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## **EDINBURGH AND SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND CITY REGION DEAL REGIONAL GROWTH FRAMEWORK UPDATE**

**Report by Service Director, Customer & Communities**

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### **SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL**

**26 August 2021**

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#### **1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report seeks the views and approval of Council of a proposed finalised Regional Prosperity Framework (RPF) for the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region following a consultation process. Subject to the views of Council, it is anticipated that the finalised RPF will be ratified by City Region partners at the Joint Committee meeting on 3 September 2021.**
- 1.2 The Regional Prosperity Framework (RPF) builds on City Region ambitions through a holistic economic framework that will provide the basis for economic recovery post-pandemic and future direction for major projects and investment that support inclusive growth and transition to a net zero economy over the next 20 years.
- 1.3 City Region partners initiated a consultation on a draft RPF, which closed on 26 July. Feedback from the consultation has been analysed to inform drafting of a final RPF, which is attached as Appendix 1. It is intended that the final RPF shall be agreed by partners at the City Region Joint Committee meeting on 3 September 2021.
- 1.4 Scottish Borders Council is represented by the Council Leader on the Joint Committee. The Council is invited to express its views upon and to approve the final draft of the RPF preparatory to the meeting on 3 September 2021.

#### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **I recommend that Council:-**
  - a) Note the overall number and content of responses to the consultation, the major themes which emerged and the broadly positive nature of the majority of responses;**
  - b) Comment upon the draft Final Regional Prosperity Framework (RPF);**

- c) Note that, subject to approval of the RPF by the Joint Committee, a number of additional actions will be initiated to support the RPF, namely:**
- i. formal endorsement by those regional partners (including local authority partners) which have not endorsed the RPF by that stage;**
  - ii. preparation of an implementation and action plan to support delivery; and**
  - iii. finalisation of a publication version to include additional graphic content;**
- d) Approve the draft Final Regional Prosperity Framework.**

### 3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The background and purpose of the Regional Prosperity Framework (RPF) was described in detail in the report to Council of 17 June 2021 and is reflected in the proposed finalised RPF in Appendix 1 of this report, which is due to be considered at the Joint Committee meeting of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region on 3 September 2021.
- 3.2 In brief, the RPF sets out a 20-year vision to help address the significant challenges and opportunities faced by the City of Edinburgh and South-East Scotland Region. This includes supporting a post-COVID-19 economic recovery, responding to a new economic and trading context outwith the EU, and the development of a sustainable, inclusive and net zero carbon economy, which supports the wellbeing of all of the City Region's people.
- 3.3 The RPF was approved for consultation by the Joint Committee on Friday 4 June 2021. That decision and the consultative draft RPF were endorsed by Scottish Borders Council at its meeting on 17 June 2021. At the same time, Council agreed 'to receive the proposed 'final' Regional Prosperity Framework for consideration, following the public consultation exercise.' Para 4.14 of the report noted that it was the working assumption of SBC officers that once the consultation was complete, the amended RPF would be 'brought back to the Council on 26 August 2021 for approval prior to City Deal approval at the Joint Committee on 3 September 2021'.
- 3.4 The consultation period ran from Monday 14 June 2021 until Monday 26 July 2021 (6 weeks) and included a number of ways for respondents to contribute their views. A list of key regional stakeholders was prepared in advance and direct approaches were made to encourage responses from a wide range of organisations, including the public, private and third sector, industry bodies and other representative organisations.
- 3.5 In total 71 responses were received through the consultation portal, or by email submission. The breakdown of these by geography is shown below:

**Table 2.1 – Breakdown of Consultation Respondents by Geography**

<b>Table 2.1 – Breakdown of Consultation Respondents by Geography</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>City of Edinburgh</b>	23	32
<b>East Lothian</b>	3	4
<b>Fife</b>	2	3
<b>Midlothian</b>	13	18
<b>Scottish Borders</b>	11	15
<b>West Lothian</b>	2	3
<b>Regional (ESES)</b>	2	3
<b>Regional (non-ESES)</b>		
<b>National</b>	15	21
<b>Other</b>		

3.6 In addition to the formal consultation, two additional online engagement sessions were organised. These informal events engaged around 47 individuals from around the region. The sessions were anonymous. Table 2.2 shows the geography of those respondents that took part in the online engagement.

<b>Table 2.2 – Breakdown of Online Participants by Geography</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>City of Edinburgh</b>	20	42
<b>East Lothian</b>	3	6
<b>Fife</b>	8	17
<b>Midlothian</b>	4	9
<b>Scottish Borders</b>	7	15
<b>West Lothian</b>	1	2
<b>Other</b>	4	9

The online events were anonymous and there is therefore no detailed information about respondents' characteristics. The session introduction made clear that those taking part were doing so as individuals.

### **Overview of Consultation Responses**

3.7 The major themes from the consultation are summarised below.

- a) **Travel** – including detailed feedback from Transport Scotland, also relates to environment
- b) **Environment** – including Nature Scot
- c) **Society/Place** – including feedback from Scottish Government More Homes Division and NPF4 teams; Scottish Enterprise; Creative Scotland; and Homes for Scotland.

3.8 The online engagement events surfaced similar themes including:

- a) **People & Workforce** – access to skills and training is key, including upskilling and apprenticeships (perhaps with an emphasis on “green skills”), access to jobs, addressing skills shortages, developing transferable skills. The wider context of EU Exit and Covid-19 as significant threats to future workforce stability and opportunities was highlighted.
- b) **Environmental** – appetite to place environmental sustainability more centrally in the vision and document (including development of microgrids, response to climate emergency;
- c) **Place & Transport** – quality of place; pride in place and a positive legacy; successful economy, access to affordable housing, changing patterns of travel accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic;
- d) **Wellbeing** – including fair work, active travel / core path improvements, addressing (fuel and other) poverty recognising the link between poverty and poor health, community wealth building, and the need to create better career paths in the care sector in order to meet our future care needs as a society;

e) **Equality** – and a desire to see a fairer region.

3.9 Following closure of the consultation on 26 July 2021, a full analysis of all responses has been undertaken by Officers across the City Region partnership and the Programme Office with the support of consultants, Deloitte. Amendments have been made to the Framework seeking to address or reinforce the feedback referred to in paragraphs 3.7 and 3.8. In particular, emphasis has been added to the environmental and sustainability imperatives, which now underpin all economic activity and the zero and low carbon connectivity (both physical transport and digital connections) upon which economic activity is predicated. It should be noted that the majority of consultation responses are broadly supportive of the structure and content of the draft RPF.

3.10 A workshop of Scottish Borders Council Elected members took place on 24 June 2021 to consider the draft consultative South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy and the City Region Regional Prosperity Framework. Working with our partners, SBC have sought to ensure that the feedback from SBC Elected Members is incorporated in the Final RPF. This includes:

- That the particular needs of the Scottish Borders in relation to connectivity, both digital and physical transport infrastructure feature strongly in the document; and
- That the Scottish Borders capacity to support further renewable energy developments is caveated appropriately.

### **Next Steps**

3.11 The purpose of this report is to seek Council's views upon and ultimately, Council approval of the proposed finalised RPF following the consultation process. The Final RPF set out in Appendix 1 is due to be considered by the City Region Elected Member Oversight Group (EMOC – at which the Council is represented by Councillors Bell and Robson) on 20 August 2021, prior to the Joint Committee on 3 September 2021. There is the potential for change to the RPF document at the EMOC and Joint Committee. Indeed, it is precisely to test with SBC members whether Council considers that any changes are required that this report was scheduled to come before Council on 26 August. Thus, the Council's comments upon and (if given) approval of the RPF will constitute a vital partner contribution to deliberation within the EMOC and Joint Committee.

3.12 Following presentation of the Final RPF to the Joint Committee on 3 September 2021, other regional partners are expected to ratify the Final RPF by 30 September 2021. Thereafter, partners will develop an action plan to support delivery of the Framework; and produce a publication version of the Framework (including additional graphic content). Next steps are set out in table 3.1 below:

<b>Date 2021</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>26 Aug</b>	<b>Scottish Borders Council</b> - Draft Final RPF to be presented and discussed
<b>30 Aug</b>	<b>Joint Committee Papers</b> – Draft Final RPF published along with Joint Committee papers

<b>3 Sept</b>	<b>Joint Committee Decision</b>
<b>By 30 Sept</b>	Final Publication – preparation of publication version of RPF (subject to Joint Committee approval)
<b>Sept to end-Dec</b>	<b>Endorsement</b> by regional partners as required by 30 Sept <b>Implementation</b> and <b>Action Plan Development</b> to support delivery

## 4 IMPLICATIONS

### 4.1 Financial

As noted in para 3.9, consultancy support is in place, paid for by monies received from Scottish Government and a £30k SESplan rebate carried over into this financial year. There are no additional costs directly attached to any of the recommendations contained in this report.

### 4.2 Risk and Mitigations

Once adopted, the intention is that the RPF will become a non-statutory regional policy and strategy, articulating a high level agreed statement of regional economic priorities and ambitions. In this connection, a core purpose of the RPF is to inform the development of other national, regional and local plans and strategies, including a future review of the Council's Economic Strategy. To be relevant to the Scottish Borders, it is essential that the Framework reflects the individual character of the Scottish Borders and seeks to maximise opportunities and outcomes for the region from the City Deal and its legacy. To this end, Officers have endeavoured to ensure that the Scottish Borders needs, aspirations and context are addressed in the drafting and amendment of the RPF.

### 4.3 Integrated Impact Assessment

An integrated impact assessment has been completed. As noted, subject to formal approval, the final RPF will be non-statutory; its purpose will be to inform and support the development of other national, regional and local plans and strategies, including a future review of the Council's Economic Strategy. Addressing inequalities across the City Region is integral to its purpose of 'impactful collaboration between Government(s), national agencies and regional partners to drive prosperity that promotes greater equity.' All six Local Authority Partners are expected to use the RPF to develop future policy and strategy with common approaches to equality, poverty and socioeconomic disadvantaged.

### 4.4 Sustainable Development Goals

While promoting 'prosperity' across the City Region is at the heart of the RPF, the Framework is unambiguous in its commitment to objectives which mirror the UN Sustainable Development Goals and are consistent with National Performance Framework. Prosperity must 'work for everyone' and 'economic success must not be at the expense of our planet, it must not exploit or marginalise anyone and it must be shared more equally across the region.'

#### 4.5 **Climate Change**

Together with promoting prosperity, community wellbeing and reducing inequalities, net-zero and just transition are at the heart of this Framework. The framework identifies the themes in the Climate Change Checklist as key priorities and provides linkages to National Planning Framework 4, the National Transport Strategy 2, and Just Transition, amongst other key policies.

Although the RPF will be non-statutory, it constitutes a shared commitment to influence the future development of national, regional and local strategy and policy so that there is a common approach across the City Region. Within this framework, the Council will continue to progress the Scottish Borders Climate Change Route Map driving towards net zero emissions of greenhouse gases both organisationally and across the Scottish Borders.

#### 4.6 **Rural Proofing**

There is a strong emphasis in the RPF on each of the six regions being unique with different challenges and opportunities and a recognition that a single solution will not work across the City Region. Specifically, the RPF is respectful of the differences posed by rurality, with the Scottish Borders Council being the most rural of its local authority areas, and it recognises the need to adapt approaches whether in transport, infrastructure support, skills training or reducing inequalities, to respond to the rural context.

#### 4.7 **Data Protection Impact Statement**

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

#### 4.8 **Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

Not applicable.

### 5 **CONSULTATION**

5.1 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.

#### **Approved by**

**Jenni Craig**

**Service Director, Customer & Communities**

**Signature .....**

#### **Author(s)**

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**Background Papers:** Scottish Borders Council Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Regional Growth Framework Update Report 17 June 2021; [Consultation Portal website](#) – June / July 2021

**Previous Minute Reference:** Minute item 9 Scottish Borders Council 17 June 2021

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

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