
OUR PLAN AND YOUR PART IN IT: SBC'S CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2020/21

Report by Executive Director, Corporate Improvement and Economy

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

08 June 2021

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report presents a high level summary of Scottish Borders Council's 2020/21 performance information with more detail contained within Appendices 1, 2, 3 and 4. The report includes reporting on the progress of change and improvement projects across Scottish Borders Council (SBC), under the Fit for 2024 programme and highlights the work undertaken during the course of the organisation's response to the Covid-19 pandemic.**
- 1.2 SBC approved a revised Corporate Plan (Our Plan and Your Part in it 2018-2023) in February 2018, with four corporate themes. In order to monitor progress against the four themes, performance and context information will be presented quarterly to Executive Committee, with an annual summary in June each year.
- 1.3 During 2020/21, SBC has continued to press ahead with a range of important initiatives and innovation, including:
- (a) The progression of a number of key projects including commencement of the Reston Station project works in March 2021 and the appointment of McLaughlin & Harvey as the Main Works contractor for the Hawick Flood Protection Scheme;
 - (b) The accelerated implementation of the Inspire Learning programme, with every student, from Primary 4 onwards, and teachers receiving an iPad, enabling SBC to adapt quickly to remote learning when required throughout the pandemic;
 - (c) The accelerated roll out of MS Teams across the entire organisation, providing a digital platform for staff to collaborate virtually online as well as enabling the vast majority of office based staff to transition to home working with minimal disruption;

- (d) The council continues to engage with the Borderlands Inclusive Growth deal, formally signed on 18 March 2021, which will deliver multiple benefits to the Scottish Borders;
- (e) Extended the contract with CGI for the delivery of end-to-end managed IT Services until 2040, positioning the Scottish Borders as the UK's first Smart Rural Region
- (f) Developed a group of Young People from across the Borders to become Youth Ambassadors for Sustainability. The Youth Ambassadors will focus on highlighting the climate emergency and encouraging local people to take action under the campaign **#OurPromiseToThePlanet**.
- (g) An Award Winning Council, with the work on both the Inspire Learning Project and Dirtpot Corner Improvement works receiving a total of 3 National awards.

1.4 Over the past year the Council has continued to deliver key core services, albeit, *how* some services are delivered may have changed. Restrictions meant that face-to-face services could not be delivered in the usual way. Through the use of technology, Services adapted to continue service delivery and meet the needs of our residents. Care services adapted to the increased need for additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in order to undertake their role. Catering and cleaning staff were re-distributed to support provision of food parcels for those most in need. Teaching Staff and Students experienced significant changes in how Education provision was delivered, both in-school and at home learning.

1.5 The report highlights only a fraction of the many initiatives and projects, in addition to those mentioned above, undertaken to continue to support the needs of those living in the Scottish Borders throughout the pandemic:

- (a) Borders Older People's Planning Partnership (BOPPP) undertook a survey to identify key needs of older people as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The results of this will be used to inform the commissioning of key older people's services.
- (b) SB Cares mobilised a Covid-19 Rapid Response Infection Team. Initially responding to CV-19 outbreaks within our Care Homes, this team will continue to operate to manage future outbreaks of infection.
- (c) The Walk It Project continued to welcome and encourage, where restrictions allowed, people to take part in fun, safe walks across the Borders. The walks are an ideal way for people to keep fit, socialise and relieve stress.
- (d) Summer Childcare Hubs for children of key workers and vulnerable families meant Key Workers could continue to respond to the pandemic where required and vulnerable families continued to receive vital support.
- (e) We have successfully continued to provide a safe, face-to-face social work service to Children and Families across the region.

- (f) Distributed over £70 million of funding through the Covid-19 Grants scheme to provide vital financial support to local businesses directly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- (g) Put in place Community Assistance Hubs within each of the 5 localities to provide support to meet the needs of Borderers in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

1.5 The information contained within this report will be made available on the SBC website: www.scotborders.gov.uk/performance

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 I recommend that the Committee:-

- (a) **Notes the progress update relating to Change and Improvement Projects, referenced in Section 5 and detailed further in Appendix 2;**
- (b) **Notes the changes to performance indicators outlined in Section 6 of this report;**
- (c) **Notes the performance summarised in Sections 7 and 8, and Approves the Annual Reports set out at Appendices 1, 2 and 3 and the action that is being taken within services to improve or maintain performance.**

3 BACKGROUND TO SBC PERFORMANCE REPORTING

- 3.1 SBC approved a revised Corporate Plan in February 2018 (Our Plan and Your Part in it 2018-2023). Against a continued challenging external context, the plan presented how SBC will focus Services for our communities, set across four corporate themes:
1. Our Services For You
 2. Independent, Achieving People
 3. A Thriving Economy, With Opportunities For Everyone
 4. Empowered, Vibrant Communities.
- 3.2 In order to ensure that the corporate themes are addressed effectively, SBC's Performance Management Framework (PMF) was updated and presented to Council on 30th August 2018. This revised PMF set out how SBC would strengthen its performance management across both SBC Services and Commissioned services.
- 3.3 The Appendices reflect a quarterly reporting format structured around the four corporate themes, and use a mixture of narrative, highlights, performance and context indicators.
- (a) Updates on Fit for 2024, Change and Improvement projects are contained in Appendix 2. These are monitored by Corporate Management Team (CMT) and through the SBC Financial Plan and associated monitoring.
 - (b) Appendices 1 and 3 contain updates on specific performance and context indicators, structured around SBC's 4 Corporate Themes.
 - (c) A schedule of indicators is provided for information at Appendix 4 covering quarterly performance reporting and also annual reporting through the Local Government Benchmarking Framework.
 - (d) To reflect the significant investment made by SBC, an overview of the work and impact of Police Scotland's Community Action Team is provided in Section 8 and within Appendix 5.

4 CHANGE & IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS – UPDATE

- 4.1 Change and Improvement projects are now managed and monitored collectively under Fit for 2024. These projects are delivered in support of SBC's Corporate Plan, the SBC Financial Plan and the Health and Social Care Strategic Plan.
- 4.2 Fit for 2024, the Council's new Transformation Programme was agreed by Council on 28th February 2019. Characterised as 'the next generation' of transformation, the programme aims to fundamentally reshape the Council, from our engagement with our citizens and communities to the way we go about our business. The purpose is to deliver a Council that is adaptable, efficient and effective and capable of not only meeting the challenges ahead, but of fully optimising outcomes for the citizens and communities for which it is responsible.

4.3 The following highlights are reported:

- a) The development of Community Assistance Hubs (CAH) to support the council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Hubs were developed in each of the 5 localities with the aim of using multi-disciplinary teams to maximise community capacity to meet challenges brought by the Covid-19 pandemic. Community Support was the single point of contact for many elderly or vulnerable people and the aim of the CAHs was to minimise potential hardship caused by isolation or difficulties accessing essential food, medical supplies or appropriate information due to ongoing Covid-19 restrictions.
- b) The introduction of Sirenum/WorkFLEX in Education and SB Cares. This solution provides an efficient, workable resource for covering casual or supply work.
- c) The need for a Flexible Workforce response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Numerous members of staff from Roads, Parks, Waste Treatment, Catering and Cleaning were re-trained and re-deployed in order to ensure vital new tasks were undertaken to support and safeguard Communities during the pandemic.
- d) An update on the ongoing work to support SBC's vision of becoming a Paperless Council through the introduction of several initiatives such as Print to Post; Citizen Space surveys; the use of MS Forms to capture information, rather than paper forms; the trial of CYPAD Kitchen Manager devices to manager and monitor catering activities and reducing the number of print devices by more than half through the Print Rationalisation Programme.
- e) The accelerated rollout of MS Teams in response to the restrictions imposed due to the pandemic, allowing business to continue with minimal disruption. MS Teams has drastically changed how we collaborate with colleagues, both internally and externally.
- f) The accelerated rollout of the Inspire Learning programme in response to the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure our young people could continue to be educated when in-school learning was not possible.
- g) The development of our schools through the Learning Estate Programme with the completion of the Jedburgh Campus and future focus on the Galashiels Community Campus and Peebles High School developments.
- h) Work undertaken as part of the Connecting Scotland National programme, a National initiative, which was launched in response to the pandemic to help support vulnerable people get online. The scheme aimed to reduce isolation and improve accessibility of essential services for vulnerable people.

5 ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO SBC PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (PI)

5.1 We have been unable on this occasion to update a number of indicators within the report:

- a) Planning Permission application – weeks to determine. This data is provided by the Scottish Government with a lag in SBC receiving the information. The Q3 and Q4 figures for 2020/21 are expected later in the year.
- b) The Procurement Capability Procurement Programme (PCIP) assessment round across the entire Scottish public sector for 2021 has been paused due to CV-19 and the pressures Councils are under. In addition to this the Scottish Government are reviewing the assessment approach. It is likely future plans for this will be communicated to Councils later in 2021.

5.2 Previously reported figures have been revised as follows:

- The Q3 2020/21 figure for the 16-64 Employment Rate has been updated.

5.3 The following indicators have been decommissioned:

- (a) Energy Use cost information has been removed due to energy providers continuing to increase prices, which in turn results in increased costs being reported. The Energy Use measures will be reviewed and a fresh set included in the Q1 2021/22 quarterly report. The new indicators will provide better insight in to energy use across the organisation.
- (b) SBC Business Grants Fund indicators have been removed due to the Grants and Loans scheme ending in March 2020.
- (c) Scottish Borders Council (SBC) took a decision on 5 November 2020 to transfer the operational delivery of the Business Gateway service from SBC to South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE). Subsequently the SOSE Board agreed to deliver Business Gateway service on behalf of Scottish Borders Council as part of a strategic partnership agreement. The arrangement is part of the strategic partnership protocol between SOSE and SBC that Council agreed on 26 November 2020 to help both organisations work together to achieve their joint aims for the benefit of the local economy. As part of the agreement, the role of Business Gateway transferred from SBC to SOSE from 1 April 2021. SOSE will provide quarterly activity reports to Scottish Borders Council with information provided being used to inform this Corporate Performance Report. The activity will align with Business Gateway National and Scottish Local Authority Economic Development (SLAED) group performance indicators. Further information relating to the Scottish Borders Business Gateway delivery, and associated performance management framework, is available in the report presented to the Executive Committee on 20 April 2021: <https://scottishborders.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=161&MIId=5148&Ver=4>

Indicators reported in this Corporate Performance Report, for 2021/22 onwards, will be taken from the new Performance Management Framework and will focus on:

Indicator	21/22 Target	Justification
Total number of start-up customers who have begun trading (Quarterly)	150	Demonstrates success of BG Service
Number of clients attending start-up workshops/seminars (Quarterly)	250	Reflects the estimated number of attendees in Scottish Borders maximising available resource and support from National workshops/seminars
Number of jobs created (Annual)	n/a	Economic impact of new businesses created.
Sector breakdown of Business Start-Ups (Annual)	n/a	Economic impact of new businesses created.

6 PERFORMANCE AGAINST THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE THEMES

6.1 Performance measures – summary of successes

- (a) Planning permission applications increased by 5% compared to 2019/20.
- (b) There is a notable improvement in the percentage of household waste sent to landfill (28.67% in 2019 to 0.09% 2020). This is due to the closure of the Council's landfill site but also commencement of the new residual waste contract. It is worth noting that Covid-19 has seen a significant increase in the quantity of waste generated by households due to lockdowns and increased home working. At this stage, the impact on household recycling performance appears to have been limited. However further analysis is required to fully understand the impacts.
- (c) Housing Benefits - although the average time to process new claims has increased when compared to 2019/20 (13.63), both the time to process new claims and the time to process change events remain well within target.
- (d) Assessor information - Additions and amendments to the Council Tax Valuation List and Valuation Roll remain better than target for the third consecutive year.
- (e) 81% of Looked After Children are in Community Family based placements rather than residential. This is a 1% increase on 2019/20 and is above target.
- (f) 95% of invoices were paid within 30 Days.

6.2 Performance measures – summary of challenges

- (a) Complaints - Performance for Stage One complaints, both time to process and the percentage closed within timescales, has declined in 2020/21 when compared to the previous year. Similarly, the percentage of Stage 2 and Escalated complaints closed within timescale have also decreased when compared to 2019/20 although, the time to process for both measures remains within target.
- (b) Bed days associated with Emergency Admissions shows a significant increase in Q3 2020/21 when compared to the previous quarter. This increase is attributed to the measure for Scottish Borders now including data for the four community hospitals. This brings the measure in line with National figures.

6.3 Our Performance in the context of Covid-19

There is a need to exercise caution when considering the Council's performance during the periods impacted by the pandemic. Performance reported reflects the impact of changing environmental, social and economic factors in direct response to the pandemic. The following are examples of this:

- a) **Education Attendance / Exclusions** – performance for the year and latest quarter appears to have significantly improved; however, children have not been in schools due to home learning as result of Covid-19 restrictions and, therefore, instances of exclusions are minimised. With that said, schools have also developed and launched the 'Inclusion Framework', which provides advice and guidance around exclusions.
- b) **Community Learning and Development** – performance has dipped during 2020/21; however, the Service has been absorbed in to responding to the pandemic, as well as lockdown restrictions and social distancing contributing heavily to the reduced number of participants.
- c) **Energy Use** – Electricity consumption has reduced, a proportion of which can be attributed to people working from home rather than office based. However, Gas Consumption has increased. While it may be expected for this to have also reduced, when staff have been in offices, or Students in schools, there is a need for windows to be open for increased ventilation, which in turn increases consumption.
- d) **Affordable Housing** - These annual delivery figures have always varied considerably from year to year due to a number of factors. In 2020/21, Covid-19 related impacts have included the closure of building sites, a number of delayed site starts, materials shortages, material delivery delays and working days lost due to infection. Performance for 2020/21 looks to have reduced; however, it has been directly impacted by the effects of the pandemic.
- e) **Out of Work Benefits Claims** have increased in 2020/21 compared to the previous year. This could be attributed to the impact of Covid-19 on the job market and sustainability of businesses during the pandemic.

- f) **Safer Communities Mediation Service** - 2020/21 performance is considerably poorer when compared to the previous 2 years. Mediation service delivery has been significantly impacted by the restrictions imposed as a result of Covid-19, meaning there is little opportunity to undertake face-to-face mediation sessions. Where possible mediation is being carried out through other means.
- g) **Customer Contacts** have increased by approx. 34,000 compared to the previous year. It is clear from the reported data, that the way we interact with customers has dramatically changed over the course of the pandemic.

6.4. While reinstatement of services is an important factor in our recovery, we need to continue to maximise the opportunities that have been presented because of our need to respond to the pandemic. As such, the Council has developed a Recovery Plan that identifies key actions to lead the organisation through its recovery from the pandemic whilst supporting the delivery of our Strategic Aims set out in the Corporate Plan. The Recovery Plan, along with the Corporate Plan, will shape and support ongoing service improvement.

7 COMMUNITY ACTION TEAM – SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY AND IMPACT

7.1 An infographic summary on the impact of the Community Action Team (CAT) is provided at Appendix 5.

During 2020/21 the CAT has:

- Carried out 1,365 hours of High Visibility foot patrols and 5,854 hours of mobile patrols;
- Carried out 284 static road checks;
- Issued 844 parking tickets;
- Carried out 274 Person Drug searches (44.5% positive) and 74 Premises Drug searches (86.5% positive);

8 IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Financial

There are no costs attached to any of the recommendations contained in this report.

8.2 Risk and Mitigations

Effective performance management arrangements will ensure that services, and those providing services on behalf of SBC, are aware of any weaknesses and can take corrective action in a timely manner, therefore mitigating any risks more effectively. The Council's Risk Management Policy and framework ensures that all services, and services delivered by third parties, identify and manage risks to the achievement of their objectives, with senior management providing appropriate levels of oversight. Performance should be enhanced by having robust risk management arrangements in place. In response to the Best Value Assurance Audit of SBC during 2019, a Best Value Audit Action Plan was created. This action plan includes provision for strengthening SBC's approach to performance reporting.

8.3 **Integrated Impact Assessment**

There are no adverse equality/diversity implications. Performance reporting may help the Council to identify and address any equality / diversity issues and improve processes and procedures.

8.4 **Acting Sustainably**

Economic, social and environmental impact of SBC actions can be monitored more effectively if there are effective performance reporting arrangements in place.

8.5 **Carbon Management**

There are no significant effects on carbon emissions arising from the proposals contained in this report.

8.6 **Rural Proofing**

This report does not relate to new or amended policy or strategy and as a result rural proofing is not an applicable consideration.

8.7 **Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

There are no changes to be made to either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the proposals contained in this report.

9 **CONSULTATION**

9.1 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 the final report.

9.2 The Corporate Management Team have been consulted on this report and any comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

Approved by

Rob Dickson

Executive Director

Corporate Improvement and Economy Signature

Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Melanie Hermiston	Business Services Officer Tel: 01835 824000 Ext 6803

Background Papers:

Previous Minute Reference: 19 January 2021

Note – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Alasdair Collison can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

Contact us at Policy, Planning & Performance, Scottish Borders Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, performance@scotborders.gov.uk