
SOUTH OF SCOTLAND REGIONAL ECONOMIC STRATEGY – DELIVERY PLAN

Report by Director, Resilient Communities

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

25 November 2021

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks the endorsement of the Delivery Plan for the South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy (Appendix 1), which has been produced by the South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership.**
- 1.2 This report follows on from the decision by Scottish Borders Council at its meeting on 23 September 2021 to agree the South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy. It also agreed to receive the Strategy's Delivery Plan and a Measurement Framework for the Strategy at a future meeting which is the subject of this report.
- 1.3 As with the Strategy, the Delivery Plan has been produced by the South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership. The Partnership comprises members of Scottish Borders Council, Dumfries and Galloway Council, and South of Scotland Enterprise, together with members from business, communities, social enterprise, third sector, registered social landlords, young people and representatives from colleges, universities and public bodies. The Chair of the Partnership rotates annually (based on financial years) between Dumfries and Galloway Council and Scottish Borders Council. The current Chair of the Partnership is Councillor Rowley. Scottish Borders Council has been involved in every stage of the development of the Strategy and the Delivery Plan. The Delivery Plan was agreed by the Partnership at its meeting on 5 November 2021.
- 1.4 The production of the Delivery Plan has involved a great deal of discussion and consultation with local, regional and national partners. It is a three year 'rolling' Plan with short, medium and long term actions that the South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership will review annually. The actions in the Plan are aligned with the vision and priorities within the Strategy. They are grouped according to the main themes in the Strategy and there are some cross cutting actions. The main organisations are identified for taking forward each action. There is a section in the Plan about the Measurement Framework. The Partnership has decided to take its time in developing this Framework to ensure that relevant outcome indicators are produced that can relate to the Strategy's priorities.

2 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Council:

- a) Endorses the South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy Delivery Plan in Appendix 1.**
- b) Agrees to receive progress reports about the implementation of the Strategy and Delivery Plan, including the Measurement Framework**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At its meeting on 23 September 2021 the Council agreed to endorse the South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy. At that meeting, the Council also agreed to receive the Strategy's Delivery Plan and a Measurement Framework for the Strategy at a future meeting which is the subject of this report.
- 3.2 The Strategy was produced by the South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership which comprises members of Scottish Borders Council, Dumfries and Galloway Council, and South of Scotland Enterprise, together with members from business, communities, social enterprise, third sector, registered social landlords, young people and representatives from colleges, universities and public bodies. Scottish Borders Council has been involved in every stage of the development of the Strategy and Delivery Plan. The membership of the Partnership from Scottish Borders Council comprises Councillors Haslam, Rowley, Mountford and Bell with Councillor Robson as a substitute. The Chair of the Partnership rotates annually (based on financial years) between Dumfries and Galloway Council and Scottish Borders Council. The current chair of the Partnership is Councillor Rowley. The overall membership of the Partnership is listed in the Strategy agreed by Scottish Borders Council at its meeting in September 2021.
- 3.3 The South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy is a ten-year strategy. It seeks to maximise the economic opportunities in the South of Scotland, whilst taking account of its key challenges. It is shaped by a considerable amount of engagement of organisations and people across the region together with the members of the South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership.
- 3.4 The vision of the Strategy recognises the unique strengths of the South of Scotland in relation to its natural capital, the quality of its communities and cultural identity and looks to increase the working population and attract visitors to the region. Inclusivity, sustainability, innovation and creativity, and making the most of everyone's potential are key elements in this Vision. Based on this vision the Strategy identifies six priority themes. These are:
- Skilled and Ambitious People.
 - Innovative and Enterprising.
 - Rewarding and Fair Work.
 - Cultural and Creative Excellence.
 - Green and Sustainable Economy.
 - Thriving and Distinct Communities.

4 South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy – Delivery Plan

- 4.1 Considerable efforts have been made by the South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership to produce the Strategy's Delivery Plan. The development of the Delivery Plan has been informed by the extensive consultation carried out on the Strategy. This engagement which comprised over 1100 responses was referred to in the previous Council report for the Council meeting on 23 September 2021. The actions in the Plan have been developed following partner workshops based on the themes in the Strategy, dialogue with national agencies, and meetings of the Partnership and Partnership members, many of which have drawn on wider discussions with others in their own organisations or area of interest. These activities have been supported by officials from South of Scotland Enterprise, Dumfries and Galloway Council and Scottish Borders Council.

- 4.2 A Reference Group consisting of a smaller number of South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership members and chaired by Councillor Rowley met weekly to provide input on the production of the Delivery Plan. This Group supported by officers worked well together with strong and constructive engagement between members. It is a way of working that is planned to be continued. Reference Group members were also able to link in with their own networks to gain advice. The Council's input into this process involved a series of meetings held prior to Reference Group meetings and were attended by Partnership members comprising Councillors Shona Haslam, Mark Rowley, Simon Mountford, and Stuart Bell together with substitute member Councillor Euan Robson. This was particularly helpful. The Delivery Plan was agreed by the Partnership at its meeting on 5 November 2021.
- 4.3 The Delivery Plan is a three year 'rolling plan' and comprises, short, medium and long term actions. The six priority themes mentioned in para 3.4 above, together with a cross-cutting approach, are the basis for the development of the actions within the Delivery Plan (see Appendix 1) . The identified actions are:
- Strategic and high-level providing clarity on what is needed but not being overly prescriptive on how it should be delivered or achieved.
 - Collaborative, delivered across partners – not a list of what individual organisations are already doing.
 - Related to matters which the partners have control over.
 - Focused on activity which will have a tangible impact across the themes of the Strategy.
 - Adding value to and complementing what is already happening, or which scale up existing projects and activities to extend scope or reach.
 - Stretching, ambitious and deliverable, and sub-divided into short, medium and long term.
- 4.4 Within each of the Strategy's priority themes there are case studies, some examples of existing actions and a list of proposed partnership actions, including an indication of the key delivery partners and timescales. It is intended that this will be a living document which is regularly monitored and reviewed by the South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership on an annual basis.
- 4.5 Within the Delivery Plan there is mention of the Partnership's approach to the Measurement Framework. This Framework for measuring progress against the high-level outcomes and impacts is being developed as one of the short-term partner actions, and will be brought forward to a future meeting of the Partnership once completed. Initial programming of when to present this with the final Strategy for approval was revised by the Partnership. This reflected the extent of involvement and participation required to ensure the Measurement Framework is correctly positioned with local and national partners, businesses, social enterprises, communities and third sector.
- 4.6 Significant efforts are being made by the South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership to ensure its Strategy and Delivery Plan is effectively implemented. The Partnership's next meeting is on Friday 10 December 2021. Work is now taking place to develop a programme setting out the arrangements, including timescales, for taking forward the actions in the Delivery Plan. Officers will continue to work closely with national agencies and other organisations to ascertain their commitments and involvement in

the Strategy and Delivery Plan. Also, further engagement is to take place with partners and bodies across the South of Scotland to ensure their commitment and contribution to endorsing, supporting and promoting the Strategy and Delivery Plan. It is intended that a Reference Group type process is used by the Partnership to oversee this work.

5 **IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 **Financial**

The Council has supported the development of the Strategy through the Economic Development budget. More detail is required on the actions that make up the Delivery Plan to ascertain further resource requirements.

5.2 **Risk and Mitigations**

- a) The South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy and its Delivery Plan will make a vital contribution to the economic development aspects of strategic planning in Scottish Borders that is taken forward by Scottish Borders Council and the Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership.
- b) There is reputational risk for the Council in not strongly supporting the South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy and its Delivery Plan. Working with our partners, Scottish Borders Council has played a key role in the production of the Delivery Plan.
- c) Partnership working is critical to the success of economic development. The South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy and its Delivery Plan is aimed at ensuring public, private, community and voluntary bodies work together with a common purpose.

5.3 **Integrated Impact Assessment**

Inclusive Growth and equality matters are at the heart of the development of the South of Scotland Regional Economic Development Strategy. The development of the Strategy has been informed by an Integrated Impact Assessment sub-group of the South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership which included key officers in the Council. The sub-group assessed the draft Strategy and recommended changes which were incorporated into the final Strategy. There will be further impact work ongoing associated with the implementation of the Delivery Plan.

5.4 **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

The South of Scotland Regional Economic Development Strategy and its Delivery Plan has a major focus on sustainable economic growth linked to the SDG.

5.5 **Climate Change**

The South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy and its Delivery Plan is predicated on a Just Transition to Net Zero and is expected to have positive implications for reducing carbon emissions.

5.6 **Rural Proofing**

The South of Scotland Regional Economic Development Strategy and its Delivery Plan is about improving the competitiveness and sustainability of its constituent rural economies.

5.7 Data Protection Impact Statement

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

5.8 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

There will be no changes required to either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the proposals set out in this report.

6 CONSULTATION

6.1 The Director of Finance & Corporate Governance, Chief Legal Officer (and Monitoring Officer), Director of People, Performance & Change, Clerk to the Council, and Communications Team have been consulted and comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

6.2 The Corporate Management Team has been consulted and comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

Approved by

Jenni Craig

Director, Resilient Communities

Signature

Author(s)

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Background Papers: None

Previous Minute Reference: Scottish Borders Council 31 October 2019, Scottish Borders Council Executive Committee 15 September 2020, Scottish Borders Council 17 June 2021 and Scottish Borders Council 23 September 2021.

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