



SBC RECOVERY PLAN

May 2021

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND

Many people have suffered as a result of the wider impacts of COVID-19, particularly those already most disadvantaged. Many have lost their jobs or face future financial hardship; key sectors of our economy have been severely impacted; and young people's education and opportunities have been disrupted.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact, globally and locally, for public health, the economy, society and the environment, highlighting and compounding existing challenges.

During the pandemic we have seen the best of human spirit through the effort, sacrifice and resilience of individuals, communities and staff - a legacy which we must celebrate and preserve.

So while COVID-19 requires continued vigilance in our ongoing response, we need to consider our Recovery Plan.

We must look to the future, taking the positives and opportunities from the pandemic and addressing the new risks and threats we face. We also must continue to adapt and react to the consequences of the pandemic as the 'unknowns' emerge over time.

Our Recovery Plan sets out what worked well; what worked less well and what actions we need to take.

The pandemic has highlighted inequalities. Our recovery plan acknowledges and addresses those inequalities, recognising we will need to go further and faster to improve opportunities for those most disadvantaged.

We must also focus on a more sustainable future to address the serious long-term challenge of climate change. We declared a climate emergency and outlined a target to become carbon neutral "as soon as possible"; so we must make our recovery from COVID-19 a green recovery.

We must strive to keep up the benefits of reduced travel and reduced emissions as a result of home-based working.

We need to address demand delayed because of the pandemic. We need to protect the health and wellbeing of our residents and explore alternative models of care; but we also need to focus support for our economy, young people's education, and those who are vulnerable or isolated. The way we live and work will never be quite the same again, but we must use this Recovery Plan as a springboard to ensure we continue to make the Borders the best it can be.

Our plan sets out the Council's recovery actions within the 4 Corporate Plan themes.



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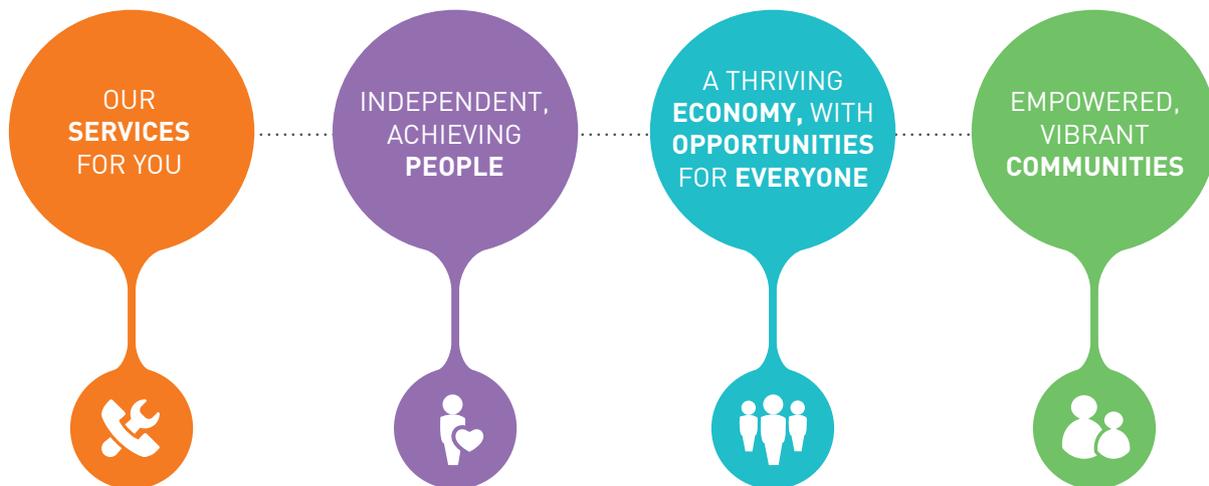
SECTION 2: OUR RECOVERY PLAN PRINCIPLES

This Recovery Plan is a clear statement of our intent. Given the continuing levels of uncertainty for the future, we are on a different journey to the one we had planned before the pandemic.

To ensure we're doing the right things, this Recovery Plan will remain dynamic, flexible and under constant review to ensure our recovery reflects operational, community and staffing need, emerging government policy and financial recovery.

We want to provide leadership on recovery, but we can't do this on our own, and collaboration through working together with our partners in the public sector, the health sector, the voluntary sector and the community is vital to the plan's success.

Our Recovery Plan sets out our priority actions for recovery from COVID-19 over the next 12-months. It lays the foundations for longer term recovery that will inform our renewed and revised Corporate Plan.



The Recovery Plan is underpinned by strong recovery principles:

1. Target recovery activity and support to where most needed through evidence-based decision making.
2. Stabilise and accelerate the recovery for Borders people, places and businesses.
3. Tackle inequalities to help our most vulnerable and disadvantaged citizens and communities overcome the negative impacts of the pandemic.
4. Join-up and work in partnership to speed up recovery for the Borders.
5. Focus on environmental challenges and use the recovery to accelerate our climate change ambitions.
6. Apply lessons from the pandemic and utilise the learning and good practice to improve the Council as an organisation & employer, strengthen place and partnership working across the Borders.



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SECTION 3: OUR RECOVERY PLAN AREAS



1. Maintain resilient and sustainable services:

Manage increased demand for services, particularly hospital and social care services, and strengthen the care market.



2. Develop our people and future ways of working:

Invest in a sustainable and resilient workforce through recovery, learning from the pandemic to embed flexible working, promote well-being and develop new ways of working.



3. Help our children and young people to achieve their educational and attainment aims:

By returning to in-person learning, enabling access to digital resources and tackling attainment gaps.



4. Deliver digital performance to make the most effective use of our resources:

Use digital opportunities, data and technology solutions to drive investments and high performance for all Borders residents



5. Support business and grow the economy:

Build confidence in local businesses, re-purpose town centres and create the conditions for business innovation and investment to drive economic growth. Work with our partners to get people back into employment and support skills development, training and re-learning.



6. Invest in regeneration and a sustainable future:

Invest in the regeneration of local areas, support housing growth and support the development of digital infrastructure and sustainable transport.



7. Recognise the power of our communities to tackle inequality and social exclusion:

Champion equality and tackle the effects of poverty, vulnerability, isolation, loneliness and domestic violence; and support this by promoting increased and sustainable social action, volunteering and community capacity.



8. Climate change:

Make sustainability and tackling climate change central to our recovery and lay the foundations for a sustainable long-term future.





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SECTION 4: OUR RECOVERY PLAN ACTIONS

The actions that follow explain what we will be doing to combat the impact of the pandemic and to deliver our recovery.



1. Maintain resilient and sustainable services:

Manage increased demand for services, particularly hospital and social care services, and strengthen the care market.



ACTIONS

- Ensure health and care provision is safe and supports the impact, management and recovery from the virus.
- Increase access to and capacity for reablement care, respite care and intermediate care.
- Continue to work closely with care partners and suppliers and build on effective Community Resilience networks.
- Use the learning from COVID-19 to further improve the experience for children and families in need of support and protection.
- Review services commissioned through other organisations to identify post-pandemic issues and opportunities.
- Support Carers to continue to meet care and support needs.



2. Develop our people and future ways of working:

Invest in a sustainable and resilient workforce through recovery, learning from the pandemic to embed flexible working, promote well-being and develop new ways of working.



ACTIONS

- Roll-out new technology and capabilities to staff (e.g.) Total Mobile.
- Undertake a Digital Skills baseline survey to understand what skills staff have and where the gaps are.
- Create a sustainable network of Digital Champions across service areas, able to support colleagues develop their digital skills.
- Support managers with a learning programme to develop skills to remotely manage teams and services to ensure high levels of performance and staff wellbeing.
- Develop the future plan for the use of our buildings including the workplace redesign to support new ways of working.
- Develop a sustainable and resilient workforce programme.



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3. Help our children and young people to achieve their educational and attainment aims:

By returning to in-person learning, enabling access to digital resources and tackling attainment gaps.

INDEPENDENT,
ACHIEVING
PEOPLE



ACTIONS

- Continue the pandemic support/arrangements available for vulnerable children and young people.
- Provide targeted IT and training to children and young people to enable them to use digital learning resources
- Support a positive return to full time in person learning with a focus on relationships, wellbeing and progress in learning



4. Deliver digital performance to make the most effective use of our resources:

Use digital opportunities, data and technology solutions to drive investments and high performance for all Borders residents

INDEPENDENT,
ACHIEVING
PEOPLE



ACTIONS

- Continue to review, upgrade and replace our technology to support new ways of working, offering improved security, stability, and integration to business systems.
- Increase our digital service offering to improve customer experience, communication and information sharing.
- Eradicate waste in our processes and eliminate manual and paper-based processes through the use of digital solutions and alternative service delivery models, striving to.



5. Support business and grow the economy:

Build confidence in local businesses, re-purpose town centres and create the conditions for business innovation and investment to drive economic growth. Work with our partners to get people back into employment and support skills development, training and re-learning.

A THRIVING
ECONOMY, WITH
OPPORTUNITIES
FOR EVERYONE



ACTIONS

- Provide business advice, marketing, promotional activity and physical measures to support businesses and town centres.
- Promote the Borders on the National and International stage as a place to invest and work.
- Support training providers and employers to upskill to reflect changes in employment opportunities.
- Reshape community development services
- Fully utilise the Build Back a Better Borders Recovery Fund to “kick-start” activities relating to sport, culture, environment and strengthen community capacity, resilience and engagement

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6. Invest in regeneration and a sustainable future:

Invest in the regeneration of local areas, support housing growth and support the development of digital infrastructure and sustainable transport.

A THRIVING
ECONOMY, WITH
OPPORTUNITIES
FOR EVERYONE



ACTIONS

- Address issues of poor connectivity by accelerating development of digital infrastructure and improved coverage (fibre, 4G, mobile).
- Accelerate the delivery of cycle routes, walking friendly routes and pavements to promote health and wellbeing.
- Reduce surplus space in our office-based estate as a result of the increase in home working.
- Develop the Local Transport Plan to support a low carbon future and rural connectivity.



7. Recognise the power of our communities to tackle inequality and social exclusion:

Champion equality and tackle the effects of poverty, vulnerability, isolation, loneliness and domestic violence; and support this by promoting increased and sustainable social action, volunteering and community capacity.

EMPOWERED,
VIBRANT
COMMUNITIES



ACTIONS

- Develop the locality model, building on the best practice seen in the CAH pandemic response, to deliver services designed around our local communities.
- Work with our communities and staff to increase the levels of local self-help and volunteering and to tackle isolation.
- Identify the increased financial value of volunteering to show the benefit to the local economy.
- Build upon the success of the Connecting Scotland programme, work with Partners on the Connecting Borders expansion project, to assist vulnerable people get digitally connected and access to a range of opportunities such as training & learning, employability skills, maximising income, reducing household bills, and access to digital services.



8. Climate change:

Make sustainability and tackling climate change central to our recovery and lay the foundations for a sustainable long-term future.

EMPOWERED,
VIBRANT
COMMUNITIES



ACTIONS

- Implement action plans for climate change commitments to consolidate the change in behaviours as a result of COVID-19.
- Support and promote the ability and functionality to work from anywhere reducing the need to travel and delivering efficiencies.
- Define the plan and timeline to become carbon neutral as an organisation.



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SECTION 2: OUR RECOVERY PLAN PRINCIPLES

It's important that we keep track of the difference this Recovery Plan is making over the next 12 months. We will collect data and organise it in a way that gives us a clear measure of our success. We'll know it's worked when...

1. Maintain resilient and sustainable services:

1.1) Everyone can access the quality services they need



1.2) The health and social care sector can cope with ongoing demand and winter pressures



2. Develop our people and future ways of working:

2.1) Staff tell us what things are working well and what needs to improve



2.2) Data and metrics demonstrate improved staff wellbeing (e.g.) mental health and wellbeing indicators, absence, staff turnover and employee engagement



3. Help our children and young people to achieve their educational and attainment aims:

3.1) Families and carers feel confident that children can get back to school and access the education they need



3.2) Children can complete a full academic year, without any impact on their results



4. Deliver digital performance to make the most effective use of our resources:

4.1) Investment in digital services and working delivers measurable results



5. Support business and grow the economy:

5.1) Businesses are supported to safeguard jobs, and to recover and adjust to drive future growth



5.2) There is increased provision/delivery of training, skills and career based activities



6. Invest in regeneration and a sustainable future:

6.1) We have accelerated delivery of our capital works and infrastructure projects to support growth in housing, business and our town centres





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7. Harness the power of our communities to tackle inequality and social exclusion:	
7.1) Greater numbers of people are supported to improve their health and well-being and recover well from the effects of pandemic including isolation and financial stress	
7.2) More of our most vulnerable people receive the local support they need and greater numbers of our communities are supported to deliver local solutions to local priorities	
7.3) Social value, engagement and co-production are embedded within our planning, procurement, and delivery of services	

8. Climate change:	
8.1) Carbon dioxide emissions are being reduced towards our target of being carbon neutral	
8.2) There is greater investment in sustainable transport (e.g.) electric vehicles, cycle routes and public transport	
8.3) We are reducing the cost and carbon footprint of the council's property	

SECTION 6: NEXT STEPS

Reinstatement of services is an important element of recovery, but learning from the pandemic to design future models and services that are resilient and better meet the needs of our communities and our staff is critical.

We need to ensure that we use resources effectively, working with partners and with businesses to deliver services that provide what is required and that deliver improved outcomes for those in receipt of the service.

The actions set out in this plan build on momentum from the pandemic but also, very importantly, align to the strategic aims of the organisation through the Corporate Plan.

The Corporate Plan is key to ensuring that the strategy informs the design. The Corporate Plan will be refreshed, embedding the recovery plan priorities and measures within it.