



REFRESH OF SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN 2018-2023

Report by Executive Director for Corporate Improvement and Economy

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

17 June 2021

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to refresh the [Council's Corporate Plan 2018-2023](#) by supplementing it with the Refresh Document set out at Appendix A; to provide a stimulus for discussion of a new Corporate Plan for the period 2023-2028; and to provide a framework for annual review of and engagement around the Corporate Plan.
- 1.2 Much has changed since Council agreed its existing Corporate Plan in 2018. This report asks how we refresh, recast and strengthen our existing Corporate Plan to address challenges and optimise opportunities, given our new context?
- 1.3 The Refresh Document answers this question by promoting a strengthening of the Council's values and a unifying mission which builds on the commitments under the four themes of the Corporate Plan. These values, and mission require to be set within the strategic landscape of challenges and opportunities faced by the region and the Council.
- 1.4 The report notes that Council managers have been engaged in developing 'refreshed' service plans, intended to more effectively align the Corporate Plan to those plans which guide the delivery of our objectives at the service level. All of this is about strengthening the 'Golden Thread': the relationship of strategy to plans and actions and their relationship to managers and to staff.
- 1.5 In strengthening the Golden Thread, the report also identifies the need to revisit our approach to Performance Management. Only if we have clear performance information which measures our priorities can we hope to deliver the improvement outcomes we seek. A review of the Council's Performance Management Framework has been initiated to support this process.

1.6 Finally, the report proposes that the Refresh Document should serve as a framework for future engagement around a new Corporate Plan for the period 2023-2028 and that an annual review of the Corporate Plan should be undertaken as an essential element of ensuring that it continues to be relevant and responsive to change.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 I recommend that Council agree:-

- a) The Refresh Document at Appendix A shall refresh and supplement the Corporate Plan 2018-2023;**
- b) The Refresh Document shall provide a framework for public engagement and consultation about a new Corporate Plan for the period 2023-2028; and**
- c) That a review of the Corporate Plan should be undertaken on an annual basis, with the first such review to align with Council's consideration of its Financial Plan 2022-23 to 2027-28.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Corporate Plan serves as the Local Authority's strategic framework for action during the lifetime of the Council. The corporate plan should be prepared on the basis of an organisation-wide strategic approach. It is important that the plan is designed to meet the circumstances of our organisation and the region it serves whilst preserving flexibility in order to meet the demands of a changing environment.
- 3.2 Scottish Borders Council agreed its present Corporate Plan in February 2018. It can safely be asserted that, judged from 2021, much has changed since then.
- 3.2 The Corporate Plan needs to take account of such changes and, to refresh the thinking and commitments in the Corporate Plan in the light of those changes. Furthermore, as an organisation, the Council needs to begin to think about its ambition and responsibilities for the future as we look towards a new Corporate Plan for the period 2023-2028.
- 3.3 Therefore, a 'Refresh of the Corporate Plan 2018-2023' has been developed with the following objectives:
 - A review of the key changes which have occurred since 2018;
 - To provide a supplement or support to the Corporate Plan in the light of those changes;
 - To provide a starting point and a framework for discussion around and development of a new Corporate Plan from 2023; and
 - To embed an annual review of the Corporate Plan as an essential element of the Council's Corporate Planning Cycle.

The refresh document is appended to this report as Appendix A, and we refer to it throughout this report as the 'Refresh Document'.

- 3.4 It must be emphasised:
 - a) Any new Corporate Plan should be 'built from the ground up'. The report and Refresh Document begin very much from the notion that any Corporate Plan must develop out of a deliberative evidence-based assessment of issues with Elected Members, but that this, in turn, must build on broad engagement and a clear commitment to co-production with public, partners, stakeholders and staff.
 - b) A little less than a year to go until the next local government elections, the proposed approach set out in the Refresh cannot be regarded as something which has been tested through engagement with the public and other stakeholders. Thus, we should see the proposals in the Refresh Document as a suite of working principles designed to support to the existing Corporate Plan and our activity generally.

3.5 The Refresh Document builds on the current Corporate Plan, and draws on the Council's [Staff Corporate Plan](#) 2018-2023, the [Scottish Borders Community Plan](#) (approved in May 2018) and the plans and activities of other bodies, both public and private. The focus is deliberately big picture - about what we are aiming to achieve, what we do, why we do it and how we are going to go about doing it. The starting off point for this process is the present Corporate Plan followed by what has happened since 2018.

4 OVERVIEW OF THE CORPORATE PLAN 2018-2023

4.1 Our existing Corporate Plan 2018/23 made a very deliberate effort to move the dial from what 'we, as a Council, were going to do' to 'asking you to play your part- as individuals, families, businesses, partners and communities.' At the same time, the Plan set out a series of commitments under the following 4 themes:

- Our services for you
- Independent, achieving people
- A thriving economy, with opportunities for everyone
- Empowered, vibrant communities

4.2 Over the last 3 years, the Council has sought to consult, involve and engage the public, communities, stakeholders and partners in efforts to create solutions with 'you and for your local area', through our new Area Partnerships. It would be rash other than to acknowledge that this remains a work in progress, but meaningful progress has been made in some areas as evidenced through our quarterly monitoring reporting and the Best Value Assurance Report of October 2019 in which the Accounts Commission noted:

Scottish Borders Council has made steady progress as it continues to transform the way it delivers services. Working with other organisations will be key to the council achieving its ambitions for further changes.

4.3 However, the Accounts Commission also highlighted a number of areas particularly relevant to any review or consideration of the Corporate Plan.

- The Council's Business Transformation, specifically, 'Fit for 2024' programme is 'an ambitious next step in this agenda which will require further refinement and planning.'
- 'The council should be more effective in evaluating, managing and reporting its performance, bringing greater clarity on where and how its services need to improve. It also needs to get better at the reporting of performance – both in terms of information considered by members and in reporting to the public.'
- 'Such elements should support a stronger culture of continuous improvement throughout the organisation. Another significant element of such a culture is staff ownership of the council's ambitions for change – we urge the council to develop how it engages its staff in planning and delivering change.'

While an action plan has been implemented to address these issues, they remain relevant to questions of how the Council strengthens the relationship between its strategic aspirations, improvement and delivery.

5 WHAT HAS CHANGED?

- 5.1 To say that the changes we have experienced since 2018 are profound, risks understating the position. Dominated by the immediate consequences of COVID-19, evidence suggests that nationally and locally our health, economy, societal and cultural outcomes have been deeply negatively impacted and continue to worsen with the passage of time. We do not yet know what the new normal is. Moreover, we are not dealing with the impacts of COVID-19 alone but with a combination of issues in the form of the climate and nature emergencies and EU Exit, which broaden and augment the challenge we face as a Council, as well as that faced by the people, communities, businesses and other stakeholders that we serve. The Refresh Document considers these challenges at some length, subdividing them into:
1. 'New' and enhanced challenges, including COVID-19, the interlinked Climate and Nature Emergencies, and EU Exit.
 2. Pre-existing strategic issues, particularly those impacted by new and enhanced challenges.

The following pre-existing strategic issues are identified. These too are considered at some length in the Refresh Document.

1. Demography
 2. Health and Social Care
 3. Economy
 4. Skills, Training, Employability and Transitions
 5. Transport
 6. Vulnerable Communities, including poverty and wider deprivation issues
 7. Environment
- 5.2 If the challenges appear unprecedented, then it is also the case that, for the first time in many decades, the Scottish Borders stands on the cusp of unprecedented prospects with new tools, new opportunities and new funding. Key to these opportunities is an alignment of circumstances in which the Scottish and UK Governments have accepted that rural regions, like the Scottish Borders, require bespoke solutions if they are not merely to meet the challenges which lie ahead, but to grasp future opportunities for prosperity, inclusion and sustainability. Thus, we now have levers such as South of Scotland Enterprise, a developing Regional Economic Strategy for the South of Scotland, the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, the Edinburgh and South-East Scotland City Region Deal, the South of Scotland and City Region Indicative Spatial Strategies, and priority within the current

design of the UK Government's Build Back Better Funds, replacing EU Structural Funds.

- 5.3 The question which arises from this blend of challenge and opportunity is how our thinking and focus should change as we move forward? In particular, taking what we know about the challenges we face, the opportunities which exist, the assessment of the Accounts Commission of our Strengths and Weaknesses, how do we refresh, recast, and strengthen our existing Corporate Plan and provide a framework for thinking about, discussing and shaping the next Corporate Plan?
- 5.4 The Refresh Document answers these questions by promoting a strengthening of the Council's values and vision, and a unifying mission which builds on the commitments under the four themes of the Corporate Plan. Not having been tested with the Scottish Borders public and other stakeholders, these values and mission should be seen as working principles, operative during the remainder of the present Council term. They are also intended to provide a stimulus and a start point to generate ideas, views and discussion around a new Corporate Plan within the framework, which appears at Appendix 1.
- 5.5 In setting out a framework for future engagement, consultation and annual review of the Corporate Plan, furthermore, the present report recognises that Corporate Planning should be seen as an ongoing process in which our ambitions, and progress against those ambitions are revisited continually, enabling us to adapt and enhance our efforts to drive continuous improvement.
- 5.6 While the focus of the present report is not business transformation, the Council's transformation programme, Fit for 2024, is a core element of preparing the Council for the future and will continue to sit at the heart of the Council's corporate planning process.

6 REFRESH: WORKING PRINCIPLES

- 6.1 Taking our cue from paragraph 3.4, what might a suite of working principles to support our Corporate Plan and activity for the remainder of the present Council term look like?
- 6.2 Over the last two decades, in Scotland, as in other parts of the world, there has been increasing interest in a 'Wellbeing' approach to government, which focuses on societal progress through measuring wellbeing as a function of improvements in quality of life, material conditions and sustainability. In Scotland, this has found its principal expression in the Christie Commission and the National Performance Framework now enshrined in legislation through the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. As a first step, in 2007 Scottish Government set out its vision in the National Performance Framework (NPF), promoting improved wellbeing as the measure of effective public policy based upon the assessment of outcomes. NPF was then augmented by the development of Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs), first introduced in 2009, by which Scottish Government and local authorities sought to specify shared priorities for each council area, consistent with Scottish Government's strategic goals. More recently, SOAs were replaced with Local Outcomes Improvement Plans (LOIPs). The notion

of wellbeing, however, remains a constant. Whether you are talking about Ayton, or Ardnamurchan, the essential aspiration of any vision is likely to be the same. Wherever you are, it's about 'wellbeing'.

- 6.3 There are a number of different definitions of wellbeing, but there appear to be 4 elements common to many definitions: prosperity, good health, fairness/equality, sustainability. Accordingly, any vision for the Scottish Borders should be based around the aspiration of optimising wellbeing and our ambition for the region's citizens should be to drive:
- Prosperity, economic resilience and Community Wealth Building, which when reinforced by notions of fairness and equality places a premium on inclusion;
 - Good physical and mental health and wellbeing;
 - Fairness and equality based on the notions of personal freedom, equality of treatment, respect for all human beings and a belief that one's views matter;
 - Sustainability. As Scottish Government has noted, 'If everyone in the world lived as we currently do in Scotland, it would require the resources of more than three planets.' To enable all people throughout Scotland, and the wider world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life, it is essential that we live, work and consume sustainably.
- 6.4 Each of these aspirations is already strongly manifested in Scottish Government policy through the National Performance Framework; and, for the Council, through the Embedding Sustainable Development Report of 29 August 2019, which formally committed the local authority to implementing the UN Sustainable Development Goals as they relate to local government.
- 6.5 A vital connection also requires to be made between our efforts to optimise wellbeing and the Council's legal duties under Equalities legislation and the Fairer Scotland Act. By making specific reference to equalities as an element of wellbeing, and, as we shall see, embedding equalities and inclusion within our refreshed values, it is intended to reinforce the Council's legal obligations with an active policy commitment, intended to shape the Council's decision-making and policy approach across the board.
- 6.6 The Refresh Document takes 'improving wellbeing' as an overarching principle or 'mission', which should run through the Council's decision-making and delivery, reflecting those elements set out in para 6.2.
- 6.7 The Refresh Document also considers that there should be a special focus on Natural Capital. This is consistent with the Four Capitals approach of the Report of the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery, and complements the direction of national policy, reflected in 'the Green Recovery' ambitions of the Scottish and UK Governments, set out (among other commitments) in the Update of the Climate Change Plan 2018–2032, the multi-year investments of the Programme for Government 2020–2021, and in the Build Back Better Funds. Perhaps most importantly of all, it recognises the foundational role of Natural Capital in underpinning the prosperity and character of the Scottish Borders. Natural capital is one of the Scottish

Borders' greatest assets and is indispensable to our future net zero economy, developing thriving rural economies based around woodland creation, peatland restoration and biodiversity as well as sustainable tourism, food and drink and energy. The Council's Climate Change Route Map, the South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy, the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, the Edinburgh and South-East Scotland City Regional Deal and the South of Scotland Regional Land Use Partnerships (RLUP) Pilot should be seen as elements of a wider strategy – which builds on existing partnerships and best practice and our natural capital assets as a regional 'unique selling point'.

- 6.8 The heart of our existing Corporate Plan 2018-2023 is #Our Part/Your Part – the recognition that, if the Scottish Borders is to successfully meet future challenges and grasp future opportunities, then this requires everyone to play their part, from the Council delivering services to the diligence of students and lifelong learners to volunteers in communities throughout the Scottish Borders. The notion that we need everyone to play their part remains essential. If it was true previously that the challenges we faced and the opportunities available to us required a mobilisation of all our capacities across the Scottish Borders, whether public sector, private sector, third sector, or private citizen, then this even more true now. #Our Part/Your Part remains a clarion call in future plans. The scale and complexity of challenges faced, the need to optimise whatever opportunities exist make it essential.

Our Values

- 6.9 If we take 'optimising wellbeing' as our overriding goal, as the Council's core mission, and we add to this the mutually supportive relationship between Council, Public and Partners implied in #Our Part/Your Part, we can begin to extrapolate a series of interlocking values.

Our Values

a) People-focused

- We work collaboratively with colleagues and partners, recognising that everything we do is for the benefit of our residents
- Less judgment, more empathy: We treat people with respect rather than making assumptions about their needs or behaviour
- No decision about me, without me: We believe that everyone has the right to be involved in decisions that affect them.

b) Agile

- We take advantage of new opportunities and manage risk effectively
- We work with the public, communities, partners and stakeholders to make the best use of public resources and are robust in our business relationships to ensure that we deliver good value for money
- We are always looking for new ideas, learning from our own experiences, each other, and the best in the world

- We actively try new things; we understand that mistakes create opportunities to learn and we manage the risks that arise

c) Inclusive

- We are passionate about everyone having the best opportunities
- We carefully consider the impact of our decisions, and we always seek to act fairly
- We recognise that diversity is about understanding that people are different and have different strengths as well as needs, rather than simply treating everyone the same
- We recognise that equality is the right of all human beings to be equal in dignity, to be treated with respect and consideration and to participate on an equal basis with others in any area of economic, social, political, cultural or civil life; all of which ensure that people feel welcome, valued and accepted

d) Sustainable

- We are passionate about the prospects of future generations and ensuring we live within our means
- We are determined to ensure that the Scottish Borders should become a leader in the environmental sphere and enjoy the benefits of dealing simultaneously with health inequalities and environmental sustainability
- We think creatively, look for solutions and solve problems based upon an understanding of the long-term

Our Strategic Priorities

6.10 A further link in this chain of values, and mission, is clarity around the Council's strategic priorities. Now viewed through the prism of COVID-19, EU Exit and the Climate and Nature Emergencies, the strategic issues we face are noted below, and their salience for the region is described in the Refresh Document:

1. Demography
2. Health and Social Care
3. Economy
4. Skills, Training, Employability and Transitions
5. Transport
6. Vulnerable Communities
7. Environment

Together with the values, and mission set out in this section, it is suggested these strategic issues form part of the framework through which we should think about our future priorities and consider our future Corporate Plan.

- 6.11 Currently, however, these priorities are broad. Looking forward, it will be important, as the dialogue around priorities in the next Corporate Plan develops, that Council concentrates on a more limited number of priorities. If this is not done, then we run the well-worn risk that, 'if everything is a priority, nothing is a priority.' Elected Members will have a critical role in promoting discussion around future strategic priorities, and determining what the focus of the Council's strategic priorities should be.
- 6.12 For the present, Council should continue to frame its approach to pursuing its strategic priorities around the 4 themes of the existing Corporate Plan:
- Our services for you
 - Independent, achieving people
 - A thriving economy, with opportunities for everyone
 - Empowered, vibrant communities
- 6.13 Our Vision - The Refresh Document does not propose a vision for the future. Given where we are in the lifecycle of the present Corporate Plan, it would seem appropriate that the development a vision, if felt appropriate, is undertaken during the engagement and development around a new Corporate Plan.

7 WHAT NEXT?

a) Service Plans and Performance management

- 7.1 What the Refresh Document seeks to do then is to reinforce our Corporate Plan by interpolating some working principles, comprised of values, and an overarching goal or mission into the Corporate Plan. It also recognises the most pressing strategic issues which the Council and the region face, and their importance in shaping future priorities. It will be clear that by themselves these are simply steps in a process aimed at strengthening the relationships between the Council's goals and what it does and delivers. As noted in the Refresh Document, this is referred to as 'the Golden Thread'. Our aim is to ensure that our goals, vision and values inform and are informed by our processes, systems and people. Linking the "Golden Thread" from our Corporate Plan through our business strategies and operations is crucial if our staff, our partners, the public and other stakeholders are to buy-in to our strategy and a shared purpose for the Council and the Scottish Borders.

7.2 Clearly, this is a process, not a one-off. It's about building something which captures the ambition of our region, and seeks to translate it from the high level of a Corporate Plan into real action. This requires a series of steps. These steps include:

- Refresh of the Corporate Plan, which is a key focus of this report.
- The development of effective Service Plans, which make the link between the Corporate Plan and operational delivery.
- Strengthening the Council's Performance Management approach.
- Further strengthening and mainstreaming equality into the heart of every day practices by embedding it firmly within our Performance Management Framework.

7.3 Work to ensure that there are clear and effective Service Plans has been undertaken. However, the observation that this is a process bears repeating. Subject to Council agreeing the present report, officers will seek to further refine the relationship between the Refreshed Corporate Plan and Service Plans, ensuring that Service Plans are framed within the values, and mission of the Refreshed Plan and are driven by the Council's strategic priorities.

7.4 It hardly need be said that efforts to align the Council's values and mission with what it delivers are likely to be pointless unless we can show that these values and mission are manifested in results. In its Best Value Assurance Report of October 2019, the Accounts Commission noted that the Council needed to improve its performance reporting. There are two aspects to this:

- More effectively being able to measure progress, so that judgements can be made about what actions are required to drive improved outcomes; and
- Reporting performance better and demonstrating how we are making a difference through our actions.

Again, this brings us back to the Golden Thread. Performance management is a connected process that follows a logical succession of stages. What we're aiming for is an unbroken link between values and goals which manifests itself ultimately in results. It's when what we think and what we say and what we do all line up: analysis, systems and people making sure that our values and goals are mirrored within our strategies, plans and policies and delivered through our actions.

7.5 A review of the Council's Performance Management Framework has been initiated to support this process. Among the things the Review will consider are:

- A business manager approach to providing expertise, alignment and support.
- Using the Council's Competency and Appraisal Process for staff to embed the right behaviours in respect of performance management.

- Progress of the Business Intelligence Programme to create data resource and analytical tools to drive improvement of our priorities/outcomes.
- 7.6 The performance-management process involves clearly communicating to every member of staff the aims and objectives most directly relevant to them, enabling them to think for themselves about how they can make their best contribution, then supporting and developing them, both professionally and personally, so that they can optimise that contribution. This is about creating a culture of continuous improvement. Our goal is that managers own the performance-management system as something live, useful and essential to achieving performance at the Council. It is not a bureaucratic add-on: it's as necessary and as regular for the Council as breathing is for all of us. The Business Intelligence Hub is the means by which we secure, develop and analyse the right kind of information.

b) Engagement

- 7.7 With Local Government Elections scheduled for May 2022, the timeframe for considering a Refresh of the Corporate Plan has been necessarily compressed and consultation has been focused internally. As the Council progresses to the development of a new Corporate Plan for the period 2023-2028, it is essential that the new Corporate Plan is one based on broad and deep engagement and co-production of a shared ambition in which the public, communities, businesses, partners and stakeholders feel invested. So, the Refresh Document and this report are also about creating a framework for future thinking and development of a new Corporate Plan. Built around the Council's developing approach to Place-Making, we envisage not a single conversation with the public, communities and other stakeholders, but an evolving and extended dialogue with a much stronger process which builds a fundamental difference in approach. Council's agreement to the recommendations of this report will initiate that process.

c) A Framework for Reviewing the Corporate Plan

- 7.8 As noted in para 3.1, the corporate plan serves as the local authority's strategic framework for action during the lifetime of the council. Much of the value of the corporate plan, however, lies in the process which underpins it. It is this process which is essential to preserving flexibility in order to meet the demands of a changing environment, and in driving improvement. To be effective, such processes need to be structured and sustained.
- 7.9 To support a structured and sustained approach to Corporate Planning, it is proposed in the report recommendations that the Council moves to an annual review of the Corporate Plan to assess progress against objectives and to consider and approve what may need to change in the light of evidence. Appendix 1 shows the proposed process cycle for supporting the Corporate Plan going forward. The effect of this approach would be to establish a clear cycle including early engagement, first with Elected Members, and then more generally in developing a new Corporate Plan, and an annual review of the plan in each subsequent year of the lifetime of the Council, supported by a consultation process. The final review would be a review of the entire term of the Corporate Plan.

7.10 It is also proposed that the Corporate Plan reviews, and the engagement and consultation which supports them is aligned with the Council's budget planning process. The reason for this is that the budget should be informed by the Council's vision, values and goals and the engagement and consultation activities which inform them. Alignment of the budget and corporate planning process will strengthen this relationship. The first review should take place in February 2022 aligned to Council's formal consideration of its Financial Plans.

8 IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Financial

Refreshing the Council's Corporate Plan and strengthening our corporate planning process will have an influence upon the Council's decision-making and service delivery. In turn, it can be expected that the strengthening of the Corporate Plan and corporate planning processes will influence the Council's spending priorities. Financial implications, including anticipated benefits resulting from either the Refresh Document or the corporate planning process will be identified as implementation progresses, and reported to Council/the appropriate committee.

8.2 Risk and Mitigations

Highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the unfolding emergencies in relation to Climate and Nature, and EU Exit, the strategic context in which the Council is operating has changed significantly since it agreed its Corporate Plan in 2018. To ensure that the Corporate Plan, which establishes the strategic ambition of the Council remains relevant and directs the Council's activities effectively, the Corporate Plan needs to take account of such changes, and, to refresh the thinking and commitments in the Corporate Plan in the light of those changes. Furthermore, as an organisation, the Council needs to begin to think about its ambition and responsibilities for the future as we look towards a new Corporate Plan for the period 2023-2028, and to institute a process which supports the development of the Plan and the wider process of continuous improvement. If the Council fails to take these steps, there is a risk that the Council's vision, strategic goals and culture will not match the level of challenge it faces, or enable it to maximise opportunities consistent with its responsibilities. This report, its proposed Refresh of the Corporate Plan and the proposed framework for future corporate planning are 'the mitigations' of these risks. By ensuring that the Council is responsive to the challenges both it and the region face, and attentive to the opportunities which exist, through a Refresh of the Corporate Plan and ongoing dialogue around a future Corporate Plan, the Council's ability to address challenges and grasp opportunities should be optimised.

8.3 Integrated Impact Assessment

- (a) An integrated Impact Assessment has been undertaken. The findings indicate that whilst the refresh of the Corporate Plan is relevant to both the Equality and Fairer Scotland Duty there is no need for a full assessment to be undertaken. This is because the impact of the Refresh is indirect rather than direct. It will impact and influence the Council's decision-making, policy approach and delivery more widely, but by setting the terms in which that decision-making, policy approach and delivery takes place.
- (b) The recommendations to the report propose a clear framework for a development a new Corporate Plan, engagement and annual review of the Corporate Plan and associated engagement. While the design of the engagement and consultation elements of this process will be developed within the Place-Making work currently being progressed, a key objective is significantly strengthened, broader and deeper engagement with the Scottish Borders public, communities and other stakeholders.

8.4 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

This report and the Refresh Document build on the Embedding Sustainable Development Report of 29 August 2019. They are part of a journey aimed at embedding a culture in the Council which supports delivery of the UN SDGs 'as they relate to local government', specifically, in the context of the Council's remit and responsibilities. The goal is to infuse a set of values and vision, and unifying mission in the Council's decision-making, policy development and delivery which is complementary to the UN SDGs.

If we take the first UN SDG – end poverty in all its forms everywhere - at a practical level:

- With respect to our proposed values:
 - People-focused means a genuine focus on the issues of those in poverty or at risk of poverty. Thus, matters of finance, governance and delivery are not issues in and of themselves, but simply issues of agency to allow us to direct our focus on to the goals of reducing and ameliorating poverty in the Scottish Borders
 - Agile – means a commitment to what works rather than being hide-bound by 'aye bin'
 - Inclusive means what it says – a passion for addressing disadvantage, and ensuring that everyone has the best opportunities
 - Sustainable – means a determination to ensure that our efforts and solutions to address poverty last, that they really make a difference to people now and to the generations who come after them.

- With respect to our mission, ‘optimising wellbeing’ means addressing the causes of poverty in the Scottish Borders, promoting economic resilience and prosperity; good physical and mental health and wellbeing; a sense of fairness, equality and social justice; and, again, a high quality of life while ensuring the conditions which make that quality of life possible are sustained into the future.

This exercise repeats with each of the 17 UN SDGs.

The significance of the UN SDGs will be an important feature of discussion around a new Corporate Plan.

8.5 Climate Change

The impact of this report on Climate Change is indirect rather than direct. For example, it has no direct bearing on the elimination of fossil fuels in our buildings and other infrastructure. Rather, as noted in para 8.4, the report’s aim is to embed a culture in the Council which supports delivery of the UN SDGs, including specifically the following UN SDGs:

7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe resilient and sustainable
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

8.6 Rural Proofing

It is anticipated that the Refresh of the Council’s Corporate Plan and, in particular, the proposed dialogue around a new Corporate Plan and supporting corporate planning process will have a strongly positive effect on engagement, promoting inclusivity and thereby facilitating the participation of those people, businesses and stakeholders based in rural locations.

8.7 Data Protection Impact Statement

There are no personal data implications arising from the proposals contained in this report.

8.8 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

There are no changes required to either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the proposals 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 Equalities and Diversity Officer has been consulted in relation to the Equality Impact Assessment and is supportive of the points noted at para 8.3.

Approved by

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Background Papers: Scottish Borders Council Corporate Plan 2018-2023; Scottish Borders Council Staff Corporate Plan; Scottish Borders Community Plan; Report on Embedding Sustainable Development 29 August 2019

Previous Minute Reference:

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

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