Marshall Douglas, seconded by Councillor Thornton-Nicol, moved as an amendment that recommendation b) be altered to read "to review the annual support grant after one year."*

*On a show of hands Members voted as follows:-*

*Motion – 11 votes*

*Amendment – 4 votes*

*The Motion was accordingly carried.*

## DECISION

### DECIDED:-

- (a) to increase the annual community support grant by 10% representing a budget increase of £4,970;
- (b) to review the annual support grant every three years;
- (c) to limit spend of the annual support grant to operational matters in the first instance and other initiatives thereafter;
- (d) to disallow community councils from using of the annual support grant to fund third party organisations,
- (e) to cover the cost of all community council insurance premiums, capped at the current level of assets and events, at an additional cost of approximately £6,000 for 2024/25 allowing for annual increases thereafter;
- (f) to increase the maximum local community paths maintenance grant to £600 per applicant, representing a budget increase of £5,100;
- (g) that Officers were to support a review of Scottish Borders Community Councils' Network to consider the establishment of locality-based networks in consultation with community councils;
- (h) to maintain SBCCN annual grant at current level, to be reviewed once the future of SBCCN had been agreed, and
- (i) that the wider support available to community councils be reviewed

## DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Leigh Douglas, Thornton-Nicol and Weatherston declared an interest in the following item of business in terms of Section 5 of the Councillors Code of Conduct given their involvement in various festival committees and left the meeting during the discussion.

### 8. SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL LOCAL FESTIVAL GRANT SCHEME REVIEW

With reference to paragraph 9 of the Minute of the meeting held on 13 June 2023 there had been circulated copies of a report by the Director – Resilient Communities which advised of the outcomes of a review of the Local Festival Grant Scheme (LFGS) and sought approval for an increase in funding to the Scheme from 2024/25 onwards. Feedback gathered from stakeholders as part of the review process was provided in the



report. A funding increase of the Scheme by £30,000 to be used for insurance, public protection and health and safety costs was proposed. The membership of the Scheme would be maintained and would not be extended to include new festivals or events. Festivals whose annual support grant did not fully cover their insurance and public protection costs could apply for an additional grant of up to 50% of their annual support grant from 2024/25 onwards. All festivals within the Scheme could apply for funding to support health and safety costs. It was proposed that decision making should be made at Officer level with final approval and sign off by the Director, Resilient Communities. The report also asked Members to consider proposals for in-kind support for festivals and events delivered across Scottish Borders. The Scheme would be reviewed every three years, with the next review due to take place in 2026/27. Members welcomed the report and expressed their thanks to officers for undertaking the review. Mrs Craig confirmed that all the festivals had completed equality statements. Conversations with Police Scotland regarding the level of support that they were able to provide were expected to take place. The Chairman highlighted the importance of ensuring that accessing help and information from the Council was straightforward for volunteers supporting events.

## **DECISION**

### **AGREED:-**

- (a) that the total monies available in the Local Festival Grant Scheme be increased from £85,110 to £115,110;**
- (b) that decision making for additional grant awards as detailed in the report be agreed at Officer level with final approval and sign off by the Director, Resilient Communities;**
- (c) that officers explore the opportunities for in-kind support from SBC for local festivals and events;**
- (d) that festival and event organisers have access to a digital SBC Community Events toolkit which will provide guidance and information for those hosting local events; and**
- (e) that Officers strengthen grant evaluations to gather information on the economic and social benefits festivals bring to the local area.**

## **MEMBERS**

Councillors Leigh Douglas, Thornton-Nicol and Weatherston re-joined the meeting.

### **9. SCOTTISH BORDERS LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2023/2028**

With reference to paragraph 8 of the Minute of the meeting held on 18 April 2023 there had been circulated copies of a report by the Director – Infrastructure and Environment which sought approval of the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2023-2028 due to be submitted to the Scottish Government in November 2023. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 placed a statutory requirement on local authorities to develop a Local Housing Strategy (LHS), supported by an assessment of housing need and demand. The LHS provided direction for tackling housing issues and informed future investment in housing and related services. The new Local Housing Strategy set strategic outcomes and a delivery plan framework for the period 2023-2028. The strategy brought together the local authority's responses to the whole housing system including requirements for market and affordable housing; preventing and tackling of homelessness; delivering specialist housing; meeting housing support needs; addressing housing conditions across tenures and improving the energy efficiency of all homes to support a transition to Net Zero. The Lead Officer, Housing Strategy and Development, Ms Donna Bogdanovic, presented the report and responded to Members questions. In response to a question regarding a lack of reference in the report to infrastructure associated with housing developments, Ms Bogdanovic explained that the scope of the LHS was limited to the delivery of new homes.

Infrastructure, and other strategic assessments, were considered as a separate element of projects. The Principal Planning Officer, Mr Ian Aikman, advised that there was a close working relationship between the appropriate services of the Council to ensure that suitable infrastructure provision was considered as part of developments. Ms Bogdanovic confirmed that there had been considerable engagement with social care providers and the NHS to ensure that projections of demand was accurate and informed.

#### **DECISION**

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

- (a) the submission of the Local Housing Strategy and the action plan to the Scottish Government in November 2023;**
- (b) implementation of the Local Housing Strategy where there were no additional financial resource implications; and**
- (c) note that officers would bring back proposals related to those actions identified as potentially having resource implications.**

#### **10. GRASS MANAGEMENT REVIEW**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Director – Infrastructure and Environment which provided an update on grass management undertaken within the Parks & Environment Service, outlining the current situation, and proposed next steps. Grass Management Services were provided by Parks & Environment as part of a suite of amenity services. Further to changes made in 2018, and following the appointment of a new Service Manager, Officers had been reviewing performance and the wider policy context to inform a future approach to grass management, reflective of resources, community feedback and the Council Plan. Based on those findings the report outlined some steps being taken including a proposed revised model of operation, designed to address deficiencies with the current model, to be piloted during 2024/25. The Parks and Environment Manager, Ms Carol Cooke, presented the report and responded to Members questions. In response to a question regarding performance statistics, Ms Cooke acknowledged that staff sickness had impacted on performance to a considerable degree. Cutting crews were unable to operate flexibly when sickness rates reached a certain threshold, which impacted on the ability of crews to meet the cutting schedule. It was confirmed that succession plans were in place, with four modern apprentices currently engaged. Regarding unpredictable growth rates, Ms Cooke explained that it was key that agility was built into the system to adapt to environmental conditions. In response to a question regarding communication of the plans with the public, Ms Cooke explained undertook to ensure that visual aids, including maps, be incorporated into communications. Members welcomed the report and highlighted that where grass was not cut for biodiversity reasons it was important that the public were aware of the reasons not to cut grass.

#### **DECISION**

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

- (a) note the findings of the Grass Management performance review; and**
- (b) approve a Pilot Study, testing out a revised model of operation, to be piloted in 2024**

#### **11. HEADSTONE SAFETY**

11.1 There had been circulated copies of a report by the Director – Infrastructure and Environment which provided an update on Headstone Safety, as agreed at Council in March, reporting findings from the Headstone Reinstatement Pilot Study that was undertaken at Lennel Cemetery. The report also set out proposed options and potential next steps. A report to Council in March on Headstone Safety included a range of

proposals aimed at improving outcomes for communities in the future management of Headstone Safety. Those proposals were:

- Proposal 1: New Headstone Safety Policy - encompassing the development of a Monumental Masons Registration Scheme, a Transfer of Rights Scheme, a programme of strip foundation installations and a refresh of standards for future headstone testing programmes.
- Proposal 2: Communications Refresh – including an overhaul of communications to members, communities and social media around Headstone safety works aimed at raising awareness and education.
- Proposal 3 – Headstone Reinstatement Pilot Study – to trial the re-erection of any headstones that had been laid flat by Scottish Borders Council, enabling further analysis of risk, resource, and cost implications.

11.2 The Parks and Environment Manger presented the report and responded to Members questions. In response to a question regarding the steps taken where it was not possible to contact lair holders' ancestors, Ms Cooke explained that the first step was to place a sign at the headstone, however if there were no visitors to a grave then that was not expected to be effective. The Council did not hold records on the ownership of lairs. The Council's Bereavement Officer, Ms Diane Munro, confirmed that conversations with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission would also take place to try and locate family members. Ms Cooke confirmed that work to future proof the system was ongoing. In response to a question regarding financial support for those struggling to afford repairs, Ms Cook confirmed that support available through the hardship scheme would help address issues of affordability. Members welcomed the report, acknowledged that getting communications right was key, and that public safety was of paramount importance.

#### **DECISION**

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

- (a) note the findings of the Headstone Reinstatement Pilot;**
- (b) approve the implementation of option 5 in the report as the preferred option as part of the 24/25 financial planning process; and**
- (c) the preparation of a new Headstone Safety Policy.**

***The meeting concluded at 13.00 pm***

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## **SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL'S QUARTER 2 2023/24 PERFORMANCE INFORMATION**

**Director - People, Performance & Change**

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### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**5 December 2023**

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

- 1.1 This report presents a summary of Scottish Borders Council's Quarter 2 2023/24 performance information.**
- 1.2 The information contained within this report will be made available on the SBC website: [www.scotborders.gov.uk/performance](http://www.scotborders.gov.uk/performance)

#### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 I recommend that the Executive Committee:-**
  - (a) Notes the Quarter 2 2023/24 Council Plan Key Milestones and Performance Indicators Report in Appendix 1.**
  - (b) Notes the Quarter 2 2023/24 Community Action Team Performance Report in Appendix 2.**

### **3 BACKGROUND TO SBC PERFORMANCE REPORTING 2023/24**

#### **Quarterly Council Plan Performance Report**

3.1 The Q2 Performance Milestones and Performance Indicators Report shows progress made against the Council Plan milestones and performance indicators for quarter 2. The report is shown in Appendix 1.

3.2 Work continues on updating and maintaining performance indicators for the future.

3.2.1 The following indicators have been moved from performance indicators to information only:

- Working age population (16 - 64) employment rate
- Working age population (16 - 64) Claimant Count (including Universal Credit and JSA)
- Working age population (18 - 24) Claimant Count (including Universal Credit and JSA)

3.2.2 The source of reporting for the following indicator has changed from Quarterly Borders Delayed Discharges to Quarterly Board of Residence Delayed Discharges for the Borders due to changes in National Returns' frequencies:

- Bed days associated with delayed discharges in residents aged 75+; rate per 1,000 population

#### **Community Action Team Performance Report**

3.3 The Community Action Team Performance Report has been updated to reflect Quarter 2 of 2023/24. It is shown in Appendix 2.

### **4 COUNCIL PLAN – SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE**

3.4 The 18 milestones reported in this quarter show that 9 of them have been achieved as planned. There was 1 milestone which has been rescheduled to a future quarter and there were 8 milestones which have been partly completed and work will continue on them.

3.5 Of the 90 indicators presented 68 are in a good position of which 15 are particularly positive. 13 are highlighted as areas of focus for improvement and there is a delay in receiving the latest information for 4 of them. 9 information only figures which provide context to some of the performance indicators are also shown in the report.

3.6 A summary of the performance in the year to date is shown by Council Plan Theme with a range of performance across the different themes.

3.7 A Dashboard via Power BI has been developed which allows the public to access data about any Performance Indicator that they wish to see. The dashboard can be viewed from this link: [Our performance as a Council: 2018-19 onwards | Scottish Borders Council \(scotborders.gov.uk\)](https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/our-performance-as-a-council-2018-19-onwards)

## **5 COMMUNITY ACTION TEAM – SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY AND IMPACT**

- 5.1 The Community Action Team (CAT) has been operating at full strength since 1<sup>st</sup> June and the upturn in the statistics since that date is notable, particularly for High Visibility Foot Patrols and Mobile Patrols hours.

## **6 IMPLICATIONS**

### **6.1 Financial**

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

### **6.2 Risk and Mitigations**

Effective performance management arrangements will ensure that services, and those providing services on behalf of SBC, are aware of any weaknesses and can take corrective action in a timely manner, therefore mitigating any risks more effectively. The Council's Risk Management Policy and framework ensures that all services, and services delivered by third parties, identify and manage risks to the achievement of their objectives, with senior management providing appropriate levels of oversight. Performance should be enhanced by having robust risk management arrangements in place.

### **6.3 Integrated Impact Assessment**

There are no adverse equality/diversity implications. Performance reporting may help the Council to identify and address any equality / diversity issues and improve processes and procedures.

### **6.4 Sustainable Development Goals**

Economic, social and environmental impact of SBC actions can be monitored more effectively if there are effective performance reporting arrangements in place.

### **6.5 Climate Change**

There are no significant Climate Change effects arising from the proposals contained in this report.

### **6.6 Rural Proofing**

This report does not relate to new or amended policy or strategy and as a result, rural proofing is not an applicable consideration.

### **6.7 Data Protection Impact Assessment**

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

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

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

## 7 CONSULTATION

7.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Interim Chief Officer Corporate Governance (Monitoring Officer), the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Director – People, Performance & Change, the Clerk to the Council and Corporate Communications have been consulted and any comments received incorporated into the final report.

7.2 The Council Management Team has been consulted on this report and any comments received incorporated into the final report.

### Approved by

**Clair Hepburn**

**Director - People, Performance & Change Signature .....**

### Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Julie Aitchison	Data & Performance Officer Tel: 01835 824000 Ext 8147

### Background Papers:

**Previous Minute Reference:** 12 September 2023

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

Contact us at Policy, Planning & Performance, Scottish Borders Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, [performance@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:performance@scotborders.gov.uk)





SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

# PERFORMANCE REPORT

## Q2 2023/24 MILESTONES & PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Page 17



Clean, green future



Fulfilling our potential



Strong inclusive economy, transport and infrastructure



Empowered, vibrant communities



Good health and wellbeing



Working together improving lives

# Introduction



This is the Quarter 2 Performance Report for the 2023/24 Council Plan. It presents the Council's progress against the Key Milestones set out for Quarter 2 and provides an update on the Council's Performance Indicators. The report is structured into the 6 themes of the Council Plan.

For each theme the progress against key milestones is shown alongside the desired outcome or outcomes that it is contributing towards. Detail is then provided on the theme's performance indicators that are noted as being particularly positive, or areas of focus for improvement. All performance indicators are then summarised in a table, with the progress of each indicator identified as either positive, neutral, focus for improvement or for information only. Further detail on each indicator can be found in the

Public Performance Dashboard on our website: [Our performance as a Council: 2018-19 onwards | Scottish Borders Council \(scotborders.gov.uk\)](https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/our-performance-as-a-council-2018-19-onwards)

Indicators showing a **notable improvement**, or where the performance indicates a particularly **positive** position are shown in charts coloured in **green**

Indicators showing a notable **reduction** in performance, or where there is a **focus for improvement** are shown in charts coloured in **orange**

There has been a consistent **increase** in the number of people Registered for SB Alert



The number of bed days associated to **Delayed Discharges** have continued to **increase** (NHS data)



## Performance Indicators Key

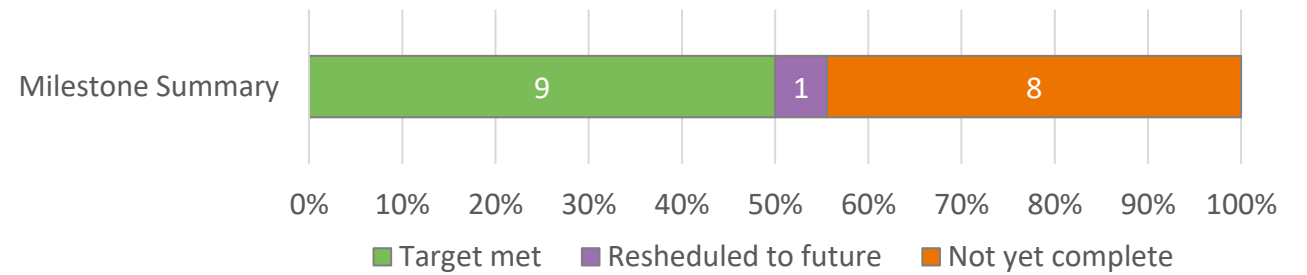
● Positive	There has been a notable improvement, or the data indicates a particularly positive position
○ Neutral	There has been no significant change since the previous review, and progress is satisfactory or as expected
● Focus for Improvement	There has been a notable reduction in performance, or the data suggests a position that we will be focusing on for improvement
¡ Information only	The indicator shows data for information purposes only

# Summary



## Key Milestones

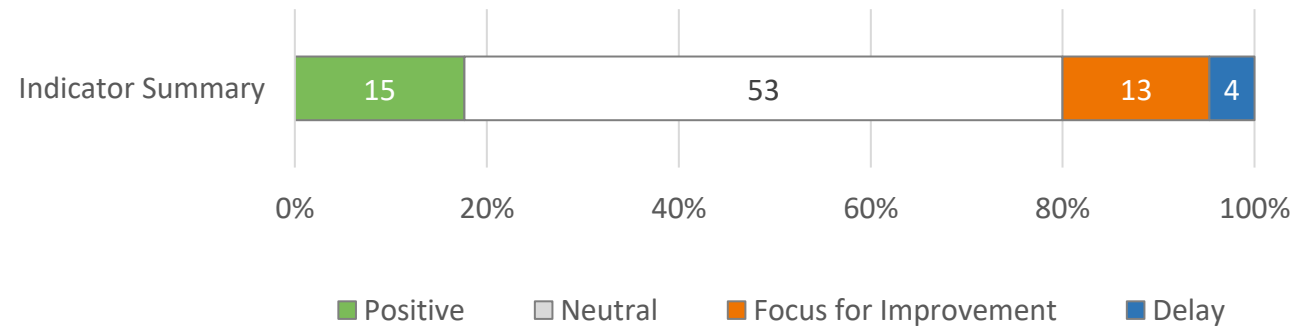
The 18 milestones reported in this quarter shows that 9 of them have been achieved as planned. There was 1 milestone which has been rescheduled to a future quarter and there were 8 milestones which have been partly completed and work will continue on them.



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## Performance Indicators

Of the 90 indicators presented 68 are in a good position of which 15 are particularly positive. 13 are highlighted as areas of focus for improvement and there is a delay in receiving the latest information for 4 of them. 9 information only figures which provide context to some of the performance indicators are also shown in the report.



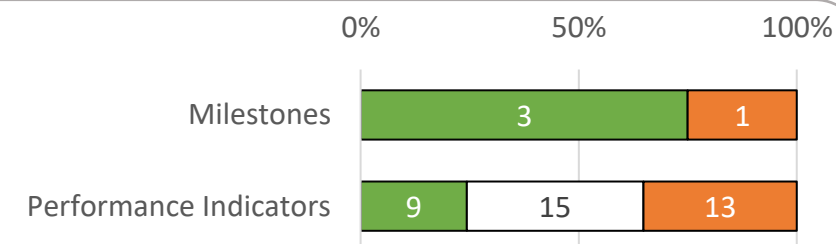
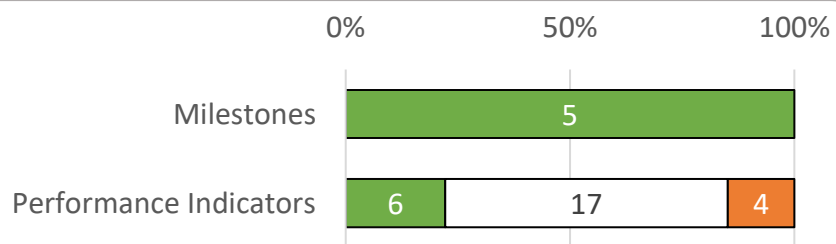
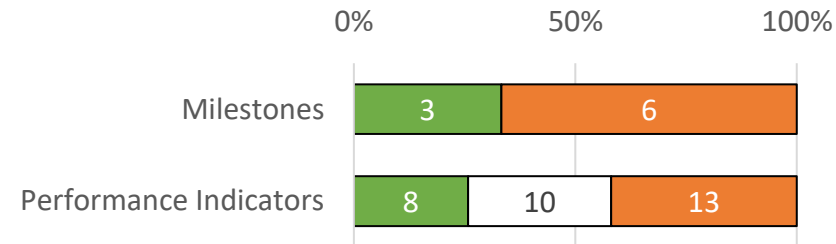
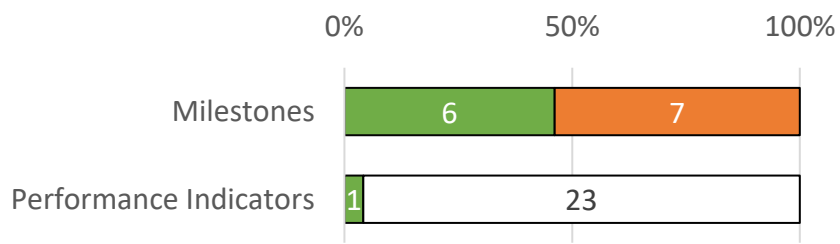
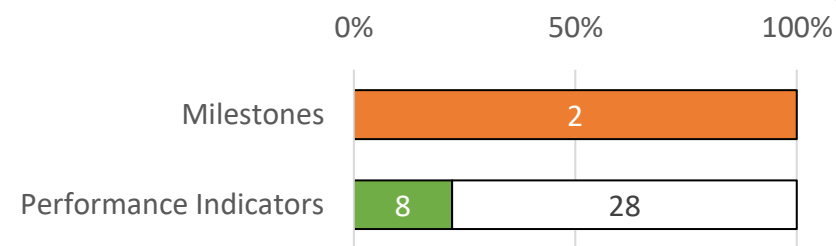
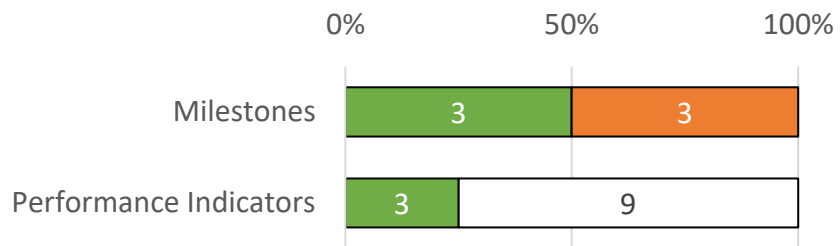
## Clarifications

- Please note that in Quarter 1 we reported that the extension of free school meal provision to all Primary School Children would be completed in Q2 but due to a change of policy from the Scottish Government, this has now been put on hold
- Please note that the Complaints figures have changed slightly from those reported in Quarter 1. The change has been reflected in this report.



# Summary of Performance Year to Date

For the milestones green indicates that the milestone was achieved as planned; orange reflects milestones that have not been completed as planned, or that have been rescheduled for a future date. For performance indicators green shows areas where performance has been notably positive; white reflects areas that are performing as we would expect, and orange indicates performance levels that are a focus for improvement.



# CLEAN GREEN FUTURE

PRIORITY: Accelerate action to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change and extreme weather



## Complete an extreme weather assessment of key coastal infrastructure and bridges

This action will be completed in Q2 2024/25

Bridge General  
Page 21  
inspections  
continue to check  
for effects of  
extreme weather



Main coastal assets between **Eymouth** and **Burnmouth** were subject to an **Asset Condition Assessment**

Part of the **Eymouth Coastal Study**

Wider coastline is currently under assessment as part of the **Berwickshire Coastal Change Adaptation Plan**

As part of this a number of **triggers** will be **highlighted** such as:



- **actions** to alter a structure
- **changes** to guidance or local policy

## Roll out a Schools Resource Pack to all primary schools that promotes sustainability, recycling, and eco-friendly practices linked to the Curriculum for Excellence

Resource developed **jointly** by:

- SBC's **Waste** Services
- SBC's **Education** Department
- **Levenseat** Ltd



Milestone has been **completed**



Fantastic Resource for teachers and pupils:



- Online Games
- Lesson plans linked to curriculum for excellence

Aim to **increase awareness** amongst Young People about:



- importance of recycling
- what can be recycled
- what happens to the waste in your general waste bin

**Resource launched** earlier in the year by an **online** Waste & Recycling **lesson** held in conjunction with SBC's Inspire Learning Team



**Levenseat Ltd:** Waste Management Company used by SBC

### Desired Outcomes linked to this Milestone

- Services and infrastructure that are ready to meet the needs of our communities in the face of climate change and extreme weather events

### Desired Outcomes linked to this Milestone

- Enable change through increased public understanding of the need to change our behaviour around how we use resources and the need for increased resilience across our communities

# CLEAN GREEN FUTURE

**PRIORITY:** Accelerate action to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change and extreme weather



## Working with partners and key regional stakeholders develop a delivery plan to retrofit domestic housing, which builds on current retrofit schemes

SBC were awarded **£1.8m EES:ABS funding** across **23/24** to support **retrofit** energy efficiency improvements and **renewable** technologies targeted at properties in **fuel poverty**



**Successful**  
22/23  
**EES:ABS**  
delivery

For the 3 full financial years **since 2020/21** SBC have:



- Supported **430** households
- Installed **612** measures

**Contractors** will **support** community benefit activities within the **region**



**3 schemes** across the region **identified** and **initiated** delivering:

- Air Source Heat Pumps
- Solar PV
- Battery Storage



Also a wider regional **Internal Wall Insulation** for potentially **140** properties

These measures will:

- **increase** the **energy efficiency** of homes
- **raise** the **EPC rating**
- **raise** the levels of **affordable warmth**

*EES:ABS : Energy Efficient Scotland: Area Based Scheme*

## Complete review of the Council's greenspace maintenance operations to identify opportunities for improved environmental management

This action will be completed in Q4

Grass Management Review paper going to Exec in **November 2023**



**Pilot** will be rolled out across the region



It will work with staff and communities to **identify local priorities**

### Desired Outcomes linked to this Milestone

- An approach to energy in the Scottish Borders which is robust, affordable and does not contribute to climate change

### Desired Outcomes linked to this Milestone

- Protected, managed and restored environments which support the wellbeing of people and nature

# CLEAN GREEN FUTURE

PRIORITY: Accelerate action to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change and extreme weather

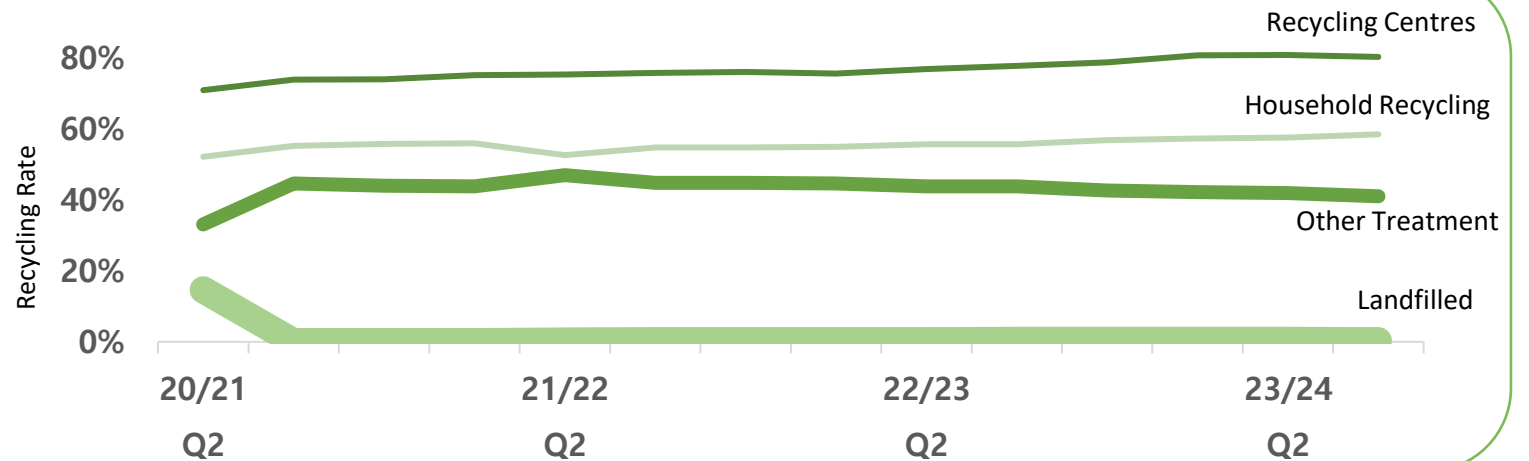


Service	Indicator	Q2 23/24	Status
Waste	Annual Household Recycling Rate	58.56 %	○
	Annual Household Waste Landfilled Rate	0.34 %	○
	Annual Household Waste to Other Treatment	41.1 %	○
	Annual Average Community Recycling Centre Recycling Rate	80.37 %	○
Energy Services	Electricity Consumption (kWh)	1,499,156.10	○
	Gas Consumption (kWh)	1,281,764.54	○

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The Recycling Rate within the Scottish Borders has continued to **increase** whilst the waste sent to landfill **continues to be below 1%**

This **positive situation** is due to a new contract commencing in July 2019, and further improvements introduced by the contractor for sorting recycling centre waste



# FULFILLING OUR POTENTIAL

**PRIORITY:** Empower communities and schools to deliver a high quality education focused on excellence, equity, wellbeing and improved outcomes for children and families



## Implement year 2 of 5 year Equity Strategy to address inequalities and reduce impacts of poverty on attainment

This action is partially completed and will be fully completed in Q4

SBC **agreed** local authority core & core plus stretch aims and **annual trajectories for 2025/26**



Schools and clusters have set their local stretch aims **collaboratively**



SBC have developed an **empowered approach** to attainment **Challenge Funding'** including:

- **Devolving resources** of Strategic Equity Funding and Care Experienced Funding to **clusters**



Achieved through a **consultative** process

An example can be seen here: [SBC Empowering Clusters SAC Funding SWAY](#)



SBC launched the **Education Power BI Dashboard**

- give schools **easier access** to more **up to date** data
- **trained** all senior school leaders in this

Implemented **updated** Pupil Equity Funding governance **procedures** and provided **training** to **increase quality of** school PEF plans

**Completed** and reported on **Closing the Gap** thematic school reviews in **10** schools with SIMD **Quintile 1** populations



### Desired Outcomes linked to this Milestone

- Raise attainment in literacy and numeracy closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged

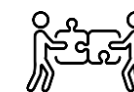
## Provide access to mental health supports through the launch of a service directory app to school devices

This action will be completed in a later quarter

Work is **on-going** to populate data into the App



Work with **Apple** is **on-going** re **final adoption** of App following development



**Lessons** are **developed** to use across schools to **promote** the use of the **App**



**Launch** event is now being **planned**



### Desired Outcomes linked to this Milestone

- Raise attainment through improved inclusion, equity and wellbeing for all children and young people



# FULLFILLING OUR POTENTIAL

**PRIORITY:** Empower communities and schools to deliver a high quality education focused on excellence, equity, wellbeing and improved outcomes for children and families



Build on the success of 'Get into Summer 2022' to plan provision for children and families to access to food, childcare, wellbeing supports and activities during school holidays



2354 children supported

418 families supported

2924 snacks provided

1599 meals provided



Activities provided across the Borders

Positive feedback on 2023 events received

Funding was confirmed very close to the end of term

## Desired Outcomes linked to this Milestone

- Raise attainment through improved inclusion, equity and wellbeing for all children and young people

Provide high quality professional learning to all school staff to support delivery of digital learning



Online and in-person digital skills workshops delivered featuring key apps to enhance:

- Learning
- Teaching
- Assessment



Inspire hosted an induction session for newly qualified teachers



Session allowed newly qualified teachers to be ready for teaching in Borders schools

## Desired Outcomes linked to this Milestone

- Improve employability skills to enable sustained positive school leaver destinations

Continue to develop learning and qualification pathways through partnerships with further and higher education establishments, employers and training agencies

CLD service are making use of National Progression Awards (NPA) for:

- learners in schools
- young people disengaged from learning

Looking into joint delivery of Youth Work training programmes

Youth Achievement Awards being offered as part of learning programmes

Increase in CLD services use of SQA

## Multiply Project

- A UK Government funded project
- aimed at learners 19+years
- teaches functional maths

Works with third sector partners

## Desired Outcomes linked to this Milestone

- Improve employability skills to enable sustained positive school leaver destinations

# FULLFILLING OUR POTENTIAL

**PRIORITY:** Empower communities and schools to deliver a high quality education focused on excellence, equity, wellbeing and improved outcomes for children and families



Service	Indicator	Q2 23/24	Status
<b>Education</b>	What percentage of primary school pupils attend school?	96.68%	○
	What percentage of secondary school pupils attend school?	93.68%	○
	What percentage of primary and secondary school pupils attend school?	95.20%	○
	Number of Exclusion Incidents – Primary Schools	9	○
	How many primary school pupils were excluded?	7	○
	Number of Exclusion Incidents - Secondary Schools	19	○
	How many secondary school pupils were excluded?	19	○
	Number of Exclusion Incidents – Primary and Secondary Schools	28	○
	How many primary and secondary school pupils were excluded?	26	○
	Number of Schools/Nurseries inspected per Quarter	0	<b>i</b>
<b>Modern Apprentices</b>	New Modern Apprentices employed by SBC	26	○
	Current Modern Apprentices employed within SBC	45	○
	Modern Apprentices securing SBC employment after apprenticeship Cumulative Year to Date	10	○

# STRONG INCLUSIVE ECONOMY, TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

**PRIORITY:** Deliver the key economic development programmes for our region - the South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy, Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal and the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal and Regional Prosperity Framework – making our economy stronger, greener and more sustainable.



## Desired Outcomes linked to this Milestone

Support our tourism sector, creative industries and our other key industries such as health, social care, construction, land, manufacturing, and food & drink to create a stronger economy where existing and new businesses and social enterprises grow and expand increasing productivity and investment into the Scottish Borders

## Progress the Destination Tweed project as part of the Borderlands Deal



Project's Full Business Case is currently being **drafted**



This is part of the **final stage** of the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal **approvals process**

## Complete an electric vehicle charge point feasibility study outlining the potential to install electric vehicle chargers across the Borders

Feasibility study and expansion plan is **complete**



Study & Plan was **submitted** to Transport Scotland for review



**Response** received on **10 August 2023** with a couple of minor comments to address

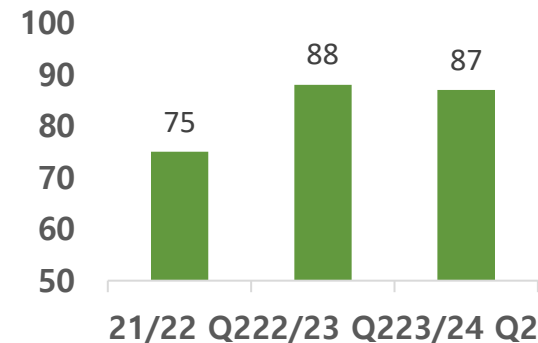
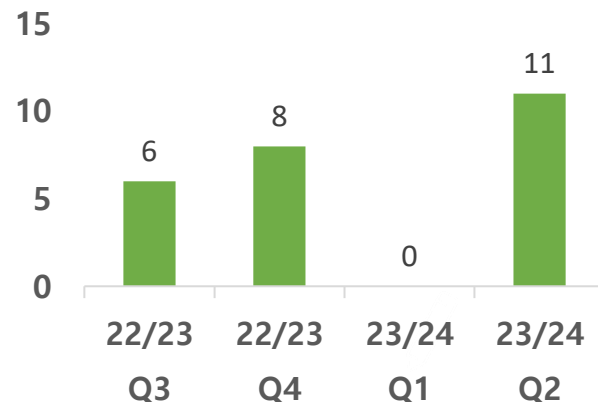


## Desired Outcomes linked to this Milestone

- Enhance digital and transport connectivity

The total number of **new Business Start-Ups** in Q2 are at the highest level since the figures started being collected. The Q2 figure is also **above target**

(through Business Gateway)



The number of **clients attending start-up workshops/seminars** in Q2 have been similar for the past 3 years and the Q2 23/24 figure is **above target**

(through Business Gateway)

# STRONG INCLUSIVE ECONOMY, TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

**PRIORITY:** Deliver the key economic development programmes for our region - the South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy, Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal and the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal and Regional Prosperity Framework – making our economy stronger, greener and more sustainable.



Service	Indicator	Q2 23/24	Status
Major Capital Projects	RAG status is "Green"	8	○
	RAG status is "Amber"	10	●
	RAG status is "Red"	1	●
Working Age Population	Working age population (16 - 64) employment rate*	76.20%	í
	Working age population (16 - 64) Claimant Count (including Universal Credit and JSA)	2.93%	í
	Working age population (18 - 24) Claimant Count (including Universal Credit and JSA)	4.57%	í
Customer Advice & Support - Financial Inclusion	Number of People referred in the quarter	335	○
	Monetary Gain for cases closed in the quarter	£1,253,076.28	○
	Cumulative Monetary Gain for cases closed in the year to date	£2,257,153.60	○
Customer Advice & Support – Housing Benefit	New Claims (Avg No. of Days to process)	25.35	●
	Change Events (Avg No. of Days to process)	8.49	○
Business Gateway	Total number of new Business Start-Ups (Business Gateway)	11	●
	Number of clients attending start-up workshops/seminars (Business Gateway)	87	●
Economic Dev & Procurement	Occupancy Rates of Industrial and Commercial Units	86%	●
Community Benefit Clauses	Total Number of Contracts Awarded with Community Benefit Clauses (CBC) included <b>** Reported Q2 &amp; Q4</b>	Now reported annually to align with Annual Procurement Report cycle	
	Number of new Employment and Skills opportunities delivered as a result of Community Benefit Clauses (CBC) <b>** Reported Q2 &amp; Q4</b>		

\* Please Note that there is a lag of one Quarter for data provided for employment rates

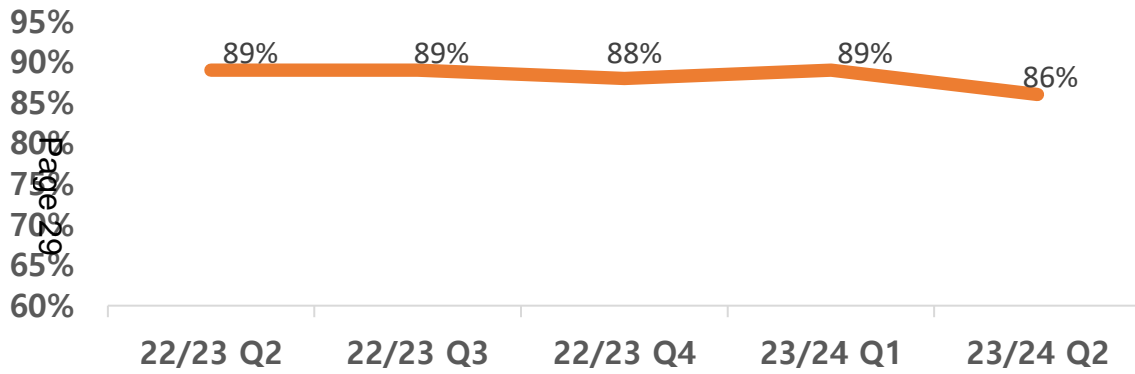
Key: ● Positive ○ Neutral ● Focus for Improvement í Information only

# STRONG INCLUSIVE ECONOMY, TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

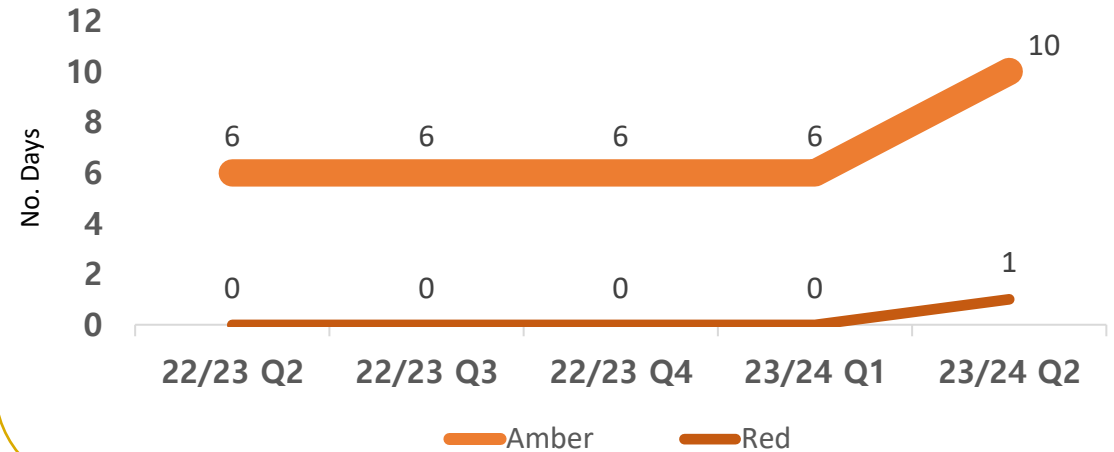
**PRIORITY:** Deliver the key economic development programmes for our region - the South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy, Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal and the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal and Regional Prosperity Framework - making our economy stronger, greener and more sustainable.



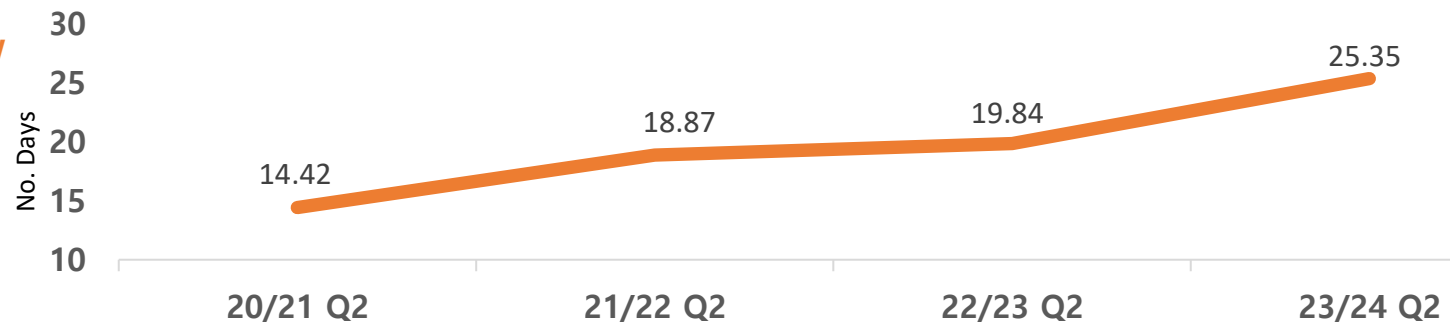
The **Occupancy Rates of Industrial and Commercial Units** in the Scottish Borders has **decreased by 3%** over the past year and also since Q1.



The number of **Capital Projects with Red and Amber Status** have both **increased** in Q2 and are a **focus for improvement**



The time taken to process **new** housing benefit claims has **increased** compared to previous years and this area is seen as a **focus for improvement**



# EMPOWERED VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

**PRIORITY:** Support and empower people to achieve strong, active, resilient and sustainable communities and realise opportunities for improving people's lives.



## Implement our Community Engagement Strategy

This action will be completed in a later quarter

Page 30



Draft strategy developed



Further work required to reshape strategy to reflect **Target Operating Model** which went to council on 31 August 2023



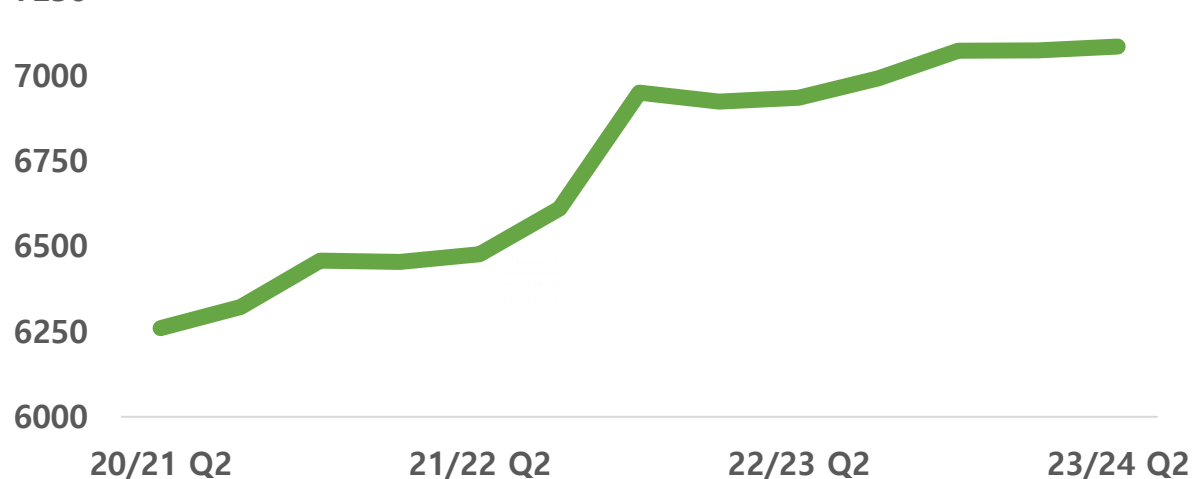
### Desired Outcomes linked to this Milestone

- Enhanced participation and engagement which empowers communities to shape the decisions which affect them

**1 request** has been **agreed** in Q2 for Asset Transfers



There has been a consistent **increase** in the number of people Registered for SB Alert



**339** people carried out volunteer work with SBC in Quarter 2

**£231,877** funds have been awarded through the Neighbourhood Small Schemes Fund by the end of Quarter 2

# EMPOWERED VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

**PRIORITY:** Support and empower people to achieve strong, active, resilient and sustainable communities and realise opportunities for improving people's lives.



Service	Indicator	Q2 23/24	Status
<b>Communities &amp; Partnerships - Asset Transfers</b>	Number of Requests <b>Received</b>	0	●
	Number of Requests <b>Agreed</b>	1	●
	Number of Requests <b>Refused</b>	0	●
<b>Communities &amp; Partnerships - Participation Request</b>	Number of Requests <b>Received</b>	0	○
	Number of Requests <b>Agreed</b>	0	○
	Number of Requests <b>Refused</b>	0	○
<b>Communities &amp; Partnerships</b>	The number of people carrying out volunteer work with SBC	339	○
<b>Communities &amp; Partnerships – Value of Funding Awarded</b>	Total Scottish Borders	£33,888.15	○
	Berwickshire	£0	○
	Cheviot	£0	○
	Eildon	£31,845.15	○
	Teviot & Liddesdale	£995.00	○
	Tweeddale	£1,048.00	○
	Borderswide	£231,877.00	○
	Neighbourhood Small Schemes Fund – Total Value of funds awarded (cumulative)	£231,877	○
<b>Community Resilience</b>	SB Alert - No. of people registered	7085	●
	No. of Active community resilience plans (cumulative)	56	○
	No. of Progressing community resilience plans (cumulative)	3	○

# GOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING

**PRIORITY:** The people of the Scottish Borders have the opportunities and are supported to take control of their health and wellbeing, enjoying a high quality of life.



Publish a locality directory on health / wellbeing and social care services

This action will be completed in Q4

Page 32

**Locality model** will be developed first



- Locality directories **will be developed** when this is **complete**



## Desired Outcomes linked to this Milestone

- People of the Scottish Borders are supported and enabled to take control of their health and wellbeing, and enjoy a high quality of life

Review the approach to early intervention services for children and families who require additional support

This action will be completed in a later quarter

Work is at an **early stage**



Support will be on a multi-agency basis based on the principles of:

- relationship-based practice
- Holistic Family Support
- focused specifically presenting needs of children and families



Multi-agency **developments** being proposed include:



- Setting up **2** early intervention Wellbeing Support/Intensive **Family Support Teams** in the Scottish Borders

## Desired Outcomes linked to this Milestone

- Every child grows up loved, safe and respected and able to realise their full potential (The Promise)

**Timescales** are **indicative** but it is hoped that:



- the approach will be formally ratified at the end of **October 2023**
- the 2 early intervention teams will be operational by the **end of the financial year**
- commissioning strategy concluded by **October 2024**

**Further initiatives** include:

- review of current **early intervention commissioned services** for Children & Families



# GOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING

**PRIORITY:** The people of the Scottish Borders have the opportunities and are supported to take control of their health and wellbeing, enjoying a high quality of life.



## Develop our social prescribing function for care at home and GP's

This action will be completed in a later quarter

Collaborative Care at home design project **agreed** at **key destinations** including:

Health Social Care Partnership Joint Executive  
SBC Council Management Team



Collaborative project **launching** after going to Commissioning Board on **31<sup>st</sup> October**



**Providers have signed up** to the project



### Desired Outcomes linked to this Milestone

- Services are designed around service users' needs, focus on prevention, early intervention and minimising health inequalities

## Develop and action a Cycling Strategy, a Sport and Physical Education Strategy, and a Library Strategy

This action has been delayed due to a review of Live Borders and will be moved to a later quarter

### Desired Outcomes linked to this Milestone

- People have access to quality cultural, play, leisure and sport activities

## Road Incidents

Based on unvalidated data, unfortunately there was one fatality as the result of a road accident in the Scottish Borders in Quarter 2 of 2023. This is the same as the preceding 3 month period and in line with the corresponding quarter 2 in 2022.

There were 22 people seriously injured as a result of road accidents in the Scottish Borders in Quarter 2 of 2023. This is 13 up on the equivalent period in 2022 and 11 up on the previous quarter. The figure of 22 is also significantly worse than the figure (13.2) required to meet the revised national reduction targets for the area. Roads policing colleagues have not suggested any particular trend or reason for the increase and it should be noted that these short-term indicators do have a tendency to spike up and down.

# GOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING

**PRIORITY:** The people of the Scottish Borders have the opportunities and are supported to take control of their health and wellbeing, enjoying a high quality of life.



Service	Indicator	Q2 23/24	Status
Social Work C&F	Looked After Children (aged 12+) in family-based placements compared to those in residential placements	67%	●
	Looked After Children (All ages) in family-based placements compared to those in residential placements	74%	●
	Number of Looked After Children (LAC)	217	●
	Number of Inter-agency Referral Discussions (IRDs) held about a child	175	<i>i</i>
	Number of children on Child Protection Register	43	<i>i</i>
Adult Protection	Number of Concerns	63	○
	Number of Investigations	46	○
Economic Development & Procurement	Additional homes provided affordable to people in the Borders, based on our wages	18	○
NHS**	Bed days associated with delayed discharges in residents aged 75+; rate per 1,000 population*	373	●

\* Please note that the data provided in Q2 is derived from Board of Residence monthly figures

\*\* There is a lag of one Quarter for data provided for NHS data

Key: ● Positive ○ Neutral ● Focus for Improvement *i* Information only

# GOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING

**PRIORITY:** The people of the Scottish Borders have the opportunities and are supported to take control of their health and wellbeing, enjoying a high quality of life.



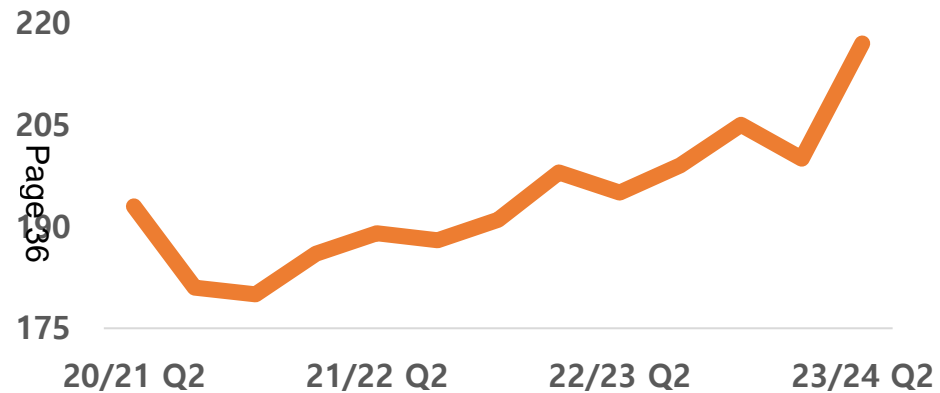
Service	Indicator	Q2 23/24	Status
Page 35 Safer Communities	Number of Referrals To Domestic Abuse Services (Cumulative)	220	●
	Number of reported incidents of domestic abuse (cumulative)	Awaiting Publication by Police	
	Number of High Risk domestic abuse cases discussed at Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) (cumulative)	67	●
	The percentage of referrals into the Mediation Service that were progressed and agreement was reached (cumulative)	100%	●
	The percentage of individuals who were satisfied with the Mediation Intervention on exit from the service (Cumulative)	0%	○
	The number of referrals into the Mediation Service (Cumulative)	15	●
	The number of reported ASB Incidents (Cumulative)	Awaiting Publication by Police	
	Number of ASB Early Interventions	312	○
	Number monitored for ASB	589	●
	Number of Group 1-5 recorded crimes and offences (cumulative)	Awaiting Publication by Police	

# GOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING

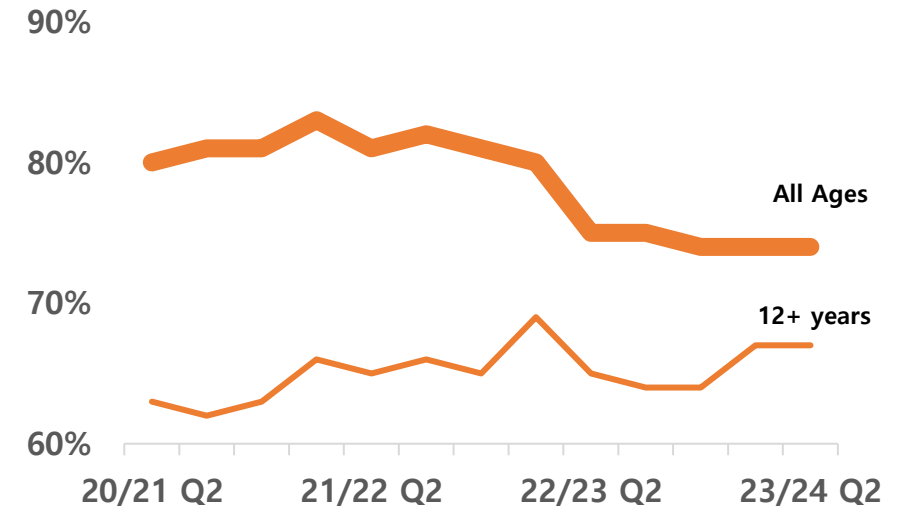
**PRIORITY:** The people of the Scottish Borders have the opportunities and are supported to take control of their health and wellbeing, enjoying a high quality of life.



The number of **Looked After Children** has **increased** since the pandemic and the number has also increased since Q1 23/24

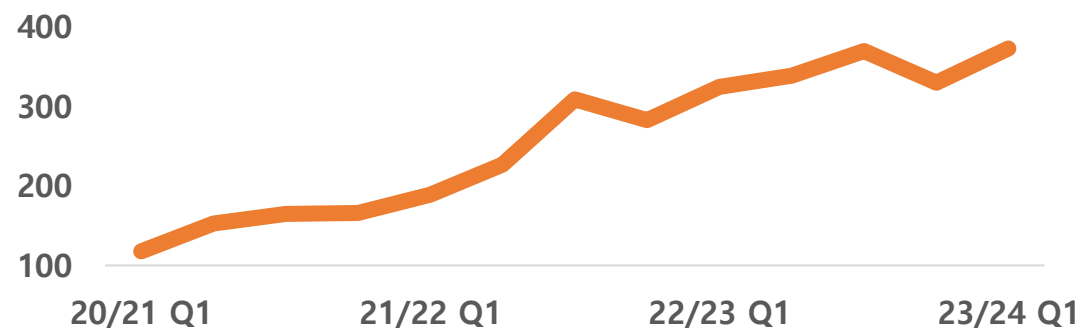


The percentage of **Looked After Children** in **family-based placements** in Q2 had **decreased** for all children but there is an **increase** for those aged only 12 years and over. This continues to be an area for Focus for Improvement



The number of bed days associated to **Delayed Discharges** have **increased** this quarter are still an area with a **focus for improvement**

(NHS data)

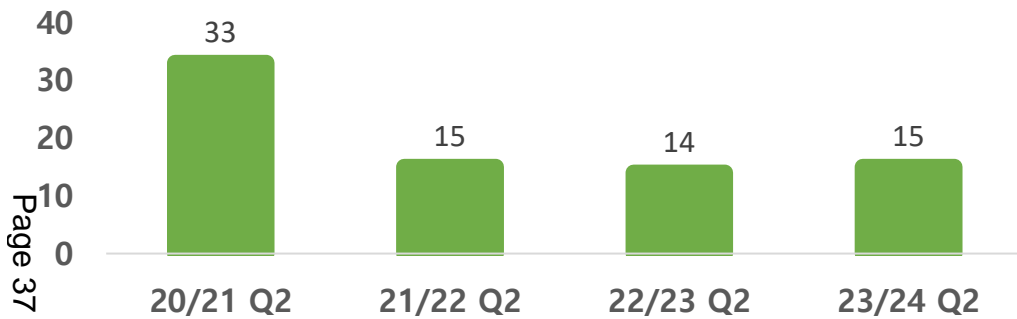


# GOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING

**PRIORITY:** The people of the Scottish Borders have the opportunities and are supported to take control of their health and wellbeing, enjoying a high quality of life.

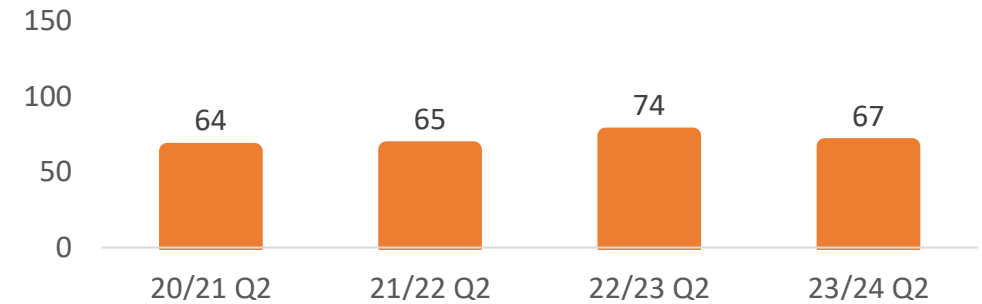


The number of **Referrals into the Mediation Service** in Q2 have **remained consistent** since 2020/21 which is **positive**

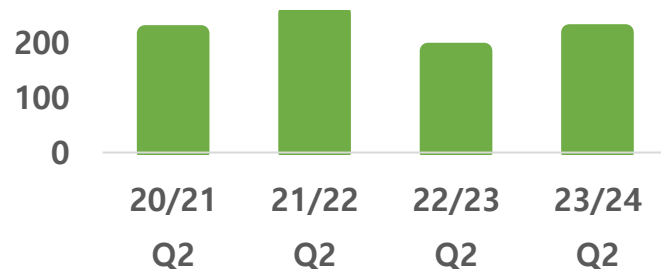


Page 37

The number of **High Risk domestic abuse cases discussed at MARAC** in Q2 has remained consistent over the last 4 years but there is **a focus for improvement**

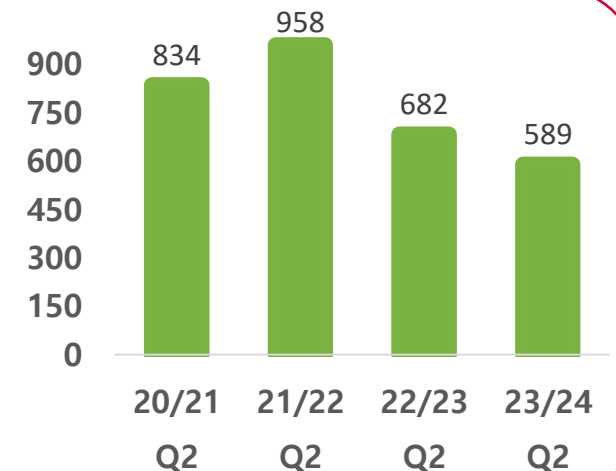


The number of **referrals** made to the **Domestic Abuse Service** in the year to date have remained **consistently positive** in Q2 over the past 4 years



**100%** of referrals into the Mediation Service were progressed and agreement was reached in the year to date

There has been a **decrease** in the number of cases **monitored** for **Anti-Social Behaviour** in Q2 in 23/24 compared to the same period over the previous 3 years



# WORKING TOGETHER, IMPROVING LIVES

**PRIORITY:** Ensure that Scottish Borders Council is effective, sustainable, responsive and aligned to the needs and priorities of our communities.



## Review the delivery of the Inequalities Strategy and the Child Poverty Strategy – now referred to as the Local Child Poverty Report and Action Plan

The **CPP** on **8<sup>th</sup> June** heard:



- The Local Child Poverty Report and Action Plan **2023/24**
- **Progress** on the **2022/23** report

Page 38

Improvement in gap between average wages in Scottish Borders and Scotland



- In 2022 the Scottish Borders average was £69 less per week than Scotland
- In 2021 the Scottish Borders average was £96 less per week than Scotland

Children in **low-income families** has **risen** to **19.7%** due to the cost of living crisis



SBC has a **£1.2m** cost of living support package



- Approx **2,695 children** received a warm clothing payment of **£100**

**CPP:** Community Planning Partnership

## Develop, consult & launch a new Community Plan that sets out key partnership priorities and actions for the Scottish Borders

New **Community Plan 2023/33** agreed by the Strategic Board on **7 September**



New plan sets out **11** outcomes for **improvement** under **4** themes of:



- Poverty
- Learning, skills and economy
- Good health and wellbeing
- Place, community and connectivity

### Underpinning Values

- People focused
- Inclusive
- Innovative
- Sustainable

### Cross Cutting Issue



- A resilient and net zero Scottish Borders by **2045**

### Desired Outcomes linked to this Milestone

- Inequality is reduced through targeted activity with all partners

### Desired Outcomes linked to this Milestone

- Better outcomes are delivered through effective partnership working

# WORKING TOGETHER, IMPROVING LIVES

**PRIORITY:** Ensure that Scottish Borders Council is effective, sustainable, responsive and aligned to the needs and priorities of our communities.



Service	Indicator	Q2 23/24	Status
Planning Permission	Av.time (wks) taken to process all planning apps - Maj Dev. - ADJUSTED (cumulative)	Data unavailable until Q3 23/24	
	Av.time (wks) taken to process all planning apps - Local Dev (non-householder) - ADJUSTED (cumulative)	Data unavailable until Q3 23/24	
	Av.time (wks) taken to process all planning apps - Local Dev (householder) - ADJUSTED (cumulative)	Data unavailable until Q3 23/24	
	Number of Planning Applications Received	253	<i>i</i>
Council Tax	Council Tax – In Year Collection Level	55.66%	○
	Capital Receipts Generated (cumulative)	£306K	○
Stage 39 Property	Properties surplus to requirements	18	○
	Properties actively being marketed	11	○
	Properties progressed to “under offer”	12	○
	Average times: the average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage one	9.2	●
*Complaints Handling	Performance against timescales: the number of complaints closed at stage one within 5 working days as percentage of total number of stage one complaints	77%	●
	Average times: the average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage two	32.7	●
	Performance against timescales: the number of complaints closed at stage two within 20 working days as percentage of total number of stage two complaints	35%	●
	Average times: the average time in working days to respond to complaints after escalation	47.3	●
	Performance against timescales: the number of escalated complaints closed within 20 working days as a percentage of total number of escalated stage two complaints	44%	●
	Number of Complaints Closed	242	<i>i</i>

Key: ● Positive ○ Neutral ● Focus for Improvement *i* Information only

# WORKING TOGETHER, IMPROVING LIVES

**PRIORITY:** Ensure that Scottish Borders Council is effective, sustainable, responsive and aligned to the needs and priorities of our communities.



Service	Indicator	Q2 23/24	Status
Freedom of Information	FOI Requests Received	344	<i>i</i>
	Percentage of FOI Requests Completed on Time	86%	●
Social Media	Number of Facebook Engagements	10,479	●
	Number of Twitter Engagements	3,620	●
Page Assessor	Council Tax Valuation List-Time taken to add new properties to the List	47%	○
	Valuation Roll (Non Domestic)-Time taken to amend the valuation roll to reflect new, altered or demolished properties	30%	○
Staff Absences	SBC Absence Rate – Staff	5.28%	○
	SBC Absence Rate – Teaching Staff	2.22%	○
	Staff Absence Rate (overall)	4.54%	○
Economic Dev & Procurement	Percentage of Invoices paid within 30 days	94%	○
Customer Contact	*Voice calls Answered	Information Delayed	

\* Please note that this PI is place of the previous Customer Contact PIs

Key: ● Positive ○ Neutral ● Focus for Improvement *i* Information only

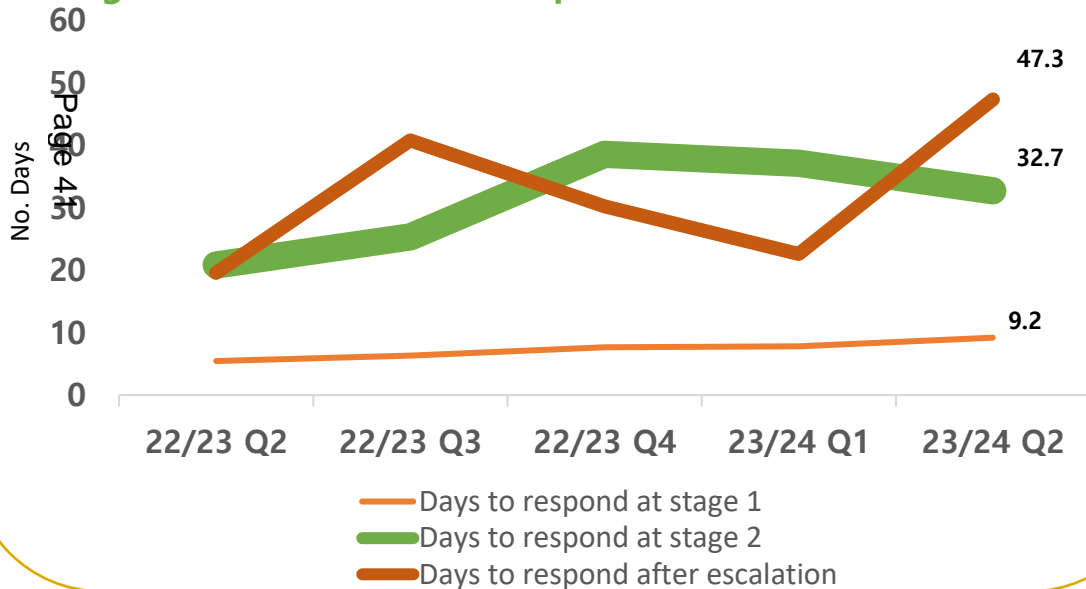


# WORKING TOGETHER, IMPROVING LIVES

**PRIORITY:** Ensure that Scottish Borders Council is effective, sustainable, responsive and aligned to the needs and priorities of our communities.

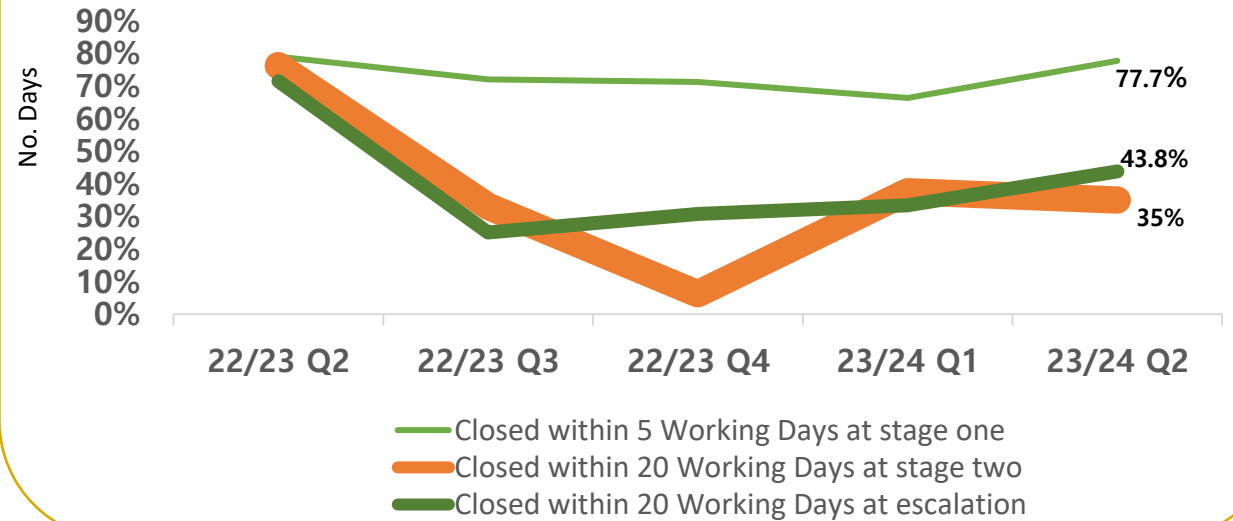


The number of days taken to respond to complaints at **stages 1** and **after escalation** have **increased and are** areas to **focus on improvement**. However, the number of days taken to respond at **stage 2** has **decreased**. This is **positive**.

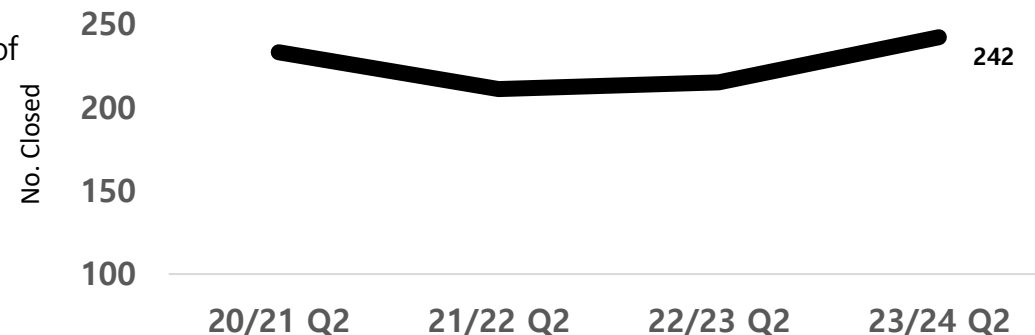


A **new system** to record complaints was implemented in Q3 22/23 and we expect to see an improvement in the second half of 23/24.

The percentage of complaints closed at **stage 1** and **after escalation** has **increased**, which is **positive**. However, the percentage of complaints closed at **stage 2** has **decreased**. This is a **focus for improvement**.



The number of complaints closed has stayed at a consistent level over the last 3 years

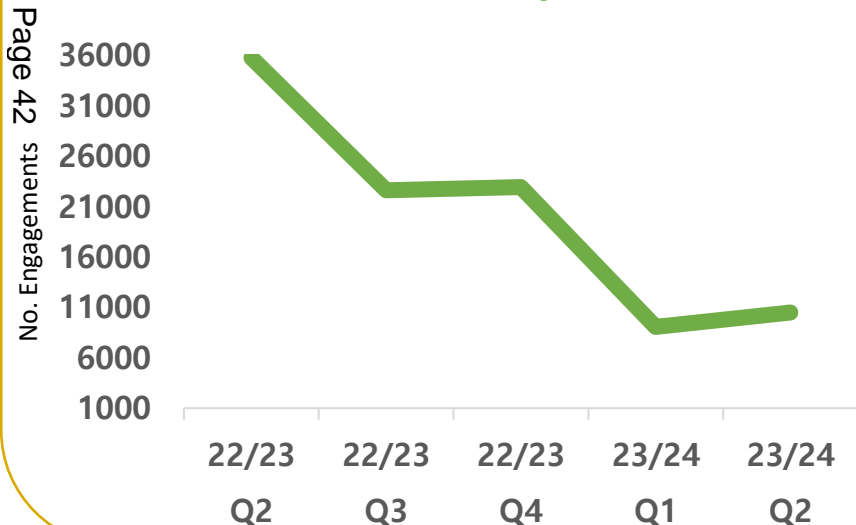


# WORKING TOGETHER, IMPROVING LIVES

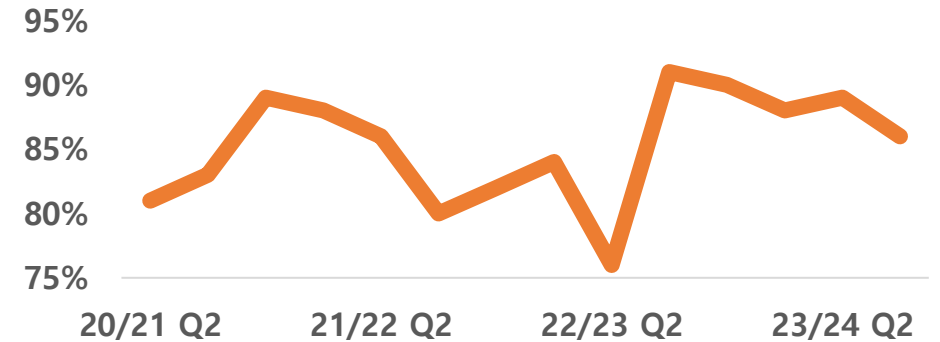
**PRIORITY:** Ensure that Scottish Borders Council is effective, sustainable, responsive and aligned to the needs and priorities of our communities.



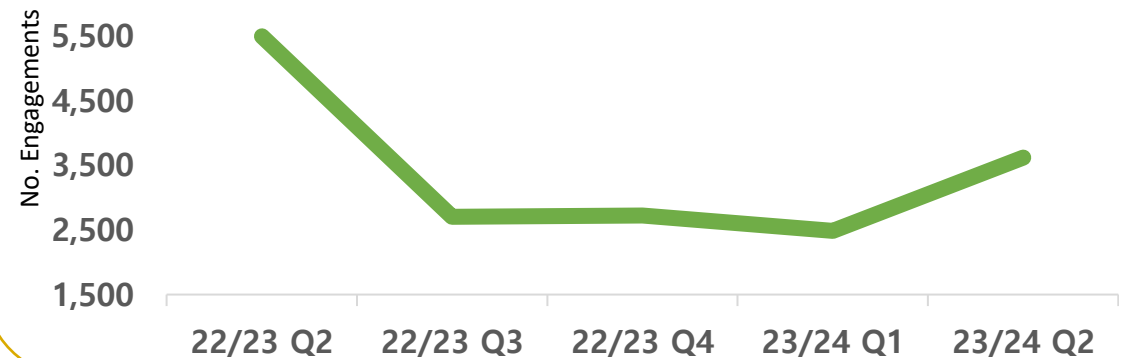
Although the number of **Facebook Engagements** has fallen over the last year, there has been an **increase** between Q1 and Q2 and this is **positive**



Although the percentage of **FOI Requests Completed** on Time remains high, further action needs to take place in order to meet the **target of 100%**



Despite an initial drop in the number of **Twitter Engagements** in the past year, the number remained stable and then **increased** over the last quarter





SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

# PERFORMANCE REPORT

Page 43 Q2 2023/24 CAT REPORT



Clean, green future



Fulfilling our potential



Strong inclusive economy, transport and infrastructure



Empowered, vibrant communities



Good health and wellbeing



Working together improving lives



# Q1 Community Action Team Report

The following is commentary based on the statistical information provided in the CAT Quarterly Impact Report for quarter 2 of 2023/24.

- The Community Action Team (CAT) has been operating at full strength since 1<sup>st</sup> June and the upturn in the statistics since that date is notable, particularly for High Visibility Foot Patrols and Mobile Patrols hours.
- The number of parking tickets issued across the Borders has increased considerably in quarter 2, with 201 tickets issued for the quarter. In September 2023 there were 112 tickets issued in the month and this is the highest single month total since November 2020.
- Youth warning letter numbers remain low in quarter 2 of 2023/24 but this is an indication of the success of the initiative. The incidents involving young people show that most are not engaging in behaviours that would warrant a letter being issued. For those young people who receive a letter very few go on to receive a repeat letter, again suggesting that the initial letter is acting as a deterrent.



# COMMUNITY ACTION TEAM

## IMPACT REPORT FOR QUARTER 1 - APRIL 2023 to JUNE 2023

BERWICKSHIRE	CHEVIOT	EILDON	TEVIOT	TWEEDDALE
<b>TASKING DURING PERIOD</b>	<b>TASKING DURING PERIOD</b>	<b>TASKING DURING PERIOD</b>	<b>TASKING DURING PERIOD</b>	<b>TASKING DURING PERIOD</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Off-road motorcycling at Monynut Forest, September.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>St Boswells Fair, July.</li> <li>Borders Union Show, July.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SBCAT officers took part in the Community Safety Advice Day for Sensory Services in Melrose.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following intelligence received a drugs warrant was executed in Hawick in September.</li> <li>High-risk missing person in Hawick in September.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UCI World Championships, Glentress, August.</li> <li>Following intelligence received a drugs warrant was executed in September in Innerleithen.</li> </ol>

**All Localities**

- Rural Crime

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT	EVIDENCE OF IMPACT	EVIDENCE OF IMPACT	EVIDENCE OF IMPACT	EVIDENCE OF IMPACT
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CAT are addressing issues at the location and have days of action planned for October.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CAT were present throughout the event and no significant issues were encountered.</li> <li>CAT were present at the show offering safety advice and support</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CAT worked with partner agencies (SFRS and NHS) meeting with members of the public with hearing issues and giving community safety advice and promoting ways to contact Police Service of Scotland and report any concerns.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CAT worked with partner agencies (SFRS and NHS) meeting with members of the public with hearing issues and giving community safety advice and promoting ways to contact Police Service of Scotland and report any concerns.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CAT were present throughout the event and no significant issues were encountered.</li> <li>A property was searched in Innerleithen with positive results.</li> </ol>

**All Localities**

- SBCAT conducted static road checks throughout the Borders in July and September to detect and deter rural thefts as part of Operation Checkpoint.

COMMUNITY ACTION TEAM (CAT) ACTIONS																				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Raised in Quarter	2	3			3	5			5	6			5	4			4	0		
Accepted in Quarter	0	1			2	1			5	5			4	2			3	0		
<b>% of tasking accepted by the CAT across all localities</b>					<b>2022/23</b>					<b>2023/24 Year to date</b>										
					60%					62%										

**NOTE:** Not all issues received and discussed at the CAT oversight group meeting are taken on as actions by the CAT. Some actions may be more appropriately followed up and actioned by another service within SBC or by a partner organisation. Also some actions are tasked directly through Police Scotland so are not reflected in the figures above but show the impact the team is having in the Borders.



# COMMUNITY ACTION TEAM

## IMPACT REPORT FOR QUARTER 1 - APRIL 2023 to JUNE 2023

Page 46

<b>HI-VISIBILITY FOOT PATROL (HOURS)</b>				<b>MOBILE PATROL (HOURS)</b>				<b>STATIC ROAD CHECKS</b>				<b>ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR WARNING LETTERS ISSUED TO UNDER 18s</b>				<b>NUMBER OF DRUG SEARCHES UNDERTAKEN PERSONS</b>			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
130	411			703	1346			83	139			9	10			2	0		
<p>Foot patrols are the number hours CAT officers spend in a specific location carrying out foot patrols. The figure quoted is in individual officer hours.</p>				<p>Mobile patrols are those carried out in marked Police Scotland vehicles and can involve 1 or more officers. The figure quoted is in individual officer hours.</p>				<p>Static road checks are proactive stops of vehicles in known problem locations to prevent or detect criminal or antisocial acts involving vehicles.</p>				<p>Where young people aged under 18 are evidenced committing antisocial behaviour (including drinking alcohol) warning letters are issued to parents/guardians to advise them of the situation.</p>				<p>No person searches were carried out in quarter 2.</p>			
												<b>NUMBER OF DRUG SEARCHES UNDERTAKEN PREMISES</b>							
												Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4				
												14	5						
												<p><b>80%</b> of searches were positive for drugs in quarter 2.</p>							

	BERWICKSHIRE				CHEVIOT				EILDON				TEVIOT				TWEEDDALE			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>PARKING:</b> No of Tickets Issued	3	4			3	18			29	95			1	67			8	17		
<b>2023/24 Year all localities</b>	<b>Q1</b>				<b>Q2</b>				<b>Q3</b>				<b>Q4</b>							
	44				201															




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## **SECOND HOMES COUNCIL TAX AFFORDABLE HOUSING INVESTMENT BUDGET PROPOSALS**

**Report by Director Infrastructure and Environment**

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**Executive Committee**

**5 December 2023**

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### **1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1 **The purpose of this report is to recommend that the Executive Committee approve an allocation of £961k in financial commitment from the Council's Second Homes Council Tax Affordable Housing Investment Budget to support the delivery of the identified affordable housing project at Upper Langlee and an additional £12k to support community led affordable housing opportunities across the Borders.**
- 1.2 As first reported in SHIP 2019-2024, the Council has been working closely with Waverley Housing to progress the regeneration of former public sector housing in and around the Beech Avenue area in Upper Langlee. This is a high-cost regeneration project with estimated costs of over £30M, requiring a total of £961k grant assistance to progress phase 1 delivery.
- 1.3 South of Scotland Community Housing (SOSCH) provides long-term support to community organisations relative to the planning and delivery of community-led housing. £12k is required to support SOSCH with the early stages of project development work on behalf of communities.
- 1.4 The sums recommended for approval supports the delivery of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2024-2029 which was approved by Committee in October 2023 and the Local Housing Strategy 2023-28. The report provides contextual commentary on the SHIP and outlines current challenges in delivery and the financial assistance required.

### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **I recommend that the Executive Committee agrees:**
  - (a) **To approve the use of £961k to ensure the delivery of phase 1 of the affordable housing development at Upper Langlee.**
  - (b) **To approve the use of £12k to support South of Scotland Community Housing with community led affordable housing projects.**

- (c) To delegate authority to the Director of Finance and Procurement to liaise with Waverley Housing and agree the timing and payment arrangements for the £961k.**



### 3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council's Local Housing Strategy (LHS) is a statutory document that provides the strategic direction to tackle housing need and demand and informs future investment in housing and related services across Scottish Borders Council's area. The new LHS has been prepared in accordance with Scottish Government Guidance which sets out the statutory requirements, essential links and outcomes that should be considered within the strategy. The LHS 2023-2028 [was considered and approved by committee](#) in November 2023. A key Strategic Outcome is the delivery of *more homes in well designed, sustainable communities that increase opportunity for all and support our economy to thrive*. Delivery of this strategic outcome includes addressing, and utilising empty homes, as well as a deliverable new build programme.
- 3.2 Based on the outcome of the Housing Need and Demand Assessment 3 (HNDA3) and aligning with National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) the proposed housing supply target (HST) for the period of the strategy has been set at 370 new homes per year, of which 141 should be affordable housing.
- 3.3 Local Authorities are also required to produce and submit a rolling five-year Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) to the Scottish Government, on an annual basis. The SHIP's core purpose is to set out the key strategic housing investment priorities over a five-year period and is consistent with the identified priorities set out in the Council's LHS. The [SHIP 2024-2029](#) is an ambitious, creative and practical plan that rolls forward projects identified in previous SHIPs and introduces new projects. It demonstrates how, when and where the Council and its partners intend to develop new homes. It also illustrates how a variety of funding mechanisms are maximised to ensure the delivery of the projects.
- 3.4 The projects contained within the SHIP programme are prioritised by taking a number of factors into consideration. Delivery of the SHIP is dependent upon RSLs continuing to secure ownership of sites and maintain a land-bank to provide more certainty to programme delivery.
- 3.5 This SHIP 2024-2029 was developed in a challenging economic climate. While the SHIP sets out an extremely ambitious development pipeline over the next five years there is considerable uncertainty regarding the timescales of when sites will be brought forward due to high development costs and economic uncertainties.
- 3.6 The pandemic continues to impact on development and construction of affordable housing across Scotland. In addition to this the war in Ukraine and the cost-of-living crisis has had a major impact in the delivery of current projects and delays in projects being brought forward for approval. Construction industry capacity, construction materials availability and costs, availability of grant funding and borrowing capacity of RSLs are all impacting on the delivery of the programme.
- 3.7 The housing market context in which we seek to deliver affordable housing is set out in the [LHS 2023-2028](#). As highlighted at 3.6 the impact of the

war in Ukraine, as well as the long-term impact of the pandemic has seen costs in the construction sector [increase exponentially](#). While material cost increases have been significant, there are predictions this may slow and stabilise over 2023/24, however, they are unlikely to reduce and labour will replace materials as the main cost driver in the near term, given skills and staff shortages which are likely to push up wages.

- 3.8 The amount of grant funding benchmark made available for each affordable home increased in 2021 and again in 2023, however, the increases in construction costs has meant that this has had a limited impact on viability, as it only represents around 35% of the cost of an affordable home in the current climate (previously closer to 50%). Scottish Borders Council, and its development partners, have been successful in securing an enhanced levels of contribution from Scottish Government however.
- 3.9 In 2023 inflation reached its highest levels for forty years and mortgage rates exceeded 6% for the first time in 14 years. The number of available mortgage products also reduced which brings additional risk for house builders as homes may go unsold for longer periods resulting in some house builders delaying new developments, delivering smaller phases, and/or reducing the number of homes which come to market each year. This can also subsequently delay land brought forward through the Affordable Housing Policy. Additionally, developers and investors generally opt to develop elsewhere in Scotland (e.g. central belt).
- 3.10 RSLs are also under increased financial pressure which also impacts on new development. The cost-of-living crisis and inflationary rises have meant the day-to-day delivery of RSL services are costing more. Wider statutory investment commitments also mean that landlords are having to prioritise investment to bring existing homes up to meet Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing 2 (EESH2), for example. In addition to this, keeping rents low and affordable means that borrowing levels can be affected, which impacts on RSLs ability to finance new build programmes and puts increasing pressure on available grant funding.
- 3.11 Council Officers anticipate, based on current delivery programmes, an additional 200 affordable homes could potentially be completed this year. Approvals for 2023/24 are however below target as RSLs consider delaying procuring new contracts due to cost inflation or due to recent tender returns being completely unviable. Recent tender returns for some proposed Affordable Housing developments in the Borders have been £100-£150k per unit more expensive than would have been generally anticipated or have seen a 50%-75% increase in anticipated costs.
- 3.12 The ambitious programme set out in the SHIP is contingent on the sites being within RSL control/being brought forward in a timeous manner, the necessary funding being in place (both grant funding and private finance) and construction sector capacity to deliver at scale. The proposed funding contributions set out in this report will support Waverley Housing to progress delivery of a high priority regeneration project and support the delivery of 25 new homes in Phase1. Anticipated cost of the whole project (109 homes) is approximately £30million and the funding gap for the whole project is forecast to be around £15.5million.

## 4 REGENERATION OF BEECH AVENUE, UPPER LANGLEE

- 4.1 As first reported in SHIP 2019-2024, the Council has been working closely with Waverley Housing to consider suitable options to progress the regeneration of former public sector housing in and around the Beech Avenue area in Upper Langlee, Galashiels. A feasibility study and masterplan was commissioned jointly by SBC and Waverley Housing in 2018.
- 4.2 There were 229 homes included in the study area. The proposal included the demolition of 159 homes, and replacement with 109 new build homes which will better meet the needs of tenants and residents in the local community and help address future affordable housing demand in the Galashiels area.
- 4.3 In 2021, Waverley Housing solely funded and completed the refurbishment of the 68 flats being retained as one element of the regeneration strategy.
- 4.4 Planning Consent was granted on 29 March 2021 and Waverley Housing completed a re-housing exercise to allow the 1st phase of the demolition programme to proceed. Scottish Government and the Council has been supporting Waverley Housing in working towards delivery of the regeneration vision and assisted in the rehousing effort by making grant available to assist the purchase a number of homes to provide additional rehousing options to enable the demolition phase to proceed.
- 4.5 It is anticipated that there will be 4 phases of new build development which are set out in the current SHIP. These projects are being led by Waverley Housing and will be funded from a mix of anticipated Scottish Government grant funding and Waverley Housing's own reserve funds and borrowing as well as SBC anticipated contributions.
- 4.6 A demolition contractor was appointed in July 2022. The 1st phase of the demolition works were completed in December 2022, thus clearing the way for the anticipated Phase 1 new build programme to commence. It is anticipated that the contractor will be formally appointed in December 2023 with works commencing early 2024.
- 4.7 Following an unviable tender exercise in early 2023 a second attempt was made over summer 2023. Four Tenders were received on 9 August 2023. The returns are shown in table 1 below and demonstrate value for money as less than £300k separates the highest and lowest returns.

Table 1: August 2023 Tender Returns

<b>RANK</b>	<b>TENDER FIGURE</b>
1	£6,945,392
2	£6,952,910
3	£7,160,792
4	£7,239,361

- 4.8 Tender 1 represents a cost of around £297k per home. The recently published [SOLACE Report](#) on Housing pressures in Scotland highlights the

pressure on the sustainability of social housing in rural areas and identified the higher cost of building. The report highlights that new build costs are now in excess of £300,000 per unit in rural areas compared with a national average of £200,000 per unit. The costs for the project in Upper Langlee are significant but not far beyond other recently tendered projects, for example £278k per home in Burnfoot, Hawick and £230k per home at High Buckholm, Galashiels.

- 4.9 Waverley Housing have continued to work with Ark Consultancy and commissioned cost plans for the development which demonstrated the project faced a significant funding shortfall. Waverley have explored all avenues in relation to the funding gap, including ongoing discussion with Scottish Government regarding grant funding and internally to ensure the private finance and grant elements can be maximised.
- 4.10 Waverley Housing have reserves of up to £4.5million to support the delivery of all four planned phases of development (£41,284 per unit) and borrowing capacity of up to £10million (£91,743 per unit). The anticipated cost of the whole project is approximately £30million and so the funding gap for the whole project is currently forecast to be around £15.5million.
- 4.11 The further work examining the costs of phase 1, the value engineering that has been undertaken, and the ongoing discussion with Scottish Government, have all been valuable. To support delivery of phase 1 (25 homes) Waverley Housing has submitted a request to the Scottish Government for Affordable Housing Supply Programme grant funding at 9.99% above the grant benchmark. The appraisal of the project will be handled by the Scottish Government's More Homes Division South East Area team. The funding assumptions at table 2 (para 4.15) have been developed on that basis.
- 4.12 The current probable costs financial modelling exercise estimates total project costs for phase 1 to be £7.438m (£297k per unit). Anticipated funding contributions are as follows; Scottish Government housing grant contribution at 9.9% above benchmark of £3.152m (£3,151,624) along with Waverley Housing private borrowing of £2.294m and reserves of £1,032m (total £3.326m) and Scottish Borders Council grant contribution of £961k. Figures require to be finalised subject to tender checking and grant offer from Scottish Government but are set out in table 2 at paragraph 4.15.
- 4.13 There has been a desire to regenerate and transform this part of Upper Langlee for some years, and this is a strategic housing priority for both Waverley Housing and the Council, as set out in the Local Housing Strategy and Strategic Housing Investment Plan.
- 4.14 This report proposes that SBC grant assist Waverley Housing £961k to enable Phase 1 of the new build development at Upper Langlee to progress.

4.15 Table 2: Funding Breakdown for Phase 1

Construction Cost	£6,945,392
Value Engineering	-£136,201
Acquisition Funding already received	£327,103
Remaining on costs	£302,018
Contingency	£0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£7,438,312</b>
<b>Funding</b>	
Waverley Loan Finance	£2,293,578
AHSP Grant 9.99% above Benchmark	£3,151,624
Proposed SBC Grant	£961,000
Waverley Reserves	£1,032,110
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£7,438,312</b>

## 5 SOUTH OF SCOTLAND COMMUNITY HOUSING

- 5.1 South of Scotland Community Housing (SOSCH) provides long-term support to community organisations relative to the planning and delivery of community-led housing and regeneration projects. SOSCH works with communities to provide project lifecycle support – from the point of housing being identified as an issue by a community, through project development and delivery. This work is inclusive of localised Housing Needs and Demand Assessments (HNDAs), project development (including business planning, stakeholder and community engagement, securing funding packages), support to delivery phase, allocation and management options.
- 5.2 In the Autumn of 2022, SOSCH recruited a Community-Led Housing Co-ordinator for Southeast Scotland. A key element of the role is to support community organisations to bring empty homes and buildings back into use as community led housing. The coordinator has been in post for a year, during which time SOSCH has received interest from twenty-five communities across the five localities of the Scottish Borders and has become well integrated within local institutions, such as the Scottish Borders Council’s community-led local place planning work. SOSCH are now actively engaged with a number of communities, including Westruther, Swinton, and Walkerburn, to commence the process of appraising the demand and potential for community-led affordable housing.
- 5.3 The work of South of Scotland Community Housing is vital in rural areas and community-led housing is an important contributor in the delivery of affordable housing that meets the needs of local communities. Community-led housing plays a key role in community regeneration, not only providing affordable housing but also helping to support local services and is held as an asset by the community in perpetuity, contributing significantly to community wealth building. The role of SOSCH has been recognised in both the SBC Local Housing Strategy 2023-2028, and the Scottish Government’s Rural and Islands Housing Action Plan (October 2023).

- 5.4 The preparation of a localised Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) Report is a key initial action at the early-stage of developing proposals for community-led housing. This allows community organisations to develop an informed, evidence-based understanding of their local housing needs – both relative to latent demand within a community, but also in order to support repopulation or local services. The information provided by HNDA – undertaken on behalf of a community by SOSCH – allows local housing solutions to be designed in a manner that aligns to local needs and ensures a “right home, right place” approach can be taken. HNDA will inform considerations around scale, type, tenure and nature of local housing need.
- 5.5 In the development of a support package to community organisations, HNDA is a necessary initial step that – in turn – will unlock application to key project development funds, particularly the Feasibility element of the Scottish Government’s Rural Housing Fund and Stage One application to the Scottish Land Fund. However, HNDA is required to pre-empt this process to ensure project development is informed by evidenced demand.
- 5.6 Whilst SOSCH have successfully engaged with several communities who are keen to progress the assessment of community-led housing project plans, it is necessary to identify funds – on behalf of these communities – to instruct SOSCH to progress HNDA work. SOSCH attribute a fee of £3000 per HNDA report, inclusive of local housing survey and analysis of other data. At this stage, communities have been unsuccessful in identifying funding routes to enable this early-stage work.
- 5.7 This report therefore recommends an allocation of £12,000 which would enable the completion of four local HNDA reports to be undertaken, where required, over the next year. The provision of flexible funding for communities to undertake HNDAs in rural Scottish Borders would, in turn, unlock the capacity to quickly move projects forward towards securing Project Development funding, including Scottish Land Fund and Rural Housing Fund, more quickly enabling a pipeline of new community-led affordable housing proposals in the region.

## **6 IMPLICATIONS**

### **6.1 Financial**

- (a) Ensuring the effective development and delivery of SHIP projects and LHS priorities continues to be dependent on SBC’s provision of core services, financial resource allocations from the Scottish Government, partner agencies, private developers and individuals.
- (b) Scottish Government made an allocation of £15.954m to assist delivery of affordable housing projects in Scottish Borders in 2023/24. There is likely to be an underspend this year and a further underspend forecast if Waverley Housing are unable to progress phase 1 and draw down £1.236m in AHSP grant funding this year.
- (c) The arrangements to collect and use the Council’s “Second Homes Council Tax” budget are framed by Scottish Government Guidance. This budget can only be used to assist delivery of affordable housing.

The Council is required to provide statistical reports to evidence available balances and projects assisted. This reporting is now included within the SHIP document. The Guidance enables any unspent balance to be carried forward to subsequent financial years to dovetail with partners financial planning and project programming. This has enabled the Council to build up an available balance of £3.5M in anticipation of this being required to provide complementary funding to assist and ensure the delivery of affordable housing. The Council plans on the basis of around £1.2m net annual income to top up the budget.

- (d) Should the Committee decide to grant assist Waverley Housing’s development at Upper Langlee, this will secure the allocated Scottish Government grant and RSL private borrowing as set out at 4.15 (table 2). The timing of the potential Council contribution has yet to be agreed however it’s anticipated that draw down will be split equally across financial years 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- (e) It is estimated that once completed, these 25 homes will generate around £25k per annum in annual Council Tax income to the Council. This figure is based on the 2023/2024 Council Tax rates and assumes the homes will be mainly Band C. This figure also assumes estimates related to Council Tax Reduction and Single Person Discounts.
- (f) Furthermore the construction phase should positively contribute to reducing income inequality for people in the Borders through the creation of numerous direct construction jobs, apprenticeships and indirect jobs within the construction supply chain.
- (g) Table 3 below shows the balance of available funding with the inclusion of a £961k grant to Waverley Housing and the additional £12k proposed to support SOSCH.

Table 3: 2nd Homes Council Tax financial table including the proposed allocations.

	<b>2023/24</b> <b>£'000</b>	<b>2024/25</b> <b>£'000</b>	<b>2025/26</b> <b>£'000</b>	<b>2026/27</b> <b>£'000</b>	<b>2027/28</b> <b>£'000</b>
Funding brought forward	4,150	3,273	2,649	1,798	2,980
Anticipated 2nd Homes Council Tax	1,331	1,278	1,329	1,382	1,437
<b>Total Funding Available</b>	<b>5,481</b>	<b>4,551</b>	<b>3,978</b>	<b>3,180</b>	<b>4,417</b>
Current Investment Commitments	2,209	1,902	2,181	200	1,400

- (h) If the Committee agrees to assist Waverley Housing and South of Scotland Community Housing it is proposed that the Director of Finance and Procurement will liaise with both organisations regarding agreeing timing and payment arrangements in due course.

## 6.2 Risk and Mitigations

- (a) Delivery of the SHIP is largely dependent upon a number of variables not least of which relate to resource and other political and organisation decision making processes, most of which are beyond the control of the Council. As described in Section 3 of this report there are a number of challenges currently impacting on the delivery of the Affordable Housing Supply Programme, and significant pressures on the local supply of homes.
- (b) Delivery of the SHIP is also dependent upon RSLs continuing to secure ownership of sites and maintain a land-bank to provide more certainty to programme delivery. Officers will continue to work with partner RSLs to ensure that there is a strategic approach to land-banking for affordable housing.
- (c) In publishing its final report on the 17th January 2023 Internal Audit found examples of good practice and provided substantial assurance on the governance and controls in place to ensure efficient and effective use of funding and other resources for the provision of affordable housing to ensure achievement of the local housing strategy with partners.
- (d) Furthermore, the audit report also identified scope for improvement to formalise risk management arrangements, for the Strategic Housing Service, to ensure compliance with the Council's Risk Management Framework. One low-rated recommendation was made, in this regard, by Internal Audit and was agreed by the Lead Officer - Housing Strategy and Development. Follow-up meetings and work have since been undertaken to meet this recommendation, supported by the Corporate Risk Officer. A Strategic Housing Risk Register has been developed which is reflective of the objectives of the service and includes the delivery of the Strategic Housing Development Plan.

## 6.3 Integrated Impact Assessment

- (a) In line with both Council policy and legislative requirement, the SHIP 2024-2029 has been subjected to an Integrated Impact Assessment. The outcome of that assessment did not identify any concerns arising from the delivery of the SHIP potentially adversely impacting on any of the equalities groups.
- (b) The development of SHIP 2024-2029 was predicated on the endorsement of the principle of Equalities as articulated in the SHIP Guidance. The SHIP and LHS were both subjected to an Integrated Impact Assessment, Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening and Rural Proofing Assessment.
- (c) Homes produced by Registered Social Landlords will be allocated according to their individual allocations policy and procedures. As a consequence of being an RSL, they are subject to the weight of statutory scrutiny via external Regulation and Inspection by the Scottish Housing Regulator.



#### 6.4 Sustainable Development Goals

- (a) In accordance with Section 7 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 a pre-screening assessment of the SHIP 2024-2029 has been undertaken using the criteria specified in Schedule 2 of the Act. The pre-screening assessment identified no or minimal effects in relation to the environment hence the SHIP is exempt from full SEA requirements under Section 7 (1) of the Act.
- (b) By seeking to provide more new affordable houses, the proposed activity will promote sustainable communities and help to address many of the housing supply challenges identified in the Local Housing Strategy 2023-2028.
- (c) The objectives of the SHIP are consistent with UN Sustainable Development Goals [SDG] 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities and 13 Climate Action. Specifically, the SHIP responds to the ambition of SDG 11 by promoting access for all to adequate, safe and affordable Housing, by ensuring integrated, inclusive and sustainable settlement, and by strengthening regional development planning. With respect to SDG 13 development will be at least consistent with Scottish Building Standards and the national objective of net zero greenhouse gases by 2045.

#### 6.5 Climate Change

- (a) While no direct impacts on the Council's carbon emissions arise as a result of the report recommendations, New Build housing will have a general effect on the region's carbon footprint. However, these effects are addressed within the Council's Planning and Building Standards processes, and will be consistent with meeting the housing requirements and standards as set out by the Scottish Government.
- (b) It is anticipated that the affordable housing proposed will be built to meet Scottish Government's "Silver Standard."

#### 6.6 Rural Proofing

- (a) Rural proofing applies to all areas of Scottish Borders classified by Scottish Government as 'Remote Rural' or 'Accessible Rural'. This applies to most areas of Scottish Borders outwith the towns of Galashiels/Tweedbank, Hawick, Peebles, Innerleithen, Selkirk, Eyemouth, Jedburgh and Kelso.
- (b) The SHIP project working group carried out a Rural Proofing exercise as part of the preparation of the SHIP. It was considered that the delivery of the SHIP will have no unforeseen negative impact on the rural area, and is more likely to have positive effects by increasing the supply of affordable housing.

#### 6.7 Data Protection Impact Statement

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

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

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

## 7 CONSULTATION

7.1 The Director (Finance & Procurement), the Director (Corporate Governance), the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Director (People Performance & Change), the Clerk to the Council and Corporate Communications have been consulted and any comments received incorporated into the final report.

### Approved by

**Name:**  
**John Curry**

**Title:**  
**Director Infrastructure and Environment**

### Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Donna Bogdanovic	Lead Officer, Housing Strategy

**Background Papers:** [Local Housing Strategy 2023-2028](#)  
[Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024-2029](#)

**Previous Minute Reference:**

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

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## **KALEMOUTH SUSPENSION BRIDGE - ESSENTIAL REPAIR WORKS**

**Report by Director – Infrastructure & Environment**

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### **EXECUTIVE**

**5 December 2023**

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

- 1.1 **This report provides an update on the status of Kalemouth Suspension Bridge. It proposes that further detailed design work is undertaken and that external grant funding be sought to allow essential repair works to be undertaken on the timber elements of the bridge.**
- 1.2 Kalemouth Suspension Bridge is a Category 'A' Listed structure which carries the unclassified D101/4 public road over the River Teviot. It is a fine example of a historic wrought iron chain-bar suspension bridge with timber deck.
- 1.3 The bridge was closed to vehicular traffic in August 2020 when substantial decay was discovered in some of the main timber deck elements. Prior to its closure the bridge had a 3T weight restriction which allowed single file traffic to cross the river between the A698 and the small settlement of Ormiston Mains which consists of around 12 properties
- 1.4 Various investigations and detailed assessment work has since been carried out and this has found that the main wrought iron suspension structure of the bridge is unable to demonstrate sufficient strength to safely carry 3T vehicles or sufficient strength to carry full pedestrian crowd loading. Passage has therefore been further restricted to a maximum of 10 people at any one time.
- 1.5 Due to the very high costs that would be associated with strengthening a Category 'A' listed wrought iron suspension bridge and the potential for adverse impacts on the bridges special architectural and historic nature it is proposed to progress a scheme to only replace and renew the timber elements on the bridge. These elements have reached the end of their serviceable life and replacing them will safeguard the bridge into the future and ensure it can remain in use for pedestrians and cyclists.

1.6 Costs associated with replacing all timber elements on the bridge are estimated to be around £1M and as such a proportion of external grant funding is being sought to allow these works to go ahead.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 **I recommend that the Executive Committee: -**

- (a) Notes the updated position regarding Kalemouth Suspension Bridge.**
- (b) Agrees to the proposed way forward of developing a project to replace all timber elements on the bridge in 2025/26 subject to successful external grant funding applications.**

### **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Kalemouth Suspension Bridge is a Category 'A' Listed structure located on a minor road which joins the A698 between Jedburgh and Kelso, close to the small village of Eckford. The bridge carries the unclassified D101/4 public road over the River Teviot just upstream of its confluence with the Kale Water.
- 3.2 The bridge is a fine example of an early wrought-iron chain-bar suspension bridge with timber deck. It was designed and built by Captain Samuel Brown and the bridge was completed in the 1830's. Captain Samuel Brown had earlier built the Union Chain Suspension Bridge, which links Scotland and England near Paxton. Kalemouth Suspension Bridge has a span of around 54 metres and is just over 4.5 metres wide. Due to its historical significance the bridge is protected by its Category 'A' Listed status.
- 3.3 The bridge was closed to vehicular traffic in August 2020 on safety grounds. During planned routine maintenance works substantial decay was discovered in some of the main timber deck elements and the Council took the decision to restrict passage to pedestrians and cyclists only. Prior to its closure Kalemouth suspension bridge operated under a 3T weight restriction and carried single file traffic between the A698 and the small hamlet of Ormiston Mains which consists of around 12 properties.
- 3.4 Following its closure to vehicular traffic the Council instigated various surveys and reviewed historic records about the bridge to gain a better understanding of its structural make-up and capabilities. This work included employing external consulting engineers, WSP, to undertake a Principal Inspection and Structural Assessment of the bridge.
- 3.5 The Principal Inspection found the wrought iron suspension system on the bridge to be in reasonably good condition for its age, however, the timber deck and parapet elements have reached the end of their serviceable life.
- 3.6 The outcome of the Structural Assessment work was that despite its relatively good condition the wrought iron suspension system was unable to exhibit sufficient strength to safely carry 3T vehicular loading. The suspension system was also unable to demonstrate the capacity to carry full pedestrian (crowd) loading and as such it has been further restricted, with a maximum of 10 people allowed to cross the bridge at any one time.
- 3.7 The closure of the bridge to vehicles under 3T has impacted those people living in Ormiston Mains and other surrounding villages. There are alternative routes to gain access to the main A698 road but distances and journey times are longer. The maximum diversion distance being 7 miles.

### **4 PROPOSED WAY FORWARD**

- 4.1 Following the above research and assessment work Officers have considered the options for the bridge. Ideally these would involve a project to replace all the timber elements and works to strengthen the wrought iron suspension system. However, as has been seen at the Union Chain Bridge, major refurbishment of such an historic structure would be a very complex

task. Design and construction costs would therefore be very high. The Union Chain Bridge refurbishment project was circa £10M and given Kalemouth Suspension Bridge is half the span strengthening and timber replacement costs would likely be in the range of £2M- £4M, most probably at the top end of this scale. This, unfortunately, renders a project of this nature cost prohibitive and means it does not really offer value for money for the public purse.

- 4.2 Consequently, it is instead proposed to instigate a project which would aim to replace and renew all timber elements on the bridge to enable the bridge to continue to be safely used by pedestrians and cyclists. Subject to detailed design development, this would be based around the original design, and this will allow retention of Captain Brown's original wrought-iron elements. This will safeguard the bridge for the future and ensure it can remain in use for pedestrians and cyclists. Interpretation boards can be added to explain its history and its link to its sister bridge, the Union Chain Bridge.
- 4.3 It is estimated that costs associated with a project to replace all timber elements will be around £1M. This work is essential as the condition of the existing timber deck and parapets will continue to deteriorate and, in time, the bridge would have to be fully closed. Further design and preparatory work will be required to determine the total scheme cost more accurately but £1M is considered a reasonable initial estimate. Consulting engineers, WSP have been approached and asked to submit a price for the design of the timber replacement works.

## **5 FUNDING OPTIONS**

- 5.1 Funding the above timber replacement project still presents the Council with some financial challenges. Currently a capital budget of around £750k is allocated by the Council for bridge improvement works across the entire Scottish Borders network. The Council has circa 1200 bridges to manage and maintain from this annual budget. Therefore, it is proposed to seek some external grant funding to assist with the refurbishment works at Kalemouth Bridge. Contact has already been made with Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and initial feedback has been positive. However, the standard grant rate from HES for local authorities is 25% of the grant eligible costs so the maximum contribution is likely to be around £200-250k. Other possible external funding streams will be explored, such as the National Lottery Grant Fund. It should be noted that any external organisation that offers funding does so with various conditions attached.

## **6 IMPLICATIONS**

### **6.1 Financial**

- (a) It is proposed to undertake the above timber replacement works in financial year 2025/26. The current approved capital budget for masonry refurbishment within the Roads & Bridges Block in 2025/26 is £417k. The initial estimated total scheme costs associated with the project is circa £1M and we are therefore looking to maximise external funding opportunities to allow this project to proceed.

- (b) Approval will be sought to increase the masonry refurbishment block allocation to £700k in 2025/26 from the wider Roads & Bridges Block as part of the 2024/25 Capital Programme Block Allocations report. If approved this will allow the Council to contribute circa £400k to this project leaving some budget to carry out essential work on other bridges in-year.

## 6.2 Risk and Mitigations

- (a) There is a high risk that if timber replacement works are not carried out within next few years Kalemouth Bridge will have to be fully closed. This would detract from its Category 'A' Listed status and generate negative publicity for the Council.
- (b) There is a risk that external grant funding may not be secured. This is considered unlikely as positive feedback has already been received for Historic Environment Scotland.
- (c) There is a risk that costs associated with the timber replacement works will exceed the initial estimate of £1M. This is possible as much of the cost associated with working on a weak suspension bridge over a wide river is related to the temporary safe access arrangements for the construction work, be that scaffold or floating pontoon, and it is difficult to estimate these costs at the design stage.

## 6.3 Integrated Impact Assessment

The Integrated Impact Assessment template has been completed for this project which involves replacing all timber elements on Kalemouth Bridge to avoid it having to be closed. It is not considered that it will have any adverse effects on equality or opportunity.

## 6.4 Sustainable Development Goals

It is not envisaged that the proposal will impact on any of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. However, a potential benefit of the project may be to encourage walking and cycling in the area. A permissive path route already crosses Kalemouth Bridge, and the repair work and associated vehicular traffic restriction may further encourage these activities.

## 6.5 Climate Change

- (a) Formally closing Kalemouth Suspension bridge to vehicles will increase journey distances and times for a small number of people. This will marginally increase their carbon output. However, over time as more efficient and predominantly electric vehicles come into circulation this increase will become very small.
- (b) Replacement timber material for the project will only be sought from sustainable sources.

## 6.6 Rural Proofing

This project is not a new or amended policy or strategy it is a specific and individual project to repair Kalemouth Suspension Bridge.

## 6.7 Data Protection Impact Statement

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

## 6.8 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 Director (Finance & Procurement), the Director (Corporate Governance), the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Director (People Performance & Change), the Clerk to the Council and Corporate Communications have been consulted and any comments incorporated into the final report.

### Approved by

**Name**  
**John Curry**

**Title**  
**Director – Infrastructure & Environment**

### Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
<b>Paul Frankland</b>	<b>Engineering Manager – 01835 825179</b>

**Background Papers: N/A**

**Previous Minute Reference: N/A**

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## Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

### Stage 1 Scoping and Assessing for Relevance

#### Section 1 Details of the Proposal

<b>A. Title of Proposal:</b>	<b>Kalemouth Suspension Bridge – Essential Repair Works</b>
<b>B. What is it?</b>	<p>A new Policy/Strategy/Practice <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>A revised Policy/Strategy/Practice <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>A new Project</b></p>
<p><b>C. Description of the proposal:</b> (Set out a clear understanding of the purpose of the proposal being developed or reviewed (what are the aims, objectives and intended outcomes, including the context within which it will operate))</p>	<p>Essential repair works on Kalemouth Suspension Bridge. All timber elements are to be renewed and replaced so that the bridge can remain open for pedestrians and cyclists.</p> <p>As part of this work the bridge will be access over the bridge will be formally redetermined to exclude motorised vehicles and as such 3T vehicles will no longer be able to cross the bridge.</p> <p>The bridge is a Grade 'A' Listed structure and the works will be done in keeping with this protected status so that it can be viewed and enjoyed for many years to come.</p>
<p><b>D. Service Area:</b> <b>Department:</b></p>	Infrastructure and Environment
<p><b>E. Lead Officer:</b> (Name and job title)</p>	Paul Frankland Engineering Manager

<b>F. Other Officers/Partners involved:</b> (List names, job titles and organisations)	Sanne Roberts – Heritage & Design Officer, HES
<b>G. Date(s) IIA completed:</b>	6 Nov 2023

**Section 2 Will there be any impacts as a result of the relationship between this proposal and other policies?**

<b>No</b> <i>(please delete as applicable)</i>
<b>If yes, - please state here:</b>

**Section 3 Legislative Requirements**

<b>3.1 Relevance to the Equality Duty: No</b>	
<p><b>Do you believe your proposal has any relevance under the Equality Act 2010?</b>  <i>(If you believe that your proposal may have some relevance – however small please indicate yes. If there is no effect, please enter “No” and go to Section 3.2.)</i></p>	
<b>Equality Duty</b>	<b>Reasoning:</b>
<b>A. Elimination of discrimination (both direct &amp; indirect), victimisation and harassment.</b> <i>(Will the proposal discriminate? Or help eliminate discrimination?)</i>	

<b>B. Promotion of equality of opportunity?</b> <i>(Will your proposal help or hinder the Council with this)</i>	
<b>C. Foster good relations?</b> <i>(Will your proposal help to foster or encourage good relations between those who have different equality characteristics?)</i>	

<b>3.2 Which groups of people do you think will be or potentially could be, impacted by the implementation of this proposal? (You should consider employees, clients, customers / service users, and any other relevant groups)</b>				
Please tick below as appropriate, outlining any potential impacts on the undernoted equality groups this proposal may have and how you know this.				
	Impact			Please explain the potential impacts and how you know this
	No Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	
<b>Age</b> Older or younger people or a specific age grouping	X			
<b>Disability</b> e.g. Effects on people with mental, physical, sensory impairment, learning disability, visible/invisible, progressive or recurring	X			
<b>Gender Reassignment/ Gender Identity</b> anybody whose gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex assigned to them at birth	X			
<b>Marriage or Civil Partnership</b> people who are married or in a civil partnership	X			

<b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b> (refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to <b>maternity</b> leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, <b>protection</b> against <b>maternity</b> discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth),	X			
<b>Race Groups:</b> including colour, nationality, ethnic origins, including minorities (e.g. gypsy travellers, refugees, migrants and asylum seekers)	X			
<b>Religion or Belief:</b> different beliefs, customs (including atheists and those with no aligned belief)	X			
<b>Sex</b> women and men (girls and boys)	X			
<b>Sexual Orientation</b> , e.g. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Heterosexual	X			
<p><b>3.3 Fairer Scotland Duty</b></p> <p>This duty places a legal responsibility on Scottish Borders Council (SBC) to actively consider (give due regard) to how we can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socioeconomic disadvantage when making <u>strategic</u> decisions.</p> <p>The duty is set at a strategic level - these are the key, high level decisions that SBC will take. This would normally include strategy documents, decisions about setting priorities, allocating resources and commissioning services.</p>				
<p><b>Is the proposal strategic? No</b></p> <p>Yes / No (<i>please delete as applicable</i>)</p> <p><b>If No go to Section 4</b></p>				

**If yes, please indicate any potential impact on the undernoted groups this proposal may have and how you know this:**

	Impact			State here how you know this
	No Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	
<b>Low and/or No Wealth</b> – enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future.				
<b>Material Deprivation</b> – being unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure and hobbies				
<b>Area Deprivation</b> – where you live (e.g. rural areas), where you work (e.g. accessibility of transport)				
<b>Socio-economic Background</b> – social class i.e. parents' education, employment and income				
<b>Looked after and accommodated children and young people</b>				
<b>Carers</b> paid and unpaid including family members				
<b>Homelessness</b>				
<b>Addictions and substance use</b>				
<b>Those involved within the criminal justice system</b>				

### **3.4 Armed Forces Covenant Duty (*Education and Housing/ Homelessness proposals only*)**

This duty places a legal responsibility on Scottish Borders Council (SBC) to actively consider (give due regard) to the three matters listed below in Education and Housing/ Homelessness matters.  
This relates to current and former armed forces personnel (regular or reserve) and their families.

**Is the Armed Forces Covenant Duty applicable?**

**No**

If "Yes", please complete below

<b>Covenant Duty</b>	<b>How this has been considered and any specific provision made:</b>
<b>The unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the armed forces;</b>	
<b>The principle that it is desirable to remove disadvantages arising for Service people from membership, or former membership, of the armed forces;</b>	
<b>The principle that special provision for Service people may be justified by the effects on such people of membership, or former membership, of the armed forces.</b>	

## Section 4 Full Integrated Impact Assessment Required

Select No if you have answered “No” to all of Sections 3.1 – 3.3.

**No** (please delete as applicable)

If yes, please proceed to Stage 2 and complete a full Integrated Impact Assessment

**If a full impact assessment is not required briefly explain why there are no effects and provide justification for the decision.**

This project involves the replacement of defective timbers on a rural suspension bridge, to allow it to remain open to pedestrians and cyclists. 3T motor vehicles will be prohibited from using the bridge due to its inability to safely carry that level of loading, alternative routes are available.

<b>Signed by Lead Officer:</b>	<b>Paul Frankland</b>
<b>Designation:</b>	<b>Engineering Manager</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>6 Nov 2023</b>

<b>Counter Signature Director:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	