

---

## **SOUTH OF SCOTLAND CYCLING STRATEGY**

**Report by Director of Resilient Communities and Director of Assets and Infrastructure**

---

### **SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL**

**25 August 2022**

---

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

- 1.1 This report sets out a draft Cycling Strategy for the South of Scotland which looks at a ten year period between 2022 and 2032.**
- 1.2 The strategy document and associated action plan has been primarily developed by South of Scotland Enterprise, within a partnership approach incorporating national, regional and local partners including Scottish Borders Council and Dumfries and Galloway Council.
- 1.3 The document seeks to capture all of the active travel opportunities and help harness the ambition that is currently found throughout the South of Scotland. The document also looks to deliver a legacy from the Cycling World Championships that will be coming to the South of Scotland in 2023.
- 1.4 The development of a cycling strategy was a key action in the delivery plan of the Regional Economic Strategy and was endorsed by the Regional Economic Partnership (REP).
- 1.5 If approved, it is planned to launch the Cycling Strategy in September 2022 at the next meeting of the Convention of the South of Scotland which coincides with the Scottish Borders hosting Stage Two of the Tour of Britain, starting in Hawick and finishing in Duns.

#### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that Council:-**
  - a) Approves the South of Scotland Cycling Strategy identified in Appendix A**
  - b) Approves the associated Ten Year Action Plan identified in Appendix B.**

### 3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The South of Scotland has a long-established and substantial leisure cycling offering as well as world-class mountain biking facilities. It is widely accepted that the South of Scotland is unique and that the natural assets of the area enhance and support ongoing cycling development.
- 3.2 Cycling in Scotland is entering a watershed moment with the recent publication of a range of national strategies and key policy documents that are intrinsically linked to the South of Scotland Cycling Strategy. A list of the key documents are detailed below in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1 – Key Strategic Documents and Strategies**

Key Documents	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• RES: South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NSET: National Strategy for Economic Transformation</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Scottish Government Climate Change Plan 2018-2032 Path to Net Zero</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2023 UCI Cycling World Championships: Unlocking the Power of the Bike</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• National Transport Strategy 2: Improving Connections, Changing Lives</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• UK Government: Shared Prosperity</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• UK Government: Levelling Up</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Scottish Cycling: Developing a Nation of Cyclists</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland : Leading European Mountain Biking</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ESECRD: Edinburgh &amp; SE City Region Deal</li></ul>	

- 3.4 In 2023 the Cycling World Championships will be coming to Scotland and this will be one of the biggest cycling events in our history. Scottish Borders Council have been confirmed as the host area for the Mountain Bike Cross Country and the Mountain Bike Cross Country Marathon. Dumfries and Galloway Council have been confirmed as host area for the Para-Road Cycling Championships.

- 3.5 The Regional Economic Strategy (RES) was published in September 2021 and is a vital document for the future prosperity of our region and communities. An associated delivery plan that identified actions that are to be considered over a short, medium or longer term was published in November 2021. The development of a South of Scotland Cycling Strategy was identified as a key action within the delivery plan.
- 3.6 Elected Members recently agreed a refreshed Strategic Events Plan for the Scottish Borders covering a five year period between 2022 and 2027. The plan identifies the importance of cycling to the Scottish Borders and highlights key events such as The Tour of Britain which is returning to the Scottish Borders in September 2022 and the international Cycling World Championships which will be visiting the Borders in 2023 when the Tweed Valley will be the venue for the Downhill Mountain Biking and the Cross Country disciplines.

## 4 SOUTH OF SCOTLAND CYCLING STRATEGY

- 4.1 The shared vision proposed by the South of Cycling Strategy is as follows:

'By 2032 our South of Scotland communities are shaped around and include all of our people and cycling is the most popular choice for shorter everyday journeys and embedded into the daily fabric of the lives of our residents and experiences of our visitors'.

- 4.2 The strategy document has been developed through a strategic partnership approach, led by South of Scotland Enterprise, with input from key partners including Scottish Borders and Dumfries and Galloway Councils, Event Scotland, Sustrans, Visit Scotland and Scottish Cycling.
- 4.3 The main reason for the creation of the document is to try to detail all of the cycling initiatives, programmes and projects that are being delivered or planned throughout the South of Scotland and to deliver an approach that is integrated and inclusive.
- 4.4 The six key strategic themes within the Strategy are detailed below:-
- **Innovation and Technology:** We will strengthen the region's role as a hub for cycling industry research, product development and stimulate growth in the existing business supply chain;
  - **Destination Development & Promotion:** We will invest in the visitor economy infrastructure to support the growth ambitions of the region's tourism sector. Our campaign strategy will cement our reputation as one of Europe's leading mountain biking destinations and grow the profile of our road cycling, gravel and enduro credentials;
  - **Events:** We will collectively identify and secure cycling events that will inspire people to ride bikes and act as a catalyst for change. Our region-wide events strategy will continue to build on our credible and established relationships within the professional cycling community but importantly will also offer assistance, support and framework information to grassroots communities;

- **Sustainable Economy and Communities:** By collectively prioritising our transition to net zero, we will harness the power of the bike to create new economic opportunities;
- **Sport, Recreation and Wellbeing:** We will use a strategic partnership approach between Local Authorities, Live Borders, Scottish Cycling and national agencies to deliver a range of critically important initiatives that supports efficient programme delivery, is inclusive and offers a well-defined rider pathway which allows progression from novice through to elite rider;
- **Infrastructure:** We have a watershed opportunity to create an infrastructure plan which supports the other five key ambitions noted above and to use the power of the bike as a catalyst for change.

4.5 A copy of The South of Scotland Cycling Strategy has been provided in **Appendix A.**

4.6 An Action Plan has been produced to accompany the strategy document, indicating the interventions that will be undertaken throughout the lifespan of the document. A copy of the Action Plan has been provided in **Appendix B.**

4.7 If approved, it is planned to launch the South of Scotland Cycling Strategy on 5 September 2022 at the next meeting of the Convention of the South of Scotland (COSS), which is due to take place in Hawick. The COSS meeting coincides with Stage Two of the Tour of Britain which starts in Hawick and finishes in Duns.

## 5 IMPLICATIONS

### 5.1 Financial

- a) The Action Plan outlines the suggested interventions associated with the lifespan of the strategy, noting that there will be regular review periods and the priorities will likely change and evolve over time. It is likely that financial and staff related support to help support the delivery plan will be required. Financial implications will be reflected in the monitoring reports presented to the Executive Committee on a quarterly basis or through the financial planning process as appropriate.
- b) All funding options to support the delivery of the strategy will be actively pursued by the range of partners involved.

### 5.2 Risk and Mitigations

- (a) Active travel throughout the South of Scotland is a key 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 major events such as The Cycling World Championships in 2023 and also The Tour of Britain which is coming back to the Scottish Borders in September 2022.

- (b) Failure to support cycling and active travel opportunities throughout the Scottish Borders and the South of Scotland risks the delivery of a range of economic, environmental and social related benefits.

### **5.3 Integrated Impact Assessment**

A key aspect of Scottish Borders Council's work in relation to Economic Development is to reduce barriers to inequality and to help promote a sustainable, inclusive and environmental aware decision making process. The Cycling Strategy and associated Action Plan will help ensure that information on service delivery in relation to equalities groups is constantly monitored.

### **5.4 Sustainable Development Goals**

The intention of the South of Scotland Cycling Strategy and associated Action Plan is to help promote a socially and environmentally responsible decision making process, balanced with delivering economic benefits designed to help sustain and invigorate local communities.

### **5.5 Climate Change**

- a) 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.
- b) The Cycling Strategy and associated Action Plan encourages communities throughout the South of Scotland to deliver against regional net zero commitments and to make cycling more inclusive for all.

### **5.6 Rural Proofing**

The report highlights the intention of Scottish Borders Council to encourage more active travel to take place within the Scottish Borders and throughout the South of Scotland, thereby providing rural communities with more opportunities from increased visitor numbers and sustainable economic activity.

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

## 6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Acting 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 tabled at the meeting.

### Approved by

**Jenni Craig**  
**Director – Resilient Communities**

**John Curry**  
**Director – Assets and Infrastructure**

### Author(s)

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

### Background Paper

#### Previous Minute Reference:

**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