



Scottish Borders Community Plan Progress Report 2023

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Our Vision

Working together with our communities and through targeted partnership action, the quality of life will improve for all who live, work or study in the Scottish Borders

Welcome to our Progress Report

As Chair of Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership I am delighted to be presenting you with a summary of our achievements over the last five years.

The last five years have been difficult for everyone. The pandemic and Cost of Living Crisis have had a huge effect on the Borders, as they have across the world. For those who were already experiencing inequality, such as low incomes and poor access to services, the last three years have affected them proportionately more than many of us. This has meant that the Partnership, and all organisations that are part of it, have had to work even harder than usual to ensure that we all have access to the basics we need to live.

The pandemic and Cost of Living Crisis have undoubtedly had a knock on effect on what we had set out to achieve in our Plan when we agreed it in May 2018. However, where possible, we have worked to ease the effects on our community and in some things not only improved but are performing better than Scotland as a whole.

During 2022/2023 we have been working to identify priorities that we need to address in our new Community Plan, taking account of changes over the last five years. Our new Plan will set out improvements that we need to address together in order to see real improvement.

I'd encourage you to get involved in the work of the Partnership. This may be by taking part in our consultations, reading and commenting on the documents we produce or getting involved with the work we do through any one of our partner organisations.

In conclusion I'd like to say a big thank you to the staff, board members, councillors and volunteers whose work has helped us to achieve the positive outcomes in this report. I'd also like to thank my predecessor, Cllr Mark Rowley, who oversaw the work of the Partnership from 2017-2022.

Cllr Caroline Cochrane
Chair, Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership

Who are Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership?

Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership is a group of organisations who work together to tackle local challenges and reduce inequality for people in the Scottish Borders.

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 sets out the role and membership of the Partnership.

STATUTORY PARTNERS

- NHS Borders
- Police Scotland
- Scottish Borders Council
- South of Scotland Enterprise
- Scottish Fire & Rescue Service
- Borders College
- Health & Social Care Integration Joint Board
- Historic Environment Scotland
- Scottish Environmental Protection Agency
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- Scottish Sports Council (represented by Live Borders)
- SEStran
- Skills Development Scotland
- VisitScotland

These five organisations share the responsibility to lead the Partnership

NON-STATUTORY PARTNERS

- Berwickshire Housing Association
- Eildon Housing
- Live Borders
- Scottish Borders Community Council Network
- Scottish Borders Housing Association
- Third Sector
- Waverley Housing

In 2018 we agreed four themes that our work for the next five years would fall under.

- Our Economy, Skills & Learning
- Our Health, Care & Wellbeing
- Our Quality of Life
- Our Place

For each theme we set out a number of outcomes that we wished to achieve. These have been set out below.

Our Economy, Skills & Learning

- More people working more productively for higher wages
- More business people benefitting from greater investment and better support for their new and existing businesses, particularly in key growth sectors
- More highly skilled workers
- More people shopping, visiting and spending in local town centres
- More people benefitting from better connectivity
- More LAC (looked after and accommodated) children and young people in positive and sustained destinations
- More children, particularly those living in poverty, achieving higher levels of attainment

Our Health, Care & Wellbeing

- More people in good health and leading an active lifestyle at every age and stage of life
- More people in good mental health at every age and stage of life
- Improved support and care for older people

Our Quality of Life

- Fewer people experiencing violence (incl. domestic abuse)
- Fewer people experiencing anti-social behaviour (ASB)
- Fewer people killed or seriously injured on our roads

Our Place

- More people able to afford to heat their homes
- More people living independently in affordable and sustainable homes

Our 2018/22 Community Plan had 15 outcomes and 30 measures. We have selected key highlights and accompanying information to illustrate some of the work that have contributed to the work over the last five years.

Throughout this document we compare the current situation to 2018 using the most up to data available. The way in which data is recorded may have changed since we published the Plan. Where this is the case we have used the most appropriate data that is available.

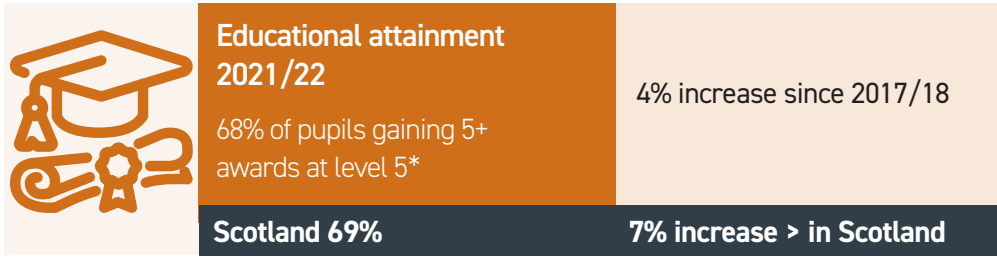
Our Economy, Skills & Learning

Our aim: More highly skilled workers

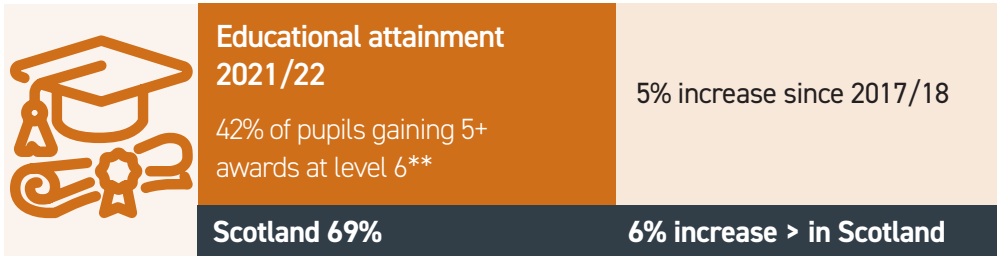
What do we know?

Skill shortage vacancies are more common in the Scottish Borders compared to Scotland

How are we doing?

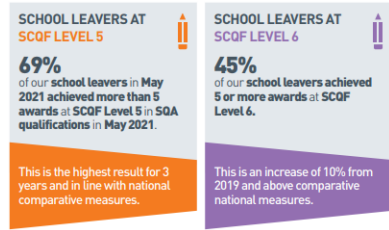


* Level 5 = National 5 Awards, Skills for Work National 5



** Level 6 = Higher Awards, Skills for Work Higher

Broadening the curriculum in secondary schools has meant that there is a wider range of qualifications on offer for students, including more vocational qualifications. The focus on other awards at SCQF (Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework) levels 5 and 6 has ensured more learners can access qualifications which may better suit their pathway than those subjects included in a 'traditional' curriculum. Galashiels Academy is one of only 2 schools in Scotland to receive the SCQF Partnership gold award.



The launch of the Inspire Learning digital learning and reaching transformation project in 2019 has seen all teaching staff and P4 – S6 pupils have an iPad. This has revolutionised the way teachers teach, assess and provide feedback to learners. For learners, as well as improving their digital literacy, they have far more personalisation and choice in their learning now and can receive quicker feedback on their work. The accessibility features of the iPad have helped to better support learning with a range of additional support needs.



Students are able to choose courses at Borders College as part of their timetables in the senior phase to supplement their school subjects. There are also opportunities to study Foundation Apprenticeships in several industry areas.

Ryan Boylan from Selkirk grew up with both his mum and dad working in the catering industry so it was no surprise that he decided to follow in their footsteps and studied Professional Cookery SCQF NPA Level 4 before moving on to the and NC Professional Cookery and NPA Hospitality Level 5 programme at Borders College in September 2021.

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is used to identify children and young people who live in the most deprived areas of Scotland. Nationally, we compare the performance of key equity groups against overall performance to measure and monitor the poverty related attainment gap. Attainment evidence demonstrated that Scottish Borders continues to address the attainment gap while improving attainment for all.

In particular : Milestone data in 2020-21 demonstrates that the proportion of children residing in SIMD Deciles 1-3 achieving their milestones:



Our aim: More people working productively for high wages

What do we know?

Weekly wages for people working in the Borders are among the lowest in Scotland.

How are we doing?



Weekly wages for those that work in the Borders 2020/21

£571

18% increase > since 2017/18

Weekly wages for those that live in the Borders 2020/21

£617

17% increase > since 2017/18

(Median gross weekly earnings for F/T employment)

Scotland £640.50

14% increase > since 2017/19

Scotland £640.30

14% increase > since 2017/18

Our aim: More people benefit from better connectivity

What do we know?

The availability of good broadband speeds in the Scottish Borders is below the average for Scotland

How are we doing?



2018 broadband coverage: premises unable to receive 30Mbit/s in the Scottish Borders

17%

Scotland 8%

2023 broadband coverage: premises unable to receive 30Mbit/s in the Scottish Borders

13%

Scotland 6%

Our aim: More people shopping, visiting and spending in local town centres

What do we know?

Town centres are at the heart of our communities and help make the Scottish Borders distinctive and special.

How are we doing?



Footfall in the main Borders towns 2020

27,740

25% decrease < since 2018



Retail vacancy rates in the Borders 2017/18

12.8%

Scotland 10%

Retail vacancy rates in the Borders 2020/21

11.5%

Scotland 12.5%

What do we know?

The percentage of geographic area in the Scottish Borders with no 4G signal is greater than that for Scotland

How are we doing?



2018 mobile coverage: geographical area with no 4G signal in the Scottish Borders

22%

Scotland 22%

2022 mobile coverage: geographical area with no 4G signal in the Scottish Borders

15%

Scotland 17%

Our Health, Care & Wellbeing

Our aim: More people in good health and leading an active lifestyle at every age and stage of life

What do we know?

When we published our Plan more adults in the Scottish Borders are overweight compared to Scotland

How are we doing?



	2018-19	2021-22
Children with a healthy weight in P1 - Borders	76.9%	75.7%
Children with a healthy weight in P1 - Scotland	76.6%	74.7%

Whole Systems Approach to diet and healthy weight

Eymouth has been one of the Scottish early adopter areas for a Whole Systems Approach to supporting and promoting healthy weight, eating well and being physically active with a focus on children and health inequalities. The work is informed by the ambition for children to have the best start in life and to improve children's health and wellbeing by having opportunities to eat well and be active.

An action plan was developed following community-based workshops and activities have been progressed across the three priority themes of communication; family participation and learning and outdoor activities and headline activities are listed below:

Communication: Eymouth Development Trust produced and distributed 14,000 copies of Eymouth Living magazine by April 2023.

Family Participation and Learning: Three Book Boxes are available in venues in Eymouth to read, lend or keep, with a focus on health and wellbeing; Parental feedback about existing play spaces in Eymouth has resulted in repairs and improvements to play space; a popular Community Lunch was provided.

Outdoor Activities: Between August 2022 and April 2023, 113 individual children took part in junior park run; cycling training and safety awareness sessions for children and staff were made available; staff and volunteers have access training to support delivery of outdoor training sessions which is supported by an online resource pack and equipment for local use; young people are co-producing an interactive clay map to highlight what supports wellbeing in Eymouth.




Our aim: More people in good mental health at every age and stage of life

What do we know?

Poor mental health can affect people at all stages of life, from childhood onwards, and means people are likely to have poor outcomes in other areas of their lives including physical health, employment and participation

How are we doing?

We had set a target of a WEMWBS score above 51.0 for all men and women. We haven't achieved this and have seen the score fall slightly. We are in line with Scotland.



	Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS)	Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS)
	2012-15 50.4	2017-21 49.6 Borders

Our aim: Improved support and care for older people

What do we know?

Alongside the growing ageing population there is also an increase in the complexity of need, for instance the proportion of older people with two or more health conditions increases with age, bringing additional needs for care, support and treatment.

How are we doing?

	Multiple emergency hospital admissions, aged 65+	Multiple emergency hospital admissions, aged 65+
	Borders 15% < reduction	Scotland 8% < reduction
	Multiple emergency hospital admissions aged 65+	Multiple emergency hospital admissions, aged 65+ Borders is 13% below the Scottish Average
Based on the 3 year rolling averages 2016-18 and 2019-21		

Our Quality of Life

Our aim: Fewer people experiencing antisocial behaviour

What do we know?

Antisocial behaviour was ranked 1/24 in Police Scotland's 2016/7 'Your View Counts' survey

How are we doing?



Antisocial Behaviour Involving Young People in Peebles

Action Taken

The Community Action Team (CAT), worked alongside other officers to address issues as they were reported to Police Scotland. However policing the problem was seen as only one aspect of tackling the wider issue. Therefore an approach was developed that included involvement of local schools, youth clubs, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Peebles Community Council the Antisocial behaviour Unit and Social Work Departments.

These agencies actively engaged with young people to identify and understand the reasons young people engaged in antisocial behaviour and provided activities to young people to divert them away from antisocial behaviour.

Activities provided for young people to help reduce reports of antisocial behaviour include:

- Costa Coffee Teen only evenings, every fortnight.
- Tweeddale Youth Action continues to offer a place for 12-16 year olds on a Wednesday and Friday evening.
- Youth Groups in Peebles now offer actives and opportunities for 12-16 years olds 7 days a week.
- "Oor Youthy" is a new youth group at the Drill Hall for 12-16 year olds. The group have recently purchased a minibus for the young people to fix up and it will be used as a mobile safe space in Peebles.
- Peebles Community Council are planning to construct a shelter in Victoria Park to give young people a sheltered space.
- Discussions are taking place with Eastgate Theatre to offer cinema nights for young people.

Actions by partner agencies to reduce reports of antisocial behaviour include:

- Crime Prevention Surveys at crime hotspots have been carried out by Police Scotland.
- Residents and business owners and staff of Tweed Green and School Brae have met with Police and partners to discuss long term solutions to antisocial behaviour issues.
- The Antisocial Behaviour Unit deals with all aspects of antisocial behaviour by following recognised legislation but also by working in a proactive way with partners.
- Community engagement through organised clinics and promoting and advertising on social media.
- Estate walkabouts as well as home visits have been undertaken with partners and Housing Associations.
- All partner agencies have regular interactions to address issues.
- Police and partners continue to undertake patrols to engage with and deter young people from antisocial behaviour.

Results Achieved

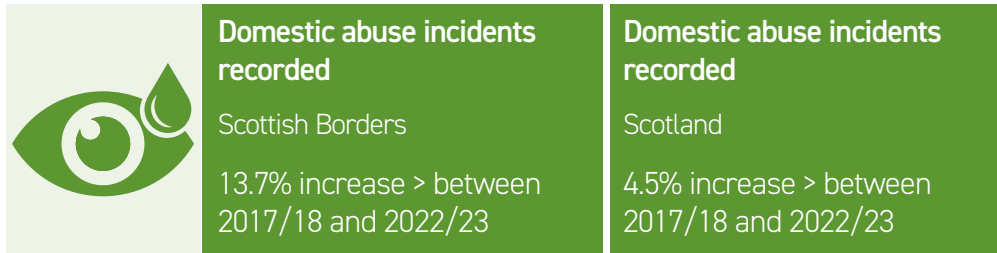
Antisocial behaviour issues reported to Police Scotland reached a high point in September 2022 for Peebles. Over the following four months reports of young people engaging in antisocial behaviour dropped substantially (with over a 75% reduction in incidents reported to Police Scotland).

Our aim: Fewer people experiencing violence (including domestic abuse)

What do we know?

There were 968 recorded incidents of domestic abuse in the Scottish Borders during 2016/17.

How are we doing?



Our aim: Fewer people killed or seriously injured on our roads

What do we know?

Between 2014/15-2016/17 there was a 57% increase in fatalities compared to a reduction of 9% in Scotland

How are we doing?



Our Place

Our aim: More people living independently in affordable and sustainable homes

What do we know?

The right supply of housing is important in meeting the needs of our communities, and particularly in light of the projected population change.

How are we doing?

	Number of new supply affordable homes completed	Total number of affordable homes completed
	Scottish Borders 125 in 2022/23 compared to 87 in 2017/18	Scottish Borders 146 in 2022/23 compared to 146 in 2017/18

While the figure for last year the figure was much higher, this was an expectation due to delays from the previous year due to Covid. The figure is positive and similar to previous years – over the past 6 years the average new supply each year has meant we have met our Housing Supply Target for new supply affordable homes of 130 new affordable homes per annum. 2022/23 has been a challenging year with the Cost of Living Crisis, inflation and higher interest rates so the number of new supply housing delivered is positive.

SBC appointed a dedicated Empty Homes Officer in August of 2021, who currently has an active case load of 182 empty homes. Over the last 18 months the Empty Homes Officer has been making connections with owners, neighbours and communities being affected by empty homes. The SBC Empty Home Grant Scheme was officially launched in September 2022. The Grant Scheme has been well received and we currently have 16 applications for a variety of empty homes across the Scottish Borders, 12 of which will become affordable rental homes.

In the first year of dedicated resource being applied to empty homes, we have seen 18 empty homes being brought back into use through direct officer activity. Through the successful building of the empty homes caseload we expect to see many more homes come back into use supported by the Empty Homes Officer.

A major affordable housing development on what was the former Coopersknowe site in Galashiels, now called McQueen Gardens was completed by Eildon Housing Association in 2022/23. 69 new, high quality, sustainable and affordable homes were developed on this long-time derelict site.



The development comprises of a mix of family houses, bungalows and upper and lower colony style flats. Six of the bungalows are fully wheelchair accessible and ten properties were made available for key workers.

Ettrick and Yarrow Community Development Company led the community purchase of the former farm buildings and site of 2.06 hectares at Ettrickbridge from Buccleuch Estates. In late 2022 the development was successfully completed and the old Kirkhope Farm steading has been transformed into 5 affordable houses and 7 energy efficient workshop units.



Our aim: More people able to afford to heat their homes

What do we know?

Fuel poverty affects a large proportion of households in the Scottish Borders.

Fuel poverty is defined as the need to spend more than 10% of income to pay for fuel bills. Extreme fuel poverty is defined as the need to spend more than 20% of income to pay for fuel bills.

How are we doing?



Fuel Poverty

Scottish Borders

5% decrease < between 2014/16 and 2017/19

7% decrease < in Scotland over the same period

Extreme Fuel Poverty

Scotland

1% increase > between 2014/16 and 2017/19

4% increase > in Scotland over the same period



Number of Energy Efficiency Scotland: Area Based Schemes/ Private Sector Measures installed

Scottish Borders

43% increase in households supported between 2019/20 and 2021/22



If you have any questions about this report for Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership please contact:

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To find out more about community planning please visit:

www.scotborders.gov.uk/communityplanning



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