

COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP PRIORITIES FOR THE SCOTTISH BORDERS (2022)

CONSULTATION REPORT

INTRODUCTION

This report summarises the process and outcomes of the Priorities for the Scottish Borders (2022) consultation undertaken by Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership. The consultation asked people for the thoughts on the priorities for the Borders that should be addressed by the Community Planning Partnership over the next year.

BACKGROUND

Under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 the Scottish Government requires Community Planning Partnerships to tackle local challenges and improve local outcomes, with a particular focus on reducing inequalities, by working together as a partnerships and with local communities and businesses.

Each Partnership is required to development a Local Outcome Improvement Plan, also known as the Community Plan, how the Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership would work with local communities, businesses and community groups to plan and deliver better services and improve the lives of people who live in the Borders.

METHODOLOGY

The consultation was made available online via the Council's consultation hub – Citizen Space.

The consultation asked questions about ten areas that have been previously identified as priorities for the Borders community. These were:

- Making our economy stronger and more resilient to change
- Improving digital connections including broadband speed
- Creating better employment opportunities
- Improving energy efficiency at home and work to help reduce our bills,
- Feeling well - both physically and mentally
- Improving housing options for everyone in our community
- Making sure that everyone has enough money to live on
- Helping everyone gain skills and raise attainment through formal and informal education
- Increasing the range and availability of sustainable transport
- Enhancing our natural environment and green spaces

Respondents were asked to include anything, important to them and their community, which was missing.

Responses

A total of 201 completed responses were received

The table below sets out responses by area:

Locality	No. of respondents	% of respondents by locality
Berwickshire	37	18.4%
Cheviot	30	14.9%
Eildon	49	24.4%
Teviot & Liddesdale	34	16.9%
Tweeddale	37	18.4%
Scottish Borders	13	6.5%
Outwith the Scottish Borders	1	0.5%
Total	201	100.0%

Of those that responded 18 indicated that they were responding on behalf of a group. The groups can be broken down as follows:

- 5 community councils
- 9 community/third sector organisations
- 2 education providers
- 1 private sector organisation
- 1 unnamed group

RESULTS

Question one: What is most important to you?

Respondents were asked to identify their top three priorities from the list detailed in the Methodology section above. All respondents answered this question. The top three priorities identified were:

- 1 Making sure that everyone has enough money to live on
- 2 Feeling well - both physically and mentally
- 3= Creating better employment opportunities
- 3= Increasing the range and availability of sustainable transport

What is most important to you? First priority	No. of respondents	%
Creating better employment opportunities	15	7%
Enhancing our natural environment and green spaces	12	6%
Feeling well - both physically and mentally	27	13%
Helping everyone gain skills and raise attainment through formal and informal education	7	3%
Improving digital connections including broadband speed	10	5%
Improving energy efficiency at home and work to help reduce our bills	18	9%
Improving housing options for everyone in our community	13	6%
Increasing the range and availability of sustainable transport	16	8%
Making our economy stronger and more resilient to change	23	11%
Making sure that everyone has enough money to live on	43	21%
Something else that isn't on this list	17	8%
Total	201	100%

Appendix C

What is most important to you? Second priority	No. of respondents	%
Creating better employment opportunities	21	10%
Enhancing our natural environment and green spaces	11	5%
Feeling well - both physically and mentally	41	20%
Helping everyone gain skills and raise attainment through formal and informal education	15	7%
Improving digital connections including broadband speed	15	7%
Improving energy efficiency at home and work to help reduce our bills	16	8%
Improving housing options for everyone in our community	13	6%
Increasing the range and availability of sustainable transport	15	7%
Making our economy stronger and more resilient to change	15	7%
Making sure that everyone has enough money to live on	35	17%
Something else that isn't on this list	4	2%
Total	201	100%

What is most important to you? Third priority	No. of respondents	%
Creating better employment opportunities	26	13%
Enhancing our natural environment and green spaces	25	12%
Feeling well - both physically and mentally	18	9%
Helping everyone gain skills and raise attainment through formal and informal education	15	7%
Improving digital connections including broadband speed	9	4%
Improving energy efficiency at home and work to help reduce our bills	19	9%
Improving housing options for everyone in our community	25	12%
Increasing the range and availability of sustainable transport	26	13%
Making our economy stronger and more resilient to change	15	7%
Making sure that everyone has enough money to live on	18	9%
Something else that isn't on this list	5	2%
Total	201	100%

68 respondents indicated that there was something else important to them and their community. Some of the additional priorities given e.g. affordable housing, mental health services and poverty are covered by those listed above. Additional, new, priorities submitted:

- Community engagement including communication, consultation and the involvement of young people in decision making processes (4)
- Net zero and climate change (7)
- Community safety (5)
- Services and facilities including public toilets (6)
- Partnership working (1)
- Planning policy/system (1)
- Roads (general) (1)
- Social equity (1)
- Third/community sector (2)

Question two: Do you have any ideas that could make the priorities a reality?

Making our economy stronger and more resilient to change

104 respondents gave ideas relating to this priority. These can be categorised as follows:

Topic	Number of comments*
Communication/community engagement	2
Digital	4
Energy efficiency/renewables/net zero	11
Facilities	6
Holistic approach	4
Housing	3
Local buisnesses/ local economy	46
Misc comments	15
Partnership working	6
Roads/transport	17
Tax incl Council Tax/Non Domestic Rates	10
Tourism	4
Towns/villages (incl. centres/high streets)	9
Training/skills/employment opportunities/mentoring	23
Third sector/communities	23

* Respondents' comments total more than 104 as more than one topic area can be included in a comment.

Comments included:

“Encouraging light industry within centres of population to minimise transport needs”

“Joined up working between third sector, private and public bodies to signpost and promote opportunities. Making the Scottish Borders attractive for all ages, supporting young people to travel to learning opportunities and still live here if they want to. Skills development for all, not just high academic achievers. Circular local economy with more reuse and recycling.”

“Help all marginalised groups to use their imagination and skills to bring new ideas to commercial and public services.”

Appendix C

Improving digital connections including broadband speed

79 respondents gave ideas relating to this priority. These can be categorised as follows:

Topic	Number of comments*
Access/device provision	8
Community hubs/initiatives	4
Free wi fi	2
Improve & ensure parity of coverage/signal	27
Investment/policy/initiatives	19
Misc comments	15
Monitor suppliers/competition	5
Partnership working	1
Use of appropriate technology / infrastructure	9

* Respondents' comments total more than 79 as more than one topic area can be included in a comment.

Comments included:

"The Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband (DSSB) rollout is a brilliant initiative, but many remote areas in the Borders remain unconnected. This reduces the opportunities for people to operate their businesses from these remote locations, and may even preclude highly skilled, experienced people relocating to the area who are looking for a better work-life balance."

"Better broadband speed for rural parts of the area. Many elderly people are missing out on updates from sbc/generally as they don't have technology."

"Make IT knowledge available on demand (a help desk type facility) and provide easily accessible ongoing training for all levels."

Appendix C

Creating better employment opportunities

106 respondents gave ideas relating to this priority. These can be categorised as follows:

Topic	Number of comments*
Attract investment	16
Fair/equitability of employment	2
Flexible employment models	1
Green economy	8
Incentives/grants	10
Infrastructure incl transport	16
Living wage	8
Local/start up business/support	29
Misc comment	8
Policy	1
Quality jobs	4
Sustainability	2
Think outside the box	3
Third sector/communities	3
Tourism	5
Training/education/apprenticeships/skills	35

* Respondents' comments total more than 106 as more than one topic area can be included in a comment.

Comments included:

"Work closely with South of Scotland Enterprise and SDI and government to ensure Borders is in the frame for inward investment opportunities. Continue to ramp up links between industry and education to ensure our learners are getting work experience and connecting to local employers. And for those hardest to reach who are not in employment; really impactful programmes to build skills and confidence."

"Incentivise employers to ditch zero hours contracts; pay at least living wage. We need lots and lots of proud, skilled tradespeople; become a training centre of excellence."

"We need to attract more businesses into the Scottish Borders to achieve this, raise the profile of apprenticeships encourage young people to stay local. Not always setting academic achievement as the goal, but encouraging creativity and sports as well."

Appendix C

Improving energy efficiency at home and work to help reduce our bills

108 respondents gave ideas relating to this priority. These can be categorised as follows:

Topic	Number of comments*
Carbon literacy/education/advice	23
District heating schemes	4
Fitting and initiatives: solar panels/insulation etc	61
Fuel cost/financial support	9
Housing	15
Misc comments	8
Policy	14
Non residential buildings	4
Renationalisation	2
Renewable energy	3
Skills/training	3
Smart meters	2
Third sector/communities	6

* Respondents' comments total more than 108 as more than one topic area can be included in a comment.

Comments included:

"Providing grants or loans on soft terms, to encourage all sectors of society to improve their home & work energy efficiency"

"Have a scheme to encourage people to switch their lightbulbs to energy efficiency ones - maybe allow people to recycle their lightbulbs in exchange. Install smart meters in all new builds so people can see how much energy they are using. Educate people on how much electricity different appliances use, and provide information on how people can reduce their energy bills and what support is available to them should they need it."

"Every public building should have electricity generation capacity with p v roof cells and wind turbines. Incentives for home owners to install such measures"

Appendix C

Feeling well - both physically and mentally

101 respondents gave ideas relating to this priority. These can be categorised as follows:

Topic	Number of comments*
Access to services	20
Communication/education	9
Cost of living	2
Exercise/activities	42
Food	3
Housing	1
Inequalities	3
Investment	22
Misc comment	6
Third sector/communities	12
Travel / transport	9

* Respondents' comments total more than 101 as more than one topic area can be included in a comment.

Comments included:

“Creating and enhancing more green spaces and encourage everyone to get up and get out. Set up healthy eating cooking classes, maybe with help from the local supermarkets.”

“Highlight and promote group participation in outdoor pursuits. Introduce 'buddy' schemes which help both parties wellbeing”

“Improve facilities and transport for people to access leisure activities. Improve services in mental health. Make these services more easily & readily available to people, and in their locality.”

Appendix C

Improving housing options for everyone in our community

95 respondents gave ideas relating to this priority. These can be categorised as follows:

Topic	Number of comments*
Affordable housing	19
Communities	1
Costs	4
Development	18
Environmental sustainability	8
Equitable treatment	3
Holiday/second homes	8
Housing size/specification	16
Infrastructure	6
Investment	23
Misc comments	8
Partnership working	3
Policy	27
Private rentals	3
Social housing	20
Support	3

* Respondents' comments total more than 95 as more than one topic area can be included in a comment.

Comments included:

"Buy up disused buildings and convert into homes for those on the waiting list & for homeless people. Build more social housing. Speed up house repair process. Ensure adequate space is given to families, appropriate to numbers in a household. Improved housing needed for families who have special needs, disability issues. More grants to help ease the financial burden of having to move or relocate. Give grants (not loans) to furnish homes particularly those on benefits or low income."

"Build new housing in targeted areas, recognising that places such as Coldingham, St Abbs and Eyemouth are second home hotspots. Ringfence new build houses for purchase only by those who live in Scottish Borders already."

"Put greater controls on housing development to make them more community friendly and more affordable as well as more environmentally sustainable."

Appendix C

Making sure that everyone has enough money to live on

93 respondents gave ideas relating to this priority. These can be categorised as follows:

Topic	Number of comments*
Benefits/grants	27
Communication/education/advice	16
Cost of living	5
Employment	12
Housing	3
Infrastructure	3
Investment	4
Living wage/pay	19
Local economy/economic development	15
Misc comment	10
Policy	11
Reduce/reuse/recycle	2
Taxes	6
Third sector	4
Transport/roads	5

* Respondents' comments total more than 93 as more than one topic area can be included in a comment.

Comments included:

"Promote a minimum income for all. Strip out the small initiatives that don't necessarily hit the target population. Ensure nobody is worse off as a result of employment. Work more closely with those out of work to explore why they can't secure/maintain employment. Create opportunities for all to work (paid or unpaid)."

"Promote the Living Wage scheme within the council but also via contractors and partners."

"Start with real life people who do not have enough money to live on currently e.g. food bank users. The Trussell Trust are employing reps to tackle this issue, worth with them to identify what needs to change and sanction it, no barriers."

Appendix C

Helping everyone gain skills and raise attainment through formal and informal education

79 respondents gave ideas relating to this priority. These can be categorised as follows:

Topic	Number of comments*
Advice/support/communication	5
Apprenticeships/training & employment opportunities	8
Community learning (all ages)	23
Costs/financial support	4
Digital/technology	7
Education /schools	21
Incentives/investment	3
Learning for all	9
Misc comments	7
Policy	7
Third sector/community/volunteering	8
Transport, location & infrastructure	12

* Respondents' comments total more than 79 as more than one topic area can be included in a comment.

Comments included:

"Everyone leaving school not going on to higher education or apprenticeships should be offered the chance to learn a skill or relearn an area they felt they didn't do their best at. There should also be schemes for adults to acquire new skills throughout their working life's that would help make the economy more resilient to change. There should be opportunities to learn skills all the time."

"Maybe, more info on employment options, while at school. I think a targeted initiative around high value STEM skills, especially for teenage girls, would have a big effect on attainment gap."

"Put on local adult ed classes in village halls or community centres.
Offer more vocational based courses for people to retrain, incl more basic skills courses. Offer free transport to people to get to a training centre.
Put on more on line courses."

Appendix C

Increasing the range and availability of sustainable transport

101 respondents gave ideas relating to this priority. These can be categorised as follows:

Topic	Number of comments*
Affordability/grants	14
Buses	45
Community transport	4
Cycle paths	3
DRT	6
Electric Vehicles incl. charging	20
Employment	1
Infrastructure	18
Innovation	3
Investment	4
Misc comments	5
Policy	3
Public trans	70
Railway	28
Roads	5
Sustainability	11

* Respondents' comments total more than 101 as more than one topic area can be included in a comment.

Comments included:

"There is no public transport that is effective in getting people to and from work or leisure activities or even to and from hospital. Some system that would allow those in rural areas to get around without using public transport - numbers are low so why not have much smaller buses which are electric. Electricity charging points for cars need to be dramatically increased before people will be willing to switch - points before car purchase not following."

"Increase Demand responsive transport routes and get community councils to promote them. A public discussion and collation of response on transport in each community including promoting better use of existing options."

"This has to be a top priority and would be enabling for all as well as having a massive effect on meeting climate change targets. Borders buses are very expensive - is a subsidy possible, or public ownership? More routes and more frequent buses would increase uptake and should help public and businesses. Smaller buses/minibuses, electric bikes and trikes for shorter distances."

Appendix C

Enhancing our natural environment and green spaces

89 respondents gave ideas relating to this priority. These can be categorised as follows:

Topic	Number of comments*
Advice/communication	10
Allotments/community growing	6
Biodiversity	3
Farming	5
Health	2
Investment/incentives	3
Litter/dog poo	9
Local assets incl. green space	49
Misc comments	8
National Park	1
Policy	18
Services/facilities	9
Skills/learning	5
Third sector/communities	14
Transport, roads and foot paths	18

* Respondents' comments total more than 89 as more than one topic area can be included in a comment.

Comments included:

"The Scottish Borders already has fantastic green spaces and natural environments but these could be improved upon by the planting of fruit trees, the increase in the number of allotments and reducing the time, effort and money spent on wasteful practices like bedding plants."

"Promote the open spaces for recreational use, walking camping horse riding etc. Keep the windfarm companies away from turning the whole area into an industrial landscape. Respect the beauty we have all around us and showcase what is on our doorsteps."

"The third sector has responded strongly to the climate emergency crisis, there's desire across every community to protect and enhance our natural landscape. Support to community groups and local agencies is fundamental in educating and promoting the local environment."

Question 3: Is there anything else you would like to say about the priorities for you and your community?

80 respondents included additional comments covering a wide range of subject areas, these can be classified as follows:

Topic	Number of comments*
Comment relates specifically to a priority listed above	19
Community engagement/consultation	8
Community safety/crime	6
Environmental sustainability	7
Equality	1
Investment	7
Misc comment	4
Politics/policy	12
Roads	6
Schools	3
Services/facilities	12
Tax	1
Third sector/communities	13
Tourism	4
Towns/public spaces	10
Young people	6

* Respondents' comments total more than 80 as more than one topic area can be included in a comment.

Comments included:

“Reduce the carbon footprint of the whole of the Borders communities. We are in a Climate and Ecological Emergency. All policies should be tested as to the role they play in reaching the Scottish Government's targets for Net Zero.”

“Make it easy for people to volunteer; promote all sorts of different ways in which people can contribute to the greater good, however little or much time they can spare. Simplify pots of funding available for small projects. Put council operatives on the ground to take direct action on small issues (SB Local worked) and give them a sense of ownership and pride in the work they do.”

“Encourage all communities to get involved with the Place Making approach in their local areas so that they can directly influence their surroundings.”