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## EMBEDDING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Report by Chief Executive

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### SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

29 August 2019

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#### 1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 **This report proposes that the Council formally commits to embedding sustainable development in its strategies, policies and service delivery. By doing so, the Council will ensure that it has a clear coherent and overarching ethical framework for its activities, which brings benefits to the organisation and supports its efforts to optimise outcomes.**
- 1.2 It is proposed that the Council manifest its commitment to sustainable development by pledging to implement the UN Sustainable Development Goals ([Link](#)) as they relate to local government.
- 1.3 Such a commitment recognises the increasing urgency that we live and use resources in ways which does not compromise the quality of life of future generations.
- 1.4 The Report identifies two key areas of benefit from the Council pledging to deliver the UN Sustainable Development Goals:-
  1. An overarching ethos brings clarity, consistency and coherence to the Council's approach across the full range of its activities.
  2. Taking a leadership role in relation to sustainable development enables the Council to maintain and build value organisationally through the efficient and sustainable use of resources, to develop public value in its relationship to citizens and communities, and to manage reputational risk.
- 1.5 To support implementation, the Sustainable Procurement Policy Group is to be renamed 'the Sustainable Development Group' and its role extended to ensure that appropriate practice is adopted and followed in how the Council undertakes the full range of its activities.
- 1.6 The Sustainable Development Group will report annually to Council on progress. It is recognised that not all SDGs targets carry the same relevance in the context of the Council's responsibilities and the Sustainable Development Group will promote a practical view of this based on good practice.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **2.1 I recommend that the Council agrees:-**

- (a) formally to commit to implementing the UN Sustainable Development Goals as they relate to local government;**
- (b) to note that, to support implementation of sustainable development, the Sustainable Procurement Policy Group will be renamed 'the Sustainable Development Group' and its role extended to ensure that appropriate practice is adopted and followed in how the Council undertakes the full range of its activities;**
- (c) that the Sustainable Development Group shall review the recent decisions and actions of the UK and Scottish Governments and UK local authorities with a view to making recommendations as to how the Council can play '#our part' in tackling climate change; and**
- (d) that the Sustainable Development Group shall report to Council annually on progress in implementing sustainable development.**

### **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The UN's agreement of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and Scottish Government's incorporation of these UN SDGs in the new National Performance Framework ([Link](#)) highlight the increasing urgency of the sustainable development agenda for the world and for national governments. As the CoSLA Convention Report 'United Nations Sustainable Development Goals – Localisation in Scotland' 14th December 2018 ([Link](#)) affirms, Councils too have a critical role in delivering sustainable development.
- 3.2 In its 2005 Sustainable Development Strategy – Securing the Future, the UK Government said: 'The goal of sustainable development is to enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising the quality of life of future generations.' This short description is also used by Scottish Government, and provides a useful encapsulation of the concept. It recognises that, 'If everyone in the world lived as we currently do in Scotland, it would require the resources of more than three planets.'<sup>1</sup>
- 3.3 The new National Performance Framework was approved by the Scottish Parliament on 24th May 2018, and incorporates the UN Sustainable Development Goals, fulfilling a 2015 commitment by the First Minister to embed them in all government activity. The new National Performance Framework includes 11 National Outcomes that set out Scottish Government's aspirations for the country, and 81 National Indicators that will be used to track and measure progress towards achieving them.
- 3.4 Prior to publication of the CoSLA Convention Report on this subject, SBC officers were already working on a proposal that the Council formally commit to sustainable development in its strategies, policies and service delivery. The CoSLA Convention report underscores the need to make progress. Adoption of the UN SDGs is the best means of achieving this. There are two interlinked reasons for the Council to pledge to deliver the UN SDGs:-
1. To provide a clear ethos which supports the Council's activities across the range of its activities.
  2. The value that taking a leadership role on sustainable development brings to the organisation and its activities.

### **4 AN ETHOS**

- 4.1 Collectively, Connected Borders, the Corporate Plan, and the Community Plan represent the foundational texts upon which all Council decision-making, strategies, policies, processes and service delivery should be regarded as being based. In Connected Borders, the Council's Administration makes explicit commitment to 'a future that delivers economic growth and sustainable development' and sets out a vision for 2017 to 2022 that includes in its opening sentence a recognition of the importance of our natural environment, which is the basis of the area's outstanding beauty.

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<sup>1</sup> Scottish Government – 'Developing an Environment Strategy for Scotland: Discussion Paper' p4 ([Link](#))

- 4.2 The Council's Corporate Plan for 2018-2023, among other things, commits to:
- Maintaining and improving our high-quality environment, and
  - Ensuring we respond to national policies and other statutory requirements.
- 4.3 In similar vein, the Community Plan promotes the themes of 'Our Quality of Life' and 'Our Place', while 'sustainability' is identified as one of the 'ways of working'.
- 4.4 Sustainable Development is one of the guiding principles of 'Fit for 2024', the Council's new Transformation Programme agreed by Council on 28<sup>th</sup> February this year. Indeed, the Council Report on 'Fit for 2024' presaged the present report, which it noted was 'in preparation' ([Link](#)).
- 4.5 At the same time, the Council is committed to policy approaches which support sustainability through, for example, procurement, carbon management and environmental offsetting within planning. The Scottish Borders Council Sustainable Procurement Charter ([Link](#)) exemplifies good practice.
- 4.6 The purpose of this report is to establish the link between principle and action explicitly, and to ensure that the relationship between sustainable development and what the Council does is universally understood within the organisation and can be properly articulated beyond it. To achieve these objectives, it is proposed that, by means of this report, Council will formally commit to deliver the UN Sustainable Development Goals in a council context providing the philosophical rationale for why the Council acts as it does. In this way, the policy choices that the Council pursues in relation to subjects as apparently disparate as recycling, education and digital customer service will make extrinsic sense. Furthermore, Council approval will amplify and elaborate the commitment to sustainable development expressed within Connected Borders.

## **5 ADDED VALUE**

- 5.1 Just as leading private sector organisations have found that there is a strong business case for sustainable development in enhancing profitability and shareholder value, so there is a corresponding benefit for public sector organisations from sustainable development. The benefits include the following:-
- a) Capital value - Whether we mean natural capital or financial capital, it is self-evidently of benefit to the Council and to others that we carry out our functions without running down our capital stock. In the natural environment, this means ensuring that we renew resources like timber, fish and water, and in the financial environment, it means we find ways of delivering our services in a way which can (continue to) deliver the optimal outcomes we seek.
  - b) Public value – this is a broad concept that includes trust and legitimacy, as well as outcomes and the means used to deliver them. Sustainable development can strengthen society and create public value in three ways: addressing market failure (e.g the Council's

investment of £8M in delivering superfast broadband); building resilience (e.g. building capacity and protecting resources through resilient communities); and renewing the social contract. With specific reference to this last point, pursuing sustainable development can help organisations bolster wider social value and renew the social contract with the communities they serve. It is far easier to maintain community amenities where people feel a sense of shared ownership, rather than seeing them as assets belonging to the state. This is the essence of the social contract between the state and its citizens which sits at the heart of the idea of public value. It is also the animating idea which underpins the Corporate Plan agreed by Members in February 2018: 'Our Plan and Your Part in it'.

- c) Organisational benefits - There is a persuasive organisational case for sustainable development. Cost savings can be made through environmentally responsible actions such as cutting down on waste – for example reducing wasted electricity through inefficient heating and lighting, or reducing the amount of rubbish taken to landfill.
- d) Managing reputational risk - Reputational risk is also increasingly significant. Complying with environmental legislation is increasingly demanding. For example, the Council has significant legal responsibilities and requirements under the Climate Change Act (Scotland) 2009 and will be subject to even more ambitious targets under forthcoming legislation. Out-performing requirements should deliver long-term financial benefits, while failing to meet our responsibilities may result in penalties and will earn reproach.

5.2 The 17 SDGs comprise 169 targets. These need to be delivered at global, national and subnational levels if sustainability is to be achieved. At the same time, not all SDGs targets carry the same relevance at all levels and in all Member States. As the CoSLA Convention Report notes there is a need to ensure that the SDGs translate meaningfully into a local context. The Global Network of Cities, Local and Regional Governments (UCLG) has produced a useful resource for all local governments, showing how each of the Goals relates to local government in practice, and showing how authorities might practically work towards them ([Link](#))

5.3 "Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits" is one of the 7 Core Principles set out in the Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance approved by Council on 28 June 2018. The proposal in this report that the Council "Formally commits to implementing the UN Sustainable Development Goals as they relate to local government" if approved, could be used as evidence to further demonstrate good governance in practice to define and plan outcomes that are sustainable.

## **6 SBC SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

6.1 The Council's Sustainable Procurement Policy Group is a beacon of good practice currently. This officer group supports good practice in Council procurement by ensuring that decisions reflect the principles of sustainable development set out in the Sustainable Procurement Charter. While the reach of the Sustainable Procurement Policy Group is extensive, there is a

broad spectrum of activity, planning and policy setting across the Council in respect of which the Group currently has no involvement.

- 6.2 To deliver the SDGs in a Scottish Borders context, it is intended that the Sustainable Procurement Policy Group is re-designated the Sustainable Development Group and its remit extended to drive adoption of, implementation of and best practice on sustainable development throughout the Council. It should do this by: -

- Awareness raising
- Advocacy
- Monitoring
- Enforcement

The Sustainable Development Group will have a key role in identifying deficiencies in meeting the objectives of the Council in relation to sustainable development and, with the approval of the Council's Corporate Management Team, in seeking compliance. This is what we mean by 'enforcement'.

- 6.3 Strategic progress on delivering against the SDGs in the Scottish Borders will be reported to Council annually with the Sustainable Development Group reporting regularly to the Council's Corporate Management Team on operational delivery.
- 6.4 The aim is to embed sustainable development into our organisation so profoundly that it is indistinguishable from mainstream culture. This requires the commitment to deliver on the UN SDGs envisaged within this report, and a 'systemic' approach to delivering sustainable development, led by the Sustainable Development Group, in which 'sustainability thinking is hardwired into the culture of the organisation, and the values implicit in sustainable development are reflected in everything from staff mindsets to resource planning.' Only in this way will we make good on the aspirations of the UN, the Scottish and UK Governments, and, ultimately, on Member ambitions manifested in Connected Borders and other plans
- 6.5 The Council is making a significant contribution to sustainable development already, but by embedding sustainable development in its culture and enforcing good practice through the Sustainable Development Group, it can achieve much more. Appendix 1 contains four examples of activity, where good practice is currently taking place, but also highlight additional steps that might be taken, with such steps encouraged by the approach envisaged within this Report
- 6.6 Together with biodiversity loss (please see IPBES Global Assessment Summary for Policymakers ([Link](#))), climate change is one of two existential threats to current life on earth. On 8 October 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) ([Link](#)) warned in a vital report that humanity must act within the next 12 years to limit global warming to 1.5C and avoid or mitigate some devastating consequences. In November 2018, the Councils of two major cities, Bristol and Manchester, passed motions declaring a 'climate emergency' and setting targets aiming to be carbon neutral by 2030 and 2038 respectively. Since then, there has been a wave of Climate Emergency declarations by Councils across the UK including, for example, Preston, Maidstone, Newcastle, Leeds, and Cardiff. The UK and Scottish Governments have made similar declarations. Meanwhile, Glasgow

City Council has unveiled plans to become the first UK city to reduce its greenhouse emissions to net-zero, aiming to reach the target before 2045. It is proposed that a first action for the Sustainable Development Group would be to review the recent decisions and actions of the UK and Scottish Governments and UK local authorities with a view to making recommendations as to how the council can play 'our part' in tackling climate change.

## **7 IMPLICATIONS**

### **7.1 Financial**

Though no costs flow from this report directly, application of its recommendations to the decision-making, policy formulation and activities of the Council may have cost implications. These cost implications will be reported, as appropriate, in relation to each area of activity where costs arise as a consequence of the pursuit of sustainable development.

### **7.2 Risk and Mitigations**

The report fully describes all the strategic elements of risk that have been identified in relation to this report and its recommendations and no specific additional concerns need to be addressed. However, adoption of and implementation of sustainable development practices throughout the activities of the Council may give rise to additional specific risks and require mitigation actions. These will be identified, and a full analysis of impact and likelihood and associated management or political responses will be set out when reporting in relation to the relevant items or activities.

### **7.3 Equalities**

- (a) An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out on this proposal and it is anticipated that there are no adverse equality implications. Indeed, the UN SDGs are entirely animated by driving greater equality in ways which are sustainable, and consider the interests of future as well as present generations.
- (b) If an adverse impact is identified in relation to a specific aspect of sustainable development practice, appropriate analysis of impact and likelihood and associated management or political responses would be undertaken in respect of that issue or activity.

### **7.4 Acting Sustainably**

The purpose of this report is to embed sustainability into the very fibre of the Council and how it makes its decisions, acts and delivers services.

### **7.5 Carbon Management**

Reduction of carbon emissions is a core objective of sustainable development, specifically, Goal 13 – Climate Action and Goal 7 – Affordable and Clean Energy. Furthermore, the Council is engaged in delivering a Low Carbon Economic Strategy [\[link\]](#), and Energy Efficiency Programme which identifies, designs and implements technical interventions to decarbonise our built estate and reduce our utility cost base. The Energy Efficiency Programme will continue to examine ways in which we can support the Scottish Government's carbon aspirations while generating economic benefits to the Scottish Borders.

## 7.6 Rural Proofing

The UN SDGs represent commitments to sustainable development in all contexts, including rural contexts and an equalities based approach based upon responsiveness to needs across the board including in rural settings. Accordingly, the purpose and recommendations of this report are fully complementary and conducive to the objective of Rural Proofing.

## 7.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

No changes are required to either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the proposals in this report.

## 8 CONSULTATION

8.1 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 any comments received have been incorporated into this report.

8.2 Work is being undertaken with Corporate Communications to develop both internal and external communication plans around 'Embedding Sustainable Development'.

### Approved by

**Tracey Logan**  
**Chief Executive**

**Signature .....**

### Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
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**Background Papers:** UN Sustainable Development Goals; Scottish Government National Performance Framework; CoSLA Convention Report 'United Nations Sustainable Development Goals – Localisation in Scotland' 14th December 2018; Corporate Plan 2018-2023 - 'Our Plan and Your Part in it'; Connected Borders – Administration's Vision 2017-2022; Global Network of Cities, Local and Regional Governments (UCLG) – 'The Sustainable Development Goals: what local governments need to know' (2015); IPBES Global Assessment Summary for Policymakers (2019); IPCC Special Report – Global Warming of 1.5C (October 2018)

**Previous Minute Reference:** None

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

Contact us at Michael Cook, Corporate Policy Advisor, Scottish Borders Council,  
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**CASE STUDY 1****PROJECT - Jedburgh Intergenerational Community Campus**

Plans to build a new Intergenerational Learning Campus in Jedburgh are being progressed by the Council, with the campus being developed on an area of land behind the existing Parkside Primary School, in a site extending to around 13 hectares.

The provision of modern, high quality facilities for the local community of Jedburgh and further afield is a key ambition of the Council. The site will provide a range of primary and secondary school buildings and extensive sports facilities. The campus will be used by all sectors of the local community, enhancing wider economic and social benefits. Innovation is based on a partnership between the public and private sector to deliver joint benefits as well as opportunities for wider community and economic benefits.

The provision of extended sports facilities at the campus can engender greater community capacity to improve lifestyle and wellbeing, with links to active travel benefits and wider low carbon behaviours. The campus can become a low carbon centre for community activity.

The energy plan is to utilise three 500kW gas boilers to meet heating and hot water demands and 600m<sup>2</sup> of roof mounted solar PV to contribute to the electrical demands which will have an estimated 100kW peak electrical generation capacity. Between 32% and 37% of the heat pumps annual electricity demand can be met by the 600m<sup>2</sup> solar PV installation on the JICC.

**SDG Commitments**

*How does the JICC help to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals for the Council?*

**SDG 3 Good Health** – access to enhanced sports facilities

**SDG 4 Quality Education** – JICC represents a sustainable place-based solution reflecting Scottish Government/Council commitments to deliver quality inclusive education provision on site and in the community

**SDG 7 Renewable Energy** – PV integrated into build

**SDG 8 Good jobs and economic growth** – opportunities for community based training

**SDG 9 Innovation and Infrastructure** – new approaches to community learning delivery

**SDG 10 Reduced inequalities** – access for all community interests

**SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities** – local provision of services and learning

**SDG 12 Responsible Consumption** – increased awareness of issues through local support

### **Other Opportunities**

*What extended SDG commitments could the project deliver?*

**SDG 7 Renewable energy** – pursuing a still lower carbon footprint for the site

**SDG 9 Innovation and infrastructure** – facilitating the lower carbon footprint referred to above in respect of SDG 7, and demonstrating good practice/exemplar for local community and partner organisations.

**CASE STUDY 2****Residual Waste Treatment**

The Integrated Waste Management Strategy 2013-25 was developed to support the Scottish Government's waste reduction ambitions and increase overall recycling and composting rates in the Scottish Borders.

The Council currently manages around 42,000 tonnes of residual waste per annum and, with no treatment facilities available within the Scottish Borders, and a need to divert biodegradable waste from landfill sites before 2021, a secure and sustainable residual treatment solution was required.

Recently, the Council went out to tender to find a provider able to deliver an affordable and environmentally sustainable solution to disposing of residual waste.

The procurement of the service required potential providers to produce a method statement that was evaluated using software that was able to analyse the climate change impact of each proposal. This formed a substantial proportion of the quality aspect of tender submissions, taking into account a wide range of environmental impact considerations, including final destination of the waste i.e. incineration or another landfill outside Scotland and the carbon emissions from the transportation and processing of the waste. In this way, the Council could satisfy itself that the waste is being disposed of in a way that considers the wider environmental impact of our actions.

The contract for residual waste treatment was finally awarded to a service provider based in Lanarkshire and will provide robust arrangements are in place to treat waste generated by households and businesses in the Scottish Borders and will ensure the service is delivered in as environmentally sustainable way as possible.

The successful procurement exercise will be supported by a detailed communications recycling plan that sets out how the Council will work to increase household and business recycling rates across the Scottish Borders. This will help householders and businesses understand the value of being responsible consumers and enable them play their part in supporting the Councils sustainable development ambitions.

The overall outcome of this recent procurement exercise and future recycling communications plan will support the Councils sustainable development ambitions by promoting responsible consumption, reducing general waste and ultimately play a small, but important role, in protecting the planet.

**SDG Commitments**

*How does Residual Waste Treatment help to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals for the Council?*

**SDG 7 Renewable Energy** – Waste previously destined for landfill will now be processed at a Materials Recovery Facility and a Combined Heat and Power plant to deliver the optimum solution to recover value from residual waste.

**SDG 11 Sustainable Cities** - Reducing landfill and increasing re-use and recycling rates will ensure the beauty and heritage of the Scottish Borders will be maintained for future generations.

**SDG 12 Responsible Consumption** – Considering the carbon emissions in relation to the transportation of waste was an important aspect in the procurement of this contract. Supporting short supply chains and reducing transport and carbon emissions should play a vital role in the Council's climate change obligations.

**SDG 13 Climate Change** – As above.

### **Other Opportunities**

*What extended SDG commitments could the project deliver?*

A single procurement exercise is not the end of the matter. The Council must continue to encourage 'reduction, reuse and recycling' both externally and internally. Externally, this involves effective communication, and ensuring that the Borders' public is supported in maximising its efforts. It means making sure that the Council's processes for recycling are intuitive and continue to develop in increasing percentages of materials recycled. It also requires the Council to set an example. Internally, this compels the Council to assess the sustainability of its product use and procurement efforts across the spectrum of activity in which it is engaged, and ensuring that a culture of sustainability is pervasive not only in the processes of the Council, but in its culture. Effective communication and process design are key elements of this approach.

**CASE STUDY 3****Integrated Plan for Older Peoples' Housing**

The Integrated Plan for Older Peoples' Housing sets out a clear direction to deliver sustainable services for older people over the next ten years.

The plan takes into consideration a number of sustainable development outcomes that will impact on the provision of future older people's services in the Scottish Borders.

The main emphasis of the plan is providing older people in the Scottish Borders a greater choice of housing, support and care that meets their long-term needs. It is focused on enabling independent living but proposes an investment and service framework which tackles the logistical and market challenges experienced by service commissioners. It proposes investment in housing for older people, technology-based services, and additional people capacity as a means of ensuring future needs can be met.

Long term social, economic and environmental issues are explored in depth throughout the plan, taking into account the future requirements to meet the needs of older people in the Scottish Borders. Although increasing appropriate housing capacity is the main focus of the plan, consideration is also given to utilising future technology solutions and developing a future workforce that will meet future demands, as well as how the Scottish Borders responds to increased demand upon residential settings. The plan supports the Older Peoples Joint Commissioning Strategy 2013-2023 which sets out the long term vision for older people's services in the Scottish Borders. This joint strategy primarily focuses on the health care, social care and well-being of older people in the Scottish Borders.

**SDG Commitments**

*How does the Integrated Plan for Older People's Housing help to deliver sustainable development?*

**SDG 3 Good Health** – by understanding and addressing the cause of an issue or need (rather than continuing to deal with the consequences) the Council and partners can promote sustainable development through better and improving health outcomes. The emphasis is on prevention and early intervention which are demonstrably more efficient in terms of resource use.

**SDG 5 Gender Equality** – by bringing all groups of people together to ensure that everyone is involved, the Council can promote and strengthen community cohesion and resilience as well as meeting its duties under the Equality Act (2010).

**SDG 9 Innovation and Infrastructure**- The plan focuses on new innovative and resource efficient ways of providing accommodation to meet the needs of older people

**SDG 10 Reducing inequalities** - closing the gap between the least and most disadvantaged in our communities

**SDG 11 Sustainable Cities** – by listening to, engaging with and building capacity within our communities embedding the practice of 'co-production'

**SDG 13 Climate Change** - supporting the objectives and targets of the Climate

Change Duty in developing facilities and in delivering services

**SDG 17 Partnership for Goals** - those lead partners identified for key actions will impact assess their actions against environmental, equality and/or health impact assessments as appropriate

**Other opportunities**

*What extended SDG commitments could the programme deliver?*

**SDG 4 Education-** The plan touches on building workforce capacity. Vital to the successful delivery of an older peoples' strategy, there is a need to extend and develop collective thinking and efforts in this area.

**SDG 7 Renewable Energy-** In designing new build accommodation whether extra care and related housing or residential, we should aim to do more to meet reduce the carbon footprint of the sector and to address long term energy needs. In short, we should aim to maximise the benefits of a low carbon approach by means of design, building standards and energy supply.

**SDG 8- Good Jobs and Economic growth** –The question of how the development of the care sector can support economic growth is an area ripe for further analysis and development.

**CASE STUDY 4****SBC Pool Cars**

The Council's Travel and Mileage Policy recognises the need to reduce overall council business mileage and consequential carbon emissions. In so doing, a fully managed pool car fleet service was introduced in July 2017.

This is a very good example of sustainable practice that delivers social, economic and environmental benefits.

Historically, employee-owned vehicles were used for SBC staff journeys. Therefore, there was no control over the age and type of vehicle used. As a result, a number of the vehicles used for business purposes were older, more damaging to the environment, and contributed more to the organisation's carbon footprint than other forms of transport.

A successful trial period saw an almost a 25% reduction in business miles using an environmentally friendly pool car fleet of 15 vehicles. Significant financial savings and a reduction in carbon emissions were delivered which supported the Council's efforts to meet climate change targets.

It was agreed to scale up and expand the service across area office locations and also incorporate community use. This saw the project rolled out across a further 8 localities within the Scottish Borders, increasing the usage, and further reducing private car business mileage which will result in further financial and environmental savings.

It is anticipated that the impact of reducing the number of business miles travelled by council employees and the use of the low emission pool car fleet vehicles could reduce the carbon emissions from the Council's business mileage by up to 42%.

As well as business use by SBC and other named partner organisations, it was agreed that a minimum of 50% of the pool cars should be made available for community use to provide more opportunities for rural communities.

This has provided communities across the Borders with increased access to sustainable, low emissions vehicles at times when other public transport is less frequent out-of-office hours. SBC's Local Access and Transport Strategy seeks to make the Scottish Borders a more connected place by providing reliable, affordable, convenient transport which enhances accessibility and promotes connected town centres.

**SDG Commitments**

*How does the Pool Cars Programme help to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals for the Council?*

**SDG 11 Sustainable Cities/Towns**- The project provides better connectivity across the Scottish Borders with a reduced carbon footprint.

**SDG 10 Reducing Inequality** – Provides opportunities for mobility for people without transport

**SDG 12 Responsible Consumption** – Reduces SBC business miles and provides a consistency of low emissions from all the fleet vehicle

**SDG 17 Protect the Planet** – Reduced emissions help to meet climate change obligations and carbon reduction aspirations

**Other Opportunities**

*What additional benefits could the programme deliver?*

The progress made in reducing the environmental impact of the Council's business car use demonstrates a clear commitment to the organisation's climate change obligations. However, the development of a pool of modern fuel efficient vehicles should be seen as a first step in a transition to a still more fuel efficient fleet which runs increasingly on non-fossil fuel based energy, and the catalyst to creating a low emissions area with a comprehensive network of electric vehicle charging points across the Scottish Borders that will encourage communities to follow the lead set by the Council.