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## **SCOTTISH BORDERS CYCLE TOURISM STRATEGY - UPDATE**

**Report by Executive Director  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

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**29 January 2019**

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### **1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report updates Elected Members on the activities achieved in 2018 in relation to delivery of the Scottish Borders Cycle Tourism Strategy 2016-2021, and highlights the opportunities for 2019.**
- 1.2 The Scottish Borders has a long-established and substantial road cycling offer as well as world-class mountain biking, therefore a strategy for cycle tourism in the Scottish Borders is providing a strategic framework for the continued development of cycling in the area.
- 1.3 The Scottish Borders Cycle Tourism Strategy aims to boost the Scottish Borders' economy, accelerating the growth of cycling from an events and tourism perspective. Whilst the area is already a recognised destination for cycling in the UK the aim will be to be seen as one of Britain's premier destinations for cycling by 2021. The details of the activities undertaken in 2018 are set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **I recommend that the Executive:**
  - (a) Notes the achievements and progress in 2018 in relation to the Scottish Borders Cycle Tourism Strategy;**
  - (b) Notes the opportunities for cycle related events and activities in 2019; and**
  - (c) Agrees to continue to support the cycle tourism sector and continues to encourage cycle events as part of the Scottish Borders Cycle Tourism Strategy.**

### **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Scottish Borders has a long-established and substantial road cycling offer as well as world-class mountain biking at the 7stanes sites at Glentress, Innerleithen and Newcastleton. It also has an attractive series of natural trails on the hills. The natural assets of the area provide a cycling 'playground' and a range of cycle friendly services. Unlike other activities, cycling is available throughout the Scottish Borders, offering a good opportunity for geographic spread.
- 3.2 Cycling has become a key tourism product for the Scottish Borders with a notable growth in the number of cycling and mountain biking events taking place including TweedLove, the Tour de Lauder, the Tour o' the Borders and the Enduro World Series and the Tour of Britain. These events all help to promote the Scottish Borders and raise its profile as a cycling destination, and create opportunities to use cycle tourism as a means to increase economic benefit to the Scottish Borders

### **4 CYCLE TOURISM STRATEGY**

- 4.1 Scottish Borders Cycle Tourism Strategy allows the Council to ensure investment and development is addressed in a strategic and coordinated way across all services in order to boost the economy. The strategy encompasses event development; infrastructure and marketing to maximise cycling events; and tourism opportunities.
- 4.2 The Scottish Borders Cycle Tourism Strategy vision highlights that "We will work to make the Scottish Borders one of Britain's premier destinations for cycling by 2021." The Council will seek to deliver this vision by working across the public, private and voluntary sectors. The strategy aims to deliver strong economic impact through the following key objectives :
  1. Developing our Assets – turning our cycle tourism assets into experiences and improving quality.
  2. Event Development – attracting and leveraging events
  3. Building consumer demand – promoting the quality experiences

#### **Achievements for 2018**

- 4.3 There is continued interest from event organisers in staging events in the area, both from within and outwith the Scottish Borders. Part of this is due to the area being seen as 'cycle friendly'. TweedLove and Tour o' the Borders remain as key events in the calendar. 2018 saw the return of the Tour de Lauder, Cross Border Sportive and the Selkirk Mountain Bike Marathon, Scottish Enduro Series along with cycling club events such as the Tour of Tweeddale and also the Ken Laidlaw Sportive. All of these events ensure that cyclists and mountain bikers are very much aware of the cycling and mountain bike assets available in the Scottish Borders. The 2018 portfolio of events that is part of the TweedLove Festival generated an economic impact of £740k.

## **New events/ activities for 2018**

- 4.4 2018 saw the inaugural Doddie's Ride take place to raise funds for the Doddie Weir Foundation and this event resulted in significant interest. A new online cycling campaign was undertaken to raise awareness of the Cycle Scottish Borders website resulting in over 7,000 individual clicks through to the site. In a further move to support cycling activity across the area, freestanding bike repair stations are in the process of being installed in Hawick, Peebles, Tweedbank, Galashiels, Innerleithen and Kelso. The details of the activities undertaken in 2018 are set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

## **Future Opportunities for 2019**

- 4.5 Potential new events for 2019 include a weekend mountain biking festival, Transcend, which is a development of the TweedLove Festival. The European round of the Enduro World Series will return in May 2019. Other event ideas being explored include a night-time Gravel Festival and an event concept titled 'Race the Train' starting in Newtongrange and ending in Galashiels. Opportunities to work with communities and towns to make more of cycle tourism will continue to be explored.
- 4.6 The Tour of Britain (TOB) regularly returns to the area and an event of this stature adds huge amounts of credibility to the cycle tourism offer. Discussions are already underway about this event returning in 2020, with a view to this being the start of a five year programme with the Council bidding for a number of TOB stages to be hosted in that five-year period.
- 4.7 The Scottish Borders Cycle Tourism Strategy aims to boost the Scottish Borders economy, accelerating the growth of cycling from an events and tourism perspective. Whilst the area is already a recognised destination for cycling in the UK, the aim will be to be seen as one of Britain's premier destinations for cycling by 2021.

## **5 IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 Financial**

The Cycle Tourism Strategy action plan for 2018/2019 highlighted the continued need for support. The Council continues to target support to cycling events and marketing activity across the Scottish Borders. There are a number of actions set out, although additional funding from external sources will have to be secured in order to deliver all the outcomes. The service will continue to prioritise budget and support activity to deliver the Cycle Tourism Action Plan.

### **5.2 Risk and Mitigations**

There is a risk if the Council does not support businesses and communities to take advantage of the opportunities provided by cycle tourism that the economic development opportunities from this growing sector may not be maximised. The Cycle Tourism Strategy has a detailed Action Plan with specific resources to deliver key priorities activities. Working in partnership with local agencies and businesses will be critical to the successful delivery of the Action Plan.

### **5.3 Equalities**

An Equalities Impact Assessment was carried out and is available on the Council website.

**5.4 Acting Sustainably**

The encouragement of cycle tourism will help support economic activity across the Scottish Borders, bringing in new and repeat visitors to the area and raising the profile of the Scottish Borders at a national and international level. There are also opportunities to link cycle tourism to the Borders Railway and the Core Path Network.

**5.5 Carbon Management**

Increasing the volume of visitors who are using bicycles for transport and recreation could reduce the need for travel and have a positive impact on carbon emissions.

**5.6 Rural Proofing**

Rural proofing is not required because this project does not change Council strategy or policy. The Strategy could have a positive impact for rural areas of the Scottish Borders as many of the best road and mountain biking routes are in the remoter parts of the area.

**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 Chief Officer 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 .....**

**Author(s)**

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**Background Papers:**  
**Previous Minute Reference:**

**Note** – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Bryan McGrath can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

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