



Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership

Meeting	CPP STRATEGIC BOARD	DATE
Delivery Team/Project	Economy & Low Carbon Delivery Team	November 2016 6-monthly update

Progress in Current Reporting Period:

- **Economic Strategy Action Plan** – The Economy & Low Carbon Delivery Team has discussed progress against the detailed Action Plan, including the need to add new actions where appropriate to reflect all partners' priorities.
- **Brexit** – Following the EU referendum vote in June 2016, the Council and Scottish Enterprise have been investigating the potential impacts for the Scottish Borders of the UK leaving the European Union. It is clear that there will be significant impacts on: the agriculture sector; the movement of people (and potential employees); access to markets (in the EU and worldwide); and for the current regional policy framework. However, it remains unclear what the scale of the impact may be and whether some impacts may prove to have an upside as well as negative implications. The Council's Leader, Councillor David Parker, wrote to the Prime Minister in September raising these issues and concerns and seeking a meeting with the UK Government.
- **Enterprise Network Review** – The Scottish Government published its Phase 1 report on its Enterprise and Skills Network Review. This has implications for the future of key local partners - Scottish Enterprise, Skills Development Scotland – as well as Scottish Funding Council Highlands and Islands Enterprise. Very positively, the report highlighted the need for a new enterprise and skills vehicle to be developed for the South of Scotland area.
- **Borders Railway Blueprint** – Strong progress continues to be made in relation to the Railway Blueprint programme. Recently we have seen the approval of a Customer Hub and Toilet at Tweedbank Station; development of the Borders Railway Masterplanning programme (including Galashiels Town Centre and Tweedbank); successful submission of a funding bid to the Scottish Enterprise Tourism Destination Fund; completion of Tourism Business Development Programme, assisting 48 tourism businesses; and Transport Scotland will undertake a Borders Transport Corridors Pre-Appraisal Study which will include examining the case for extending the Borders Railway, along with improvements to the A1, A7 and A68 corridors.
- **Broadband coverage** – The Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband roll-out continues across the Scottish Borders, with new cabinets now live in places such as Jedburgh, Lilliesleaf, Stow and Broughton. The Ettrick and Beyond community-led initiative is working closely with Community Broadband Scotland to develop a new project that will deliver better broadband for the Ettrick, Yarrow and Tweedsmuir areas (and beyond). The Council is inputting to the new R100 Programme that has recently been set up by Scottish Government to address those premises that will not be covered by the current rollout.

- **Mobile Phone Coverage** – working through the South of Scotland Alliance to influence mobile network operators and feed into the work that UK and Scottish Governments are supporting around the Emergency Services Network contract.
- **Tourism** – VisitScotland reported another fall in footfall and bookings at their iCentres (their rebadged Visitor Information Centres). All centres saw a reduction in footfall apart from Hawick which saw a positive increase in users being recorded. Senior officials from VisitScotland will provide a briefing for all Councillors in December to update them on the latest thinking on tourism strategy and visitor information. The successful joint bid from Scottish Borders and Midlothian Area Tourism Partnerships to the SE Tourism Destination Fund (noted above) will provide new resources to help tourism businesses develop opportunities around the Borders Railway. Its final sign off is pending legal agreement with SE.
- **Hawick Action Plan** – Working with Scottish Enterprise, Skills Development Scotland, Borders College and local businesses and organisations, the Council is taking forward implementation of a range of actions in the Hawick Action Plan. The Scottish Government announced a capital funding allocation of £3.6M in September 2016 and officers are currently developing options that will deliver the best impact with that funding.
- **Town Centre Regeneration** – As part of its work to support town centres across the Scottish Borders, the Council has developed a Town Centre Resilience Index to assist with its prioritisation of its town centre investments and activity. The Galashiels Town Centre Coordinator project has been successfully completed.
- **SG Future of Forestry consultation** – Based on input from the 'A Working Countryside' CPP stakeholder group, the Council has submitted a response to this important consultation, recognising the important role that forest areas play in economic and community development, as well as timber production.
- **Economic Development Updates** – Copies of the recent Economic Development Updates that have been provided to the Council's Economic Development Executive Committee are attached for your information

Resource Status

All of these projects and initiatives are being taken forward using existing staffing and budgets.

The opportunity to access £3.6M of capital funding from Scottish Government to support regeneration activity in Hawick is a major boost for the town.

Programme Status

All of these initiatives are successfully under way.

There are continuing frustrations around the Superfast Broadband roll-out in terms of understanding which premises have received a superfast connection because of the 'post-code' level of the current contract. The new R100 programme is intending to focus down to the individual premises level.

Issues and Risks

- Ongoing uncertainty in relation to 'Brexit' means that businesses and CPP partners are unable to confidently plan and develop a response to the situation. Senior Councillors and officials will meet Mr Mike Russell, the Scottish Government Minister responsible for 'Brexit' in December to talk about scenarios and potential responses. Local business leaders are also being invited to that discussion

Planned Activity in Next Reporting Period

- **Brexit** – Meeting with Scottish Government Minister in December 2016.
- **Enterprise Network Review** – Feed into the Phase 2 discussions to influence the remit, roles and structure of the new South of Scotland enterprise and skills vehicle.
- **Borders Railway Blueprint** – Complete Masterplanning programme; develop a Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) programme for the railway corridor; Transport Scotland progress the Borders Transport Corridors Pre-Appraisal Study.
- **Broadband coverage** – The Council will work with South of Scotland Alliance to influence the R100 programme to ensure it delivers maximum coverage for the Scottish Borders.
- **Hawick Action Plan** – Detailed plans for the £3.6M capital funding to be agreed locally and with Scottish Government. Continued delivery of the projects identified in the Action Plan.
- **Town Centre Regeneration** – The Council intends to prepare a rolling 3-year Town Centre Action Plan that will set out the priority projects for its investment and support. This will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis to reflect the changing priorities in the Town Centre Resilience Index.

Prepared by

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Date

16 November 2016