

---

## **SCOTTISH BORDERS STRATEGIC EVENTS PLAN**

**Report by Director - Resilient Communities**

---

### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**16 August 2022**

---

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

- 1.1 This report provides a refreshed Strategic Events Plan for the Scottish Borders over a five year period between 2022 and 2027.**
- 1.2 This report outlines the significant impact events have on the region and also the supporting role Scottish Borders Council has in the delivery of these events. The Council successfully facilitates and supports a wide range of regional, national and international events which in turn delivers a significant economic impact to the local economy.
- 1.3 The refreshed events plan takes into account the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on the events sector, as well as placing an emphasis on sustainability, the environment and local communities. An Operational Plan supports the strategy document and sets out how the various strategic actions will be delivered.
- 1.4 The report reflects the high level of ambition in the Scottish Borders in relation to the delivery of strategic events. This ambition will help secure further growth within the events sector, broaden the base and help attract more visitors to our area.

#### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommend that the Executive Committee:-**
  - (a) Approves the Scottish Borders Strategic Events Plan identified in Appendix A.**
  - (b) Approves the Scottish Borders Operational Plan identified in Appendix B.**

### **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The previous Scottish Borders Events Plan was produced in 2014 and ran until 2020. It outlined the vision for the Scottish Borders as an event destination for significant events. It is widely recognised that events raise the profile of the area and create economic and community related benefits. In 2019 the economic benefits associated with events supported by Scottish Borders Council were estimated to be in the region of £4.5m.
- 3.2 Two major factors have recently shaped the direction of the refreshed Events Plan. Firstly, the COVID 19 pandemic caused significant negative impacts on the sector and a need to support the recovery of the sector and create a more positive future from what was a very challenging situation. Secondly, there is the opportunity for more enhanced co-operation with key strategic partners in the South of Scotland, including Dumfries and Galloway Council and South of Scotland Enterprise which has culminated in the delivery of the South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy.
- 3.3 Events are recognised as an important part of the social and economic fabric of communities. They enrich the lives of local residents, attract visitors and improve the economic vitality of an area. Recognising the importance of events, the Council has had an Events Plan since 2006 and has allocated funding to support large scale strategic events that accrue economic benefits on an annual basis.
- 3.4 Separate arrangements and funding streams are also in place to support local community festivals and common ridings. The Communities Partnership team allocate the Local Festival Fund and this annual fund assists with the running costs of traditional festivals in towns and villages across the Scottish Borders.

### **4 NATIONAL EVENTS STRATEGY 2015 - 2025**

- 4.1 The National Event Strategy "Scotland the Perfect Stage" was first published in 2008. This set out the Government's vision for events and highlighted the range of benefits that a strong portfolio of events can deliver for Scotland. Since then Scotland has demonstrated ever strengthening reputation as the perfect stage for events and has successfully reaped many of those benefits of a growing international reputation for hosting events.
- 4.2 The successful delivery of "Scotland the Perfect Stage 2015- 2025" allows for the development and growth of a flourishing, innovative and competitive events industry through which Scotland can enhance and sustain an inspirational portfolio of strategic events. It is hoped that these events will help generate business opportunities, creates jobs and boost the local economy, whilst delivering impacts and a legacy that will benefit all Scottish communities.
- 4.3 The current vision for the National Events Strategy is to capitalise on;
  - Our cultural identity and heritage;
  - Our people;
  - Our natural environment;

- Our built facilities; and
- Our signature events.

4.4 In addition, Visit Scotland announced a new tourism strategy "Scotland Outlook 2030" in March 2020 which has a ten year horizon to grow the value and enhance the benefits of tourism for our visitors, businesses and communities. The main focus of the strategy is centred on responsible and sustainable tourism.

## **5 SCOTTISH BORDERS STRATEGIC EVENTS PLAN 2022 – 2027**

5.1 The revised 2022 – 27 Strategic Events Plan is ambitious and proposes targeting support towards strategic events that have the greatest regional economic impact, provide national and international benefits, are sustainable and also work towards the delivery of net zero.

5.2 The Scottish Borders is currently building a strong reputation as a great place to hold a wide variety of activity based outdoor events. The Strategic Events Plan therefore sets out the Council's approach in terms of how we will continue to support, nurture and develop a series of strategic events throughout the Scottish Borders and also how we will measure the impact of these events.

5.3 The plan intends to build on the highly successful work that has taken place over the past few years where we now have a portfolio of successful 'home grown' events such as:

- The Borders Book Festival;
- The Melrose 7's;
- The Jim Clark Rally;
- TweedLove; and
- The Tour o the Borders.

5.4 The Scottish Borders has also hosted national events such as The Tour of Britain Cycle Race and we are also looking forward to the international Cycling World Championships visiting the Borders in 2023 when the Tweed Valley will be the venue for the Downhill Mountain Biking and the Cross Country disciplines.

5.5 The Strategic Events Plan aims to maximise resources as well as continuing to leverage in funding support from key strategic partners such as EventScotland and South of Scotland Enterprise. The plan also has key linkages to the South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy and highlights the role of events in attracting visitors to the region, providing opportunities to stay longer and spend more while they are here and also to encourage them to return.

5.6 Another key focus is on bringing new events to the area and helping to enable existing events to grow and ultimately become more sustainable so that over time resources can shift from existing events to new events.

5.7 It is also important for National and International events to have a positive

impact and help deliver a lasting legacy for Scottish Borders communities. With this in mind, it is proposed to deliver a one off community fund to assist communities celebrate the Cycling World Championships in 2023 as part of the events strategy to ensure a lasting legacy. It is also proposed that this will be complemented by a one-off top investment in small scale community events (up to £5k) that are not currently supported through the Festival Support Fund.

- 5.8 The Strategic Events Plan has been developed with help from local consultancy group Purple Moon Events Services and has included consultation work with the local events sector, including key event organisers.
- 5.9 An Operational Plan which outlines the methodology and proposed budget allocations over the current financial year has been produced to deliver the Events Plan and provide suitable direction.
- 5.10 As part of the Operational Plan, there will be an official launch of the strategy and a communication plan will accompany the strategy document.
- 5.11 The Strategic Events plans and the Operational Plan have been appended to this report in **Appendix A** and **Appendix B** respectively.

## **6 IMPLICATIONS**

### **6.1 Financial**

The Operational Plan outlines the cost implications associated with the strategy over the next three years. Financial and staff support is required to help develop individual events and the region as a whole as an international and national events destination. The current event budget is approximately £100k per annum with an additional investment of £500k in 2022/23 approved as part of the 2022/23 financial planning process. Phasing of this additional investment will align with the operational plan with any timing between financial years included in future revenue monitoring reports. The funding will be used to help promote and develop the local events sector in the Scottish Borders.

### **6.2 Risk and Mitigations**

- (a) Event development is a priority for Scottish Borders Council and this is reflected in the continuing opportunities which are being presented and which the council is supportive of, for example hosting the Cycling World Championships Cross Country and Mountain Biking competitions in 2023. There is a risk that if the Council does not support events the economic, environmental and social benefits will not be realised.
- (b) Failure to deliver support to local events risks delivery of economic impacts and other social and cultural benefits. Competition from other regions of Scotland and the UK means that the public and private sector need to work effectively together to ensure the Scottish Borders is providing the best 'support package' for events possible.

### **6.3 Integrated Impact Assessment**

A key aspect of Scottish Borders Council's work in relation to Economic Development is to reduce barriers to economic growth and target inequality. The Events Plan will help ensure that information on service delivery in relation to equalities groups is constantly monitored.

### **6.4 Sustainable Development Goals**

The new Strategic Events Plan will ensure that the planning, development and delivery of events incorporates socially and environmentally responsible decision making, balanced with providing economic benefits to help sustain local communities.

### **6.5 Climate Change**

Scottish Borders should be recognised as a leader in sustainability. Caring for the natural environment should be a priority for everyone and will remain a priority with the UK drive to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to support a Just Transition to Net Zero by 2045. Event development support includes advice on potential impacts of events and carbon management. Event organisers will be required to try and reduce emissions and champion environmental sustainability across the industry where practical.

### **6.6 Rural Proofing**

The report highlights the intention of Scottish Borders Council to encourage more events to take place within the Scottish Borders and thereby providing rural communities with more opportunities from increased visitor numbers and economic activity.

### **6.7 Data Protection Impact Statement**

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

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

There are no proposed changes to the Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation.

## **7 CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer/Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Director (People Performance & Change), the Clerk to the Council and Corporate Communications are being consulted and any comments received will be incorporated into the final report.

**Approved by**

**Jenni Craig**  
**Director - Resilient Communities**

**Author(s)**

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Jane Warcup	Events Officer
Graeme Johnstone	Lead Officer
Sam Smith	Chief Officer, Economic Development

**Background Papers:**

Executive Report – 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021 (Scottish Borders Strategic Events Plan)

Executive Committee Meeting 16<sup>th</sup> April 2019 (Strategic Events Opportunities)

Scottish Borders Strategic Events Plan 2022 - 2027

Scottish Borders Strategic Operational Plan 2022 - 2023

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

Contact us at [jwarcup@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:jwarcup@scotborders.gov.uk) – 01835 825066