
UPDATE ON THE DESTINATION TWEED PROGRAMME

Report by Director Infrastructure and Environment

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

25 May 2023

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update to Council on progress with the Destination Tweed Programme, which forms part of the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal.**
- 1.2 The Destination Tweed Programme is a £24.7m capital programme that is part of the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal. The Destination Tweed Programme comprises 13 different projects, the most significant of which is the Tweed Trail, which will be a 113-mile long walking and cycling trail from Moffat to Berwick-upon-Tweed. A contribution of £10m from the Deal will help to fund the Tweed Trail. The programme is being led by Tweed Forum on behalf of Scottish Borders Council, Northumberland County Council and Dumfries and Galloway Council.
- 1.3 An Outline Business Case is ready to be signed off by the Scottish Government and a draft Full Business Case will shortly thereafter be submitted for Government consideration, which will then require approval from Council and the Borderlands Partnership Board.
- 1.4 Scottish Borders Council intend to take a lead role on the project management and construction of the Tweed Trail, expanding on the work undertaken in 2022/23. This is being formalised via a revision of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Council and Tweed Forum.
- 1.5 A governance structure for the programme is being established. It is led by a Programme Delivery Board with a proposal for a series of Working Groups. A Business Engagement Working Group is also being established.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that Council:

- (a) Notes the information provided on the current position with the Destination Tweed Programme.**
- (b) Endorses the Council's project delivery arrangements for the Tweed Trial.**
- (c) Notes that programme Outline and Full Business Cases will be brought back to Council for approval in 2023 as detailed in paragraph 3.4.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Destination Tweed Programme is a £24.7m capital programme that is part of the Destination Borderlands Theme within the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal. A contribution of £10m from the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal will help to fund the Tweed Trail project, which will be a 113-mile long walking and cycling trail from Moffat to Berwick-upon-Tweed. The overall programme will create a unique, world-class visitor destination that will connect and promote multiple assets in the region and become known as one of the great long distance routes in the UK.
- 3.2 The programme is being led by Tweed Forum on behalf of Scottish Borders Council, Northumberland County Council and Dumfries and Galloway Council. Tweed Forum have a small dedicated team who work to protect, enhance and restore the rich natural, built and cultural heritage of the River Tweed and its tributaries. The programme consists of 13 different projects. These projects are described in the following table:

Project name	Description
P1 Tweed Trail	The creation of a 113-mile long walking and cycling trail from Moffat to Berwick-upon-Tweed.
P2 Crook Inn Bunkhouse	Construction of Bunkhouse accommodation at the community owned and C-listed Crook Inn.
P3 Biggar Water	A partnership between Tweed Forum, South Lanarkshire Council and SEPA to restore natural habitats.
P4 Designed Landscapes	Planting of 50,000 specimen/native trees over a 5-year period to conserve and regenerate degraded landscapes.
P5 Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)	Co-ordinating the facilitation of a collaborative and large-scale INNS control programme.
P6 Woodlands for Wildlife and Water	Planting approximately 200 ha (300,000) of new native & riparian woodlands to benefit communities downstream from upper catchments.
P7 Tweed Watch – Education and Training Programme	Developing and delivering an environmental education and outreach programme to inspire people to care for their environment.
P8 Pollinators Along the Tweed	Employing a conservation officer to work with volunteers in creating, monitoring and managing key and beneficial pollinator habitats.
P9 Reviving the Wild Heart of Southern Scotland	An ecological restoration initiative to plant 52,500 trees and shrubs to create 80ha of upland native woodland and montane scrub over a

	5-year planting period. In addition, the restoration of barns and new volunteer facilities.
P10 Uncovering the Tweed - Archaeology Programme	Community based archaeology programme throughout the programme area with training and participatory opportunities.
P11 Tweed Stories – Interpretation and Branding	The creation of a distinct brand identity and an exceptional physical and digital interpretive experience.
P12 Connecting Threads	A 5-year creative, placemaking project in a rural area, focusing on a river rather than a centre of population to offer a diverse mix of river-related activities.
P13 Third Party Community Grants	Available for small scale projects to enable engagement with the Trail and the other projects.

3.3 The Destination Tweed programme is expected to deliver significant economic benefits for the Borderlands area and the wider region:

- By the end of year 10, there will be an additional 303,299 visitors per annum, which will be maintained thereafter (compared to business as usual).
- These additional visitors will spend approximately £26.9m (gross) p.a. in year 10.
- The additional spend will support approximately 412 jobs (gross) p.a. in year 10, or 203 net additional jobs.
- The additional spend will generate GVA of approximately £20.4m (gross) p.a. in year 10, or £7.4m net additional (discounted) GVA in year 10.
- Increased levels of walking and cycling and other non-motorised travel will contribute at least £5.6m in Active Modes benefits (improved health outcomes and reduced absenteeism).

3.4 An Outline Business Case is ready to be signed off by the Scottish Government and a draft Full Business Case will shortly thereafter be submitted for Government consideration, which will then require approval from Council and the Borderlands Partnership Board. The initial Strategic Outline Case was approved by Council in November 2020. Prior to this, Council approved a contribution of £174,500 to the programme development phase through emergency powers in March 2020. This investment funded works surveys, capacity building, professional fees, and recruiting and staffing. The development phase was completed in March 2022.

4 PROGRESS ON TRAIL WORKS

4.1 Scottish Borders Council have a strong track record in delivering active travel infrastructure, with specific in-house expertise in construction project management, engineering design and construction. Whilst the River Tweed starts in Dumfries and Galloway and ends in Northumberland, the most significant stretch runs through the Scottish Borders. Due to these factors,

Scottish Borders Council have assumed the lead role in project managing and constructing the Tweed Trail. This is being formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Scottish Borders Council and Tweed Forum which will detail roles and responsibilities and the transferring of funds from funders to Scottish Borders Council. This is being coordinated by the Council's Legal team.

- 4.2 Initial funding was made available during 2022/23 which enabled works to begin on-site on initial sections of Tweed Trail at a cost of £494k. These works were funded in full by Sustrans with SBC direct grantees of this funding.
- 4.3 The initial Tweed Trail work sections have been delivered in full by SBC Contracts. It is proposed that this procurement model can be adopted for the remainder of 113-mile Tweed Trail construction. A procurement document detailing the benefits of this model has been developed by officers for funder review and sign off.
- 4.4 Works completed to date are:
- 420m of tarmac path installed at Peebles Hydro – with designs ongoing for improvements to main access and A72 crossing as well as link path at East access to current Tweed Valley Trail.
 - Road upgrading works through Yair Estate completing about 1km of trail.
 - Materials purchased for re-decking of Woodend Bridge nr Cardrona.
 - Power connection for Eshiels tunnel – Future lighting and safety enhancements.
 - Neidpath Viaduct and Tunnel principal inspections.
 - Yair Bridge – Traffic signal upgrade to enhance pedestrian/cyclist user phase.
- 4.5 Tweed Forum will maintain an active role in the delivering the project. They will focus developing the route, user experience and landowner agreements along the length of the trail.
- 4.6 It is proposed that the design of the Tweed Trail will largely be undertaken by Scottish Borders Council's in-house Engineering Team. This will be supplemented, as required, by external design services on an ad-hoc basis.
- 4.7 It is proposed that the project will be managed and coordinated by Scottish Borders Council's in-house Major Projects Team and with support from external project managers, replicating the delivery model adopted on the current schools projects.
- 4.8 A list of work sections is being developed for financial year 2023/24 and a funding stream has been indicated from Sustrans.

5 GOVERNANCE

- 5.1 A governance structure for the Destination Tweed programme is being established. It is led by a Programme Delivery Board, which has been in place since July 2022 and meets every month. Key Officers from Scottish

Borders Council attend the Board and it is chaired by the Council's Director of Infrastructure & Environment. There is also representation from Dumfries and Galloway Council, Northumberland County Council, South of Scotland Enterprise, Visit Scotland, Tweed Forum, project partners (Southern Uplands Partnership, Borders Forest Trust, Buglife, Tweedsmuir Community Company), the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal Programme Management Office, SEPA and landowners via Scottish Land and Estates. Further details on the governance structure will be included within the Full Business Case for the project.

5.2 The governance below the Programme Board level is being grouped within three themes, which cover all 13 projects within the programme and are focused on delivery:

- Economy - Sustainable Infrastructure;
- Environment - Landscape and Biodiversity; and
- Community - People and Activities.

Council Officers will be involved in the steering groups on Sustainable Infrastructure, which include the Tweed Trail and Tweed Stories Branding and Interpretation.

6 BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT AND MARKETING

6.1 A Business Engagement Working Group, which will include the South of Scotland Destination Alliance (SSDA), VisitScotland, South of Scotland Enterprise, Scottish Borders Council and Tweed Forum, is being established to develop an engagement plan. This will identify partners and audiences as well as activity. With support from VisitScotland and partners, a programme will be developed to include webinars, face-to-face activity and inclusion in partner newsletters and digital channels. SSDA, VisitScotland and South of Scotland Enterprise will identify businesses along the route and undertake targeted business engagement activity.

6.2 These partners are also committed to other major investment activity in the South of Scotland, in particular around cycling, and there will be significant opportunity to build Destination Tweed into engagement activity around other projects such as the Mountain Bike Innovation Centre and Adventure Bike Park, the Glentress masterplan, 7stanes, and the new Kirkpatrick Macmillan Coast-to-Coast route.

7 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Financial

- (a) As Officers are currently in discussions with Scottish Government officials regarding the overall Borderlands financial profile for 2023/24 and beyond, the latest funding position for the Destination Tweed programme is provisional.

Source of funding	Totals
Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal	£10m
Northumberland County Council	£1m
South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE)	£4m
Other	£9.7m
Totals	£24.7m

- (b) The outcome of discussions with Scottish Government will be reported to Elected Members in due course.
- (c) The total estimated budget of the Tweed Trail construction is £14.5m. These costs will be reviewed by external consultants following significant notable increases in construction material and labour costs globally over past few years.
- (d) In 2023/24 Scottish Borders Council is supporting the Tweed Trail through construction, PM support and design fees. These costs will be recovered through external grant claims.
- (e) Sustrans funding of around £800k has been agreed in principle for financial year 2023/24. A final list of Sustrans fundable works is being worked up by the project team.
- (f) A suggested five year phasing programme has been developed by the project delivery team. The main elements of the programme include landowner negotiations, design & planning and construction and where appropriate, land purchase, community consultations and procurement. Each work section will be attributed to an identified funder and programmed to match the funding arrangements and resource availability for each financial year.

7.2 Risk and Mitigations

The programme has a risk register laying out all strategic and operational risks with associated mitigations, and this feeds into a wider risk register that the Council maintains for the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal programme. This is revised and updated regularly.

7.3 Integrated Impact Assessment

As part of the Full Business Case submission to Government, the programme will be required to complete an Integrated Impact Assessment. Therefore, this Integrated Impact Assessment will be prepared and submitted to Council for approval along with the Full Business Case to ensure that it meets the requirements of the Equality and Fairer Scotland duties.

7.4 Sustainable Development Goals

The development of the programme will contribute to the ambitions to be a green, fair and flourishing region, helping to achieve net zero ambitions, and support community wealth building and thriving places. An assessment of this contribution towards the outcomes of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals will be undertaken as the programme is taken forward. The programme will be subject to a Carbon Impact Assessment as part of the Full Business Case process.

7.5 Climate Change

As the programme is taken forward, there will be specific assessments undertaken to assess embodied carbon emissions during its implementation and lifecycle. The Carbon Impact Assessment required by Government will also allow for the measurement of carbon impacts and benefits relating to the five themes – Resilience, Transport, Nature-based solutions, Energy and Waste – as set out in the Council’s Climate Change Route Map.

7.6 Rural Proofing

This report does not affect or amend rural proofing policies.

7.7 Data Protection Impact Statement

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

7.8 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

There are no changes to the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the proposals within this report.

8 CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The Acting Chief Financial Officer, the Interim Chief Officer Corporate Governance (and Monitoring Officer), the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Director of People Performance & Change, the Clerk to the Council and Corporate Communications have yet to be consulted on this report. Comments received on the day will be incorporated into the final version of the report.

Approved by

John Curry, Service Director Assets and Infrastructure

Authors

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Background Papers: None.

Previous Minute Reference: Council – 18 April 2023; Council – 26 November 2020; Council – 18 March 2020.

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

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