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## **SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL EVENTS PLAN 2014-2020 – PROGRESS REPORT**

**Report by Corporate Transformation & Services Director**

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### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**1 November 2016**

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

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

#### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

### **3 SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL'S EVENTS PLAN 2014-2020**

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

### **4 SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL'S EVENTS PLAN – 2016 UPDATE**

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

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

## **5 IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 Financial**

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

## 5.2 **Risk and Mitigations**

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

## 5.3 **Equalities**

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

## 5.4 **Acting Sustainably**

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

## 5.5 **Carbon Management**

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

## 5.6 **Rural Proofing**

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

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

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

# 6 **CONSULTATION**

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

**Approved by**

**Rob Dickson**

**Corporate Transformation & Services Director**    **Signature .....**

**Author(s)**

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**Background Papers:** None

**Previous Minute Reference:** None

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

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