
DRAFT SOUTH OF SCOTLAND REGIONAL ECONOMIC STRATEGY

Report by Executive Director, Corporate Improvement and Economy

SCOTTISH BORDERS COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

10 JUNE 2021

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report to the Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership (CCP) Board sets out the progress being made in the development of the South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy and agrees to support the planned consultation on the draft Strategy.**
- 1.2 The draft South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy has been developed by the South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership (REP). The REP aims to ensure that there is a strong strategic direction for the economic development of the South of Scotland that aligns partner activities with those of the South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE). The REP comprises members drawn from the public, private, voluntary, and community sectors from across the South of Scotland. Councillor Rowley currently chairs the REP and Scottish Borders Council's other REP members comprise Councillors Haslam, Mountford and Bell with Councillor Robson as a substitute. There is also representation on the from some other organisations in the Scottish Borders CCP including Borders College and the Registered Social Landlords (RSLs).
- 1.3 The first main task of the REP has been leading and overseeing the development of a South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy. The draft Strategy shown in Appendix 1 (not yet attached) provides a vision and set of priority themes for the next 10 years and set of high level actions. These will provide the ambition and intent for the development of a three year action plan that is updated on an annual basis. This action plan will be developed in the next two months in tandem with the proposed public consultation.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Community Planning Partnership Board notes the draft South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy in Appendix 1 (not yet attached) and agrees to support the planned consultation on the Strategy by encouraging and promoting participation through partner networks**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At its meeting on 31 October 2019, Scottish Borders Council agreed to support the establishment of the South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership (REP). Briefly its aims are to ensure that there is a strong strategic direction for the economic development of the South of Scotland that aligns partner activities with those of the South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE), and to effectively link into the Convention of the South of Scotland.
- 3.2 The REP comprises members of Scottish Borders Council, Dumfries and Galloway Council, SOSE, together with appointed members from business, communities, social enterprise, registered social landlords, and representatives from colleges, universities and public bodies including the Scottish Funding Council, Skills Development Scotland, Scottish Enterprise, and VisitScotland.
- 3.3 The membership of the REP from Scottish Borders Council comprises Councillors Haslam, Rowley, Mountford and Bell with Councillor Robson as a substitute. The chair of the REP rotates annually between Dumfries and Galloway Council (DGC) and Scottish Borders Council (SBC). Currently, Councillor Rowley chairs the REP. Its main task has been leading and overseeing the development of a South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy.
- 3.4 As indicated in the report to Scottish Council's Executive on 15 September 2020 the first full meeting REP was delayed until September 2020. The reason for the delay in starting was the scale of the COVID-19 pandemic and the requirement to re-focus staff resources for to meet the immediate needs of businesses.

4 DRAFT SOUTH OF SCOTLAND REGIONAL ECONOMIC STRATEGY

- 4.1 The main task of the REP is to set the strategic direction for the regional economy in the South of Scotland by developing the South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy. At its initial meeting the REP expressed a strong desire to see this Strategy developed as quickly as possible. The consultants RSM were commissioned by SOSE, DGC and SBC together with Scottish Government to support the production of the Strategy.
- 4.2 This work on the Strategy commenced in early December 2020 and has involved a considerable amount of engagement with community and voluntary organisations, public and private organisations and the wider public. There has also been comprehensive analyses of economic, social and other data and other studies pertaining to the South of Scotland. The REP has met regularly often on a monthly basis to oversee this work, supported by a smaller Reference Group chaired by Councillor Rowley.
- 4.3 The draft Strategy is a ten-year strategy. It seeks to maximise the economic opportunities in the South Scotland, whilst taking account of its key challenges. It is shaped by the engagement of organisations and people across the region together with the members of the REP. Its vision recognises the unique strengths of the South of Scotland in relation to its natural capital, the quality of its communities and cultural identity and looks to increase the

working population and attract visitors to the region. Inclusivity, sustainability, innovation and creativity, and making the most of everyone's potential have been key elements in influencing the vision and the priority themes.

4.4 From this vision the Strategy identifies a set of high level actions under six priority themes. These are:

- Skilled and Ambitious People
- Innovative and Enterprising
- Rewarding and Fair Work
- Cultural and Creative Excellence
- Green and Sustainable Economy
- Thriving and Distinct Communities