

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

17 September 2019

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Scottish Borders Events Plan 2014-2020 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'. The current plan outlines the Council's approach for the support, development, delivery and measurement of the impact of events in the Scottish Borders.**
- 1.2 Over the last 5 years, the Council has been successful in securing and hosting the popular Tour of Britain as well as encouraging the development of a range of sporting and cultural events including the Borders Book Festival, Melrose 7s, Tweedlove/ Transcend, Enduro World Series and the Borders Art Fair. It is estimated that events generate on average over £7million per annum to the local economy in the Scottish Borders.
- 1.3 In addition to the current event calendar, there are a range of key event opportunities from 2020 onwards including themed event years, infrastructure development opportunities, cultural landmark celebrations as well as new and developing events.
- 1.4 Development of a new strategic events plan will involve a collaborative approach with stakeholder consultation to develop a strategic events plan fit for purpose. Key stakeholders, ambitious event organisers, national events, sporting/ cultural agencies and local businesses organisations will be included within the consultation process. A new strategic events plan will ensure the Scottish Borders maximises the potential visitor opportunities and economic impact for the area.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 I recommend that the Executive Committee:

- (a) Notes the progress made in relation to the Scottish Borders Council Events Plan 2014-2020 and the economic impact of events for the Scottish Borders;**
- (b) Agrees that Council Officers lead the development of a new Strategic Events Plan for the Scottish Borders over the next four months, engaging with key partners and stakeholders;**
- (c) Requests that a draft Scottish Borders Strategic Events Plan is presented for approval in early 2020.**

3 SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL'S EVENTS PLAN 2014-2020

- 3.1 The Scottish Borders Events Plan 2014-2020 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'. The current plan outlines the Council's approach for the support, development, delivery and measurement of the impact of events in the Scottish Borders.
- 3.2 The overall aim of the current events plan 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 to understand their economic impact
- 3.3 The Council supports the development and delivery of events with advisory support; direct grant funding for marketing and infrastructure development; support to apply for and draw down funding from national sources such as EventScotland and Creative Scotland; provision of statutory and legal requirements such as licences; in-kind support with traffic management arrangements; and safety advisory support through the multi-agency Safety Advisory Group.
- 3.4 During the last 5-year period of the current events plan, the Council has been successful in securing and hosting the high profile event, Tour of Britain as well as encouraging the development of a range of sporting and cultural events including the Borders Book Festival, Melrose 7s, Tweedlove/Transcend, Enduro World Series and the Borders Art Fair. It is estimated that events generate on average over £7million per annum to the local economy in the Scottish Borders.

4 SCOTTISH BORDERS STRATEGIC EVENT PLAN REVIEW

- 4.1 It is proposed to develop a new strategic events plan for the Scottish Borders building on the strengths of the current event offering and exploiting new opportunities on the horizon. Events such as the Borders Book Festival have grown significantly from their origins and now are major events attracting visitors as well as promoting the Scottish Borders and the profile of the area to an international audience.
- 4.2 The updated plan will continue to focus on attracting high profile events to the Scottish Borders such as the Tour of Britain. Closer partnership working with the five Borderland area local authorities as part of the new Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, will also provide an opportunity to explore and develop new cross Border events and tourism opportunities. In addition, the creation of the new South of Scotland Enterprise Agency in 2020 will provide a focus and opportunity to develop South of Scotland events and activities maximising the strong links and synergies between the Scottish Borders and Dumfries & Galloway.

- 4.3 Alongside the opportunities of working with regional and national partners, there are also a range of key event opportunities from 2020 onwards including:
- Scottish Government's themed event years (Year of Coast & Waters in 2020 and Year of Scotland's Stories in 2022);
 - Major international cycling events being hosted in Scotland in 2023;
 - Current successful events seeking to grow and develop attracting additional visitors linked to the Borders Railway;
 - New and developing events such as Enduro World Series based in Innerleithen and Borders Art Fair in Kelso;
 - Reintroduction of the Jim Clark Rally combined with the recent opening of the new Jim Clark Museum in Duns;
 - Cultural landmark celebrations for Sir Walter Scott 250th anniversary in 2021 with benefits to Abbotsford House and Selkirk as well as links to other heritage tourism opportunities;
 - Event infrastructure development opportunities such as the new 3G pitches across the Borders and additional downhill routes at Glentress and Innerleithen.
- 4.4 The new strategic plan will focus on supporting events, which have a strong economic impact in terms of growing visitor numbers and raising the profile and reputation of the Scottish Borders. Local community events and activities including local Common Ridings continue to be an important feature of Border community life. It is envisaged that these will continue to be supported through the Council's Communities and Partnerships team.
- 4.5 Development of a new strategic plan will ensure the Scottish Borders maximises the potential visitor opportunities and economic impact for the area. The new plan will seek to develop and grow events in terms of visitor numbers to maximise spend and economic impact. The plan will also seek to maximise social and cultural opportunities along with encouraging an environmental sustainable approach for events.

5 DEVELOPMENT PROCESS FOR A NEW STRATEGIC EVENTS PLAN

- 5.1 Development of the new strategic events plan will involve a collaborative approach with stakeholder consultation to develop a strategic events plan fit for purpose. It is recommended that Council Officers lead the review and develop the events plan over the next four months, engaging with key partners and stakeholders across the South of Scotland, Central Belt and North of England.
- 5.2 Key stakeholders, ambitious event organisers, national events, sporting/cultural agencies and local businesses organisations will be included within the consultation process. Consultation and engagement will include national agencies such as EventScotland, VisitScotland, Creative Scotland, sporting and cultural organisations as well as local organisations such as Scottish Borders Tourism Partnership, LiveBorders, event organisers and events infrastructure providers.

6 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

The Council's Economic Development Service will lead the development of the new Strategic Events Plan. A range of consultation and engagement events will be progressed to gain input and feedback from appropriate stakeholders and organisations. Any costs in relation to the consultation will be funded from within the Council's current Economic Development Service budget.

6.2 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. An updated strategic events plan with clear vision and purpose is critical to ensure events continue to grow and the area continues to be developed as a national and international event destination.
- (b) Increasing competition from other areas in the UK as well as abroad, requires that the public and private sector need to continue to work in partnership to ensure a range of accessible, safe and attractive events are delivered and that the Scottish Borders is promoted as a prime visitor destination.

6.3 Equalities

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. An equality impact assessment (EIA) will be undertaken as part of the development of the new strategic events plan.

6.4 Acting Sustainably

The new strategic events plan will seek to ensure that the planning, development and delivery of events incorporate socially and environmentally responsible decision making balanced with providing economic benefit to help sustain local communities.

6.5 Carbon Management

The new strategic events plan will seek to ensure the delivery of environmentally sustainable events that meet with national and international standards.

6.6 Rural Proofing

Rural proofing, where relevant, will be undertaken as part of the development of the new strategic events plan.

6.7 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.

7 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Service Director HR, the Clerk to the Council and Communications are being consulted and their comments have been incorporated into the final report.

Approved by

**Rob Dickson
Executive Director**

Signature

Author(s)

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Background Papers: None

Previous Minute Reference: None

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