
PROPOSED PLACE MAKING APPROACH

Report by Service Director, Assets and Infrastructure

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

25 FEBRUARY 2021

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report proposes a phased introduction and development of a Place Making approach to community engagement and participation across Borders communities.**
- 1.2 At its meeting on 17 December 2020 Scottish Borders Council considered outline proposals for community engagement over future service delivery and associated investment of resources in meeting the needs of local people in the most effective and sustainable way. It was agreed that detailed proposals for an estate wide, community engagement led review of services would be brought to February Council.
- 1.3 The place making proposals set out in this report are rooted in the Council's *Fit for 2024* programme, in particular the theme of *Enhanced Community Engagement, Participation and Empowerment*, and aim to build on, and link with, a wide range of existing and planned national, Council-led, partnership and community work outlined in section 3 of the report. This includes the launch of the national Place Based Investment Programme, developing the Place Principle commitment adopted by Scottish Government and COSLA and the anticipated national draft Planning regulations on Local Place Plans which are expected ahead of the Scottish Parliamentary elections in May.
- 1.4 In particular, the proposals aim to build on the learning and experience of joint working with Communities and Partners in responding to the current Covid-19 pandemic and to reflect the national ambition for a Resilient Recovery which seeks greater integration building on Social Renewal, inclusive growth and low carbon. The ambition is more place-based collaboration for improved outcomes.
- 1.5 The place making approach will include consideration of the changing and challenging financial landscape, strategic change across the Borders, existing commitments and policy requirements, and some initial engagement on Borders wide service review. It will also include a review and mapping of all related activity taking place across organisations and communities at region and local level.

- 1.6 Section 5 and Appendix 1 of the report sets out a route map for the development and implementation of the place making approach which has 4 distinct phases (with indicative timescales) as follows:
- 1) Preparation and Planning (March – July)
 - 2) Production of Initial High Level Place Briefs (August – October)
 - 3) Develop and Agree Place Programmes (September – November)
 - 4) Delivery, Monitoring and Review (November onwards)
- 1.7 This phasing recognises that cyclical, place making arrangements need to be built jointly over time with all partners. Developing a sustainable model is an important outcome to achieve. The approach also recognises that there is no “one-size-fits-all”. Each locality and each community has its own characteristics and capabilities and will start from different places.
- 1.8 Section 6 of the report sets out the next steps in progressing the first phase (again, with indicative timescales):
- 1) Establishing a Programme Team (March)
 - 2) Initial Conversations with key partner reps (March/April)
 - 3) Synthesis (April – June) detailed review and mapping of recent, current and planned work across communities
 - 4) Place-Based Framework (May – July) – developing and agreeing the principles, the detailed approach including an implementation plan
- 1.9 A report will be brought to Council at the completion of Phase 1 and prior to the commencement of Phase 2.
- 1.10 In support of the above, officers have engaged with Scottish Futures Trust (SFT). SFT were established by the Scottish Government as a centre of infrastructure expertise, providing additional skills, resource and knowledge to public sector organisations, they are experienced in developing and facilitating place making across communities in Scotland. SFT will provide support in both the development and delivery of the place making programme, providing both expertise and an objective voice in facilitating engagement.
- 1.11 As per the December 20 Council report, service profiles and proposals will be drafted in parallel with – and feed into – the first phase of the route map and, along with other issues, will inform the place making engagement. These profiles will form a series of reports to Council in late spring/early summer in parallel with Phase1 of the proposed place making approach.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 I recommend that Council:

a) Approve the model of engagement proposed

b) Note the timescales set out in the report including the intention to bring further reports to Council.

3 BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

- 3.1 At its meeting on 17 December 2020 Scottish Borders Council considered outline proposals for community engagement over future service delivery and associated investment of resources in meeting the needs of local people in the most effective and sustainable way. It was agreed that detailed proposals for an estate wide, community engagement led review of services would be brought to February Council
- 3.2 This place making proposals set out in this report are rooted in the Council's *Fit for 2024* programme and in particular the theme of *Enhanced Community Engagement, Participation and Empowerment*. In addition, it is anticipated that the proposals will also support service redesign under other key themes of Fit for 2024 Programme including:
- *Service by service reviews*
 - *Making better use of physical assets*
 - *Investment in digital solutions*
- 3.3 The proposals aim to build on, and link with, existing and planned National, Council, Partnership and Community work including:
- Community Empowerment Act
 - The Review of Area Partnerships
 - Locality Planning – and the refreshment of existing Locality Plans
 - Community-led action plans
 - Community Assistance Hubs and the development of the Locality Model
 - Climate Change Action Plans
 - Borderlands
 - Service Redesign
 - Investment in the Learning & Care Estate
- 3.4 The proposals seek to anticipate the launch of the national Place Based Investment Programme, developing the Place Principle commitment adopted by Scottish Government and COSLA. 'Place' is already at the forefront of key policy areas, including the Programme for Government, the Infrastructure Investment Plan and the emerging National Planning Framework. The purpose of the Programme is to provide a consistent framework used by all partners in places which aligns investments and change plans in a place context, to ensure that: [a] changes made in a place are relevant to that place; [b] change benefits all the people in a place.
- 3.5 Every place is already subject to many national, regional, and locally determined policies across most areas of peoples' lives. A place based approach does not seek to supplant or otherwise divert these legitimate priorities. However, it does seek to ensure that they are delivered in the best way possible when seen in the local context and when considered in tandem with various other initiatives that also impact locally. This requires a real understanding of local circumstance and the local narrative within which these often stand-alone policies operate.
- 3.6 The proposal seeks to adopt an integrated place based approach to service design, best use of assets and digital solutions. It seeks to strengthen

collaboration to enable aligned investments and shared use of space, assets and capacities to realise strategic ambitions and shared local outcomes. And it seeks to inform future planning and economic development at a local level.

- 3.7 The place making approach will include consideration of the changing and challenging financial landscape, strategic change across the Borders, existing commitments and policy requirements, and some initial engagement on Borders wide service review. It will also include a review and mapping of all related activity taking place across organisations and communities at region and local level.

4. LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC

4.1 The experience of responding to Covid-19 across the Scotland has changed the landscape of the planning and delivery of essential public services. At a local level, the response to the pandemic has strengthened community collaboration, collective leadership and ambition. Our learning from this experience falls under a number of headings including:

- Localism – The importance of community identity and strength of local social partnerships and Community Resilience arrangements; the ability and awareness of local people to respond quickly to local needs and to be innovative, resourceful and adept at bridging gaps and delays in statutory services; the way in which communities became a focal point or hub for the delivery of support and services
- Capabilities – The importance of local knowledge and networks, trusted people and local leadership and the ability to bring together and direct talents skills and the people power of volunteers who, above all, made the response to the pandemic work.
- Common Purpose - Community groups and public and 3rd sector partners have worked more effectively together, been more agile in finding solutions and making decisions. Our experience of this joint working through the Community Assistance Hubs is being used to form Locality Models
- Vulnerabilities – with a focus on protecting the shielding and the vulnerable, the response to Covid brought to light the social inequalities across our communities and the challenges we face in ensuring equality of access to support, advice and services as we move into recovery and as we develop new models of service delivery.

4.2 At a national level, the ambition for a Resilient Recovery, seeks greater integration building on Social Renewal, inclusive growth and low carbon. The ambition is more place-based collaboration for improved outcomes.

4.3 As we move to a period of sustained recovery, the lessons learned from the response to the pandemic provide an opportunity to build on local energy to transform local futures and enable:

- 1) More opportunities for community empowerment and participation
- 2) A better way of providing access to public services with a faster pace of service transformation which is addresses local need

3) A more efficient way of providing services through a better use of our shared resources

4) Better leverage of investment opportunity to create more and better jobs

4.4 The above resonates with the recent work on the review of governance arrangements for Area Partnership and in particular the engagement work undertaken by the Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) which identified an overriding message that people want to be involved in shaping Area Partnerships and ensuring they are fully inclusive, meet the needs of communities and achieve meaningful involvement and community engagement.

4.5 The subsequent report to August 2020 Council on the Review of the Area Partnerships also drew attention to the lessons from Covid and the opportunities to build on the learning and experience of the Community Assistance Hubs including:

- A reinvigorated Community Planning approach based on different ways of engagement and feedback
- Services redesigned to reflect user and community needs/requirements in light of the pandemic
- Locality Plans refreshed to reflect what communities require whilst both in recovery mode and longer term
- Build on the ways in which communities have been working which has seen them taking ownership to deliver Covid-19 related assistance in ways which best suit their town/village;

4.6 The report also highlighted the findings of the Best Value Assurance audit of Scottish Borders Council in 2019 which included:

The Council now needs to make better progress with its community planning partners in delivering crucial elements of their community empowerment obligations, including resourced locality plans which identify community need and help community wellbeing.

With the subsequent recommendation:

Improve how the Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership involves communities and the third sector, through greater involvement in local decision-making and by accelerating implementation of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

4.7 The proposals set out below aim to complement the review of Area Partnership arrangements in addressing this recommendation.

5. PROPOSED APPROACH

5.1 Officers have engaged with Scottish Futures Trust (SFT) in the development of these proposals. SFT were established by the Scottish Government as a centre of infrastructure expertise, providing additional skills, resource and knowledge to public sector organisations, they are experienced in developing and facilitating place making across communities in Scotland. SFT would provide support in both the development and delivery of the

place making programme, providing both expertise and an objective voice in facilitating engagement.

5.2 Based on early discussions with SFT, a proposed high level route map for developing and implementing a cyclical place-making engagement approach is set out in Appendix 1. The route map is based around 4 distinct phases:

- 1) **Preparation and Planning (March – July)** – This phase involves the buy-in and alignment of key stakeholders. It includes:
 - i. The development of a governance structure which will ensure that place making is aligned and integrated with Area Partnerships, Community Planning Partnership, Locality Planning and the strategic and operational planning cycles of the Council and its partners.
 - ii. Consideration of the changing and challenging financial landscape, strategic change across the Borders, existing commitments and policy requirements, and some initial engagement on Borders wide service review.
 - iii. A review and mapping of all related recent, current and planned activity and investment (including planned investments in digital services as well as the learning and care estate) taking place across organisations and communities. The purpose is to identify strategic, shared priorities and a common understanding of a place based approach across regional and local partners and policy areas including community and economic development.
 - iv. The development of a detailed phased framework for engagement. It is anticipated that some initial engagement on strategic service change options will inform this framework.
 - v. How the place making work will be resourced

The phase ensures that the necessary preparation and agreement is in place before engagement begins.

- 2) **Production of Initial High Level Place Briefs (August – October)** – High level place briefs setting out needs and priorities would be completed at a Locality level via Area Partnerships and enable a high-level, Borders-wide picture to be formed that will, in turn, identify priorities for more detailed community engagement. The output would be a place brief setting out an agreed shared story and articulation of priorities for the localities and its communities. In simple terms the brief answers the following questions:
 - a. What kind of place is this?
 - b. Why does it need to change?
 - c. What should the future be?
 - d. What are the priorities?

The engagement would revolve around a number of questions which would be used consistently in each community. Tools and resources such as the emerging Place Based Investment Programme and national [Place Standard Tool](#) may be used where appropriate.

The approach will be mindful that not all communities or localities are starting from the same position and that some will already have – or be developing – community-led action plans.

3) Develop and agree Place Programmes (September – November) –

This phase involves analysis from the high level locality place briefs to identify common themes and priority collaborations. The Place Programmes will be developed at a locality level – again through the Area Partnerships - and inform the refreshment of locality plans. The Programmes will look at opportunities for a more collaborative use of space, assets and local capacities, making better use of the totality of resources that already exist in places, to realise strategic ambitions and local outcomes. And it will look at opportunities and approaches to make better use of planned public sector capital investment to support community needs and economic development potential. It is expected that this work will identify a number of priority pathfinder communities and will involve more localised community place-making engagements over emerging areas of focus.

4) Delivery Monitoring and Review (November onwards) –

Once locality Place Programmes have been agreed, short-term quick wins could be implemented and longer-term actions could be fed into Council and other partners' service and strategic planning processes and timelines. Progress and achievement would be monitored as part of the governance arrangements set up under phase 1 and would include Area Partnership level.

- 5.3 Indicative timescales are shown above and illustrated in Appendix 2. These timescales will be reviewed and refined as part of the preparation and planning in phase 1.
- 5.4 It is perhaps worth emphasising that Area Partnerships - and through them, Community Councils, local groups and agencies - are central to the proposed approach and would be involved in preparation and planning, the initial high level place making engagements at the locality level, through the development and agreement of locality Place Programmes, to the monitoring of delivery and achievement.
- 5.5 Local Area Partnership provide elected members with an extensive opportunity to collaborate with community stakeholders including Community Councils.
- 5.6 As per the December 20 Council report, Service Profiles and proposals around service redesign will be drafted in parallel with – and feed into – the first phase of the route map and, along with other issues, will inform the place making engagement.

6. NEXT STEPS

- 6.1 If the approach set out above is agreed, the following next steps will be taken between March and July:

- 1) Establishing a Programme Team
- 2) Initial Conversations with key partner reps – drafting a set of principles and an initial mapping of recent/current and planned locality-based work to inform subsequent phases

- 3) Synthesis - detailed review and mapping of recent, current and planned work across communities
- 4) Place-Based Framework – developing and agreeing the principles, the detailed approach including an implementation plan

6.2 A report would be brought to Council at the completion of Phase 1 and prior to the commencement of phase 2.

7 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Financial

While there are no immediate costs attached to any of the recommendations contained in this report it is anticipated that the first development phase of the approach will identify resource requirements required to sustain the approach (see also Risks and Mitigations below).

7.2 Risk and Mitigations

- a) Resourcing – the successful development and delivery of the place making approach will require the appropriate resource and capacity. The first development stage of the approach will seek to review both the scope for refocussing existing resource (within the Council and across partner organisations) and what additional resource may be required. This will need to be reviewed again in Phases 3 and 4 as actions and projects take shape under the locality Place Programmes.
- b) Buy-In – collective leadership and buy-in from all stakeholders groups is a condition for success. A co-productive approach to the development and implementation of the approach seeks to ensure buy-in at all levels.
- c) Expectations – while the approach seeks to identify local needs, ambitions and priorities, these need to be grounded in the reality of the changing and challenging financial landscape. The first development phase of the approach aims to ensure that these and other challenges are fully identified and articulated ahead of the subsequent phases.
- d) Ensuring all voices are heard – it is important that the process enables all voices to be heard, not just the loudest and including those who are out-with the main towns of the Borders. Consideration of how this is achieved and managed will be addressed in Phase 1 of the approach and be kept under review throughout.
- e) Of not doing this – if we do not undertake this place making approach there is a risk that we do not make the best use of our resources, that we do not build on the opportunities and lessons learned from the pandemic and that our collective services do not address local needs effectively.

7.3 Integrated Impact Assessment

An integrated impact assessment has been completed. It is anticipated that there will be no negative impacts under either the Equality Duty or the Fairer Scotland Duty

7.4 Acting Sustainably

It is anticipated that there will be a positive effect on the following community and participation outcomes:

- a) involve the community in developing and implementing the project;
- b) take into account under-represented or excluded groups;
- c) take into account equal opportunities;
- d) improve community quality of life;
- e) improve community capacity;
- f) encourage local action and decision making.

7.5 Carbon Management

There are no direct effects on carbon emissions as a result of this report.

7.6 Rural Proofing

Not applicable.

7.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

Not applicable.

8 CONSULTATION

8.1 The Executive Director (Finance & Regulatory), the Monitoring Officer/Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Service Director HR & Communications, the Clerk to the Council and Corporate Communications have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated into this report.

Approved by

John Curry
Service Director,
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Signature

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Background Papers: Nil

Previous Minute Reference: Scottish Borders Council, 17 December 2020.

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Proposed Place-Making Process – Route Map

Appendix 1

