

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 4 OCTOBER 2016

### Economic Development Update

#### 1. Business:

- For the period from 1 April 2016 to 31 August 2016 the Business Gateway team assisted **83 business start-ups**, of which 5 have the potential to be high growth. The advisers have delivered 31 start-up workshops and 21 Growth workshops with 299 attendees.
- During the period **five Start-up workshops** were held in Galashiels and Eyemouth with a total 26 attendees.
- Business Gateway has worked across the region meeting with a number of intermediaries and spreading the promotion. In total 58 Intermediary visits have been held during the period.
- For the period from 1 April 2016 to 31 August 2016, the **Scottish Borders Business Fund** received 26 applications and approved 23 grants valued at £76,815.71 supporting projects with a value of £176,765.01. These projects are forecast **to create 35.5 jobs** with an estimated forecast **economic impact of £781,335.50 GVA**.
- The **Scottish Borders Business Loan Fund** offers loans of between £1,000 and £20,000 over terms of up to three years. For the period from 1 April 2016 to 31 August 2016, the Loan Fund received 2 applications and approved 1 loan valued at £11,250.00. This loan is forecast **to create 1 job** with an estimated forecast **economic impact of £30,525.00 GVA**.
- **Business Loans Scotland** – work is nearly complete on this and a launch is imminent for the new £100k loan scheme. SBC have a fund of £540k available.
- **Property** – Space within the Rosetta Road offices in Peebles has been identified for use as incubator units. These are currently being developed to enable businesses to take up this space early 2017. Other sites are being identified across the region to replicate this
- **Hawick Action Plan** – Officers continue to work with partners on the actions contained in the plan. This includes identifying buildings for future development, a workshop with Tourism Businesses planned on 26 September, survey work and focus group to discuss the future of the High Street. ***This work has resulted in an announcement from the Scottish Government of significant capital investment.***

#### 2. Regeneration:

- **Galashiels Town Centre**
  - The **Borders Railway Ambassadors Pilot** has operated over the summer and has so far delivered support to 11,657 enquiries. 58% of these have been at Galashiels whilst 42% were at Tweedbank. 40% are tourism or local information requirements, 34% relate to railway and 26% to bus.
  - **Pedestrian signage** improvements have been made to the town centre with 6 fingerposts erected and one awaiting installation on Green Street..
  - **A Property “Gap Analysis”** into the retail, leisure and commercial property is concluded and will inform future marketing and inward investment activity.

- **Steam Trains** – The Flying Scotsman visit in May generated a 5 fold increase in footfall and raised the profile of the town significantly. A survey to assess the impact of steam trains is to be undertaken with local businesses.
  - **Marketing** – support is being given to Energise Galashiels to refine the marketing offer of the town, particularly online. The shoppers map is close to completion following a slight delay. The Council has provided a grant to the Chamber of Trade to support this project.
  - **Town Centre Vacancies** – monitoring at the quarter end shows a stable level of vacancies at 34 in June from 34 in March 2016. Looking solely at Channel Street and Douglas Bridge, the figure has increased 13 to 14 vacant units.
  - **Shop Front Improvements** now stand at 25 properties improved with a further 7 in progress. £53,722 of grant offered has levered in a further £34,341 of investment from the private sector.
- **Selkirk Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) Project.** The five year programme of town centre regeneration activity is progressing well with the following activity/ achievements.
    - 40 grant offers have been issued for repairs to traditional buildings (General Repairs) totalling £242,500, supporting 25 properties.
    - 8 priority buildings will be supported with grant offers for repairs in Year 4 totalling £195,000. Phase 1 repairs to the Sir Walter Scott's Courthouse, which will be supported as one of the priority buildings, est. summer 2017.
    - Over 80 educational & training events have been organised by Selkirk CARS with over 2,800 people attending. The technical seminars aimed at design, construction and industry related professionals have been well attended.
    - A range of educational activities has been implemented including the Cabinet of Curiosity (joint project with Selkirk High School, Abbotsford and LiveBorders / museums); community artwork project for Selkirk Library stairwell; 2 events to complement the Bookworm Childrens Bookshop; Reflections – Glass: Water: Art: Science project at the Haining in March/ May; Doors Open Day in Sept; Geophysics survey of the Auld Kirk Graveyard.
    - A contribution will be provided to the Selkirk Town Centre Streetscape project
    - An additional £70,000 of funding has been secured from Historic Environment Scotland to support traditional building repairs projects.
- **Selkirk Town Centre Streetscape Project** – SBC Engineers' have been working with the Selkirk Stakeholder Group (organisations across the town), on the early design stages for a programme of town centre streetscape works. The town centre works aim to provide safer and improved areas for bus passengers, improve pedestrian crossings, develop flexible events space and provide better seating, as well as enhance Selkirk's historic conservation area.
  - The £450,000 proposed works will contribute to the regeneration of the town centre and is part-funded by the Selkirk Conservation Regeneration Scheme (CARS). Public consultation is currently underway and further consultation will be undertaken with Historic Environment Scotland, Selkirk CARS, Transport Scotland and Amey. It is intended that the construction begins on site next year.
- **Selkirk Business Improvement District (BIDS)** – The previous project manager appointed in early 2016 has been unable to continue working on the project due to personal reasons. The Steering Group appointed a new project manager, Mags Fenner in August. Revised timescales for the BIDs process have been agreed by the Steering Group and the project manager is now progressing the development of the two BID business plans and undertaking appropriate consultation. The ballots are proposed for June/ July 2017. If the ballot is positive, the BIDs would commence on 1 April 2018 in line with the Council's standard billing period.
- **Jedburgh Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS)** – a funding bid has been submitted to Historic Environment Scotland's for their CARS Scheme. Following the model used

for other successful heritage based town centre initiatives in Kelso and Selkirk, a heritage focused regeneration proposal has been developed for Jedburgh.

- The Jedburgh CARS Proposal seeks specifically to conserve and enhance the heritage assets within the Jedburgh Conservation area, particularly focusing on the historic conservation area as well as acting as a catalyst for wider regeneration in the town centre. There are five key elements specific to the proposal (based on the eligibility criteria of the CARS funding):
  1. Addressing key buildings in the town centre through grant support.
  2. Redevelopment of the Category A Listed Port House building as a community hub and resource centre.
  3. A programme of heritage related education and training initiatives.
  4. Upskilling and employment opportunities in traditional construction skills with the provision of school based learning and work based training.
  5. Maximising opportunities in relation to the recently reopened Borders Railway and the proposed Mossburn Distillery.
- The CARS Programme has a limited budget of £10million with a competitive bidding process for their Round 7 of funding. The proposal for Jedburgh includes a five year programme of works from 2017/18 – 2021/22 with a total project budget of eligible costs of £1,327,000 and a grant request of £866,500. Scottish Borders Council will contribute £150,000 of revenue budget and £50,000 of capital budget. The outcome of the bid will be made in January 2017 and if successful, the project will commence on 1 April 2017.
- **Scottish Government Regeneration Capital Grant Fund** –The Fund is aimed at providing new and/ or improved infrastructure for capital expenditure supporting community projects in 2017/18 – 2019/20. The focus for Round 4 is for projects that are capable of starting in the financial year 2017/18 and to fully utilise the grant allocated for that financial year. The Council has submitted three applications for the first stage:
  - Great Tapestry of Scotland (GToS) Museum and Town Centre Regeneration Project, Galashiels (Scottish Borders Council)
  - Newcastleton Hub & Community Fuel Pumps (Newcastleton & District Community Trust)
  - Jim Clark Museum, Duns (Scottish Borders Council)
- The Fund is assessed in two stages. The deadline for completed stage 1 applications was 20 June. If successful at Stage 1, projects will be invited to submit Stage 2 applications by 24 October 2016. Notification will be given to all applicants of funding recommendations by December 2016.

### 3. Tourism & Events

- **Tourism support –**
  - There have been two marketing campaigns running over the summer months, encouraging visitors to use the Railway.
  - The “runaway seat” campaign ran from the 2nd - 8th August. The #RunawaySeat was placed at secret locations around Edinburgh, Midlothian and the Borders. Using Social media and through the website, people were asked to help us find the #RunawaySeat. If they found it, they were asked to upload a picture on Twitter using the #RunawaySeat which entered them into a prize draw.
    - The campaign landing page had over 1,250 views, and the campaign generated 50 new followers for the

- Borders Railway Twitter Account. Travel blogger @scotadventures, with a following of over 5,000, also tweeted about the competition which generated great awareness for the campaign!
- The web campaign successfully reached 689,233 people with 2,758,604 Impressions.
- See Annex 1 for details of “Runaway Seat”
  
- The Visit Scotland Hop on hop off bus campaigns were delivered jointly with Midlothian Council. Evaluation on the bus campaign is not yet complete.
  
- A partnership of Midlothian and Scottish Borders tourism groups has successfully secured funding to deliver a two year business to business project between both areas. The project will start on 1<sup>st</sup> November, will have a dedicated PM and Tourism business advisor and will deliver:
  - A travel trade development programme,
  - Joint packaging and ticketing for the Railway
  - World Host Training for businesses in both areas
  - Digital Tourism training
  - Digital apps
  - Fam trips, market research and benchmarking.
  
- The new walking site [www.walkscottishborders.com](http://www.walkscottishborders.com) is now live. This is the sister site to [www.cyclescottishborders.com](http://www.cyclescottishborders.com) which has been running since 2012. Tourism and Access officers are currently planning a soft launch to promote the site to consumers and tourism businesses in November.
  
- **Event support –**
  - The Scottish Borders Tourism Cycling Strategy consultation is currently underway. A workshop was held in August at Ettrick Riverside bringing together key stakeholders within the cycling and tourism sector for their comments. The closing date for the wider consultation is 19<sup>th</sup> September.
  - Hillside Outside have confirmed the date as 3 September for the 2017 Tour of the Borders closed road cycle event. This is later than previous years and will now avoid the school holidays. It also puts the event into the shoulder months, which helps support tourism businesses. The date change was agreed with officers prior to the announcement. A long process of community engagement has begun already with the organisers taking a stand at the Yarrow Show which was also attended by SBC officers.

#### **4. Funding:**

- European funding continues to be available to projects through the LEADER and European Maritime Fisheries Fund 2014 – 2020 programmes. The Council is also applying to the Scottish Government for an allocation of funding from the **European Social Fund** to support additional Employability services in 2017 and 2018.
  
- The **LEADER Local Action Group** met in July 2016 and approved grant funding of £74,739 to three projects, with total project values of £145,859. Two approvals were for community groups, the third was grant funding for a rural business. A fourth community group application was

rejected by the panel. Applications for Round 2 closed on 31 August and five project applications for funding will be considered by the Local Action Group at its meeting in October.

- The first round of applications to the **Forth Fisheries Local Action Group** for grant finance from the European Maritime Fisheries Fund will be considered at the Group's meeting in October 2016.
- The Scottish Government has confirmed funding for the **Scotland's Employer Recruitment Incentive** (SERI) Scheme in 2016/17. The Scheme was relaunched on 1 April, targeting young people with multiple barriers to employment. Barnardo's Works has been contracted to deliver this scheme, eight places were allocated and five places have been filled to date.

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