



DELIVERING A GREENER, FAIRER AND FLOURISHING SOUTH OF SCOTLAND

REGIONAL ECONOMIC STRATEGY DELIVERY PLAN (2022 – 2025)

NOVEMBER 2021



FOREWORD

We are delighted, as the South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership (REP), to present our Delivery Plan that sets out the actions partners will take together to deliver our first ever Regional Economic Strategy (RES) – a strategy that has been widely welcomed since its launch in September 2021.

Whilst the launch of the RES marked an important milestone for our region, uniting us around a shared vision of where we want to be in ten years, we need to be clear about the actions required to deliver on our collective, strategic ambitions – which this Delivery Plan responds to.

In developing our Delivery Plan, we have focused on capturing and coordinating important strategic actions – the big things we know we need to do, and the things we know we need to work together on, if we are to realise our vision for a greener, fairer and flourishing South of Scotland by 2031. We set these actions out grouped around the key themes at the heart of the RES, making clear who the key partners are and the timescales for completion.

We recognise that the strategic partnership actions we have identified will add to and complement the wide range of activity being undertaken by individual organisations that are part of the REP and many others active within the region. This will all contribute to achieving our ambitions.

It is a great testament to the efforts of so many across the region that there is much existing activity to build on – and we recognise the continued and effective implementation of these efforts, including for example the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal and Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Growth Deal, remains critical. These efforts have generated significant momentum and secured important investments, raising ambitions and confidence that we will build on.

We are alive to the need for our Delivery Plan to be flexible, recognising that across the life of a ten year strategy many things can and will likely change. Accordingly, we will keep our Delivery Plan under regular review – to the extent that it is in reality a rolling plan, looking three years ahead at any one time – acting to ensure it remains focused on those things that matter most and will make the greatest difference.

As a partnership we look forward to working together with as many of our local communities, businesses and people as possible to better align and coordinate our collective efforts: to achieve more for less and ultimately deliver for the South of Scotland, our businesses, communities and people in this new and exciting chapter for our region.

Partners of the South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership



Communities
representatives

Crichton Campus
Leadership Group

Private Sector
representatives

Registered
Social Landlord
representatives

Social Enterprise
representatives

Third Sector
representatives

Young People
representatives

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Our Regional Economic Strategy

The South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy (RES) has been developed, following extensive engagement with those who live work and operate across the region, by the South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership (REP) – a forum that brings together a wide range of expertise and sets the direction of the South of Scotland economy.

The Strategy – the region's first – celebrates one of Scotland's most distinct and striking regions and has been developed at an extremely important time for the South of Scotland.

Launched in September 2021 – the Strategy is alive to the region's potential and seeks to chart a course towards an exciting and inclusive future where the benefits of growth and investment are shared by all who have a stake in the South of Scotland.

It builds on what has made the region a success to date, recognising its diversity, its natural beauty, and our exceptional people. It heralds a new era, where the shape of our economic success is driven by the people, businesses and communities that are passionate about the region. It looks ahead with optimism, looking beyond challenges

to see economic opportunity – none more so than that associated with the urgency of accelerating a Just Transition to Net Zero and in halting and reversing nature loss.

With a 10-year timeframe, the Strategy targets a significant shift in the region's economic performance, its outward profile, and the way by which wealth is created by and shared amongst people. It also seeks to draw a renewed focus on the region's exceptional quality of life and natural capital, to attract a new generation of resident, worker, learner, visitor and investor to the South of Scotland.

To succeed in these ambitions the focus of the Strategy goes beyond those things that are found in traditional economic strategies, recognising what is important to the South of Scotland and it commits to moving ahead in an inclusive way, building on new models of developing our economy which put wellbeing at their centre.

It is a strategy which challenges us all to be more confident about the future, to aim higher, to be more open to change, building on what we know makes the South of Scotland special and unique.

Our Framework for a Green, Fair and Flourishing Region

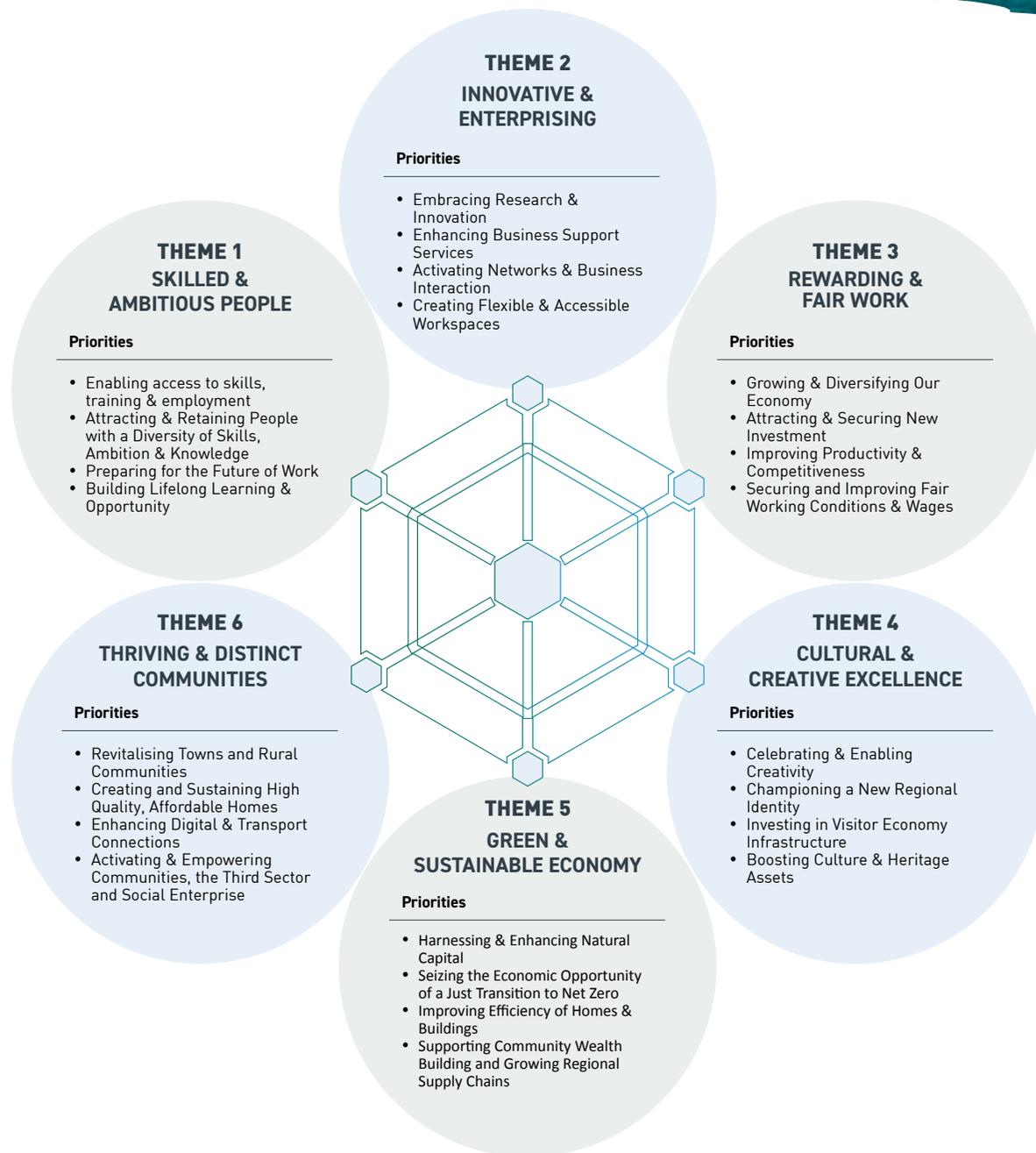
The South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy sets out a bold and compelling vision for the South of Scotland – to be **Green, Fair and Flourishing by 2031**:

“We will be a region of opportunity and innovation – where natural capital drives green growth, ambition and quality of life rivals the best in the UK, communities are empowered and cultural identity is cherished, enabling those already here to thrive and attracting a new generation to live, work, visit, learn and invest in the South of Scotland”.

Our vision is grounded in the South, having been arrived at following extensive engagement with those who work, live and operate across our region. It is intended to inspire all.

To realise our vision, grasp the opportunities and respond to our challenges, a strategic framework was developed and embedded at the heart of our Strategy. Our framework has six interlinked, equally important themes under which a small number of priorities are defined – each intended to drive action and investment.

It is this framework around which we have identified and organised what we consider to be the important strategic actions – the bigger things we know we need to do to get us to where we want to be.



Our Values

The development of our vision – the heart of our Regional Economic Strategy – was shaped by what the people of the South of Scotland told us matters to them – core values of:

<p>Sharing prosperity</p> <p>Our work will emphasise the need for all to gain from opportunity and investment, so that the benefits of growth are shared fairly, and no one is left behind. The South of Scotland will clearly see the rewards from growth across existing and new sectors, communities and people, driving up wages, productivity, job security and satisfaction, whilst also increasing quality of life and personal wellbeing, increasing access to affordable and warm housing and reducing poverty and deprivation.</p>	<p>Making the most of our potential</p> <p>We will be driven to ensure the South of Scotland and those who live and do business within it, reach their fullest potential, by growing ambition and showcasing regional excellence. By acknowledging the true breadth of factors underlying our competitiveness, we will support the region to enhance and promote its reputation - on the national and global stage - where everyone has the chance to grow and excel.</p>	<p>Thinking differently</p> <p>Our approach to developing our economy will be motivated by thinking and doing differently, to ensure the best outcomes are achieved for the South of Scotland. We will use our collective strength to promote innovation, creativity, challenge convention, harness community capacity and spirit, localise responsibility and take bold decisions, to tackle challenges, unlock opportunity and encourage all to think bigger.</p>	<p>Pioneering environmental responsibility</p> <p>Environmental sustainability and resilience will be at the core of all we deliver, as the basis for new opportunity, through the nurturing and sensitive use of our natural capital and cultural heritage to transform our visitor economy. How we use our natural assets, including our land and water is key. We will at all times pursue development that is aligned with and which seeks to accelerate the delivery of local, Scottish and UK ambitious Net Zero emissions targets , seizing the opportunities a Just Transition presents and leading the way, as we have done in the past, for others to follow.</p>
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These values are enshrined within the strategy's priorities and provide a key reference point – a common and shared imperative – which will shape how partners take forward each of the actions we set out in this Delivery Plan.

Putting these values into practice will, on occasion where relevant, be aided through the process of undertaking impact assessments, to better understand the implications of proposed actions on different people and organisations as well as for example the environment. Responsibility for determining and undertaking the relevant assessments will rest with the nominated lead partner for any given action.

Our approach will ensure that in taking forward actions, proper consideration is afforded to the fundamental principles of sustainable development goals – including carbon impacts, health and community wellbeing, and inclusive growth. We will also ensure that as we take forward each action we will look for and make the most of any synergies/collaborations with actions across all the themes in this Delivery Plan and actions through partner organisations and the region's Growth Deals.

Our Delivery Plan

We have arrived at our Delivery Plan following **extensive engagement**, discussion and debate – within and beyond the Regional Economic Partnership – about what it is that needs to happen to achieve the ambitions established in the South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy.

At the outset, we have recognised that **many of the right things are already happening**. That action being taken by individual organisations is vital. But that is not what this plan is about. It focuses on what we need to do together, where we can go further or where there seem to be gaps in activity.

There has been a clear consensus from the outset that the right focus for this Delivery Plan is one which is:

- **strategic and high-level**, providing clarity on what needs to happen but not being overly prescriptive on how it should be delivered or achieved – empowering partners and affording flexibility as well as the opportunity to be innovative
- **collaborative**, and hence seeking to capture the things we need to work together on to achieve – not a list of what individual organisations are already doing (as important as they may be)
- related to matters which we – willing partners and organisations – **have control over**

- focused on capturing activity which will have a **tangible impact** across the ambitions we hope to achieve
- **complementary and which adds value** to what is already happening, or which scales up existing projects / activities to extend their scope or reach
- **stretching / ambitious** but ultimately **deliverable** within the timeframe of our Strategy

For each of the actions within, we identify the **key partners**, but it should be noted that this is not intended to be an exhaustive list – reflecting that others may come on board to assist delivery as actions gather momentum and/or evolve.

A **timescale** for completion of each action is also set out, either as:

- **short term** (before April 2023);
- **medium term** (before April 2025); and
- **long term** (April 2025+ up until March 2031)

Regardless of the timescale for completion, work on most of our actions will start in the short term – with a small number already underway.

Theme 1

Skilled & Ambitious People

THEME PRIORITIES:

- Enabling access to skills, training & employment
- Attracting & Retaining People with a Diversity of Skills, Ambition & Knowledge
- Preparing for the Future of Work
- Building Lifelong Learning & Opportunity



REP
South of Scotland
Regional Economic Partnership

CASE STUDY FEATURE:

South Of Scotland Digital Learning and Skills Network

A recent £6.6 million investment has enabled the creation of a digital learning and skills network across the South of Scotland – the aim of which is to provide access to learning opportunities for individuals of all ages, irrespective of location. The investment has seen a partnership between Dumfries & Galloway College and Borders College develop a network of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) Hubs across the South of Scotland, to address the immediate skills gaps in areas such as Energy and Engineering, Construction and Care.

The hubs are accessible to school and college students and employers wishing to try the latest technologies or upskill their current workforce. A number of digital spokes, located across the South of Scotland in schools, community venues and in local business premises provide inclusive access to learning irrespective of the location. Both Colleges continue to actively grow their online flexible learning provision.



Photo credit: Borders College

Skilled & Ambitious People: Delivery Context

Our ambition is to build on existing efforts to develop our people and attract new talent to the region to support the success of sectors important to our economy, create and fill the jobs of the future and ensure everyone has the skills, learning and adaptability to thrive throughout their lives.

The actions in this theme will build upon work undertaken through extensive partnership since 2019 to develop and deliver a Regional Skills Investment Plan (RSIP) for the South of Scotland. This includes improving access to education, skills and training across the region; better meeting the skills needs of employers; supporting growth and development of the workforce; focusing on supporting education and skills opportunities for young people; creating a culture of enterprise and innovation and ensuring that the skills system is 'future proofed' to adapt to changing circumstances.

A new South of Scotland Education and Skills Group has been established as a subgroup of the Regional Economic Partnership to take these RSIP activities forward. This group also serves as a key link into national work of relevance to the region and will also deliver the Skilled and Ambitious People actions the Regional Economic Strategy has given rise to. This will be done with the support of critical partners such as Higher and Further Education Institutions, Crichton Campus Leadership Group, Local Authorities, Local Employability and Skills Partnerships, employers, the Third Sector, Developing Young Workforce Groups, SOSE and SDS. The group also recognises the importance of the Scottish Funding Council's Tertiary Review of Education and its implications for the South of Scotland, including the proposal for a South of Scotland tertiary provision pathfinder that explores how we best meet the needs of learners, businesses and other social aims.

ACTION 1(A)

Develop and deliver interventions to address immediate and longer term labour and skills shortages in a number of sectors of importance to the regional economy.

We know that many of the sectors which are important to our economy are facing acute labour and skills shortages. Whilst some of these are a result of recent circumstances, others are long standing. We will develop proposals to support employers to better promote vacancies; embrace different approaches to recruitment and innovate to alleviate pressures. We will also work to develop pipelines of skilled candidates that is more effectively matched to future demand.

Key Partners:

Councils, Crichton Campus Leadership group, Local Employability and Learning and Skills Partnerships, Employers, Scottish Funding Council, SDS, SOSE, Third Sector Interfaces, Universities and Colleges

Timescale: Short Term

ACTION 1(B)

Undertake a 'mapping and gapping' exercise to ensure the region has the skills to fully embrace significant future opportunities that growth of the digital and green economies will give rise to.

We will take stock of ongoing activity to develop digital skills and green skills (covering construction, renewables, low carbon vehicles and land use) across the region. We will identify gaps; opportunities to further develop a more inclusive and collaborative offer; and ultimately sense check whether we are on track to embrace and make the most of the significant and specific regional economic and social opportunities that digitalisation as well as a Just Transition to Net Zero brings. This will align with a South of Scotland Digital Strategy and the development of Net Zero related plans.

Key Partners:

Community Learning and Development Partnerships, Education and Skills Strategic Coordination Group, Registered Social Landlords, SoS Digital Skills Hub

Timescale: Short Term

ACTION 1(C)

Identify and take forward opportunities to further develop basic work readiness and transferable skills which will be important in many job roles of the future.

To ensure our people and businesses thrive, and excel in a future which is increasingly fast changing and unpredictable, we need to invest in developing and nurturing the basic employability and transferable skills, and ultimately the confidence, of our current and future generations.

Key Partners:

Education and Skills Strategic Coordination Group, Employers, Local Employability Partnerships

Timescale: Short Term

ACTION 1(D)

Remove barriers to make it easier for priority groups to access work and training.

Building on the work of the region's two employability partnerships, there is a need to map out, better understand and develop ways to remove barriers to accessing jobs and training for priority groups including young people, women, those with additional support needs and others – ultimately enabling a more inclusive and fit for purpose support offering.

Key Partners:

Councils, Employers, Local Employability Partnerships, SOSE, Third Sector Interfaces

Timescale: Short Term

ACTION 1(E)

Undertake a comprehensive 'mapping and gapping' exercise of the lifelong learning opportunities throughout the South of Scotland

We will develop a better understanding of the existing lifelong learning opportunities across the region, to enable better promotion of the existing offer and to enable gaps to be addressed.

Key Partners:

Community Learning and Development Partnerships, SDS, Third Sector Interfaces, Universities and Colleges

Timescale: Medium Term

ACTION 1(F)

Develop a collaborative programme of talent retention and attraction initiatives.

We will develop a programme of initiatives to help retain and attract new talent to the region – including a specific focus on young people. This could involve better showcasing existing and future learning and career opportunities; better promoting existing job openings; developing Continued Professional Development (CPD) opportunities and career pathways exploring incentives; and better conveying the quality of life on offer in the region as a great place to live, learn and work. We want to ensure that the South is welcoming to all people – helping to attract those from outwith our boundaries, encouraging the Scottish and UK governments to ensure we are able to attract people to our region.

Key Partners:

Councils, Education and Skills Strategic Coordination Group, SOSE, SSDA

Timescale: Medium Term

ACTION 1(G)

Encourage the Scottish and UK governments to work together to develop an approach to migration that enables us to attract people to come to the South of Scotland to live and work.

We know our businesses are struggling to recruit and that existing rules frustrate our ability to attract the labour and skills our rural economy requires. We will highlight the labour needs of our rural economy, and be proactive in responding to opportunities to influence future policy, working collectively to amplify our rural voice.

Key Partners:

Councils, National Partners, SOSE

Timescale: Medium Term

Theme 2

Innovative & Enterprising

THEME PRIORITIES:

- Embracing Research & Innovation
- Enhancing Business Support Services
- Activating Networks & Business Interaction
- Creating Flexible & Accessible Workspaces



Photo credit: Trevor Jackson

CASE STUDY FEATURE:

New Centres for Innovation

Two flagship facilities are currently being established in the region which showcase how the South of Scotland is well placed to be an innovative and enterprising leader.

The Mountain Bike Innovation Centre and Adventure Bike Park and Trail Lab project at Innerleithen in the Scottish Borders will build on the strength of mountain biking in the region by delivering the world's first Mountain Bike Innovation Centre alongside a World Class Adventure Bike Park and Trail Lab. The £19 million investment will provide bike industry businesses with a dedicated research and development facility – to support product development – and encourage long term business growth and development. The adventure bike park will promote tourism and combined the facilities will raise the region's profile and help establish the South of Scotland to be recognised as the European leader in mountain biking.

The Dairy Nexus project near Dumfries, will be a state of the art facility which aims to decarbonise the dairy industry. An £8 million investment in the facility, which will be based at the Barony campus of Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), has a strong focus on collaborative innovation across the milk supply chain. The project, which will boast the latest technologies, aims to drive down carbon emissions; accelerate productivity growth and enable the development of new products from manure, forages and milk to help minimise waste and create new income streams.

Both projects are using funding secured as part of the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal – itself an innovative and cross border approach to national and local government collaboration.



Photo credit: DG Council

Innovative & Enterprising: Delivery Context

Our ambition is to strengthen the region's role as a hub for research, innovation and enterprise. We want to work across the private, public and third sectors to boost business and social enterprise start-ups, resolve localised challenges, achieve more for less, drive productivity and attract new investment.

We recognise that across the South of Scotland, a great network of organisations supporting businesses, social enterprises and community organisations already exists, all of which provide invaluable expertise, knowledge and experience which complements the public sector offer and which effectively advocate for their needs. Our focus under this theme is to help support, develop and enhance connections between these organisations, from a position of a strong foundation.

We are already building on our research and innovation capabilities in the South of Scotland, supporting and developing work being carried out by existing Innovation projects such as the Marine Innovation Centre in St Abbs and the Advanced Manufacturing Project (AIMS) based in Hawick and Dumfries. In addition, we are engaging with Civtech 6 to help find innovative technology-based solutions to creating and sustaining a circular economy in the South of Scotland. Through forming collaborative partnerships with Zero Waste Scotland and other national partners and agencies; we will continue to challenge leading technology firms to propose solutions to the biggest challenges of the moment.

Work is underway in the region too – including collaboration between SOSE and Interface – to help better connect Scotland's academic institutions, with South of Scotland businesses, social enterprises and community organisations in order to help them adapt, diversify and innovate new products and services.

Our universities and colleges are key players in building our business base by nurturing entrepreneurial skills, delivering research and development, as well as ensuring we have a supply of highly skilled graduates to enter the job market.

ACTION 2(A)

Develop a stronger and more joined up approach to delivering and proactively promoting support for our businesses, social enterprises and community organisations

We want to increase awareness of the support available; make it as easy as possible to access; and guarantee a positive experience for those seeking support. We will explore and implement ways to work closer together to streamline the customer journey. We will also be more proactive in promoting support, using methods tailored to small and micro businesses given the significant role they play in our economy and we know can be harder to reach.

Key Partners:

Business Organisations, Councils, SOSE, Third Sector Interfaces, Universities and Colleges, Registered Social Landlords

Timescale: Short Term

ACTION 2(B)

Create more opportunities for businesses, social enterprises, community and other organisations to come together

We want strong networks which enable people to come together to share learning; support each other; provide mentoring; and identify and respond to common challenges and opportunities. In the short-term we will focus on developing and bringing together existing networks, recognising that whilst there are many active across the region, there is potential for greater collaboration between them.

Key Partners:

Business Organisations, Councils, SOSE, Third Sector Interfaces, Universities and Colleges, Registered Social Landlords

Timescale: Short Term

ACTION 2(C)

Undertake a feasibility study of opportunities and options for remote and flexible working hubs across the region

We want to capitalise on the opportunities presented by increased remote working possibilities in the future – attracting people to 'live here but work anywhere'. Increasing choice and enabling those who are able to but can not currently work from their home will be key. We will seek to better understand opportunities and delivery and management options, including a review of best practice across rural communities and the extent to which hubs could support town centre renewal and thriving village hearts.

Key Partners:

Councils, Registered Social Landlords, SOSE, Third Sector Interfaces

Timescale: Short Term

ACTION 2(D)

Make the Innovation Centres working in the region more accessible to our businesses and social enterprises

We want our businesses and social enterprises to be aware of and able to easily access the expertise Innovation Centres bring to the region, in supporting them to develop and take forward new ideas and innovation – in turn attracting investment to our region; being a catalyst for growth, new start-ups and job creation; as well as raising the profile of what we do and are capable of in the South. We will act to enable greater collaboration between Centres and support them to implement new ways to better promote their offer.

Key Partners:

Innovation Centres, Councils, Interface, Private Sector, Scottish Funding Council, SDI, SOSE, Universities and Colleges, Registered Social Landlords

Timescale: Medium Term

ACTION2(E)

Establish stronger and more meaningful links between Universities and Colleges with businesses, social enterprises and community organisations

We want to build on the great work done working with Interface across the South, which connects businesses and social enterprises with academics to support product and service delivery design and launch. We will be more proactive in mapping out which Universities and Colleges have specialisms which align with our specific future regional opportunities and explore how we can enable those Universities and Colleges to access our businesses, social enterprises and where relevant our communities.

Key Partners:

Councils, Interface, SOSE, Third Sector Interfaces, Universities and Colleges, Registered Social Landlords

Timescale: Medium Term

ACTION 2(F)

Develop a programme of ‘accelerator’ initiatives to support new business and social enterprise start-ups in sectors important to our economy

We want to support more start ups in a number of sectors which are important to our economy and with growth potential, through providing intensive and time-limited support that helps bring new ideas to fruition faster, strengthens business models, supports increased collaboration; attracts external investment and ultimately boosts survival chances.

Key Partners:

Councils, SOSE, Third Sector Interfaces, Universities and Colleges, Registered Social Landlords

Timescale: Medium Term

ACTION 2(G)

Develop stronger and ongoing relationships with those who provide vital support services to and have regular contact with the region’s businesses and social enterprises

We want to be able to reach as many of our businesses and social enterprises as possible – but we know reaching them is difficult because so many are small and busy ‘doing’. Many businesses however have regular contact with intermediary services, such as accountants. Through developing stronger ongoing relationships with these intermediaries, we can better connect with businesses to understand the challenges and opportunities as they see them and to better communicate the support services on offer in the region.

Key Partners:

Councils, Private Sector, SOSE, Third Sector Interfaces

Timescale: Medium Term

ACTION 2(H)

Promote flexible working practices through housing and planning policies, to support the concept of ‘live here work anywhere’

The region's quality of life is more attractive and in greater demand than arguably ever before post the COVID-19 pandemic. To capitalise on this, and to continue to attract people to live in our region, it is imperative that our homes, towns, villages and rural communities support flexible working practices and provide community, leisure, education and social infrastructure that supports wellbeing and good quality of life. We will seek to positively influence national, regional and local policies – and support pilot initiatives – to drive this change.

Key Partners:

Communities, Councils, Leisure and Culture Trusts, Private Sector, Registered Social Landlords

Timescale: Medium Term

Theme 3

Rewarding & Fair Work

THEME PRIORITIES:

- Growing & Diversifying Our Economy
- Attracting & Securing New Investment
- Improving Productivity & Competitiveness
- Securing and Improving Fair Working Conditions & Wages

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CASE STUDY FEATURE:

South of Scotland Enterprise

South of Scotland Enterprise, SOSE for short, is a new, dedicated economic development agency, established by the Scottish Government, for the South of Scotland. SOSE has been established in direct response to the unique economic opportunities and challenges facing the South of Scotland, to lead the delivery of a fresh and locally focused approach required to succeed in responding to these.

Launched in April 2020, SOSE's aims are to further the sustainable economic and social development, and improve the amenity and environment of the South of Scotland. Their vision is to drive inclusive growth, increase competitiveness, and tackle inequality within the region. They want to establish the South of Scotland as a centre of opportunity, innovation and growth, working with the people and communities across the South of Scotland to grow its economy.

By providing investment, expertise and mentoring, SOSE will inspire the region to think bigger, and unlock significant opportunities for all. One of SOSE's objectives is to be the catalyst for the adoption, progression and evaluation of Fair Work across the South of Scotland and lead the way through championing best practice, whilst influencing communities, businesses and governmental bodies in a meaningful way that benefits all.



Photo credit: SOSE

Rewarding & Fair Work: Delivery Context

Our ambition is to establish an inclusive economy with wellbeing at its heart. We will create and invest in employers that offer jobs that generate localised wealth, pay a fair wage, offer decent conditions, flexibility, diversity and long-term career structures for young people. This will lead to employee happiness and contentment, which will ultimately contribute to reducing poverty and deprivation.

We know from recent engagement with those businesses and social enterprises already here, that the South of Scotland is a great place to do business – testament to which is their continued investment. We know however that we need to shout louder about this and better promote our offer to attract others – in response to which we are already working harder and more collaboratively than ever before to do so, in parallel to supporting those already here too.

The transformational investment in the region through the Borderlands and Edinburgh and South East Growth Deals has generated the momentum and confidence to be more ambitious in seeking new investment, examples of which include local partners already working with SDI and VisitScotland to increase the international appeal of the region.

With many of our businesses, social enterprises and organisations having had to adapt to survive across the COVID-19 pandemic, the willingness to embrace change, to continually improve and to ultimately be more productive and competitive has never been so great – supporting their resilience and in some instances enabling growth. Partners are alive to making the most of this optimism.

Whilst many in the region are at the beginning of the journey to Fair Work, there are encouraging signs of businesses, social enterprises and organisations embracing the concept, and too of key public sector employers leading the way and already gearing up to support others.

ACTION 3(A)

Develop firm proposals to better sell the South of Scotland as a great place to do business

We want to raise the profile of the South of Scotland as a great place to do business, to attract and boost investment in the region. We will improve the inward investment proposition, so we will be able to better sell the South of Scotland on a global platform. We will strengthen our partnership processes, improve marketing of the region, develop an inward investment toolkit and attract more Inward Investors. We will build on our sectoral strengths through investment and support. We will showcase all the region has to offer making it the best place to invest.

Key Partners:

Councils, DTI, SDI, SDS, SOSE, Universities and Colleges

Timescale: Medium Term

ACTION 3(B)

Develop and implement an enhanced export support programme for businesses

We will explore ways of raising the ambition of businesses in the South of Scotland to export and trade internationally. We will engage with businesses to understand, uncover, and develop the skills and support they require to realise their exporting potential and to secure new international opportunities. We will strengthen our relationships with national partner organisations including SDI, to ensure a cohesive regional approach.

Key Partners:

Councils, SDI, Scottish Enterprise, SOSE, SSDA, VisitScotland

Timescale: Medium Term

ACTION 3(C)

Develop a pipeline of investment ready regionally significant projects

Major funding opportunities increasingly arise at relatively short notice, with tight deadlines for the submission of competitive bids. The nature of this means that projects need to have a degree of feasibility and development prior to submission for funding. In order to enable the South of Scotland to be well positioned to bid for and secure future national funding, including EU successor funds, we will identify and undertake initial feasibility and development of regionally significant projects, which can attract additional funding from a wider range of sources.

Key Partners:

Councils, National Partners, SOSE, Registered Social Landlords

Timescale: Ongoing

ACTION 3(D)

Develop and implement an approach to supporting organisations on their Fair Work journey

We want to support all our organisations in the region on a Fair Work journey. We will develop a better understanding of the challenges and barriers which limits uptake. We will seek ways to overcome these and establish the South of Scotland as a Fair Work First leader. We will promote the benefits of embracing Fair Work practices, and its positive impact for employees, employers and society.

Key Partners:

Councils, Private Sector, Scottish Government, SOSE, Third Sector Interfaces, Universities and Colleges

Timescale: Medium Term

ACTION 3(E)

Undertake a review of and make recommendations about innovative financial investment models

We want to better understand ways to attract new private sector finance, so we can support the realisation of key opportunities (such as the Just Transition to Net Zero). We will explore emerging financial opportunities to unlock private sector financing and their applicability in a rural and specifically the South of Scotland context - understanding the gaps and examining the factors that may hinder the private sector investing.

Key Partners:

Councils, SOSE, Third Sector Interfaces

Timescale: Medium Term

ACTION 3(F)

Develop a South of Scotland cycling strategy

The South of Scotland already has a significant USP in relation to cycling and mountain biking. Development of this strategy and a delivery action plan will capitalise on these strengths and develop our offering further in order to cement our place as the cycling destination of choice in the UK.

Key Partners:

Councils, Forestry and Land Scotland, National Partners, SOSE, SSDA, VisitScotland

Timescale: Medium Term

Theme 4

Cultural & Creative Excellence

THEME PRIORITIES:

- Celebrating & Enabling Creativity
- Championing a New Regional Identity
- Investing in Visitor Economy Infrastructure
- Boosting Culture & Heritage Assets



CASE STUDY FEATURE:

South of Scotland Destination Alliance

The recent establishment of South of Scotland Destination Alliance (SSDA) – a new dedicated region wide Tourism, Marketing and Destination Development body which is led by the industry itself – is a game changer for the South of Scotland.

The alliance, which came into being in 2020, brings together the Scottish Borders Tourism Partnership, Visit South West Scotland and others into a new and genuinely collaborative arrangement – enabling the region to think bigger and be more ambitious and confident than ever before.

SSDA is employing strong branding aligned to the increasingly successful 'Scotland Starts Here' brand, which is helping to sell the South of Scotland as a destination to new and international audiences. SSDA is currently working on plans to help better market the region to visitors, as well as helping the industry continue its recovery from COVID-19, undertaking strategic destination planning, and working with communities.



Photo credit: SOSE

Cultural and Creative Excellence: Delivery Context

Our ambition is to celebrate the region’s globally renowned history of inventions and innovation, traditions, contemporary, digital and emerging creative practices and active lifestyle offer, positioning culture and creative industries as a catalyst for growth, at the heart of our thriving economy.

This theme builds on our region’s distinct culture and sense of place, shaped by centuries of history, heritage and landmark events.

We are a region blessed with a strong and growing base of creative and cultural businesses, social enterprises and organisations, which, with the right support, can make an even more significant contribution to developing the region’s economic, social and environmental ambitions. The sector is growing in confidence, shouting louder and working collaboratively to aim higher than ever before – testament to which was the appetite to respond to the opportunity of developing a unique and ambitious UK City of Culture bid working with our Borderland Partners. This ground work provides an excellent foundation on which to build.

Our visitor economy has many reasons to look to the future with optimism too, with the formation of the South of Scotland Destination Alliance and Destination Borderlands Programme demonstrating the collaborative will to capitalise on the huge untapped potential of our region – aided by the roll out of the “Scotland Starts Here” brand which is resonating with audiences far and wide. Looking beyond the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic we are a region which can boast an impressive expansion of our offer – from the new Dark Skies Planetarium in Kirkcudbright to the brand new and purpose built national exhibition and visitor centre in Galashiels centred around the Great Tapestry of Scotland. More too is underway with ongoing work on what will be a nationally significant coast to coast long distance cycle route and the profiling of Galloway & Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere within a new Scotland UNESCO Trail – as an exemplar “Responsible Tourism” project.

Underpinning all of this is a track record of utilising our heritage and cultural assets to make our region stand apart from others, with huge potential to further amplify our distinctiveness and increase our competitiveness.

ACTION 4(A)

Explore options for enhancing the role of culture in the economy of the South of Scotland building on the work developed to support the Borderlands City of Culture bid

Through its place and communities, and its built, arts, industrial, historic and natural assets the cultural offering of the South of Scotland is strong and unique. Building on the momentum and learning from the Borderlands City of Culture Bid, we will work across the South of Scotland and neighbouring areas, to explore options for a range of activities and programmes that can improve the already strong cultural offering of the South of Scotland.

Key Partners:

Borderlands Partners and Private Sector, SOSE, Third Sector Interfaces, VisitScotland

Timescale: Medium Term

ACTION 4(B)

Investigate the opportunities for augmenting and enhancing the events programme in the South of Scotland

A wide variety of unique events take place across of the South of Scotland. These have proven to be an effective way of encouraging significant numbers of visitors to come to the region at all times of the year and we need to ensure they can flourish. By looking at the opportunities for expanding and enhancing the events programme of the South of Scotland we will improve the region's cultural offering as well as further support our tourism and creative sectors.

Key Partners:

Councils, Private Sector, SSDA, SOSE, Third Sector Interfaces, VisitScotland

Timescale: Short Term

ACTION 4(C)

Develop a South of Scotland Responsible Tourism Destination Development & Marketing Strategy

Our Tourism sector has been hard hit by COVID-19, but it is rebounding and has significant opportunities to further develop. For the first time we also have a Regional Destination Management Organisation for the area – in the form of the South of Scotland Destination Alliance – and there is now a need to develop an agreed vision and strategy that translates the National Tourist Strategy Outlook 2030 for the next 10 years for the South. This will guide and inform further development of the sector.

Key Partners:

Forestry and Land Scotland, Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere, Private Sector, SOSE, SSDA, VisitScotland

Timescale: Short Term

ACTION 4(D)

Undertake a data driven assessment of the creative industry across the South of Scotland, to better understand the priority needs of the sector and development opportunities

The wide range of activities under the Creative Industries sector is an area of real strength for the South of Scotland. However, our understanding of the sector needs to be stronger and informed by a robust evidence base. By collating existing data – such as from emerging local culture strategies and recognition of local design and innovation skills and capabilities – and developing this assessment, we will build a clear understanding of priority needs and opportunities and will use this to inform future actions.

Key Partners:

Councils, Creative Scotland, SOSE, Third Sector Interfaces

Timescale: Medium Term

ACTION 4(E)

Grow and expand locally based film / screen development opportunities

Film and screen is a growing industry in the South of Scotland, and has the potential to create employment, and opportunities in production, support and facilitation, for a wide array of local businesses. We will look to develop a rounded, collaborative and sustainable offering for film and screen, which will attract new productions to the area, and explore opportunities for infrastructure development to maximise our potential.

Key Partners:

Councils, Screen Scotland, SOSE, SSDA, Universities and Colleges, VisitScotland

Timescale: Medium Term

ACTION 4(F)

Work with all key providers to identify priority cultural assets in need of intervention and to enhance and take forward investment plans

We have a wide array of heritage cultural assets across the South of Scotland. Given the age of many of these, they can be vulnerable to deterioration over time. It is important that we preserve these assets and ensure they can continue to benefit communities and welcome visitors for decades to come. We will work with key players in the sector to identify sites in need of investment and develop plans to address these issues.

Key Partners:

Councils, HES, Private Sector, Third Sector Interfaces, VisitScotland

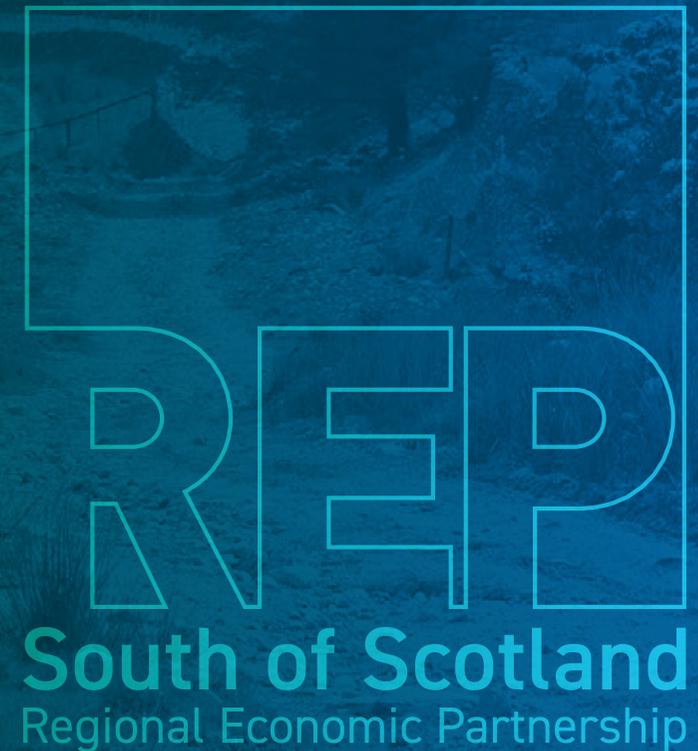
Timescale: Medium Term

Theme 5

Green & Sustainable Economy

THEME PRIORITIES:

- Harnessing & Enhancing Natural Capital
- Seizing the Economic Opportunity of a Just Transition to Net Zero
- Improving Efficiency of Homes & Buildings
- Supporting Community Wealth Building and Growing Regional Supply Chains



CASE STUDY FEATURE:

South of Scotland Regional Land Use Partnership

The South of Scotland has been chosen by Scottish Government as one of five **Regional Land Use Partnership (RLUP) pilots**. The South of Scotland pilot is unique as it is being delivered through a partnership consisting of Dumfries and Galloway Council, Scottish Borders Council and South of Scotland Enterprise. Its role is to test various types of governance and structures that will allow us to deliver a collaborative approach to land use change decision-making, which will be critical for our delivery of the Just Transition to Net Zero, and Scottish Government's climate change and biodiversity targets.

The two year pilot process involves creating a partnership of national and local government, landowners and managers, communities and stakeholders within a governance structure that ensures accountability and transparency. The Partnership's core objective will be the production of a Regional Land Use Framework (RLUF) by March 2023, using a natural capital approach to identify and agree upon current and potential land use changes across the region.

Through the effective use of data and evidence of the natural capital approach it will help provide clarity of opportunities and constraints for land use change in the area.



Photo credit: Keith Robeson

Green & Sustainable Economy: Delivery Context

In order to meet our transitioning to Net Zero emissions goals, improve wellbeing and create new economic opportunity, we will harness the full potential of our natural resources and approach to land use to further improve our quality of life; restore nature; develop our visitor offer; adapt and enhance our resilience to climate change; and to deliver cleaner energy and greener jobs.

Natural capital in relation to land, water, nature, farming, landscape, forestry and woodland is a major strength and opportunity in the South of Scotland. The area is taking forward a Regional Land Use Pilot which will help develop new and innovative, clean rural land management practices and proposals. The region will also benefit from the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal Natural Capital Programme which supports five key pilot projects. In addition, both local authorities have Climate Change Action Plans that they are taking forward.

Renewable energy is a key opportunity for the region and projects will be identified through the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal Energy Master Plan and its subsequent energy programme. A nationally important opportunity for the development of the green energy sector is being created at Chapelcross near Annan through the CX Programme, and this will be supplemented by other projects arising from work on a site Master Plan. This work also links into the implementation of the recommendations of the South of Scotland Energy Transition Group and its 'Powering Change' recommendations which are being taken forward by SOSE and other partners.

The local authorities, SOSE, Registered Social Landlords, communities and the third sector and other partners are giving a high priority to improving energy efficiency in homes and buildings and there are projects underway in support of this. Community wealth building is already under consideration by local authorities and other partners particularly in relation to the growth of local supply chains through procurement and the Delivery Plan will build on this work.

ACTION 5(A)

Undertake natural capital opportunity mapping and work to develop specific investment propositions

Our natural capital assets underpin our cultural, economic and social activities through the ecosystem services they provide. If they are allowed to deteriorate, they present a real risk to our ability to deliver inclusive growth. By understanding their function and the opportunities they present we can draw inward investment to the region to benefit wider economic development.

Key Partners:

Councils, Crown Estate Scotland, Forestry and Land Scotland, Nature Scot, Private Sector, Scottish Forestry, SOSE, Universities and Colleges

Timescale: Medium Term

ACTION 5(B)

Ensure Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere (GSAB) achieves its reaccreditation and boundary review in 2022

The UNESCO Biosphere status was the first awarded to Scotland, in 2012, internationally recognising Galloway and Southern Ayrshire as a world class environment for communities, businesses, and visitors to experience and celebrate in a sustainable way. Working collaboratively across the area we will ensure its 10 year reaccreditation is achieved and the learning rolled out across the South of Scotland.

Key Partners:

Dumfries and Galloway Council, GSAB, SOSE

Timescale: Short Term

ACTION 5(C)

Develop proposals to increase opportunities and benefits arising from the region's natural capital assets including support for sustainable agriculture, woodlands and forests, restoring peatlands, water management and increasing bio-diversity

Our wealth of natural capital assets provide a unique opportunity to sequester and store carbon. Working with academics and innovation centres we can ensure these opportunities are delivered in an equitable fashion to achieve a Just Transition.

Key Partners:

Councils, Forestry and Land Scotland, Nature Scot, Private Sector, Scottish Forestry, SOSE, Universities and Colleges

Timescale: Long Term

ACTION 5(D)

Take forward the recommendations within the South of Scotland Community Wealth Building (CWB) pilot report

CWB promotes the local procurement of goods and services by key anchor organisations to strengthen the local economy. Work has been taken forward by CLES - working closely with the region's six Registered Social Landlords - to explore how we can deliver CWB in the South. We will explore their recommendations around commissioning and investing in homes: encouraging good practice for anchor organisations, creating 'green' local supply chains and breaking down barriers for suppliers. Work in this area will aim to shorten supply chains and encourage the circular economy - supporting growth in local supply chains - delivering a positive response to the climate change crisis.

Key Partners:

Councils, NHS, Private Sector, Registered Social Landlords, SOSE, Third Sector Interfaces

Timescale: Medium Term

ACTION 5(E)

Explore the feasibility, including innovative approaches to administration and management, of a National Park in the South of Scotland

There is an opportunity to put together a proposal and bid for Scotland's new National Park to be based in the South of Scotland. We will seek to explore the reasoning for and feasibility of such a proposal, drawing in and building on existing work, including positively exploring potentially innovative models for efficiently administering and managing a National Park.

Key Partners:

Councils, SOSE, Third Sector Interfaces, National Partners

Timescale: Short Term

ACTION 5(F)

Identify and advance amalgamation opportunities for energy efficiency and decarbonised technologies.

The collective challenge of adapting homes and buildings to be low carbon presents a significant economic and social opportunity for the region. We will seek to amalgamate opportunities and through doing so provide more attractive inward investment propositions, create an anchor investment point for community wealth building, supporting local supply chain development and give rise to green jobs.

Key Partners:

Councils, Private Sector, Registered Social Landlords, SOSE, Third Sector Interfaces

Timescale: Medium Term

ACTION 5(G)

Develop and implement a communications campaign and toolkits to support our businesses, social enterprises and communities to accelerate their journey to Net Zero.

Many are still oblivious to the scale and nature of change needed to realise a just transition to Net Zero. There needs to be a consistent and sustained approach to better promoting, de-mystifying and inspiring our region to make the change – communicating the economic and societal changes that doing so will give rise to. Whilst recognising there are many toolkits available already, we will develop one tailored to the South of Scotland, which those who live, work and operate here will recognise and trust – helping to link organisations to existing and future funding opportunities.

Key Partners:

Councils, Private Sector, Registered Social Landlords, SOSE, Third Sector Interfaces, Universities and Colleges

Timescale: Short Term

ACTION 5(H)

Develop a collaborative approach to investment planning for bathing and leisure water improvements at key locations across the region

There is an opportunity to work collaboratively to address a number of water quality issues at key locations, through doing so delivering environmental improvements and further enhancing the appeal and reputation of the region as a location of choice for outdoor leisure and adventure pursuits.

Key Partners:

Councils, Crown Estate Scotland, Private Sector, SEPA, SOSE, Water Sports Associations

Timescale: Medium Term

Theme 6

Thriving & Distinct Communities

THEME PRIORITIES:

- Revitalising Towns and Rural Communities
- Creating and Sustaining High Quality, Affordable Homes
- Enhancing Digital & Transport Connections
- Activating & Empowering Communities, the Third Sector and Social Enterprise

REP
South of Scotland
Regional Economic Partnership

CASE STUDY FEATURE:

Edinburgh and South East Scotland Workforce Mobility Project

The Workforce Mobility Project is being led by Scottish Borders Council and funded through the Edinburgh & South East Scotland City Region deal to identify solutions to ensure public transport is an enabler to employability, training and education and also supports communities across the region (with the solutions being appropriate across the whole of the South of Scotland).

The project is funded until 2027 and has brought together employability, education and transport partners to identify, understand and map the transport barriers, and develop solutions to these. Following the mapping of these barrier locations the project will deliver a number of pilots over the next 2 years working with Employers, Employees and Bus Operators using postcode data and shift patterns to design new bus services that meet the need of the commuting workforce. This can also encourage a shift from private to public transport which strengthens the viability of the services and supports the transport network as a whole. This will run in parallel with projects supporting developments in Demand Responsive Transport, lower ticket pricing, bike on bus infrastructure, Mobility as a Service, Franchise models, multiple mode integration, COVID-19, active travel and policy development to build a transport network that is coordinated, integrated, affordable and responds to demand.



Photo credit: VisitScotland

Thriving & Distinct Communities: Delivery Context

Our ambition is to be attractive, competitive and to showcase the best of the region – essential if we are to address population decline. To succeed in this we need to make the South of Scotland exceptional, emphasising quality of life, connectivity, amenity and vibrant neighbourhoods.

Vibrant places and communities are vital to the economic, social, cultural and environmental well-being of the South of Scotland. Efforts to support and transform places and communities will include the implementation of the Borderlands Place programme, specific initiatives such as the Stranraer Gateway and exploiting the opportunities from the Tapestry project in Galashiels town centre and the ongoing development of a wide variety of place initiatives being carried out by the local authorities, SOSE, communities, businesses, social enterprises and the Third Sector. A significant effort will be made to enhance the capacity of communities, Third Sector, social enterprises and other stakeholders taking forward place and community based projects across the South of Scotland. Investments in high quality affordable, warm and connected homes, particularly through the implementation of Strategic Housing Investment plans will be critical in retaining and increasing the working population and in reducing poverty and carbon emissions.

There are some key challenges and barriers in the South of Scotland, especially in relation to transport and digital connectivity. However, there are also a range opportunities to help address these issues primarily through the implementation of specific projects contained within the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal such as the promotion of the Borders Railway Extension and the potential of extending the Workforce Mobility project across the whole of the region. Further investment in digital connectivity across the South of Scotland is also planned through the development of the Borderlands Digital Infrastructure Programme and building on the existing investment in 4G and 5G mobile technology currently being carried out at the Crichton Rural 5G Connectivity Hub which will be transformational.

ACTION 6(A)

Develop a renewed and up to date approach to community capacity and capability building for community groups and organisations – enabling change to be driven more locally and from the bottom up

Many of our communities have energy and ideas on what is best for them and how they want to develop. There have been gaps in the support structure for these groups in recent years in parallel to increased opportunities arising from greater empowerment. We will look at best practice and develop a new approach to working with communities in the South of Scotland, supporting them to developing their capacity, capabilities and confidence to drive forward the change they want to see in their areas.

Key Partners:

Councils, Registered Social Landlords , SOSE, Third Sector Interfaces

Timescale: Short Term

ACTION 6(B)

Develop a structured and long-term support offering specifically for Social Enterprises across the region, to support new start-ups and the scaling up of established ones

Challenges have been identified around the scale and reach of Social Enterprises across the South of Scotland. We know that Social Enterprises have significant potential to scale up and drive transformational socio-economic and environmental change. We will work with the Third Sector to develop more tailored support for Social Enterprise, including training and development for leaders, to unlock their latent potential.

Key Partners:

Councils, SOSE, Third Sector Interfaces

Timescale: Short Term

ACTION 6(C)

Develop a better understanding of digital exclusion in the South of Scotland and an evidence base to support the development of tailored interventions

Digital Connectivity has never been more vital than it is now. It enables us to work, study, and access vital services. We know that there are barriers to take up for many people across the South beyond simply the infrastructure, hardware and even the skills. We will develop a clearer understanding of the digital exclusion gap in the South of Scotland, and use this to chart a clear way forward to address it.

Key Partners:

Councils, Third Sector Interfaces, NHS, SOSE , Registered Social Landlords

Timescale: Medium Term

ACTION 6(D)

The delivery of a strategic review and an initial options appraisal regarding key transport related connectivity in the South of Scotland

One of the key challenges and barriers in the South of Scotland is the lack of good transport connectivity. We will undertake a strategic high level review of transport proposals linked specifically to previous work undertaken in both Local Authorities, and the Regional Spatial Strategy, taking note of key Government objectives such as the promotion of low carbon and a transition to Net Zero. The work will cover connectivity improvements on the A75 and A77 corridors, along with rail related development such as the extension of Borders Railway and potential new station facilities in the region; potential public transport improvements; and active travel.

Key Partners:

Councils, SEStrans, SWestrans, Third Sector Interfaces, Transport Scotland

Timescale: Medium Term

ACTION 6(E)

Advocate and lobby to create the right conditions for investment in new and existing housing within the region, to boost the number of new homes delivered to better align with economic and social needs and ambition

In order for us to tackle our demographic challenges, we will need to ensure that there is a suitable increase in the number of new homes delivered in the South of Scotland – of the right types and in the right locations – in parallel to improving our existing homes. In order to do that, we need to ensure that planning and other policies are aligned to this goal. We will advocate as one to achieve this and to secure strategic investment which matches our economic and social aims for the region.

Key Partners:

Councils, Registered Social Landlords , SOSE

Timescale: Medium Term

ACTION 6(F)

Develop a strategy to prioritise and bring back into beneficial use strategically significant empty / derelict buildings and sites in key locations across the region

There are a number of empty / derelict buildings of strategic significance across our region, often in key locations including our town and village centres, which blight our environment but have complex circumstances which act as a barrier to their re-use. We will develop a strategic and collaborative approach as a means of more proactively seeking to bring such assets back into beneficial use, giving rise to economic and environmental benefits.

Key Partners:

Councils, SOSE, Third Sector Interfaces, Registered Social Landlords

Timescale: Medium Term

Cross-cutting Actions

As well as actions relating specifically to our key themes, there are also actions that we will take which support a number of the themes simultaneously. These are listed below as our 'Cross-Cutting Actions'.



Photo credit: SOSE

Cross-cutting Actions

ACTION C(1)	Implement the recommendations from SQW to develop a Public Depository for Data and Reports relevant to the South of Scotland	Consultants, SQW, have been conducting a piece of work to look at the socio-economic data needs of the South of Scotland, analysing what is available and where the gaps are. They will also present recommendations to set up a public data depository for the South of Scotland to hold, share, and continue to collect relevant data and to establish an oversight group to maximise the impact of research conducted in the region	Key Partners: Councils, National Partners, SOSE, Third Sector Interfaces, Universities and Colleges	Timescale: Medium Term
ACTION C(2)	Establish a Feasibility Grant Fund for businesses, social enterprises, and community ventures	Partners have identified a need for an open fund for enterprises of all kinds to bid into to undertake feasibility work on new ideas and projects. This fund will help to develop a stronger pipeline of projects which can attract funding from a wide range of sources.	Key Partners: Councils, SOSE, Third Sector Interfaces	Timescale: Short Term
ACTION C(3)	Promote and utilise the GlobalScots Network for the benefit of the South	The GlobalScots Network is Scotland's International Business Network which provides opportunities for business people to connect with key contacts around the world. GlobalScots can assist in promoting the interests of the South internationally.	Key Partners: Councils, SE and SOSE	Timescale: Short Term

ACTION C(4)	Develop a robust data baseline on Diversity and Inclusion in the South of Scotland	One of the key challenges we have around missing data is around Diversity and Inclusion. We need a much stronger baseline of data to help us understand the needs, challenges and opportunities. This will aid a greater understanding and allow us to develop targeted interventions to increase inclusion and participation across society and the economy.	Key Partners: Councils, SOSE, Third Sector Interfaces	Timescale: Medium Term
ACTION C(5)	Develop a Measurement Framework for the RES which fully captures the full breadth of the activity in the Strategy	In order to gauge the impact of the RES, we require a range of measures, which the REP will monitor. An initial review of data sources suggested that there isn't the data available which can adequately cover the breadth of the Strategy. Partners will therefore work to develop a full and comprehensive Framework which fully measures our impact.	Key Partners: Councils, SOSE, REP Members	Timescale: Short Term
ACTION C(6)	Develop proposals to enhance the Circular Economy and capitalise on the key opportunities in the South of Scotland	In order to achieve our goals of a Just Transition to Net Zero, we will need to look at new and innovative ways to recycle and reuse waste materials. There are already good examples of businesses in the South re-using waste products to make new. We will support emerging opportunities to support similar developments, which can positively impact upon the environment and help build a sustainable economy.	Key Partners: Private Sector, Social Enterprises, SOSE, Zero Waste Scotland	Timescale: Short / Medium Term

Our National Partners

National partners have an important role in enabling the delivery of the ambition in our Regional Economic Strategy, working with local partners to support delivery and aligning their activity to contribute to this. This was recognised at the first meeting of the Convention of the South of Scotland in 2020, where members endorsed a commitment to working together to deliver the ambitions for the local economy and its future prosperity. Our new Regional Economic Strategy provides a structured and consistent basis for the engagement of Government and national partners and their contribution to the achievement of the South of Scotland's economic ambitions.

This Delivery Plan captures and helps coordinate important strategic actions, in significant areas which will make the biggest contributions to the achievement of the ambition in the Strategy and where all partners need to work together to deliver. The RES also helps focus the contribution that individual partner organisations and others make through their core activities, including national partners. At a recent meeting of the Convention in October 2021, national partners took the opportunity to reflect on the Regional Economic Strategy and to discuss the strategic actions, from their organisation's existing plans and activity which can be developed in future, that will contribute to its delivery. The table below captures the range and depth of that contribution across the RES themes.

National Partner	Skilled & Ambitious People	Innovative & Enterprising	Rewarding & Fair Work	Cultural & Creative Excellence	Green & Sustainable Economy	Thriving & Distinct Communities
Scottish Forestry	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Forestry and Land Scotland	◆			◆	◆	
VisitScotland	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Transport Scotland					◆	◆
Skills Development Scotland	◆		◆		◆	◆
Scottish Enterprise		◆	◆		◆	
NatureScot	◆		◆		◆	
Creative Scotland	◆			◆		◆
Historic Environment Scotland	◆			◆	◆	◆
Scottish Funding Council	◆	◆			◆	◆
Crown Estate Scotland					◆	

It is clear that there are a range of contributions and opportunities for national partners to work with the South of Scotland, in the immediate and longer term.

It is intended that through a programme of ongoing engagement, between the Regional Economic Partnership and national agencies, future delivery and update of the Strategy and Delivery Plan will be undertaken, working closely with national partners as part of regular communication and shared activity, through the successful approach to Team South of Scotland.

The Convention has agreed to seek updates from the REP and national agencies at future meetings about the additional actions taken to deliver on our ambitions for the South of Scotland.

Developing a Measurement Framework for the RES

Our Strategy looks ahead 10 years, to the South of Scotland we want to see in 2031, and defines what we believe success will look like. This makes clear our wide-ranging commitment to a well-being economy, positively impacting across our society, environment and economy. Delivering on our ambitions will, of course, take long-term, collaborative and sustained action as well as action by individual partners.

Green:



- A green economy leader – looked to by others having piloted new approaches to land use and natural capital; energy planning, generation and storage; and green travel
- A growing circular economy, supporting local supply chains and giving rise to green and local jobs
- Enhanced, future-proofed and smart energy networks enabling take up of new and Net Zero technologies
- A low carbon society, increasingly resilient to the effects of climate change.

Fair:



- Greater equality of opportunity for all, with people reaching their full potential
- Reduced poverty and deprivation
- Businesses embracing and championing the benefits of fairer working practices
- Everyone can access a home which meets their needs, which they can afford, supporting enhanced wellbeing
- Improved digital connectivity, accessibility and confidence for everyone.

Flourishing:



- More people living in, working in and visiting the South of Scotland
- Vibrant, growing and connected places shaped by empowered communities
- Strong outward facing regional identity with growing national and global appeal and reputation
- Widely respected centre of entrepreneurship and creativity
- Significant percentage of spending power being retained locally.

We want to ensure that we are able to demonstrate progress in delivering our long term aims. To do so we need to go beyond traditional economic measures to capture the positive impacts our actions have on our well-being (the health of our population) and our social and environmental ambitions. We need to be able to measure what matters most to people across the South of Scotland.

Developing a Measurement Framework for the RES (Cont'd)

In developing the Strategy, we have strengthened our understanding of existing data and have a good overview of what is available. While we have some information, we know it is not complete. The evidence, information and data sets available for the South of Scotland do not yet cover everything we need to establish accurate baselines and be confident that we can collect relevant information that captures our impact.

In the first year of our delivery, we will develop the long-term outcomes linked to our vision. In taking this forward, we will also look at the outcomes we expect from the short and medium term activities we undertake ensuring they are contributing to our vision and that we are capturing the impact. We will look broadly at the information we want to collect, that is relevant to our ambitions for a well being economy. We will draw our baseline position and identify the key indicators by which progress will be tracked across the short, medium and long term, as well as targets where appropriate. In taking forward this work we will align with the National Performance Framework so we are also able to demonstrate the contribution that the South of Scotland is making to delivering Scotland's ambitions.

We recognise the importance of having accurate data that enables us to track progress. As well as numerical evidence, we want to take forward work that provides qualitative insights that complement the facts and figures we want to have. A recent South of Scotland business survey is an example of this. It captures the views of business. This will help us understand how our region is changing and where we are adding value.

This is a long term endeavour and it is important that we get it right – we want to be able to demonstrate the difference we are making and how our actions are contributing to our vision to be “Green, Fair and Flourishing”.

Ongoing Review of the Delivery Plan

Notwithstanding that the specific actions within this Delivery Plan are the sole or joint responsibility of individual partner organisations, the REP will monitor progress and keep the relevance and effectiveness of both this Delivery Plan and the Regional Economic Strategy under review.

This is consistent with the oversight role expected of the REP – which aside from helping to align and coordinate partner efforts in response to agreed priorities or the emergence of any new opportunities, provides a forum to hold individual partner organisations to account, making sure they are stepping up to do their part and following through on the commitments made and detailed in this Delivery Plan.

In keeping with the intention for the Delivery Plan to be a rolling plan across the ten year duration of the Regional Economic Strategy to which it relates, there is a commitment to ensure that it is reviewed and if relevant refreshed annually. This process will present an opportunity to identify and include new actions; to refocus existing ones; and to remove those which have been completed – acting to ensure the Delivery Plan remains up to date and relevant, as well as accurately capturing the key partners involved and timescales being worked to. Any refresh will be subject to formal approval by the REP, and be published on the REP's website as soon as practical thereafter.

To aid transparency the REP is committed to reporting annually and publicly on the progress of delivering the actions within the Delivery Plan, as well as progress towards the desired outcomes of the Regional Economic Strategy, drawing on the agreed measurement framework, once in place, to do so.

Appendix 1: Abbreviations & Partnership Members

Business Organisations – A network of organisations which provide expertise, knowledge, and experience to the wider business community, as well as advocate for businesses. These include, for example, the Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses, Third Sector Interfaces and the Scottish Council for Development and Industry.

Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) – The national organisation for local economies which develops progressive economies for people, planet and place.

Community Learning and Development Partnership – A multi-agency partnership established to act as a strategic forum to oversee CLD activities across the sector and involving a range of key partners including various Council Services; Colleges; Third Sector Interfaces; Skills Development Scotland; and National Health Service.

Community Planning Partnership (CPP) – Each Local Authority area in Scotland has a CPP, which brings together all major public, Third Sector and private sector agencies. They focus on working in partnership with each other, and with local communities, to plan and deliver better services. CPP's include statutory partners such as Councils, Local NHS Boards, Police, Fire, and also Enterprise Agencies. There are also other key partners involved such as Third Sector Interfaces, Registered Social Landlords and Educational Institutions.

Councils – The councils (or local authorities) which cover the South of Scotland are Dumfries and Galloway and Scottish Borders. Each council is made up of councillors who are directly elected by the local population and operate independently from central government. Councils provide a wide range of public services including education, social care, waste management, libraries and planning.

Department for International Trade – is a UK Government department which works to secure UK and global prosperity by promoting and financing international trade and investment, and championing free trade.

Crichton Campus Leadership Group – Membership of the group include:

Crichton Trust	Scottish Funding Council
Dumfries and Galloway College	Skills Development Scotland
Dumfries and Galloway Council	South of Scotland Enterprise
NHS Dumfries & Galloway	The Crichton Foundation
Open University	University of Glasgow
Scotland's Rural University College	University of the West of Scotland

Education and Skills Strategic Co-ordination Group Partners – Core membership of the group include:

Borders College	Scotland’s Rural University College
Crichton Campus Leadership Group	Scottish Borders Council
Dumfries and Galloway College	Scottish Funding Council
Dumfries and Galloway Council	Skills Development Scotland
2 x employers (x1 D&G and x1 Scottish Borders)	South of Scotland Enterprise
Developing the Young Workforce Dumfries & Galloway	Third Sector Interface
Developing the Young Workforce Scottish Borders	University of Glasgow
Heriot Watt University	University of the West of Scotland
Open University	

Innovation Centres – hubs which draw together industry and research expertise in relevant sectors to work on problems and opportunities identified by a particular industry.

Scotland has the following currently established national Innovation Centres:

- Centre for Sensor and Imaging Systems (CENSIS)
- Construction Scotland Innovation Centre (CSIC)
- Digital Health and Care Innovation Centre (DHI)
- Industrial Biotechnology Innovation Centre (IBioIC)
- Sustainable Aquaculture Innovation Centre (SAIC)
- Precision Medicine Innovation Centre (PMS-IC)
- The Data Lab

In the South of Scotland, the following Innovation hubs/centres operate, including the 5G Hub, Marine Innovation Centre, Dairy Research and Innovation Centre, and AIMS (Advanced Manufacturing in the South of Scotland) centres. Plans are also in place to establish new Innovation Centres in the South of Scotland for Dairy and Mountain Biking.

Interface – Connects organisations from a wide variety of national and international industries to all of Scotland's universities, research institutes and colleges.

Key Anchor Organisations – May be public, private, voluntary or community organisations, but the common feature is a strong connection to the locality and its residents.

Leisure and Culture Trusts – With responsibility for leisure facilities, cultural venues and halls, museum collections and libraries, as well as country parks and outdoor activities. Live Borders is the leisure, sport and cultural trust for the Scottish Borders, and in the West responsibility for these services managed by Dumfries and Galloway Council.

Local Employability Partnership – Led by councils and includes a range of organisations that coordinate employability and training in the local authority area. The partnerships include the colleges across the South of Scotland, the voluntary sector, business representative organisations, SOSE and national agencies i.e. the Department of Work and Pensions and Skills Development Scotland.

Private Sector – made up of all privately owned, for-profit businesses in the economy.

Regional Economic Partnership (REP) – A forum that brings together a wide range of expertise and sets the direction of our regional economy in the South of Scotland. Members of the REP were appointed through an open recruitment process, joining elected members from both local councils and Board members from SOSE. The REP has a collective ambition to deliver a clear and compelling vision for the economic success of the South of Scotland. Its role is to inform the development of and oversee the delivery of the Regional Economic Strategy (RES).

Regional Skills Investment Plan (RSIP) – part of Skills Development Scotland's skills investment planning approach, RSIPs recognise the diverse needs of regions across Scotland. The plans take account of the particular challenges, opportunities and drivers at regional level and present a partnership response to these.

Scottish Development International (SDI) - is Scotland's trade and foreign direct investment agency. Their aim is to encourage and support more overseas businesses to set up a location in Scotland, invest in Scottish businesses or buy high quality Scottish products and services.

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) – Scotland’s national skills body.

South of Scotland Destination Alliance (SSDA) – is the strategic Destination Management and Marketing Organisation for the South of Scotland, led by the industry, encompassing Dumfries and Galloway and the Scottish Borders.

SOS Digital Skills Hub – to provide upskilling and retraining opportunities in digital skills for people within key sectors of the region’s economy, led by a Programme Board made up of the following organisations:

Allermuir Consulting	SCDI
Borders College	ScotlandIS
Border Safeguard Ltd	Scottish Borders Council
CENSIS	Skills Development Scotland
Dumfries & Galloway College	The Data Lab
Digital Health & Care Innovation Centre	University of Edinburgh
Edinburgh Napier University	University of the West of Scotland
Open University	

South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE) - is a new, dedicated economic development agency, established by the Scottish Government, for the South of Scotland.

Third Sector Interfaces – As part of the Scottish Government’s commitment to developing the role of communities and the Third Sector, it invests in the development of a network of Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs) across Scotland. This network aims to ensure that the Third Sector is adequately supported and enabled to participate in Community Planning and contribute toward the achievement of local and national outcomes.

TSIs are funded by the Scottish Government to deliver four core functions:

- Volunteering development (support for volunteers and organisations who support volunteers).
- Social enterprise development (to promote and develop social enterprise locally).
- Supporting and developing a strong Third Sector (support for Third Sector organisations on setting up a charity, training and development, and funding advice).
- Building the relationship with community planning (acting as the conduit and connecting the Third Sector with the implementation of the Single Outcome Agreements and Community Planning Process).

Water Sports Associations – such as Stranraer Water Sports Association (SWSA)

APPENDIX 2: Alignment of Our Actions and Priorities

Theme	Priority	Actions
1 Skilled & Ambitious	• Enabling access to skills, training & employment	1(A), 1(B), 1(C), 1(D), 1(E), 4(D), 6(B), 6(C), 6(D)
	• Attracting & Retaining People with a Diversity of Skills, Ambition & Knowledge	1(A), 1(F), 1(G), 2(C), 2(H), 3(D), 4(D)
	• Preparing for the Future of Work	1(C), 1(D)
	• Building Lifelong Learning & Opportunity	1(A), 1(E), 1(F), 4(D)
2 Innovative & Enterprising	• Embracing Research & Innovation	2(D), 2(E), 4(D), 5(C), 6(A)
	• Enhancing Business Support Services	2(A), 2(D), 2(E), 2(F), 2(G), 3(B), 4(D), 4(E), 5(C), 5(D), 5(G), 6(B)
	• Activating Networks & Business Interaction	2(B), 2(D), 2(E), 2(G), 3(B), 5(C)
	• Creating Flexible & Accessible Workspaces	2(C), 6(F)
3 Rewarding & Fair Work	• Growing & Diversifying Our Economy	1(G), 2(D), 2(F), 3(A), 3(B), 3(C), 3(E), 3(F), 4(D), 4(E), 5(A), 5(C), 6(B)
	• Attracting & Securing New Investment	2(D), 2(F), 3(A), 3(B), 3(C), 3(E), 4(E), 4(F), 5(A), 5(G), 5(H), 6(F)
	• Improving Productivity & Competitiveness	2(D), 2(E), 3(B), 3(C), 3(D), 3(E), 3(F), 4(D), 4(E), 5(C), 5(G), 6(B), 6(D)
	• Securing and Improving Fair Working Conditions & Wages	1(A), 3(D)
4 Cultural & Creative Excellence	• Celebrating & Enabling Creativity	4(A), 4(B), 4(C), 4(D), 4(E)
	• Championing a New Regional Identity	1(F), 2(D), 3(F), 4(A), 4(B), 4(C), 4(E), 5(A), 5(B), 5(E), 5(H)
	• Investing in Visitor Economy Infrastructure	4(C), 5(B), 5(E), 5(H), 6(D)
	• Boosting Culture & Heritage Assets	3(F), 4(A), 4(B), 4(C), 4(E), 4(F), 5(B), 5(E), 6(F)
5 Green & Sustainable Economy	• Harnessing & Enhancing Natural Capital	4(A), 5(A), 5(B), 5(C), 5(E), 5(H)
	• Seizing the Economic Opportunity of a Just Transition to Net Zero	1(B), 3(E), 5(B), 5(C), 5(D), 5(F), 5(G), 6(A), 6(B), 6(D), 6(E), 6(F)
	• Improving Efficiency of Homes & Buildings	4(F), 5(D), 5(F), 6(E), 6(F)
	• Supporting Community Wealth Building and Growing Regional Supply Chains	5(B), 5(D), 5(F), 5(G)
6 Thriving & Distinct Communities	• Revitalising Towns and Rural Communities	1(G), 2(C), 2(H), 4(A), 4(B), 4(C), 4(E), 4(F), 5(A), 5(C), 5(D), 5(E), 5(H), 6(A), 6(C), 6(D), 6(E), 6(F)
	• Creating and Sustaining High Quality, Affordable Homes	5(D), 5(F), 6(E)
	• Enhancing Digital & Transport Connections	1(B), 4(E), 6(C), 6(D)
	• Activating & Empowering Communities, the Third Sector and Social Enterprise	3(D), 5(D), 5(F), 5(G), 6(A), 6(B)



South of Scotland
Regional Economic Partnership