

RESPONDENT INFORMATION FORM

Question 1

What are the strengths of the current governance arrangements of Scottish education?

1.1 The key strengths of the current governance arrangements of Scottish Education are:

- a) The recognition that delivering the Curriculum is best achieved by taking account of Scotland's varied geographies, degrees of rurality and different educational needs.
- b) The provision of local democratic accountability for delivery of primary and secondary schools, early learning and childcare
- c) The strong partnership working that exists through community planning partners (public bodies, voluntary bodies, communities and businesses), supporting the delivery of services that improve outcomes for children and young people
- d) The decision making and interventions taking place at local level to quality assure school performance resulting in improving trends in pupil examination performance, a wider range of pupil achievements, increasing participation and improved inclusion indicator performance
- e) The richness and diversity of the learning experiences in the local community which are part of the history, the traditions and the culture of our communities. These learning experiences are part of the broader wellbeing of communities and enrich heritage, belonging and bring a sense of identity to our children and young people. Our children and young people, through their learning, contribute positively to the wellbeing and sustainability of our communities.

1.2 These strengths are clearly shown by the example of the Scottish Borders. The Scottish Borders has particular characteristics that link geography, educational needs, culture and community wellbeing:

- a) Scottish Borders is a distinct geographical entity within Scotland which is reinforced by its highly developed sense of community, historical and cultural identity;

- b) It is an extremely large rural region, twice the size of the combined area of its neighbouring local authorities in South East Scotland (Edinburgh City, East Lothian, West Lothian, Midlothian and Fife);
- c) Third lowest population density of the mainland local authorities in Scotland at 23 people per square kilometre after Dumfries and Galloway, 22 people per square kilometre and Highland 13 people per square kilometre;
- d) A settlement structure with no dominant urban centre and based on small towns in the Scottish Borders with a population greater than 1500 and none of them exceeds 16,000 people;
- e) Proximity to the national border with Northumberland and the resulting daily movement of people across the border for work, accessing services and community living;
- f) Particular socio-economic challenges in the delivery of education related transportation and connectivity challenges;
- g) Its distinct economic characteristics with large numbers of micro and small businesses and a significant reliance on agriculture, forestry, fishing, tourism and manufacturing, particularly textiles;
- h) Rural poverty and disadvantage within households is spread out across the Scottish Borders rather than concentrated in particular areas;
- i) A rich curriculum which promotes heritage and identity. The children and young people's learning experiences are woven into the fabric of annual community celebrations, pageants, major sporting events, common ridings and festivals; these activities bring economic prosperity to Borders communities, community identity, spirit and wellbeing.

1.3 The Scottish Borders has been identified as a strategic area for local government and the delivery of school education services in Scotland since the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 when it was designated as one of the nine Regional Council administrative units in Scotland. This recognition was confirmed once again at the last reorganisation of local government in 1995 with strong support from the public and local communities for the continuation of this regional type service delivery including education by Scottish Borders Council.

1.4 The strategic boundaries of the Scottish Borders have been similarly recognised for delivery by other public services, particularly Health and Further Education. Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue Services also recognise the boundaries of the Scottish Borders for their local Police and Fire and Rescue Plans. These partners have made very significant contributions to support the delivery of school education through prevention, early intervention and supporting training and employment. They also work together to deliver outcomes for children and young people across the full range of well-being indicators: Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected and Responsible, and Included.

1.5 These advantages have enabled the Scottish Borders to take a broad and comprehensive view of the needs of the provision of Education for children and young people in the Scottish Borders. The success of the Scottish Borders approach to schools education, 2 – 18 years, is clearly evidenced by:

- a) The success in education achievements in terms of educational qualifications over a long period of time;
- b) The sustained and very high positive destination rates for young people leaving school going on to Higher or Further Education, training and employment opportunities;
- c) The early years, specialist education, and social and health services developed for children, young people and adults;
- d) The building programmes of new secondary schools at Earlston, Duns, Eyemouth, and most recently at Kelso High School and new primary schools at Kingsland, Clovenfords, Denholm and Newlands in addition to current projects at Broomlands and Langlee.

1.6 Another key strength is the extremely close working that takes place between Education, Social Work and Community Learning and Development within Scottish Borders Council. This covers the creation of Scottish Borders Council's Integrated Children's Service in 2009 to the full integration through our current Children and Families Service. There have been tangible benefits of this close working.

- a) High levels of participation of our children and young people in extra-curricular activity and youth work; national best practice in youth work and volunteering;
- b) Locality approach to multi-agency service delivery where all our staff know our vulnerable children and families well and make the right interventions at the right time ensuring prevention and early intervention;
- c) Strong partnership relationships across and within services resulting in very low level anti-social behaviour and youth crime.

1.7 Improvements to Scottish Borders Council's ICT infrastructure and in particular better Business Intelligence will facilitate the easier join up of data sets from, for example SEEMIS and Framework, working to improve outcomes in terms of attainment, achievement, participation, inclusion, care, support and protection.

Question 2

What are the barriers within the current governance arrangements to achieving the vision of excellence and equity for all?

2.1 Research into best and emerging good practice in Scottish Education.

In recent times research based good practice in Scottish schools is not gathered, celebrated and built upon to drive further improvement in Scottish schools. There is a need for an identified body that has research as its core function and makes links to international practice and enterprise opportunities. The set-up of the international advisory panel as part of the NIF was very disappointing, as there is a great deal of expertise in Scottish Education which is not used in the development of policy. Historically, research bodies such as SCRE researched best practice from schools in Scotland and used it to inform practice papers and school improvement. The merger of Education Scotland and Learning and Teaching Scotland has not resulted in practitioner support in improving teaching and supporting learning in classrooms. In England the Education Endowment Foundation and the Sutton Trust provide extensive opportunities for classroom based research. Limited research into best and emerging practice in Scotland's schools results in over-reliance upon international research contexts and policy development that may not be relevant to the Scottish learning context. The Early Years Collaborative, RAFA developments and the introduction of SCEL are a welcome focus on innovation and teacher leadership research, but they do not come together to provide the direction that is required and are not accessible to all practitioners and leaders.

There should be a body that attracts funding for research in Scottish schools. Many top performing school systems have a research function which attracts funding from philanthropists and major investors. Scotland needs to establish a body focused on developing research which celebrates good practice and builds innovation from within classrooms in Scotland. Scotland should assert its place on the international stage promoting what Education is achieving and encouraging investment in our education system, our success and our young people. The highest attaining school systems in the world very much celebrate their achievements and build pride in Education – something very much needed rather than the very negative reporting of education in the media at the moment. It should not be forgotten that the OECD report highlighted that there are many key strengths in Scottish Education.

2.2 Broader Contexts Affecting Education Provision and Governance

Many children and young people are living in challenging family circumstances such as 'in work poverty'. The impact of welfare reform upon our most vulnerable families in society, coupled with the fiscal challenge, makes it difficult for many children and young people to access all the learning experiences that are available, eg extra-curricular sporting activities; internet connectivity in the evening; fuel poverty. Studying at home is a major part of examination preparation, yet so many young people

do not have access to the kind of learning environment afforded to their peers. Some of these challenges are exacerbated in rural communities where broadband and transport restrict access. The broader range of factors affecting attainment, achievement, inclusion and participation must be considered as part of Governance structures. In the Scottish Borders the Council benefit from being structured as a Children's Service and having a single Health Board partnership. It is important that these partnerships are considered as part of the review: it would be a significant barrier to Scottish Borders if new governance structures were created which did not take cognisance of existing successful children's service partnerships. The Council is focused on the specific barriers for children and young people. There is a focus on improving connectivity and accessibility through broadband and transport infrastructure improvements. These broader contexts very much affect the decision making in schools and the learning experiences they provide, eg the Council has a very successful Countryside Day where all the Primary 5 children come together to experience an in-depth contextualised curricular experience which benefits their learning. The governance arrangements must take cognisance of the broader context children are educated in: the challenges that are a focus for improvement and the existing learning experiences that are relevant to the context the children live in.

2.3 *Bureaucracy*

Scottish Borders Council knows its schools. It has a presence in schools with regular care and welfare visits as well as quality improvement activities. It is important to recognise the balance between the support of staff and wellbeing matters, as well as the need to challenge practice; consideration must be given to who is best to provide both support and challenge. All stakeholders must work in partnership to reduce bureaucracy in the Education system. Scottish Borders Council welcomes the recent change in approach to local schools being able to identify within the curriculum the key aspects for their school to focus on. This has to be supported with an inspection system that focuses on the outcomes being achieved by learners; the range of inputs and expectations illustrated within How Good Is Our School IV should be there to illustrate aspects of practice, but schools should have the freedom to prioritise the elements that are important to the learning of their children rather than be expected to be improving across all the quality indicators. This approach is not always followed in the inspection process and brings undue stress to schools who are actually doing a very good job of improving what the staff, the parents and the Local Authority have agreed is a priority for their children's learning and progress.

2.4 Knowledge of Existing Governance Arrangements

The good work and interventions that take place at every level of governance are not celebrated at the moment, nor has the definition of strong governance been described: what staff and school leaders do on a daily basis to improve the life chances of children and young people, how local clusters of schools collaborate to improve outcomes, how Local Authorities intervene, how parents support their local schools, how local and national bodies work in partnership. Details of success or challenges in existing governance arrangements need to be described in order for all stakeholders to be able to take a view on the barriers to achieving the vision of excellence and equity for all. The Scottish Borders can evidence success in the outcomes being achieved for children and young people and believe that the Council has the capacity to intervene when there are issues of underperformance.

Question 3

Should the above key principles underpin our approach to reform? Are there any other principles that should be applied?

3.1 In the scope, Skills Development Scotland and the college sector are not included yet the 'Developing the Young Workforce' strategy including the ambition for vocational education to be provided in schools by 2020 is a key strategic priority. This is a key part to achieving excellence and equity and transition into further education is a key principle. The Council would advocate that the links with Borders College should be a consideration, as should the role of University provision across Scotland. There are clear barriers to our young people attaining their destination of choice; living in a rural community means they are not always afforded the same opportunities as their peers in connerbations, eg should they wish a career path in teaching they have to leave their community to train; with the developments in distance learning all young people should be afforded the opportunity to study and train to become a teacher whilst living in their local community. Not all families have the resources to fund a young person going onto further education outwith their community. On this basis, Scottish Borders would suggest that the principle based on transitions should be amended to 'Support children and young people to make smooth transitions into formal learning, through school and into further education, training or employment no matter where they live or their family circumstances'.

3.2 Scottish Borders Council believes that there should be a principle that acknowledges the holistic nature of the child's life and the range of children's services that work in partnership with Education to deliver the vision of excellence and equity for all. The range of supports and entitlements our

most vulnerable children need to be able to fulfil their potential must be recognised. Tremendous progress has been made in partnership working across Scotland in recent years but these principles show no recognition of the importance of services working in partnership around the child.

Question 4

What changes to governance arrangements are required to support decisions about children's learning and school life being taken at school level?

Current Governance Arrangements

- 4.1 Scottish Borders works with staff from schools in creating policies and governance arrangements. The concern the Council would have if schools were to be separate to Local Authorities would be the consequences for children with additional support needs. Officers from Scottish Borders Council visited schools in the Academy System in London, engaging with a range of professionals currently practising in England. The Council would have a concern that the values upheld by the Local Authority in valuing every individual child and the pre-sumption of mainstream education could be compromised if schools were managed outwith the Local Authority. There is strong evidence from areas south of the Borders that the needs of ASN children are overlooked where resources and decision making go straight to schools and there is a risk of such children been 'excluded' from schools as a result. We would also have concern about the management of staff and ensuring principles of equality of opportunity and conditions of service. In the Scottish Borders there has been no representation of parents wishing to have more governance responsibilities; indeed our staff and parent representatives indicate that it is very challenging for many parents to have the time to contribute to the parent partnership activities that already exist. It is the Council's belief that parents can contribute to their child's learning and school life at local level, but equally so there are many matters which they trust to be managed through the partnership between the school, the Council and local Elected Members.
- 4.2 There is a great deal of coverage in the document about empowering teachers and Headteachers. In discussion with Headteachers there is a strong view that there are many governance areas currently sitting with the Local Authority that they wish to remain: school transportation, emergency planning, Health and Safety, HR and Legal Services, admissions, ASN services, Early Learning and Childcare, quality improvement co-ordination and policy development. The Council believes that their practitioners and Headteachers should be focused on improving learning and teaching and have as much time as possible to focus on developing professional learning

opportunities for all staff. Headteachers have expressed concern that further business and administrative tasks delegated to schools would actually compromise the capacity of school leaders and staff to focus on improving the quality of education and achieve the vision of excellence and equality for all children. The document states that 'we are committed to empowering our teachers and schools and will ensure they have the flexibility and freedom to teach'. The document also states that 'we are committed to extending to schools responsibilities that currently sit with Local Authorities and to allocating more resources directly to Headteachers...'. The Council works in partnership with schools to make decisions about resource allocations; the extension of responsibilities would place additional bureaucracy on teachers and Headteachers rather than reduce it. In the context of Scottish Borders, many of our small rural schools would not have the capacity to cope with the level of responsibility alluded to in the document. The Council adheres to the Christie principles of public sector reform, but have serious concern that the separation of education governance from Council governance does not take cognisance of the connectedness and interdependencies that currently exist to deliver services to schools. In times of fiscal challenge there is a need for greater cohesion of public sector service governance arrangements rather than a separation, especially in areas of Scotland where Children's Services have come together to deliver outcomes for children and young people.

Question 5

What services and support should be delivered by schools? What responsibilities should be devolved to teachers and Headteachers to enable this? You may wish to provide examples of decisions which cannot currently be made at school level.

5.1 Tackling bureaucracy to enable teachers to focus on teaching and learning is a key priority for Scottish Borders Council. Teachers and Headteachers intimate that they already feel a pressure in relation to administrative tasks and functions; that is why Scottish Borders Council are in the process of transforming all Business Support processes through digital transformation. Headteacher recruitment is a key challenge across Scotland. Feedback from Depute Headteachers and aspiring Headteachers informs that school leaders would like to see a reduction in the range of responsibilities so that they can focus on improving learning and teaching and the development of the curriculum. The direction of travel to transfer responsibilities currently managed by the Local Authority to school level is not in accordance with the voice of our school leaders. Any decisions that are made at Local Authority level are assessed to ensure that the outcomes for all young people in all schools are being considered and to ensure that the conditions of service for all staff are upheld. Decision making is based around the Christie principles

of prevention and intervention, partnership and integration, efficiency and empowering local communities. However it is important in working to these principles that the capacity of staff in education is considered and they are focused on the learning experience in the classroom; the Council is mindful of this and makes decisions which support this focus and also recognises the role of staff in Children's Services in working with partner services for children and young people.

Question 6

How can children, parents, communities, employers, colleges, universities, and others play a stronger role in school life? What actions should be taken to support this?

6.1 'How Good Is Our School IV' sets out the place of the pupil voice and family learning within school life. All schools in the Scottish Borders are working to improve their practice in both areas; the Council does not believe that a change to Governance arrangements are required. Concerns about moving to parents managing local schools have already been stated in the response to Question 4.

6.2 The 'Developing the Young Workforce' strategy is focused on developing learning pathways for young people through stronger links and connections between schools, employers, colleges and universities. There are partnerships in place to take forward this strategic development that are embedding.

6.3 It is the view of Scottish Borders Council that the strong cultural heritage and community engagement in the Borders benefits children and young people. It is the Council's belief that communities play a strong role in the life of their local schools. Schools appreciate the support and involvement they receive from a range of community partners.

Question 7

How can the governance arrangements support more community-led early learning and childcare provision particularly in remote and rural areas?

7.1 Scottish Borders has examples of good practice in this area through the Supported Childminding Scheme and the presence of many playgroups in rural areas. In the proposed expansion of early learning and childcare, Scottish Borders Council will be working closely with communities to identify best ways forward which will be bespoke to local communities. The Council does not see this as a Governance issue as it is committed to rural proofing

our early learning and childcare provision to ensure we are delivering quality, enhanced services to meet the needs of children and families in partnership with communities.

Question 8

How can effective collaboration amongst teachers and practitioners be further encouraged and incentivised?

- 8.1 Scottish Borders school staff are dedicated professionals. Collaboration opportunities must be high quality and practical. For example some schools do not have another school establishment within a 30 minute car journey so collaboration after school can be quite restrictive and not a good use of the teacher's preparation or collegiate time. High quality IT provision across Scotland and resource for IT would support more effective collaboration in some areas of practice. Scottish Borders Council is committed to enhancing IT provision through investment with CGI, a leading IT provider.
- 8.2 There is already, as the document states, very good collaboration taking place in schools. Scottish Borders schools collaborate well in high school clusters during In-Service training and cross-schools days. The Council also support staff's participation in national collaborative learning opportunities. The Council engages with neighbouring authorities in areas such as ASN, ELCC, professional learning and training, but the majority of collaboration takes place at cluster and school level as the practicalities and size of the Scottish Borders means that collaboration outwith Scottish Borders boundaries would not be a best value use of teachers' time.

Question 9

What services and support functions could be provided more effectively through clusters of schools working together with partners?

- 9.1 Similar to the response to Question 5, clusters must have the time to focus on improving teaching, learning and the curriculum. In the Borders, the Council has in place many locality arrangements that support clusters of schools, eg the Locality Integration Police Officer for each school cluster; Heads Up!, a project that aims to increase opportunities for 10-14 year olds to build resilience, confidence and self-esteem by delivering a new Health and Wellbeing programme through the CLD service, the high school, feeder primaries and the local youth club. There is a great deal of successful existing cluster working with partners.

Question 10

What services or functions are best delivered at a regional level? This may include functions or services currently delivered at a local or a national level.

- 10.1 Services or functions for the delivery of school education need to be based on positive Educational outcomes. As indicated in the answer to Question 1, there is no 'one size fits all' for Education regions. Education regions need to take account of Scotland's varied geographies, degrees of rurality and different educational needs.
- 10.2 For this reason, it is considered that rural regions such as the Scottish Borders, as shown by their positive performance on educational outcomes, should continue to take a strategic overview and deliver school educational services. The Council currently collaborates with other areas on matters such as quality assurance, assessment, Early Learning and Childcare and professional learning and training as appropriate. Decision making around collaboration should lie with the Local Authority, who have responsibility for the quality of Education provision. There are many activities, if delivered at a regional level, would be of detriment to the improvement journey of Scottish Borders schools as they would not represent best value of officer or school staff time owing to the Council's size and geography.

Question 11

What factors should be considered when establishing education regions?

- 11.1 Education regions need to be based on the areas that recognise varied geographies and different educational needs within Scotland that are best placed to enable local democratic accountability of the delivery of education and that can achieve effective partnership working.
- 11.2 As mentioned in answer to Question 1, the Scottish Borders is a good example of this with its:
- a) Particular rural regional needs and challenges;
 - b) Strong local, cultural and historical identity;
 - c) Effectiveness in terms of local and democratic decision making and close engagement with local communities;
 - d) Close partnership working between public bodies, the voluntary bodies, communities and businesses across the area.
- 11.3 In terms of the delivery of education services, the Scottish Borders approach to education has proved successful in terms of school education achievements in terms of better qualifications, positive destinations,

schools educational service investment to meet educational needs and the provision of new fit for purpose primary and secondary schools.

- 11.4 For example, already Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) partnerships, co-ordinated and facilitated efficiently by Scottish Borders Council, are highlighting the large variation in need across its 9 secondary school catchment areas. In order to better prepare children and young people for the world of work, and reduce youth unemployment, unique town based partnerships are already highlighting the significant differences in need and opportunity – from the post-industrial mill towns of Hawick and Selkirk, to Galashiels which has been reconnected via the Borders Railway, to the marine economy of the East coast.
- 11.5 Industrial sectors that dominate the Scottish Borders include farming and manufacturing sectors that are not well supported through the current enterprise arrangements, but through closer working through DYW, young people can prepare for the opportunities that these sectors can provide, as well as preparing for emerging sectors such as distilling. Close working with colleagues who have responsibility for Economic Development will be key and the facilitation of this type of cross-disciplinary working should be considered seriously when establishing education regions (which could potentially weaken this direct relationship and subsequent benefits).
- 11.6 Education regions need to be based on the practicalities of physical and digital connectivity:
- a) Broadband and mobile phone coverage;
 - b) Public transport;
 - c) Road networks and travel times.

Question 12

What services or support functions should be delivered at a national level?

- 12.1 From the point of view of rural regions such as Scottish Borders, it is important that the current service and support functions provided nationally, particularly Education Scotland, the Care Inspectorate, the Scottish Social Services Council, and the Scottish Qualifications Authority, should be continued. As indicated in answer to Question 10, collaborating informally with other areas on matters such quality assurance, assessment, and professional learning and training is viewed as the best way forward.

Question 13

How should governance support teacher education and professional learning in order to build the professional capacity we need?

- 13.1 The Council is committed to developing professional learning opportunities and recognise their importance. Considering the challenge of geography, there must be the opportunity of delivery in local areas. Currently too many national professional learning activities are centralised to Edinburgh and Glasgow and this presents many challenges and this does not afford equity of opportunity for all staff, eg SCEL. The Council's commitment to enhancing the Council's IT infrastructures will support developments in this area.
- 13.2 Scottish Borders Council would welcome greater investment in research into teaching and learning as suggested in the Council's response to Question 2 to support professional learning developments.
- 13.3 Scottish Borders Council does have a concern that the qualification for Headship is to become a requirement. There should be opportunities at local level for Councils to assess the standard for Headship; the current arrangements are not best suited to all staff's personal commitments, nor do they recognise the challenge of access to existing courses which are based in cities.
- 13.4 Schools and staff are very good at collaborating to provide high quality professional learning opportunities such as teach-meet or curriculum development at cross schools days. The development of high quality professional learning opportunities is a cultural matter rather than a governance issue and should be addressed through quality improvement practice at school, cluster and Local Authority level.

Question 14

- 14.1 **Should the funding formula for schools be guided by the principles that it should support excellence and equity, be fair, simple, transparent, predictable and deliver value for money ? Should other principles be used to inform the design formula?**
- 14.2 The principles above are a reasonable basis for any funding formulae, although they omit the very important issue of how effective the current levels of resource deployment actually are in delivering educational outcomes. It is not clear how the principles proposed actually differ from existing local arrangements that support devolved school management, what improvement they will deliver, nor how they will actually support "excellence."
- 14.3 The criteria seem to mainly focus on measuring the level of financial inputs as a proxy for fairness and effectiveness. It is essential that any move to adopt a more standardised national funding formulae recognises that only those budgets which can best be managed at school level should be

devolved to Headteacher control and that those budgets, eg home to school transport, school meals, additional support needs, long term absence, capital expenditure and the requirement to fund PPP projects, should not impact upon the quantum of resources available to support the process of learning and teaching, nor reduce the flexibility of Headteachers to deploy resources across financial years and across the curriculum through their DSM carry forward. The notion that all schools can be provided with the a one size fits all formulae, if that is indeed what is proposed, that is simple and fair, easily understood and at the same time predictable is somewhat naive. Fairness should not be mistaken for a system based upon "one size fits all".

14.4 The reality is that ensuring the equitable funding for schools is a complicated process driven by inter alia:-

- a) the nature of local communities and the challenges they face;
- b) the level of deprivation experienced by pupils;
- c) the quality and skills of the leadership team;
- d) the educational support needs of local children;
- e) the requirements of the curriculum;
- f) the support provided by Local Authorities through their quality assurance teams;
- g) the strength of community engagement including volunteering and links to sports clubs;
- h) the size, rurality, occupancy level, age, delivery model, eg PPP, and energy efficiency of buildings; and
- i) the nature of the staffing compliment within schools.

14.5 A national funding formulae will have a material impact on the local government finance settlement and local Council budgets and will require significant redistribution of existing resources.

14.6 The Council Tax is also a material determinant of the resources that a local Council can deploy to support a range of services, including education. Scottish Borders Council has the fourth lowest Council Tax in mainland Scotland and a relatively low cost per pupil, yet it deliver some of the best results in terms of achievement and attainment.

Question 15

What further controls over funding should be devolved to school level?

Many areas of funding are devolved to schools. Most Headteachers have expressed reluctance to have some of the existing control budgets devolved, eg school transport, ASN.

Question 16

How could the accountability arrangements for education be improved?

- 16.1 Accountability arrangements could be improved by recognising the strengths of rural regions such as the Scottish Borders being democratically accountable for providing both strategic and local school education services. There is a need to ensure national services support this delivery. There is also a need for stability in accountability structures going forward, which would enable rural education regions such as the Scottish Borders to plan effectively for the medium and longer term together with partners, parents, communities and businesses.
- 16.2 In the Scottish Borders it is recognised that school education needs to continue to benefit from and build on the partnership work of the Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership, with its focus on growing the Scottish Borders economy, tackling regional inequalities, and service transformation and the ongoing partnership work as part of the integration of health and care services. The Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership approach is working with local communities, including school communities, to provide locally tailored solutions to meet local needs. This is in line with the requirements of the Community Empowerment (Scotland Act) 2015.

Question 17

Is there anything else you would like to add regarding the governance of education in Scotland?

- 17.1 With respect to the rural regions such as the Scottish Borders, it is important to recognise the achievements and progress in the delivery of school education. It is particularly the case in rural regions that successful change needs to take account of the capacity of schools, parents, and communities. Local Authorities such as Scottish Borders Council are in the best position to improve the capacity of these groups in order to improve school education.