

**SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL**  
**26 AUGUST 2021**  
**APPENDIX I**

**Question from Councillor Bell**

To Executive Member for Economic Regeneration and Finance

My recollection of the 2016 agreement between SBC and CGI was that it included a commitment to set up and maintain a second UK Service Delivery Centre in the Borders with a commitment to the retention of 49 roles transferring under TUPE legislation and the creation of 100 new jobs within 5 years of service transfer.

Where are we now in regards to delivery of new IT jobs and fulfilling of the agreement?

Reply from Councillor Rowley

The Contract between the Council and CGI was revised with the agreement of Council in 2020 and as part of this change the timescales for completion of the delivery of the jobs commitment was revised to 2027.

The original contractual commitment for CGI to deliver 147 jobs with a further 10 Modern apprenticeships, with an overall aspiration to 250 jobs, was not amended by the 2020 agreement and remains in place.

Currently CGI has 71 members of staff working on the SBC contract, including 9 Borders based graduates who joined the company during the month of August.

The new office which will house the CGI Borders Service Centre at Tweedbank is now due to be completed for occupation in December 2021. The project was delayed by COVID 19 and this provided the rationale for revising the job creation timescale. The new facility at Tweedbank should drive a step change in CGI's staffing complement in the Borders.

CGI has confirmed they have 56 open vacancies that are currently being advertised across a breadth of roles in the Scottish Borders. The roles currently out to advert are shown in the table below.

J0721-0317	Business Analyst	1
J0721-0950	CISO	1
J0721-0513	DevOps Engineer	1
J0721-0661	Digital Consultant	4
J0721-0693	Director Consulting Services - Strategic Growth	1
J0721-0659	Lead Digital Consultant	2
J0721-2756	Senior Cyber Security Consultant	1
J0721-2757	Senior Security Manager	1
J1120-1898	Senior Software Developer	1
J0821-0477	Senior Software Developer C# .Net	1
J0721-1255	Senior Solutions Architect	1
J0721-2871	Software Engineer	2
J1120-1908	Software Engineer	4
J1120-1871	Test Automation Analyst	10
J0821-0549	Director Consulting Services	1
J0121-2403	IT Support Analyst (GTO)	23
J0721-1341	Transition & Project Manager (GTO)	1
		56

All 56 roles will be based in Scottish Borders but these roles will service both Scottish Borders Council and other CGI clients from across Scotland and the wider UK.

CGI has confirmed that if they can fulfil the 56 currently open roles, they will achieve a headcount of 127 jobs by the end of this year and anticipates they will deliver their contractual commitments by 2027.

#### Supplementary

Councillor Bell commented on the fact that the majority of discussions around the CGI contract at the Major Contracts Governance Group were held in private and asked Councillor Rowley as Chairman of the Group if he could give consideration whether more of the business could be considered in public. Councillor Rowley advised that he would discuss this with officers as he was guided by them in such matters.

#### **Questions from Councillor Moffat**

##### 1. To Executive Member for Wellbeing, Sport and Culture

BREST Duns Swimming Pool Trust have due to local support and the tireless work of Kirsty Inkpen and Rosalyn Gresham over the last 24 years carried out two major upgrades totalling 1.8 million pounds sourced through many grants. They have faced many challenges over the years and supported three Olympians with one silver medal winner. In 2010 they were promised £60,000 a year in revenue support which they appreciated and when it was passed by Council it was to be index linked to inflation. This has never been done which is not in my view acceptable. The gas renewal contract has increased by £20,000 so I think it's about time the Council made good its agreement to fund this pool more fairly and increase the revenue grant given that a pound in 2010 is worth around 72 pence now. Can the Executive Member advise if this additional funding will be provided?

##### Answer from Councillor Jardine

The total revenue support provided by the Council to BREST in each of the last 5 years is as follows

2017/18 £62,600

2018/19 £64,200

2019/20 £69,558

2020/21 £85,648

2021/22 £60,000

In total revenue support provided to BREST over the last 5 years by the Council therefore totals £342,006. This includes core revenue grant funding each year of £60,000. Officers are not aware of an agreement that this core grant funding was to be index linked. The approach is consistent with that adopted for both Live Borders and the Jedburgh Leisure Trust.

The total capital support provided to BREST by the Council in each of the last 5 years is as follows.

2017/18 £26,682

2018/19 £11,832

2019/20 £26,379

2020/21 £17,659

2021/22 £19,592

In total capital grant support to BREST over the last 5 years therefore totals £ 102,144.

Total revenue and capital grant support provided to BREST therefore totals £444,150 over the last 5 years.

In addition, the Trust as a registered Charity, receives 100% relief from Non Domestic Rates Liability totalling £41,598. 80% (£33,278) of this is mandatory relief and the other 20% (£8,320) is discretionary relief topped up by SBC.

The Council has protected the cash grant to BREST since 2010, at a time when significant savings have been required in other budgets and there are no plans to change this position in the current year.

#### Supplementary

Councillor Moffat considered that in comparison with the grant paid to the Jedburgh Swimming Pool and Live Borders the Duns Swimming Pool was being unfairly treated and asked that they be provided with equality of funding. Councillor Jardine disputed this assessment but undertook to visit the pool and discuss funding with them. Funding levels would remain unchanged at present.

#### 2. To Executive Member for Sustainable Development

Regarding grass cutting in Coldstream over this summer I have had a steady stream of complaints about the Leet Green and the Tweed Green riverside walks. Tourists and locals are appalled at what one resident named Jurassic Park and the fact you cannot get near the Leet or the Tweed for weeds. It is not a great advert for the first true Border town or tourism. Mums and grannies taking the kids with a net and a bucket cannot gain access to catch minnows etc. The only easy access is at the cauld which is not the safest place for kids .Will the Council look again at grass cutting in places such as Coldstream bearing in mind its often got TV cameras here at every election or political visit not the best advert for the Borders on national and international TV?

#### Answer from Councillor Aitchison

Scottish Borders Council made changes in 2018 to its grass cutting regime on the basis of financial and environmental sustainability. Areas identified as appropriate were changed to a reduced grass cutting regime to allow for greater plant and pollinator diversity.

From a biodiversity perspective, the Council like many other Local Authorities in Scotland and the UK is doing this to help both minimise emissions and enhance biodiversity. The biodiversity value of these grassland areas may not improve overnight but will gradually develop into more meadow-like habitat in time. This is important as habitat loss is on the rise. The Council has a duty under legislation to further the conservation of biodiversity.

Riverside margins can be vitally important habitat corridors for pollinators, so these areas are often prioritised in adopting this approach. This is consistent throughout the Scottish Borders region. Areas of general amenity are still managed to allow access and recreation. It is always a balancing act between public amenity and environmental sustainability, but we cannot simply do as we have always done. The Council has recently declared a Climate Emergency, which makes this ever more pressing.

I appreciate there are concerns regarding the appearance of these areas. It can be challenging when we are going through a period of change and feedback from local residents and visitors is important, to help us strike the right balance.

#### Supplementary

Councillor Moffat considered that the views of local people needed to be taken into account and asked Cllr Aitchison to take another look at the policy in this area. Councillor Aitchison advised that biodiversity was needed everywhere. The policy was constantly being looked at and compromise was needed as there were strong views on both sides of the argument.