
Localities in the Scottish Borders- a co-ordinated approach for local improvement

Report by Chief Executive

**Scottish Borders Council Executive Committee (Jedburgh)
24 March 2015**

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 **This report seeks approval to develop and pilot a local, co-ordinated approach to planning and delivering services, providing support, optimising investment, and involving communities for maximum economic, environmental and social benefit.**
- 1.2 SBC and partners deliver a huge range of services and projects, and make considerable capital investment across the region. Different areas of the region are distinctive and unique, with their own strengths and weaknesses and will require different levels of support, to ensure economic and social prosperity.
- 1.3 In order to ensure that service delivery, investment, property decisions, projects and actions are better co-ordinated, involve local stakeholders and are sustainable into the future, SBC is proposing a coordinated, intelligence-led, problem solving approach to delivering services and investment appropriately in local areas, involving communities and community planning partners.
- 1.4 It is proposed that a **Locality Framework** is developed to ensure that each of the current five area forum localities are profiled in terms of key data, town information, SBC service delivery, investment , project work, community capacity and physical/environmental assets. The Framework should also highlight where there are opportunities and weaknesses to be addressed, and can be added to, including partner services, projects etc.
- 1.5 Subject to member approval, a senior lead officer will be appointed to co-ordinate and facilitate a **Localities Approach**. This approach will involve identifying the SBC staff from across a range of services already operating on a locality basis, and co-ordinating discussions about SBC services with these staff. These officers will work with the senior lead officer to engage local elected members, key stakeholders and partners in discussions about issues affecting localities, leading to the preparation of a **Local Action Plan**. This way of working should also allow for a locally-focused problem solving approach to be taken.
- 1.6 The senior lead officer will report Local Action Plan progress to Corporate Management Team (CMT) and inform relevant Area Forums of progress. Community groups/bodies and partners would also be encouraged to share plans and updates at the Area Forum in order that any work that affects a locality is effectively co-ordinated, and duplication is avoided. By increasing

local accountability, this may, in the medium term, lead to an opportunity to explore extending SBC decision making powers and increasing budgets for Area Forums.

- 1.7 By working in this way, SBC will ensure that an increased focus on localities supports the new phase of corporate transformation, provides a platform for the implementation of the Community Empowerment Bill, and will ensure that SBC continues to address the priorities articulated in our Corporate Plan 2013, and within the new Ambitious for the Borders programme.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 I recommend that the Executive Committee:

- (a) Agrees to the development of the Locality Framework;**
- (b) Agrees to pilot this Localities Approach in the Cheviot area over the next 12 months, to then evaluate the pilot and take lessons learnt into the roll-out to the other four localities;**
- (c) Agrees the utilisation of £20k from the Capital Projects Feasibility Fund for work in the Cheviot area (as outlined in Appendix 1);**
- (d) Note that the Depute Chief Executive, People, will lead this work, supported by a senior lead officer, to be appointed immediately if approved;**
- (e) Endorse the approach to using and evolving Area Forums for the purpose of local engagement and the monitoring of locality action plans.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Scottish Borders is a rich and varied area with distinct localities. Within each locality towns are distinctive and unique, and are key drivers for the Scottish Borders economy as well as being service hubs for the surrounding rural catchment. Areas are at varying levels of economic and social well-being due to their history, accessibility, population growth /decline, and their ability to diversify and adapt.
- 3.2 SBC has led and delivered a wide range of successful development and regeneration activities including the delivery of major projects in towns in the Scottish Borders. Much of this activity has been done in conjunction with local stakeholders, partners and community organisations, something that was critical for successfully winning external funding bids, for example in Eyemouth (EU funding to develop the Harbour), Kelso (£1.4m of Heritage Lottery and Historic Scotland funds matched with private sector leverage) and Selkirk (£1m funding from Historic Scotland). However, limited staff resources have made it difficult to sustain activity in the longer term and influence future service business plans and the subsequent allocation of resources.
- 3.3 Within many of Scottish Borders' main settlements and rural communities, community led initiatives are also being progressed. These tend to be of smaller scale but can add significant value to community life and local economic development. However, capacity to deliver community led activities varies from area to area for a number of reasons:
- a) those involved tend to be volunteers and have "day jobs";
 - b) the skills that exist within a community can vary enormously and can benefit from/be hampered by the arrival /departure of individuals with key skills;
 - c) SBC's involvement with community groups is often driven by that community's desire to exploit a particular funding opportunity and is on a "first come/first served" basis.
- 3.4 Some communities have developed their own "Town Action Plans" linked to major investment programmes and in Innerleithen and Jedburgh, communities have been striving for major investment and/ or more localised and coordinated service delivery but it is often difficult for SBC services to respond appropriately due to the lack of a locality focus.
- 3.5 The Community Planning Partnership (CPP) instigated work in Eyemouth in an attempt to co-ordinate our work, along with partners, but progress has been slow due to lack of dedicated resources, and inconsistent engagement from the key stakeholders. The major lesson learned from this work has been the need to properly support community leadership and the alignment of activities across the public, private and community sectors.
- 3.6 Many towns will benefit from SBC's current 10 year capital programme and indirectly through the Councils Added Value through procurement community benefit programme. Community Planning partners will also be investing considerable resources across the region and it is critical that we co-ordinated public, private, voluntary and community sector investment to ensure maximum benefit and avoid duplication.

4 THE RATIONALE AND STARTING POINT FOR A LOCALITIES APPROACH

- 4.1 ; Whilst many SBC services are planned centrally and delivered in the same way across the whole of the Scottish Borders, some SBC services already have successful locality arrangements in place, often, but not always, based on the areas shown in the map below, for example Neighbourhood Services, Integrated Children's Service, etc. However, these services tend to take a "service by service" approach, are delivered from different premises, with opportunities being potentially missed to work across services and to add value at a locality level.
- 4.2 | National policies such as "Developing Scotland's Future Workforce" (Wood Commission) highlight the need to link the work of Councils, and in particular secondary schools, more effectively with the private sector within a locality. Significantly, the Integration of Health and Social Care articulates the vital role of localities as planning units and the Integration Shadow Board has agreed to use the existing five localities within the Borders. And the forthcoming Community Empowerment Bill (June 2015) will require that communities are involved in the planning and delivery of services in a local area, so it would be foolish for SBC and partners to ignore this potential capacity that may exist within communities.
- 4.3 ' To ensure long term sustainability of services and communities, the opportunity should now be taken to ascertain if there are other services that can be planned and better delivered on a locality basis, ensuring that they are tailored to the needs of a community. Equally, SBC should engage communities in decisions about their future capital investment in localities. By opening up a dialogue with the communities in which services are delivered and resources invested, SBC and partners can explore where communities may be able to assist in or take on elements of service delivery in order to ensure the future sustainability of services, all essential requirements of the Community Empowerment Bill, and strongly aligned to the Commission on Strengthening Local Democracy.

5 Area Forum areas in the Scottish Borders



5 MOVING FORWARD

- 5.1 The Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership (CPP) has set its priorities in its Single Outcome Agreement; Elected Members, through their "Ambitious for the Borders" programme, set overarching principles and high level objectives for the Scottish Borders; and SBC Directors have the responsibility to develop key corporate strategies and policies that will improve quality of life for residents of the Borders. However, the way in which these outcomes are achieved could be varied from area to area to better take advantage of local capacity and opportunities. Within any approach proposed, Elected Members and Service Directors would still be responsible for setting the strategic direction and the outcomes to be achieved, but the interventions and support required in each locality could be different, have a "local" flavour and be tailored appropriately.
- 5.2 By way of context for each locality, the Scottish Borders Development Plan, prepared by SBC Forward Planning team, already provides individual town profiles that include land use allocations, town centre areas and regeneration opportunities. It provides the critical baseline for developing and agreeing more focused activity across Council services, the CPP, local business and community groups. The Forward Planning team also lead Development Plans and Supplementary Planning Guidance which drive opportunities, but this needs to be shared with all SBC services and partners to inform intervention of all kinds in localities- from care homes to schools, to the development of commercial property and community-owned sites. However, it is at present, not widely used or shared.
- 5.3 Using the Development Plan and any other locality based data and research, as the baseline, the Service Director Strategy and Policy, working closely with Service Director Regulatory Services, will lead an internal review of baseline information and very quickly, prepare a **Locality**

Framework. Once established, the Framework should, at any time, provide senior officers and members with an overview of the deployment of SBC's resources within a locality e.g. number of assets to be sold, planned investment, number of schools, care places etc. This could be extended to include partner activity and investment, as well as highlighting where there is an established community-led plan in place.

- 5.4 The Framework should be updated on an ongoing basis and can be used as the *starting point* for discussions with members and communities, with everyone working with the same baseline information.

6 SUPPORTING WORK ON THE GROUND

- 6.1 As part of the recently approved SBC Corporate Transformation programme, the Depute Chief Executive, People, will oversee any approach to working within localities. However, to progress the approach proposed in this report, it is recommended that a senior lead officer be identified to bring together and co-ordinate the work of SBC officers already working on a locality basis and to broker discussions with stakeholders and partners about issues affecting local areas. These SBC officers would operate as an informal 'locality team' which could also include any officers involved with current partnership arrangements within localities, for example around Health and Social Care Integration.
- 6.2 Using the newly developed Community Engagement Framework (to be approved in Spring 2015), the senior lead officer and the 'locality team' would be responsible for developing a locally tailored engagement plan to reach as many people as possible within a locality. To ensure effective engagement, facilitation of any engagement activity should draw on expertise from different parts of the council who have had experience of engagement and facilitation, as should any subsequent community capacity building support that is required. SBC currently has approx. 32fte staff that are linked to community capacity building in some way, located in various services across the Council and their efforts should be co-ordinated to ensure that each locality is supported appropriately.
- 6.3 Based on this locally tailored engagement plan, and using the information in the Localities Framework, discussions with local Elected Members and then with wider stakeholders and partners can take place with the aim of preparing a **Local Action Plan**. Where a community led Action Plan already exists this should be taken into account and built upon, and included in any discussions.
- 6.4 As well as more general community engagement activity within the locality, stakeholder engagement for the preparation of the action plan should include, at the very least;
- Integrated Health and Social Care Partnership Board (for locality planning and services delivery purposes)
 - Learning Communities Boards
 - Head teachers, Parent Councils, and young people
 - Local CLD Learning Community Partnerships
 - Traders associations/private sector bodies/business leaders
 - Existing community delivery mechanisms e.g. Community Trusts
 - Equalities groups e.g. Accessibility panels, Borders-wide

representative groups e.g. Elder Voice

- Community Councils
- Sports Hubs
- CP partners (including NHS Borders , RSLs, Police, Fire)
- Third Sector
- Other existing groups, for example Burnfoot Community Futures in Hawick, Langlee Residents Association in Galashiels.

- 6.5 As local stakeholder discussions develop, the senior lead officer would be responsible for identifying and brokering appropriate support from SBC services, and if required partners, who would be required to *problem solve* at a local level. The extent of SBC delegated decision making and devolved budgets may need to evolve over time in order that officers within the locality are empowered to agree and initiate changes to services at the locality level which will ultimately benefit the local population (but still be aligned with centrally determined strategic approaches and outcomes).
- 6.6 Critically, this locality approach should ensure that the three Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) priorities are being addressed locally (Grow our economy; Reducing inequalities; Maximising the impact from the low carbon economy) and any discussions with stakeholders should ensure that actions are developed locally that will address these priorities.
- 6.7 Engagement with stakeholders and partners would focus on key issues within each locality (including levels of deprivation, economic conditions, unemployment etc.), service specific issues e.g. issues with grass cutting or with social care provision, as well as identifying potential project opportunities, current barriers and resource issues. At the very least, it is anticipated that any action plan would include actions that relate to the following:
- Improving the vibrancy of **centres** of major towns within the locality;
 - Current and future approaches to **delivering services within the locality** (including community capacity building for involvement in service delivery if appropriate);
 - Maximising the benefits of SBC (and partner) **capital investment** in the locality;
 - Maximising the use of **physical and other (e.g. land based, environmental) assets** (council, partner, private and community owned).
- 6.8 The Local Action Plans that are developed by stakeholders in each area should be **shared and owned** by all the stakeholders involved. By addressing the SOA outcomes, these plans will improve the social and economic wellbeing of local areas within the Scottish Borders, stimulating and supporting community and private sector action, rather than for all or most interventions to be led by the Council. Action plans must be representative of the whole community (and not just a list of SBC actions) if they are to drive local improvements.

7 PILOTING THIS APPROACH

- 7.1 In order to test this proposed approach, officers are recommending that the Cheviot Area is used to pilot this way of working for the following reasons:
- 7.1.1 The Cheviot area contains two main towns, presenting a challenge in terms of engagement with distinct groups of stakeholders- this challenge needs to be addressed before work is done in other localities;
 - 7.1.2 In 2011, a "Place based" approach to integrated working within the field of health and social care was piloted in the Cheviot area, as part of a national 'Integrated Resource Framework'. Setting some high level outcomes for the area, a range of health and social care services were examined, and reshaped to improve outcomes and release efficiencies, including property costs. This work was recognised nationally by the 'Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Service', led by the late Campbell Christie. The information collected as part of this Cheviot work, as well as the practical experience of co-locating services, for example within Kelso Hospital, provides an excellent starting point for this localities pilot.
 - 7.1.3 A number of distinct proposals have been under consideration with regard to potential future activities, interventions and development in Jedburgh and surrounding Cheviot area and £20k, from the Capital Projects Feasibility Fund, has been earmarked for initial feasibility work (more details provided in **Appendix 1**). This work would provide an ideal opportunity for SBC to engage with and involve a wide range of stakeholders in the development of key pieces of work within this locality.
- 7.2 It is proposed that the pilot will be evaluated after 12 months in terms of outcomes achieved and actions progressed, and lessons learned will be incorporated into the approach before rolling it out to the other four localities in the Scottish Borders. The 12 month pilot will also allow SBC to further engage community planning partners with this approach, ensuring that the benefits of local co-ordination and problem solving are shared across a range of organisations.

8 ACCOUNTABILITY

- 8.1 The Officers who are likely to be involved the pilot would still be accountable to their relevant service manager and would still therefore be ultimately accountable to SBC's Corporate Management Team. The senior lead officer would be required to provide regular Action Plan updates to the Corporate Management Team.
- 8.2 Locally, Area Forums should be updated on progress with Action Plans, allowing them to see that work within localities is progressing. Public sector, third sector, private sector, community organisations (including community councils) and partnerships operating within the locality would all be encouraged to attend and participate in Area Forums. The functions referred to Area Forums within the Council's Scheme of Administration are completely aligned with and would be enhanced by the approach outlined

in this paper (see **Appendix 2**). By strengthening the role of Area Forums in this way, SBC and partners would be reinforcing partnerships, networking, community engagement and involvement, all highlighted as essential within the forthcoming Community Empowerment Bill.

- 8.3 Whilst strategic direction and outcomes will continue to be set centrally, aims, objectives and performance indicators will be developed locally that demonstrate achievement of outcomes at a local level and will enable local communities and the Area Forum to monitor the delivery of actions on the ground. This will also enable local benchmarking to take place thereby identifying areas of best practice across the localities of the Borders.

9 IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Financial

- (a) All activities to establish this localities approach will be delivered within the existing Council Financial Plan, but may require budget and staff to be re-aligned and targeted more flexibly to local priorities.
- (b) Because the resource requirements relating to Local Action Plans are, as yet, unknown, it may be necessary for officers to come back to members within any financial year to discuss any additional resources that may be required to deliver actions within Locality Action Plans or any changes that may be required to the budget.

9.2 Risk and Mitigations

- (a) The Council and Community Planning partners have a duty to secure best value from all money spent, and through the Community Empowerment Bill, will have a duty to ensure that communities can get involved in the discussions that affect them. By implementing this approach, the Council will address this duty effectively and create more sustainable services and communities.
- (b) Previous approaches to locality working have struggled to engage services across SBC as well as partners, and the lack of a dedicated resource has meant that work has been slow to progress. The approach outlined in this paper should mitigate against this risk but it will also be necessary to see this locality work reflected in Business Plans, as well as the budget setting process across the Council.

9.3 Equalities

- (a) This approach should ensure the involvement of different parts of the community, thinking about the locality as a whole and increasing community and private sector engagement. However, every effort should be made to ensure that the hardest to reach groups have the opportunity to be involved and a full Equality Impact Assessment should be undertaken.

9.4 Acting Sustainably

- (a) The locality coordination approach aims to encourage the sustainable development of our localities, increasing prosperity and long term

economic growth.

9.5 Carbon Management

- (a) There is no net increase in carbon emissions at a Scottish Borders level as there is no new service delivery. However, individual projects, which are taken forward as part of the project, will be assessed appropriately to minimise impacts and maximise low carbon opportunities.

9.6 Rural Proofing

- (a) Rural Proofing will be undertaken during the consultation phase. Localities act as a potential hub for rural communities and it is anticipated that any actions/ activities would add value to the wider rural economy rather than having a negative impact.

10 CONSULTATION

- 10.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Service Director Strategy and Policy, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Chief Officer HR, the Clerk to the Council and the Corporate Equalities Officer have been consulted and comments received have been incorporated in the final report.

Approved by

Chief Executive

Signature

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Background Papers: None

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Appendix 1

Proposal to undertake Feasibility Studies in the Cheviot Locality

Service Director Capital Projects

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A number of distinct proposals have been under consideration with regard to potential future activities, interventions and development in Jedburgh and surrounding Cheviot area. The purpose of this appendix report is to highlight these and seek agreement to proceed with undertaking a Feasibility Study which will align with the new and emerging Localities approach.
- 1.2 At a high level, the feasibility work can be summarised as follows:
 - (a) Proposal to develop and construct a Waste Community Recycling Centre (CRC) facility in Jedburgh serving the Cheviot area;
 - (b) Undertake town centre traffic management and streetscape enhancement works;
 - (c) Encourage development activity around gaps sites and urban areas within the town centre;
 - (d) Consider a further Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme/ Townscape Heritage Initiative (CARS/THI) approach to Jedburgh town centre (approach used successfully in Kelso and Selkirk);
 - (e) Maximise increased economic development activity generally through a localities based approach to regeneration;
 - (f) Planned investment in a 'dual use' 3G pitch as part of a Council wide programme of pitches throughout the Borders and any implications in relation to (a)-(e).
 - (g) Look at the any implications of any other planned activities such as Skip Running Burn or Schools Estate Review for example.
- 1.3 The intention therefore is to undertake a high level feasibility exercise that identifies and addresses all of these potential options as they may influence outcomes on a locality basis, whether heritage, traffic management, economic development, education, waste or other related activities within the Cheviot area.

2 PROPOSALS

- 2.1 The following sets out some of the concurrent activities that are either already underway, or are at a very tentative stage in the Cheviot, and in particular the Jedburgh, area.

3 JEDBURGH COMMUNITY RECYCLING CENTRE (CRC)

- 3.1 Following the Council's decision to develop a Community Recycling Centre (CRC) in Kelso, Jedburgh is now the largest settlement out with a five mile radius of a CRC. At the current time there is no business case to support the development of a CRC in Jedburgh.
- 3.2 In addition, no funds are currently identified within the 10 year Capital Programme for the development of a CRC in Jedburgh (Kelso CRC is expected to cost circa £800k to develop).
- 3.3 There are also no funds identified in the Waste Services Revenue Budget for any ongoing operational costs associated with running a site in Jedburgh (circa £150k pa). This is particularly important during a time when Waste Services is required to save a further £300k pa by 2016/17. As a consequence of the recent decision to terminate the contractual relationship with NES at Langlee however, the entire Waste Management Strategy will require to be revisited and there is therefore the opportunity to consider Jedburgh as part of this wider initiative.
- 3.4 The completion of a feasibility study would determine whether there is a business case for the development a Community Recycling Centre for the Cheviot area and if so what the potential options and implications might be, including financial (capital/revenue), land acquisition / site assembly, traffic and any other consequences. The traffic impacts could be addressed through part of a wider scheme of traffic management within the town and this investment would support the wider aspirations to encourage economic activity.

4 TOWN CENTRE INITIATIVES

- 4.1 In relation to a 'localities approach', there is a need to focus and support related socio-economic town centre activity, especially as part of any CARS/THI approach and therefore linking opportunities to encourage and support town centre regeneration, particularly business activity, is a critical driver from an Economic Development perspective.
- 4.2 Historic Scotland in particular appear to be very much driven by the Scottish Government's Town Centre First Principal and are seeking to stimulate and support linked business and & community regeneration activity in town centres.
- 4.3 For example, The Selkirk Community Action Plan and the governance structure established as part of the Selkirk project/bid development, were critical in demonstrating to Historic Scotland that we were seeking to take a wider business and community approach and evidenced that both the community and business were very much part of, and embedded, into the process.
- 4.4 SBC's bid for Selkirk for CARS funding was recognised by Historic Scotland as having this co-ordinated approach and was flagged as an exemplar bid to other local authorities.

- 4.5 The joint partnership approach with the community has already been delivered very positively on the ground in Selkirk with various business/community initiatives being stimulated through the CARS bid development process and implementation phase i.e. Selkirk Business Improvement District Scheme (BIDS) initiative, Selkirk Pop Up Shops, Selkirk Community Hub at the Cross Keys, redeveloped Selkirk website; ongoing development activity at the Haining Estate, new town centre events etc. There would be no reason to suggest that these successes could not be replicated elsewhere.

5 3G Pitch Programme

- 5.1 The 3G pitch programme, covering the entire Borders region, is currently included within the approved Capital Programme. Works are progressing (at different stages) across a range of sites in Peebles, Selkirk, Kelso, Hawick and Jedburgh.
- 5.2 The current preferred site in Jedburgh is located at Lothian Park which sits immediately adjacent to Jedburgh Abbey, a Grade A listed monument. Concerns have been raised regarding the setting of the Abbey being affected by a flood-lit 3G pitch and given the potential townscape and planning implications, consideration should be given to addressing these and other concerns as part of the wider works within Jedburgh to ensure that all aspects are considered holistically.

6 Other Activities

- 6.1 As part of the localities based approach, and through the use of the Localities Framework, maximum benefits should be drawn to other planned development, investment or services initiatives within Jedburgh, which should include for example, the approved capital projects comprising the Jedburgh Skip Running Burn (Flood Protection Scheme), Bongate Mill (Economic Development) and the wider strategic Schools Estate Review across the entire Council.

Appendix 2

Area Forums

A total of 15 functions are referred to Area Forums within the SBC Scheme of Administration. Nine of these functions could be significantly enhanced by the localities approach outlined in this report. These functions are listed below:

- Scrutinise the local impact and performance of Council and other services in the area.
- Scrutinise the local impact and performance of the Community Planning Partnership in the area.
- Make recommendations on the objectives and priorities for the area, including economic development, engaging with local communities and businesses as appropriate.
- Provide direction for decision-making on those issues that involve competing interests or are controversial or contentious, other than planning applications.
- Gain a shared understanding of need in the area.
- Seek to engage and involve the local business community and consider ways to attract commercial enterprise to the area.
- Act as a consultation body requiring local input, where appropriate.

- Consider and make recommendations if required to the relevant Committee on local community matters, including local economic development plans.
- Identify impediments and barriers which inhibit integrated approaches in local service provision, and make recommendations on how these could be overcome.