
SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL EVENTS PLAN 2014-2020 – UPDATE REPORT

Report by Executive Director

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

5 December 2017

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 **This report presents an update on the 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 almost £6 million in 2017.
- 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 updated Events Plan 2014-2020 set out in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 outlines the approach to prioritising event support activity and highlights key achievements to date.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 I recommend that the Executive Committee:

- (a) **Notes the achievements and progress made in relation to the Scottish Borders Council Events Plan 2014-2020;**
- (b) **Agrees to continue to support the events sector to maximise economic impact and legacy through delivery of the Scottish Borders Council Events Plan 2014-2020.**

3 SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL'S EVENTS PLAN 2014-2020

- 3.1 In November 2016, the Council's Executive Committee 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:
- To support the development of events
 - To encourage effective event promotion and marketing
 - 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.

4 SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL'S EVENTS PLAN – 2017 UPDATE

- 4.1 The Scottish Borders Council's Events Plan 2014-2020 is set out in Appendix 1. It 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 maximising 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. The Council will continue to work with partners to grow existing events and bring new, exciting events to the area. This will build on the rich heritage of events currently in the Scottish Borders, and also encourage new and different events that can offer a unique experience to visitors.
- 4.2 Using this partnership approach, significant progress has been made with regard to the delivery of the Plan. Appendix 2 provides a summary of this progress. Some of the key highlights this year have been:
- **Melrose Rugby 7s** – Return of the Veterans Tournament. A new Universities match played between Edinburgh and St Andrews prior to the final. The University element will be expanded and developed in 2018 to keep the tournament fresh and innovative. Attendance numbers were circa 10,000, having an economic impact of £433,000 for the specific development area the grant was used for.

- **Borders Book Festival** continues to deliver a high profile event, with high profile authors expanding their event offering with food, drink and entertainment. The organiser's target for 2017 was to attract higher profile sponsors and also develop an 'individual giving' scheme to help with sustainability. Overall Economic impact was £2,282,274.
- **Tour of Britain Stage 1** Finish at Kelso. The event was featured on Eurosport with spectacular views of the area. Crowd estimates were 7,000 in Kelso town and 3,000 outwith along the route. Overall Economic impact was £280k.
- **Tour o' the Borders**, now in its fourth year had 2086 participants and just over 5,000 visitors, the economic impact was £524,500.
- **TweedLove Festival** once again attracted a record number of participants and spectators. The Enduro 'weekend' continues to grow and the estimated economic impact was £112k with 600 competitors. This will be further developed in 2018 with a new National event from the British Enduro Mountain Bike Association'. The overall TweedLove economic impact was £750k.
- **Scotland's National Beef Event** attracted approximately 3,000 attendees, with 75% from outside the Scottish Borders.
- **Brick and Steel County Rally**, Jedburgh secured British Rally Championship status for 2017. The event attracted significant media coverage (preview media estimated at 11 million readers/viewers with a value of £510,700). There were live broadcasts on ITV Borders News and Channel 4, viewership reached 130,000, and social media reached 39 million. There was an economic impact of £75k.
- **Return to the Ridings Website** (improved). The website has been updated and refreshed with added links to the Heritage Hub in Hawick to promote Scottish Ancestry. The information is up to date and there is a live Twitter feed. It is now a much more user friendly website.
- **Scottish Borders Heritage Festival** secured £20k from EventScotland as a Signature Event in the Year of History, Heritage and Archelogy. Total attendance was 33,000 of which the estimated unique visitor number was 12,000. The overall economic impact was £1,450,000 with almost 30% from outside the area.

4.3 The Council identified a range of actions within the Event Plan 2014 - 2020. Actions were prioritised around those that 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 staff and financial resources available. Some actions are ongoing and will continue to be developed and implemented.

- 4.4 The Borders Railway has impacted on events in the area, most notably the Borders Book Festival and Melrose 7's. Both organisations have worked closely with Scotrail developing special packages along with Scotrail providing extra train capacity (Melrose 7's). The Book Festival promoted their event through Scotrail's Club 50 and also Scotrail's general database (circa 900,000 subscribers). Further event development linking to the Borders Railway includes a proposal for a 'Race the Train' cycling event for 2018 or, more likely, 2019.
- 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 part-funded by the Council in 2017 is estimated to be almost £6 million based on the national EventIMPACTS model.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

- (a) The Economic Development Service currently has an annual budget of £100,000 to support strategic events development in the Scottish Borders. This is separate to the 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 co-ordination 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 co-ordinating 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 successful 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 the 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 is not required because this project does not change Council strategy or policy.

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 Service Director HR and the Clerk to the Council have been consulted and their comments were incorporated into the report.

Approved by

Rob Dickson
Executive Director

Signature

Author(s)

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Background Papers: None

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