1. Business:

- For the period from 1 April 2015 to 31 July 2015 the Business Gateway team worked with 233 businesses and individuals, and assisted 71 business start-ups, of which 10 have the potential to be high growth. The advisers have delivered 18 start-up workshops and 15 local workshops with 230 attendees.

- Each month the advisers have been running half-day outreach surgeries in Hawick, Kelso, Duns, Eyemouth, Galashiels and Peebles. This has increased our presence in each of these towns but attendee numbers have been limited. These surgeries will continue to be promoted and run through to the end of September when the team will review this activity and decide on whether to continue.

- Business Gateway is running a series of 5 Masterclass and networking events in 2015, on Marketing, Social Media, Motivation, Innovation and Sales. These are being organised in locations across the Borders. There have been 257 attendees at the first 3 and so far 122 people are booked onto the remaining two. The aim is to bring quality speakers to the area to provide information to businesses and an opportunity to network. Feedback from the first three Masterclasses has been excellent and we intend to continue these after September, on confirmation of future ERDF funding.

- Scottish Borders Business Month will run from 1 October until 6 November 2015 with over 20 events scheduled across the area and ending with the Scottish Borders Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards. The opening event on 1 October will be chaired by Cllr Bell with Phil Morris, founder of Kukri Sports as the keynote speaker. Other events during the month will cover subject areas such as Exporting, Innovation, Business Efficiency, Employment, Skills Development and Finance. To deliver this, Business Gateway has partnered with SE, SDS, CABN and private companies such as Douglas Home, RBS, Davidson Chalmers and Insureness. A promotional campaign to publicise the Business Month events will commence at the end of August.

- In 2015-16, the Scottish Borders Business Fund has received 15 applications and approved 14 grants to date valued at £41,868 supporting projects with a value of £99,903. These projects are forecast to create 15 jobs and safeguard 24.5 jobs with a forecast economic impact of £375,000 GVA.

- The Scottish Borders Business Loan Fund offers loans of between £1,000 and £20,000 over terms of up to three years. In 2015-16, the Scottish Borders Business Loan Fund has so far received 3 applications and approved 3 loans valued at £41,000. These loans are forecast to create 5 jobs and safeguard 20.5 jobs with a forecast economic impact of £242,000 GVA.
• **Property** – 72 property enquiries have been received to date in 2015/16 which have resulted in 16 new property leases which will generate £80k in annual rental income. The current occupancy level is 91% for the portfolio of industrial units, yards and shops. The following sales are in hand: four units (Duns, Eyemouth and Jedburgh); one plot of land to regularise occupancy at Duns Industrial Estate; and one EU funded plot at the extension to Whitlaw Road Industrial Estate, Lauder.

• **Employer Recruitment Incentive - Youth Employment Scotland Scheme** – The Youth Employment Scotland Scheme funded by the Scottish Government and EU funding has supported 156 placements since the Scheme was launched in October 2013 up to March 2015. The Council extended the Scheme with an additional £25,000 to support new apprenticeship opportunities over the summer.

### 2. Regeneration:

• **Galashiels Town Centre** The Galashiels Town Centre Coordinator has progressed a number of actions:
  - **14 Shop front improvement grants** totalling £30,000 have been approved to date.
  - An updated **Galashiels Events Development Plan** has been progressed with opportunities for additional events linked to the Borders Railway.
  - A new **Galashiels Town Trail & map** is being designed and produced with Energise Galashiels. It will be available for distribution in early September.
  - An application has been submitted to 14-18 Now, WW1 Centenary Art Celebrations for a temporary installation in Bank Street Gardens in Galashiels for a section of the very popular **Poppies Wave installation** held at the Tower of London in 2014. The application is for an installation for September 2016 to November 2016 and would be supported by various educational / visitor initiatives.
  - The annual exhibition **Doors Open Day** will take place in Galashiels starting on 19 September. The event is jointly organised by Scottish Borders Council and Energise Galashiels.

• **Selkirk Business Improvement District (BIDS)** – The Steering Group is progressing their two BIDS for the town centre and the Ettrick Riverside area. The estimated revised ballot date is February 2016. The next key step is the development of an initial draft business plan by the Steering Group. This will require extensive business and community engagement.

• **Scottish Government Regeneration Capital Grant Fund** – the Fund seeks to support regeneration projects across Scotland to improve the economic, social, and physical environment of communities. The Fund is aimed at providing new and/ or improved infrastructure for capital expenditure. Projects must be able to commence on site in 2016. The deadline for applications for the first round was 10 July. The Council submitted four applications:
  - Wilton Lodge Park Visitor Improvements (Camping/ Caravan Park), Hawick
  - Community – Now and in the Future, Kelso
  - The Crook Inn Community Hub, Tweedsmuir
  - Coldstream Playpark Project, Coldstream
3. **Tourism & Events**

- **Tourism support –**
  
  - Tourism businesses from Scottish Borders and Midlothian met with Scotrail at the Lodge at Carfraemill to launch the Destination audit and opportunities around the railway.
  
  - Abbotsford House and local transport operators have engaged with the Steam Train operator to deliver a local package for the six week pilot.
  
  - Tourism Ambassadors (8) have been recruited to support the Borders Railway Opening Celebrations. The ambassadors will be based at the three railway stations for the first 9 weeks of the opening of the Railway. They will meet visitors alighting from the trains at busy periods. Visit Scotland will be delivering the training.
  
  - Two hop-on hop-off buses are being wrapped in the Borders Train wrap artwork and will be available seven days a week for visitors between, Galashiels, Abbotsford, Tweedbank, Gattonside, Darnick, Melrose, Dryburgh, St Boswells and Bowden. The buses will operate until the end of November 2015 and will start up again in March 2016.

- **Event support –**
  
  - Outcome reports are due from events which have taken place over the past few months. These will be available shortly and include; Tour ‘o the Borders, Tweedlove World Enduro, Selkirk MTB, Borders Book Festival
  
  - The Borders Book Festival is receiving ongoing support and is currently considering taking on an intern/apprentice to assist in marketing.
  
  - The Tour of Britain will pass through the Scottish Borders on 8 & 9 September 2015, with the Stage Finish on 8 September at Floors Castle, Kelso.
  
  - The Borders Railway opening celebration plans are nearing completion with the official royal opening taking place on 9 September and Golden Ticket day on Saturday, 5 September.
  
  - The Scottish Borders Walking Festival starts on Sunday 6 September and will be based in and around Galashiels. Participants are being encouraged to arrive by train.

4. **Funding:**

- The Scottish Government has approved the Scottish Borders Local Development Strategy for the delivery of two EU 2014 – 2020 funding programmes: the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development through the Scottish Rural Development Programme; and the European Maritime Fisheries Fund. It has made an indicative allocation of just over £4m to the Scottish Borders LEADER
Programme for the period to 2020. LEADER funding will be available to rural businesses and community organisations and the Programme will be open to applicants at the end of this year.

- A new LEADER Local Action Group, made up of rural partners and stakeholders, has been recruited and met for the first time in July. The Local Action Group will be the decision-making body for LEADER funding applications. It meets again in September for a training and familiarisation event.

- Members of the three Fisheries Local Action Groups, representing Scottish Borders, East Lothian and Fife, met on 21 August 2015 and agreed to work together to form an overall Fisheries Local Action Group that would cover all three areas. The Government has not yet announced the value of funding allocations to Fisheries Local Action Groups in Scotland.

5. Property & Projects:

- **Strategic Employment Land Project: Coldstream** – All physical works have been completed, with only maintenance to now be carried out.

- **Gunsgreenhill Industrial Estate Extension (Seafood Technology Park) Eyemouth** – The physical and landscape contract works are completed, with only maintenance to now be carried out.

6. Low Carbon Economic Strategy

- **Refresh of Action Plan** – work has progressed on the updating of the Low Carbon Economic Strategy Action Plan. Two partner workshops have been held to consider new actions. The process is almost complete, and the Action Plan will be considered by the CPP Economy and Low Carbon Programme Delivery Team at its next meeting.

- **Climate Resilient Communities Project** – the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has funded Dundee University to deliver a project in 3 communities in the Scottish Borders – Hawick, Peebles and Newcastleton. The work will focus on identifying the challenges which are likely to be posed by a changing climate and how they will affect climate disadvantaged communities. The process will bring together individuals, community groups and service providers in a series of facilitated workshops. The main focus for initial discussions will be around the effects of flooding in these communities.

- **Galashiels Hydro Power Study** – Energise Galashiels has been awarded funding from the Local Energy Challenge Fund to assess the potential for local community energy generation from hydro schemes within the town.

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