

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 1 NOVEMBER 2016

Economic Development Update

1. Business:

- In September the Business Gateway team assisted **17 business start-ups**, of which 6 have the potential to be high growth. The advisers have delivered 6 start-up workshops and 5 Growth workshops with 53 attendees.
- Business Gateway has worked across the Borders meeting with a number of intermediaries and spreading the promotion. In total 14 Intermediary visits have been held during the period.
- For the period from 1 September 2016 to 31 October 2016, the **Scottish Borders Business Fund** received 4 applications and approved 2 grants valued at £4,198.23 supporting projects with a value of £8,396.47. These projects are forecast **to create 2 jobs** with an estimated forecast **economic impact of £70,078 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 September 2016 to 31 October 2016, the Loan Fund received 1 application and approved 1 loan valued at £20,000. This loan is forecast **to create 2.5 jobs** with an estimated forecast **economic impact of £146,245 GVA**.

- **Business Loans Scotland** – work is nearly complete on this and a launch is imminent for the new £100k loan scheme.

2. Regeneration:

Galashiels Town Centre

- The **Borders Railway Ambassadors Pilot** will conclude at the end of October. An end of season project report will be collated to review the service over the year. Funding is in place to deliver the Ambassadors service for 2017 with funding from the Council and £16.5K from the Borders Railway Blueprint Fund.

- **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 Fund is assessed in two stages. The Council submitted three applications for the first stage:

1. Great Tapestry of Scotland (GToS) Museum and Town Centre Regeneration Project, Galashiels (Scottish Borders Council)
2. Newcastleton Hub & Community Fuel Pumps (Newcastleton & District Community Trust)
3. Jim Clark Museum, Duns (Scottish Borders Council)

- Only the Newcastleton Hub & Community Fuel Pumps project was invited to submit a Stage 2 application by Scottish Government. This must be submitted by 28 November 2016. Notification will be given to all applicants of funding recommendations by the end of February 2017.

3. Tourism & Events

- **Tourism support** – Destination Scottish Borders are currently planning a Christmas shopping campaign in Galashiels, Selkirk, Hawick, Jedburgh, Melrose, Lauder and Kelso over two weekends in December. The aim is to attract visitors from Edinburgh to visit the Borders over these weekends. VisitScotland will support the marketing & PR of the project, and the Council is supporting event logistics. The Community Rail Partnership has been approached for financial support. This will be used to gather evidence for a bigger Christmas project in 2017, where there would be direct links to the Edinburgh Christmas experience.

4. Funding:

- European funding continues to be available to projects through the Scottish Borders LEADER and European Maritime Fisheries Fund 2014 – 2020 programmes. Project managers are expecting further guidance from Scottish Government on delivery of these programmes during Brexit negotiations.
- The **LEADER Local Action Group** met in October 2016 and approved grant funding to two business projects, total £68,650 against projects valued at £286,257. Three applications from community groups were considered and further information, including confirmation of match funding arrangements, was requested. The next application deadline for LEADER funding is 30 November 2016.

Bryan McGrath, Chief Officer Economic Development, tel 01835 826525.