
SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL EVENTS PLAN 2014-2020 – UPDATE

Report by Executive Director

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

29 January 2019

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report presents an update on the Council’s Events Plan 2014-2020. It highlights key events and other progress made during 2018.**
- 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 £4 million in 2018.
- 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 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 sustainability through delivery of the Scottish Borders Council Events Plan 2014-2020; and**
- (c) Agrees to encourage the opportunity for event development across the South of Scotland and North of England with other event partners and stakeholders linked with funding opportunities through the South of Scotland Economic Partnership and the Borderlands Initiative.**

3 SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL'S EVENTS PLAN 2014-2020

- 3.1 In December 2017, 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 – 2018 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** – On the day before the main tournament an Emerging Talent event was held allowing U15s to show off their skills and the main event included the University of Edinburgh side, as winners of the Scottish University 7s, (held some weeks prior to the event and part funded by Year of the Young Person). This drew in a new audience of students who may not otherwise have attended. Attendance numbers were circa 10,000, having an economic impact of £572k.
 - **Borders Book Festival** continues to deliver successfully and is established as one of the top three literature festivals in Britain. It brings high profile authors to the area and has expanded their event offering with local food, drink and entertainment. The 2018 event attracted nearly 30,000 spectator admissions. Overall Economic impact was £2.32M, despite the Festival site having to be closed for a period on the first day due to Storm Hector.

- **TweedLove Festival** portfolio of events throughout 2018 incorporated the Whyte British MTB Enduro Championships with riders from across the UK competing for the opportunity to win the title of British Enduro Championship for 2018/19. The TweedLove Festival also offered riders and their families a wider programme of events for other cycling disciplines and every age group. The overall TweedLove economic impact was £740k.
 - **Scottish Blind Golf Championship** which took place at Cardrona in 2018 and **Riverside Rock** at Jedburgh both received funding. Riverside Rock required further marketing activity to mitigate the negative impact of a rival music event at Dalkeith Country Park.
 - **Doddie's Ride**, a cycle event in aid of the Doddie Weir Foundation, was a new event in the calendar and attracted a lot of media interest.
- 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 using the staff and financial resources available. Some actions are ongoing and will continue to be developed and implemented.
- 4.4 The Borders Railway continues to impact positively on events in the area, most notably the Borders Book Festival and Melrose 7's. The Book Festival now provides a shuttle bus to/from Tweedbank station to ease access.
- 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 2018 is estimated to be almost £4 million based on the national EventIMPACTS model. This figure is less than previous years as the Scottish Borders did not host the Tour of Britain in 2018.
- 4.6 In addition, the Borders Heritage Festival organisers did not deliver a festival in 2018, agreeing to take a year out due to resource limitations and funding restrictions. However, it should be noted that there were other successful and developing events being hosted in the Scottish Borders which did not receive any direct Council funding; and therefore economic impact figures are not included e.g. Borders Art Fair. In future, for those events, Council officers will liaise with event organisers to help them grow, develop and capture their economic impact.
- 4.7 The advice offered to event organisers on the Council website is now in need of an update and to be streamlined. Discussions are underway and best practice is being looked at to ensure that organisers are provided with an improved service. This update will also include the provision of details on the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) process.

- 4.8 EventScotland has now issued criteria for 'Year of Coasts and Waters 2020'. This Year of Focus provides good opportunities for event organisers in the Scottish Borders to consider how best to develop an appropriate event and apply for funding. The Council is providing organisers and communities with support as they develop event concepts and any funding applications. In particular, discussions are progressing with Live Borders and other stakeholders to maximise this opportunity for the opening of the Great Tapestry of Scotland visitor attraction.
- 4.9 2019 will deliver a number of new or expanded events including a visit by the Proclaimers to Melrose, on the same weekend as the Borders Book Festival. The Council is supporting both events to ensure a good visitor experience at both. The Borders Art Fair held at BUAS is expanding to include an exhibition at Kelso Town Hall of artworks borrowed from the Royal Scottish Academy. This new element of the Art Fair helps to connect attendees with the town itself and will hopefully deliver further economic benefit to businesses in the town. A round of the European Continental Enduro Series will be held in May 2019 in Innerleithen. Furthermore TweedLove has developed into Transcend, the UK's first two-day, multi venue, uplift-served enduro adventure. Discussions are already underway with EventScotland with regard to the Tour of Britain returning in 2020.
- 4.10 Discussions are progressing with other local event organisers and local stakeholders for new events to be hosted in the area, which if successful in their first year, have the opportunity to grow and develop. The Council is also keen to explore the opportunity for event development across the South of Scotland and North of England with other event partners and stakeholders linked with funding opportunities through the South of Scotland Economic Partnership and future agency, as well as through the Borderlands Initiative.

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 also 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.
- (c) To ensure the Scottish Borders remains an excellent host of events there is a need to regularly re-visit the strategy to update it, ensuring it is relevant and reflects the wider economic ambitions of the area. A revised events strategy should take cognisance of the changing landscape across the South of Scotland with the creation of the South of Scotland Enterprise Agency and the development of the Borderlands initiative.

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 provide 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.

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 have been incorporated into the report.

Approved by

Rob Dickson
Executive Director

Signature

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Background Papers: None

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