

# Annex Two

## Joint Review of Culture, Sports & Leisure Services Public & Stakeholder Event Feedback

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## Overview & Reach

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Scottish Borders Council and Live Borders, in partnership, are responsible for delivering a broad range of valued culture, sport and leisure and community services throughout the Scottish Borders. Recognising the challenges facing the Council and the Trust, it was agreed that a joint review would be undertaken in relation to the funding and strategic direction of activities and services.

The review acknowledges the concerns of providing quality leisure services and facilities in a challenging and changing financial climate. The sharp rises in energy bills coupled with an aging property portfolio, the general cost of living increases and pressures on the Council's budgets, means the facility operator (Live Borders) is facing the twin challenges of significantly increased costs and reducing customer income.

As part of this review, a detailed programme of community and stakeholder engagement was undertaken. As part of this programme of engagement, a number of community drop in events, and stakeholder discussions were held as follows:

Coldstream	Thursday 27 <sup>th</sup> July
Peebles	Monday 31 <sup>st</sup> July
Jedburgh	Tuesday 1 <sup>st</sup> August
Hawick	Thursday 3 <sup>rd</sup> August
Galashiels	Monday 7 <sup>th</sup> August
Eyemouth	Tuesday 8 <sup>th</sup> August
Selkirk	Monday 14 <sup>th</sup> August
Kelso	Tuesday 15 <sup>th</sup> August
Duns	Thursday 17 <sup>th</sup> August
Online Events – Public	Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup> & Tuesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> August
Online Event – Education Partners	Thursday 24 <sup>th</sup> August

For each location, a drop- in session was held in the afternoon where the public could engage in the printed materials, provide feedback, and discuss the project with our consultant team and attending LB and SBC staff. In the evening, bookable stakeholder discussion sessions were held, with the conversations chaired and structured around key presented questions and prompts.

Two online public sessions were also held in order to provide the opportunity for those who could not attend a physical event to engage in the process.

Our team also facilitated an online discussion with key education staff – namely head teachers, department heads, and PE staff.

This report collates the feedback from the above engagements and provides a background document to support the final strategy document.

## Coldstream

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**Date:** Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> July  
**Venue:** Coldstream Community Hall  
**Attendance:** 13

### Issues Raised

- My focus is on Libraries. Agree on the need for rationalisation/centralisation of services.
- Coldstream Library Building could accommodate other services (e.g., Local Tourism office).
- Advertising for the event poor/non-existent (2).
- Perception of facilities poor.
- Ref Funding from Community Councils subsidising some of the pools – could it be used to support other facilities.
- No advertising of the event heard second hand from friend, focus is on fitness classes and 1 card to be available across all the communities.
- Community Hall staff only aware hall had been booked no background information or them being asked to advertise.
- More LIVE Borders and local authority support for community events, classes and activities needed, private ones too expensive.
- Lack of information on events, only advertised on selective platforms. Which people do not access.
- Shared services should be looked at like the library. However, there is an opinion that the library is not a library it is a council office. Tourist information. Nothing is happening. IT systems poor, need to integrate services more fully.
- Community spaces lack of them, maintaining present spaces, lack of transport, especially when you must travel for activities.
- Swimming, key life skill, lack of facilities for provision, travelling to Berwick.
- Limited Library opening times, creates challenges as this means certain individuals cannot access. More consideration should be given to accessing mobile library provision.
- Power station 3 miles up the road and they are creating an expansion, why cannot the local community benefit from them (e.g., REF/CB) they should be investing in the local communities. There is money set aside for communities, it is down to procurement.
- Recognition that resources are stretched.
- Football, no proper pitches, no areas to play football looking for 4g pitch. There is a community area being used at present that the community look after one area and the council another, the council take nothing to do with it. High grade of players within the area. Entry level at the SFA 75 children and 3 men's teams. Not community asset transfer.
- Nothing at all for the children to do within Coldstream, Access to other facilities a barrier. opportunities to take children swimming and bus hire being offered should be looked at.
- Public Park with outdated lighting, upgrade required.
- People are used to travel, however the cost-of-living issues impacting if you use your car or not, could be the possibility if discounted travel would be considered.
- Travel for cinema's, theatres, again impact of lack of public transport. Especially for outlying farms etc as some people walk over an hour to walk to town.
- Community Space for clubs, activities, society clubs lacking in the town.
- Leisure, local signed walks connecting villages and services, cycle routes also should be investigated in greater detail.
- Use the village halls for an increased variety of events suitable for all ages.

- Travel time 30 mins on average agreed suitable.
- Public Transport prominent in discussion particularly availability/cost/frequency/. You can get out the town but it is difficult getting back later in the evening.
- Teenagers restricted and no activities.
- Could be more for the elderly.
- Lack of facilities & activities for disabilities

### Future Consideration

- Wider health issue – investing in more targeted services that would create better health within the community.
- Shared services moving forward would be a good idea.
- Fewer better quality means it would be harder for people with financial constraints making it more difficult.
- Exercise by prescription, funds to be made available to enable this to happen.
- Buildings being reduced would mean that services would need to be taken to the people.
- Opportunities in a village hall which is well maintained support is required to enable the building to be used to maximum capacity.
- Discussion on asset transfer some for it and being utilised, data has been collected previously. Some venues operating like this at present.
- Feelings that they are being asked to sort out someone else's business problems.
- If you close a gym, could you not give some money to private gyms to allow the people to get free access.
- Feeling they are being asked for opinions that would be responsible for closing facilities, even though they feel the writing is on the wall.
- Are the survey's available paper copy at venues around the community to enable people to fill them out as it is discriminating against them. Lack of awareness of the surveys was evident only two aware of it in the evening session.
- Age groups of all fields should also be included.
- The people being impacted are the younger generation, our kids.

### Peebles

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**Date:** Monday 31<sup>st</sup> July  
**Venue:** Peebles Burgh Hall  
**Attendance:** 100

- Sportscotland rep/worker– Indoor events have issues with bookings, not easy to get.
- Cannot access pitches, not available, the sporting communities are suffering.
- Opening times for access to most venues and facilities are poor.
- The booking process is poor and on some occasions being given keys to open and close, no staff. School sports facilities are not easy to book. Access Bookings are not always open and not always manned. Trying to get a response is difficult, poor service.
- Live Borders do not listen to people, there have been several surveys and engagements over the last several months.
- Travel issues and they must travel for community dance.
- Poor infrastructure throughout the services.

- Getting people into Peebles for activities can be difficult, the need for spreading activities across the communities, taking them to people.
- Many numbers have not returned to activities and sports post covid, drop in numbers.
- How far out to travel – wrong question, does not mean anything, irrelevant, how do you define travel!!!! There are more complex issues.
- Swimming closed for a period has had a great impact on the swimming clubs, there is a 20-minute drive to a variety of substitute pools, even private ones which some people chose not to do, and numbers dropped.
- People are willing to travel depending on the facility, they will travel if good facilities.
- Scottish Book Club – Impacts on families with small children will not travel to a Scottish Government funded programme due to the barrier of no public transport.
- Community Centre's and Village Halls need to be in the community.
- Should be working harder to ensure sustainability and empower the outlying rural areas to enable them to attend and participate.
- Think more expansively, link what we have, buildings, partnerships and how we work together.
- A lot of good quality buildings and what is the feasibility to running them through the community.
- Is there specific management for specific buildings? None- this does not exist
- What is Live Borders management Structure, what venues do they manage and what is the income expenditure? They should provide information on running facilities independently and support upfront linking with asset transfer and community groups running facilities.
- We should also include the NHS Borders and Social Care Sector.
- A lot of spaces and facilities need to be defined more specifically with Investment through Live Borders Trust / Charity, they should be using the Charity status more.
- They see Live Borders more as a business.
- Do not need fewer buildings, just need to make the ones we have fuller to capacity.
- It is going to take the Community to make a real change.
- The Lego club is good, and it would help if there was a summer camp for the children in the community.
- A lot of increased charges affect the community in the present cost of living crisis. Pricing of halls, there is community and charity charge and then a commercial charge, there should be a public community service charge based on a % base. Reasonable rentable rooms.
- Community Asset Transfer, some people are interested in this area.
- The use of community halls and school halls was full pre Covid, now affected by an increase in charges for a public sector facility which is making it nearly impossible to continue, thus taking away the use of halls does this mean they will get closed?
- How do you deliver services to everyone when council charges are going up and nothing different is being delivered.
- Big communications gap there is an important need for better communications.
- Digital apps, services should not take away from Face to face.
- Community hall – No Wi-Fi, IT issues, need some computer access and topped off with web page issues and access. Free computer and advice, digital hubs, SBC Wi-Fi access throughout their venues.
- Drill Hall needs a full-time caretaker. Creating community comes together spaces.
- With many premises lacking accessibilities to properties, visual, audio, acoustics very poor in many venues
- Elderly citizens activities – dance, physical mobility activities, Theatre support, music events.

- Borders College – to talk and engage with the council about utilising buildings and creating satellite centres.
- Cruel to take away any facilities especially with the cost of living, mental health issues, post pandemic outfall, people's needs.
- Eastgate Theatre needs support. Must continue should be taken into consideration, variety of room sizes needs support and some work. Improved comfortable seating is required.
- Community got to do it! – need leverage to increase activity and facility usage. This will not happen on its own.
- Sportscotland, – we invest into SBC in turn require hire borders to deliver the Active Schools Community Sports Hub programme, when as a partner and we being engaged with this?
- Better community facilities on the South side of the Tweed in Peebles. Support for community hubs – especially on the South Side of the Tweed.
- Improved changing, storage, and hospitality facilities for sports clubs, baby changing and feeding facilities required,
- Too many spaces look and operate the same – need differentiation and targeting for different groups.
- Current consultation and questions will only lead to competition and disagreement between communities focused on facility closures.
- Poor management – there has been uplifts in funding – has it been well used?
- Work harder to ensure everyone has access to community services, those in rural communities.
- Inadequate Transport, reliable affordable transport. Better parking throughout the town and area.
- Long Term – Under Investment, worsening – underlying structures and amenities
- Graham Institute West Linton – the only SBC facility we have – more could be done with it.
- Rural community with limited restrictive public transport.
- Focus on what the community needs & the survey has limited opportunity for comments.
- This consultation is focused on existing facilities not what communities need!
- Question of Independence of review which is funded by SBC!
- Loss of School Library at Peebles high School – Reduction of library opening times.
- More – library & museum activities, coffee mornings, pensioner events with shuttles for people with limited, open the library in the evening for people who work and can take children after the school is closed.
- More – resources, staff, more opportunities for volunteers to do work placements in the community.
- More people to deliver a variety of activities, including educational courses.
- Have the soft play area open in more reasonable times to access with the children.
- Top priority – Museum, Gallery for town heritage and education including Tweeddale area collections. Poor physical access to library & museum for disabled people. Lifts inadequate.
- Do not cut but instead reorganize, use what is already there in the community, extend bus hours.
- SBC should cooperate with other organisations to maximise space available throughout the town, also to cooperate with people in relation to providing labour for the facilities / venues.
- There is now a lack of enthusiasm from people who wanted to make our place good, the council should provide better ways to support the aims of the people. Budgets are always said to be a limiting factor. Why not ask the population how they would solve that?
- It sounds logical to have a hub of services in Peebles. Surrounding people need transport into Peebles.

- Provide community level activities that help development of health & wellbeing. Reduces costs for NHS.
- Being able to have an overview of SBC & Live Borders of all facilities available and what can be supported through an interlink service. Lack of transparency on how Live Borders are run. Not very organised or easy to deal with.
- The need for these to support our young people and the sustainability of the future.
- Lack of day care services.
- The online survey very much targeted individuals not groups / clubs who rely on Live Borders SBC services.
- Could engage with Tweeddale Youth Action about what young people want.
- Some wealthy people around could Live Borders not use their charity status to encourage these people to support.
- Who is responsible for delivering public services. Community Hubs
- Lessons could be learned by Highland & Island Councils.
- Peebles High School could be a community HUB. New high school availability for the wider community, for downtime, relaxation creating a distraction from worries, mental health. More thoughts across the cross sections of groups for accessibility. Not enough for the seniors in the town.
- Leisure is not inclusive that restrict immobility or the elderly participating, and the access has restrictions which is discriminatory.
- Public services should be overseen by the local councilors.
- Too much money spent on Burgh Hall!!
- Parks & Green spaces.
- If travelling the collective thoughts were 5 to 10 miles max. public transport cannot be relied on and should be kept within the Scottish Government guidance of the 20-minute neighborhood, 10 min walk/cycle. There is a lack of public transport, people feel they should not have to travel, the facilities and activities should be on their doorstep, especially for the ones that do not drive. This would allow social opportunities to get to know more people.
- Cultural and leisure activities are vital and important for mental health. Taster sessions or short blocks should be offered at reasonable prices for those who cannot afford membership. More community meeting spaces at reasonable prices. More membership opportunities for students, couples, families, and guest memberships.
- Partnerships with other 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organisations that offer Specialised group activities, dementia etc. Make more use of the borders outside spaces.
- Set up an electronic forum instead of all these surveys that have been circulating over the last few years and this would allow people to comment on what they want, like or dislike.
- Get a cross trainer in the pool so people can use it whilst there and not travel to 2 venues to swim and train!

## Jedburgh

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**Date:** Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> August  
**Venue:** Jedburgh Town Hall  
**Attendance:** 17

### Drop-In Session Notes



- The ones that are easy to get to and well-advertised. “Jed Eye doing a good job”
- More opportunities to order and pick up library books as the opening times are poor. As unfortunately by moving the library out of the centre of the town this has stopped the entire generation from accessing this facility due to the huge hill that the elderly are unable to climb.
- Increase the size of the library as it has been reduced in size.
- More opening times as it is only open half days.
- Reinstate the mobile library.
- Jedburgh Campus too expensive, thus impacting on finances causing strain.
- There is a need for a more reasonable room hire cost to enable meetings and events being organised.
- The Swimming pool is indispensable fitness to all.
- We have the luxury of cars but for those who rely on public transport this is limited so the events should be in town.
- Once you must travel out of the town to do something it is then not a community activity.
- Better public transport would help.
- The library in the does not work or provide any social hub.

### Evening Discussion Notes

- Two – **museums** – good for tourists there is a lot to offer, however marketing needs improved.
- **Library** services – currently lacking, need to promote, require more books, courses and there is a limited offer on service. Needs improving, at campus which is difficult to get to and very restricted access, fewer stock than in normal library. The mobile library has issues, 2 new wagons seemingly ordered.
- **School Campus** – Positive building, there needs to be developed the inter agencies and interactional offers, there is lack of community use, cost to hire expensive and is run as a business. Again, costs too high. Further education and evening classes are needed. Vision was to include library not a cut down version.
- Campus being underused. Inclusive café/coffee bar, campus being under used.
- Make the campus more accessible.
- **Town Hall** – difficult to book, cannot gain access, lack of catering kitchen for functions, restricted caretaker access, lots of potential – runs as a good venue however needs support. Need to develop customer relationships to provide a good service. Rental too high.
- Need a **Community Space** for Art. Playgrounds with good equipment, access to community spaces need to be more available. Need more live music events, theatre, and dance.
- More **partnership working** – school campus, press reader (but positive) Historic Scotland (need to promote but no buy in). Improve charging structures that allows more people to access and generate income.
- **Wellbeing** – Tai Chi, Yoga, golf, walking (good history walks) keep fit classes, Book shop, lack of public toilets, Things need to happen to encourage people to leave their houses. Availability of programmes, activities and services need looked at. Something to stimulate older people. Provide opportunities for social interaction for lonely people. GP referral scheme. Limited opportunities to allow socialising and interacting with others. Very lonely.
- **Cultural** – borders as a collective, better transport links, mobile cinema for community, lack of buildings historical that are not inclusive, limited, or restricted access. Lack of art, need to encourage local artist to showcase their work, restricted support. Need to focus on History of area, activities, events, and opportunities in the evening need to be looked at. Good area is

the Mary Queen of Scots and the jail, town hall conditions good. Areas are underused, more events could be put on. History is undersold.

- **General** – outside business interest to run outside café, difficult due to red tape. Need to promote what is on. More for the young people to do. There is some for the 0-12years after this is poor. There are great buildings in town why are they not being used. A lot of empty shops.
- **Transport** – poor bus service, lack of buses in some areas. Snow clearing is very good. Stops too early in the evening. Young person travel card but there is no infrastructure to support this. Too many people need cars to access activities and events.
- **Community** – Taking on venues and facilities and managing them. What you are presenting here is what I thought it was, cutting services. SBC/LB interacted not about diminishing services.
- Investing in fewer, does each town lose out or how is it targeted? % wise who loses what? Everything in the community is important and needs to be worked to improve. It feels like Jedburgh has not got a voice like others and not being heard.
- Investment should be in new and current areas in Jedburgh.
- Are we stuck with LB with this? – It is not about LB it is about across the whole area and combined decisions being made. Reassure no decisions have been made and once the peoples voice has been heard the data collected will assist. Part of the debate is engaging groups to explore taking on services.
- We wanted to take on services, however as we are ageing it cannot be done, it needs to have sustainability placemaking – want the council to run facilities.
- Increased charges, increased revenue, all LB looks at is income generation.
- Definite LB / SBC tit for tat.
- **LB / SBC** – feeling is LB and SBC argue & disagree over the school project. LB has done nothing to manage the usage of the space. That nothing is being done, cost implications and charge of £40/hour. means no one is using this. There are operational issues, no storage at school for clubs or users, transporting equipment and items each week, moved spaces at last minute. Someone stated give LB a chance and they said no as they have not lived up to the expectations at present.

## Hawick

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**Date:** Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> August  
**Venue:** Hawick Town Hall  
**Attendance:** 41

### How Far Are You Willing To Travel?

- Public transport has huge limitations and impacts on social exclusion particularly for those without a car.
- Cannot drive so restricted to Hawick also have visual impairment so public transport problematic.
- Attend Peebles and Edinburgh for concerts and theatres. If public transport was safe, I would be willing to pay more!
- Depends on activity or service but not far certainly no more than a 10-minute drive.
- Family and friend travel more than 45 minutes to take part in clubs.

- Willing to walk to facilities as I do not have a car and rely on public services.
- SBL The Islands without the SOA public Transport Issues
- By car it is flexible. If by public transport very difficult – more joined up approach required.

### Most Important Services For You

- Libraries/Museums/swimming pools and Cinema. I read and I do not have a television and do not miss it.
- Heart of Hawick – music events and café.
- Library and Museum – reflect Community and its heritage.
- Library – keeps me in touch with the world.
- Library – most important – social inclusion and lifelong learning (the poor man’s university).
- Learning to swim is a key imperative and our pools are imperative in delivering this.
- Museums and libraries and art and culture with a hint of physical activity. Feed my area of interest and encourage the next generation likewise.
- Hawick swimming pool although opening times are limited. Could we have more free-swimming time instead of having to book cramped lanes.

### Comments on Adequacy of Provision

- No hubs please.
- Why is the library does not open on a Saturday (for Mon-Fri TD9 working people).
- Need more for the over 65s in terms of fitness and wellbeing.
- Hawick Library has no late opening for working people. Jedburgh Library has very few hours, small number of books and the position is not very helpful unless you have a car or are very mobile. Steep hill and too many steps.
- Since COVID, elderly and dementia patients (?) have suffered from lack of safe activities in safe location.
- **NO** as a father of girls and a friend to non-English speakers I do not think we do enough!
- Look at where the costs are being spent. Not delivering what was promised – Where are the [white] elephants.
- Everything is very digital, and app based, excluding those with no access or ability. Could organisations provide training?
- **NO** have to shout. Make *something!!!!* Or it will be a vanity project.
- More emphasis on cultural activities
- We should do away with the “Fat cats” and senior managers and refocus the savings on front line staff **X 3 people.**

### Comments Around Cultural Benefit

- Keep facilities open with longer opening hours with well- trained informed communicative staff.
- Community cohesion depend on those soft services.
- Nice to get out and about and see new + old people.
- Children and Grandchildren have benefited from swimming lessons, Essential if rivers rise – climate change issue.
- Longer library opening hours required.
- Mental health is a much talked about topic but needs joined up approach from all services.
- At a time of economic stress and world issues, culture is essential as per world war recovery.
- Invoices of all services in balance
- Need affordable activities and events!
- Physical and mental health are key to our community. The services offered are key to delivering this for Hawick.
- Physical and Mental health need stimulation. Exercise groups, dance, singing, dram, and library events need to be more publicised.

### Comments Around Learning Benefits

- Use Leisure Centre for more than just sport – it could be used as a community hub especially as it has ample parking and disabled access.
- Library staff are totally demoralised so lots of opportunities being missed. Need to have a serious look at facilities provided – opening hours and book purchase.
- Community Empowerment soon will be a skill gap in the voluntary sector.
- RE AMT community going to be busy in the future
- Vocational courses at the high school to encourage participation and perhaps a future career. Involve youngsters in the services provided.
- Not only of benefit to customers and users but staff also learning and not stagnant re knowledge. They are also customers.
- All areas wider horizons re world learning via exhibitions, workshops, helpline social confidence skills
- Why not encourage work opportunities for school leavers full time and part time.

### Evening Discussion

#### What are the transport challenges to getting to facilities?

- Bus services are inadequate.
- Unless you drive a car, it can be impossible to get across the Borders.
- We do not want people jumping in cars to go across the area to other facilities and therefore it is important to have as many local facilities.
- Public transport costs are prohibitive for those who do not have concessions.
- The evening transport means that you end up getting a taxi cost which means that an evening event in another town becomes prohibitive.
- There is nothing about the increase in footfall opportunities. You need to make better use of the existing facilities. Why is there not a slide about using the existing opportunities.
- Questions about the future based on the past use and a belief that there should be a review of the potential to increase use of facilities.
- Spaces should be made available so that more groups can use them.
- All the slide and options are about cuts and about pushing everything on to volunteers.
- Everything about the presentation is about cuts and if all our comments are about affordability and so why are you talking about increasing costs.
- Volunteers are picking up the tab for providing services.
- This is about the lack of customers and what needs to happen here is that the council needs to be looking at running these. There as a missed opportunity on how things can be improved based on what is currently available. Services and facilities better and the key to is using the resources better.
- There should be more positive of the word “investing.” Surely, we should be investing in better quality managers. This feels like managed decline.
- My understanding is that Live Borders was to be arm’s length from the Council and to develop facilities with the community and this has not happened.
- There needs to be a better use of the infrastructure and opportunities around renewables. The flood protection scheme was a wasted opportunity to bring in better heating systems for some of the facilities.
- There was a real challenge to the relationship between AJA and LB/SBC and the fact that we did not mention research, background, and disbelief that the strategy was delivered by October.
- There are problems and challenges to the use of the LB app.

- There as a missed opportunity on how things can be improved based on what is currently available.

#### **What Can Be Done For Mental Health Issues:**

- Warm spaces, various clubs but not organised by Live Borders and done by community volunteers. Builds resilience but there is poor advertising about what is available.
- Important for staff to engage with the regular users as this makes a huge difference.
- Reduced opening hours can cause problems in the winter.
- Spaces for self-referral services rather than through statutory services such as GP's.
- The placemaking review is important to see how Live Borders can signpost to facilities and organisations that could be helping.
- Interactive programmes for the arts
- Important to have affordability.

#### **What's Missing**

- Not enough for teenagers and could there be something in the High Street.
- Subscriptions cause gapping for families.
- Poor marketing and communication of the facilities that are available.
- Understanding of age and cultural groups.
- Provision is cost prohibitive which creates gaps.
- Summer Clubs during the holidays would have been useful.

#### **What's Positive About The Facilities You Use Locally?**

- Swimming pool
- Library
- Leisure centre for multi functions
- Great Heritage Hub and Film Programme
- The variety of facilities
- Heart of Hawick Great but underutilised.

#### **What Are The Negatives?**

- Charges for the Town Hall have become too expensive when LB took over the facilities and therefore underused.
- Basic repairs and maintenance are problematic.
- Advertising and marketing and web site are not great.
- Facilities under managed.
- Town hall seen as just for events and used to be a community facility – is this cost driven?
- Underused and under marketed museums.
- Cost and booking systems.

#### **Is There Adequate Provision In The Area:**

- All facilities where there is social engagement.
- Heritage Hub.
- Gym.
- Libraries.
- Good sports facilities.
- Soft Play.

- Theatre should allow the opportunity to display local talent.

## Galashiels

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Date: Monday 7<sup>th</sup> August

Venue:

Attendance: 65

### Group Discussion Notes:

#### Which cultural and leisure activities and services are the most important to you, your family, and your community and why?

- Broke down into the three elements of you, family, and community. Library and community centres come under all three, sports come under family, and museums and galleries come under community as they include heritage.
- More services from libraries for adults and youth. Needs to be better advertised as people can access books physically and online and is good for social inclusion.
- Still need a physical library – *key thing?* It would be a moral sin to get rid of it, based on learning and support for 200 years. Instead of taking things away, we should make it better. Instead of reducing things, we should be looking to increase them.
- Could re-name libraries as name means something different historically but could reflect hubs instead.
- Libraries are safe spaces as children can read books, which carries into adulthood. They are also a quiet space, somewhere to go that is free where you can have a little chat with people, etc.
- People are so isolated, so could have a coffee shop connected where people can learn to do things on computers / digital skills.
- Is Live Borders for locals or tourists? As may be able to transfer some assets to the tourist board. For example, the Great Tapestry of Scotland (GTOS) is a big drain that could be hived off to the tourist board, which can save money.
- Tom Campbell (TC): For locals and tourists to drive economy, need to embrace tourists. Talked about creating the NC500 and how it embraced visitors, but he understood the need to focus on local people too.
- Why are Live Borders getting involved in diabetes as that should be NHS.
- Would love to see a museum in Galashiels as there is a huge collection of stuff that we could display, which could fill a big museum as 66,000 photographs and 5,000 objects have been donated. This has been on the go since the 70's.
- TC: Mentioned that museums investment (rather than leisure or sports) is a conundrum.
- Trying to book a space or swimming pool and trying to pay online is ridiculous. Cannot see what has been booked once it is booked either.
- There is a creative shift to social prescribing, holistic, mental health, so Live Borders work is so important to help NHS facilities.
- Community centres are very good in Galashiels, and they are run by communities and volunteers. The Focus Centre is one of the most successful ones in the Borders as it provides space for a range of different activities at reasonable rates, which brings people in.
- Need more large, creative spaces as they are lacking in Galashiels, e.g., for knitting, dancing, etc. as there is not enough of those spaces.
- There is no textile history on display, even though Galashiels used to have 12 odd mills here.
- Cultural services / cultural hub needs to be developed here for cultural performances, but this does not come cheap.

- **TC:** If cultural hub is in Hawick, people would need to travel to there, but if it was here, how would this be subsidised? If people come from Hawick, they previously advised that this could cost approximately £50 for them to travel to here by taxi.
- Having a cultural hub somewhere creates transport costs for others, which can make it difficult or impossible to attend.
- Advantages of having a hub is that they can be good facilities, can be quite comprehensive and include different services, but disadvantages are that you could lose the independence of the facility and individual services, and you also may lose the geographical spread.
- **TC:** Infrastructure of rural living works against you.
- The Focus Centre is independent, which comes across, but a hub might become constrained by whoever oversees it if it is locally managed.
- Environment here is not conducive to creating a craft environment / culture, which means there is not many arts here as people must have other jobs to be able to survive.
- Need to focus on getting people face-to-face live, rather than relying on digital screen. Person who mentioned this works with dance and movement.
- Consensus is that sports and leisure, community centres, and libraries need to improve their service availability (e.g., opening times) and advertising.
- Very strong issues that everyone is facing is the web presence, in particular the booking system is just not fit for purpose. Two people advised that they were technologists and that they struggled with it. They advised that if they struggled with it, then it is likely that older people or people who struggle with technology would struggle with it.
- If there are problems with getting money in, need to make it easier for people to pay and use the online services.
- NHS comment re-iterated, that it is important for Live Borders to provide some services to help people be healthier to reduce pressures on NHS.
- There are a lot of community hubs and church groups in the Borders, but it might not be beneficial to pass everything onto Live Borders to take on.
- **TC:** Churches have a lot of facilities and have trouble paying for them. He helped to create the first joint up medical practice using a church building that was closed during weekdays.
- For public halls, regional hubs, libraries, etc. what is their vision to make them fit for the future? They need a vision because everything is online.
- Library is as a place and space that is much more than just providing books. People used to use them to get answers too, but do not need to as much now.
- GTOS and Jim Clark are important to their specific communities and the Borders as a whole.
- What does the sport government do? We have 10 riders in the UCI World Championships, which were developed through Live Borders by handholding them, but do not think this is well understood.
- Need help to support young people progress in sports, which could maybe be achieved through sports programmes.
- Arts / cultural activities overshadowed by sports.
- Seems Live Borders is spread very thin in terms of their services.
- Combine library with community centre and / or sports facility?
- Libraries need to be better advertised. Radio?
- Libraries with more services – play, adult learning, social inclusion.
- Museum and galleries – heritage and tourism.
- Community centres – provides different groups opportunities, shared interests and important to smaller groups.
- Libraries – quality staff (friendly and helpful), something for all ages.

- Cultural performances – live shows and museums.
- Old Gala House – very interesting exhibitions.
- Public halls – regional hubs, community halls / sports clubs connecting, Great Tapestry of Scotland, Jim Clark.
- Sports development.
- Libraries vision?
- Sports and leisure facilities.
- Community / green spaces.
- Major issues with booking systems (causes a barrier to entry).
- Services availability / opening times, etc.
- Public transport improvements – key because cannot have all resources in each Border town but if transport is good, then people can get around easily!
- Libraries – great service.
- Live Borders – ease of booking a ‘space’ for an activity. People have had to find ‘cheaper’ premises.
- Money saving – is Live Borders for locals for instance, tapestry items hive off to Tourist Board.
- Museums for town, Old Gala Club archives.
- Library and multi-use by locals – help encourages children and young people to develop a love of books and basic reading skills.
- What is necessary?
- Swimming facilities and indoor bowling.

**Do you feel there is adequate provision for all ages and abilities, that are inclusive across the whole community?**

- Everybody wants something different, such as a basketball court, skatepark, somewhere to do yoga, Pilates, paint / do creative things, etc. Esports is also on the rise with younger people. Nobody is the same, but probably do not need provisions for all these as do not want to over-provision either.
- Do we need swimming pools everywhere? Majority of room said yes.
- There is only one athletic track for the whole of the Borders that is not open that much. Should we have a centre of excellence and, if so, how do we ensure the affordability of this?
- Could also look at regional hubs.
- Some services are more promoted (e.g., sports over arts and culture), but arts and culture are equally as important as sports, so they need equal promotion.
- **TC:** Is this because sports are more about facilities?
- Could be, or it could be because sports are more accessible or more desirable to people.
- People do not know about Live Borders events, for example people did not realise that ballet and theatre is available here, as if you are not online you miss out.
- There is too broad a service over the geographical areas. Could NHS, Scottish Borders Council, rugby clubs, etc. take on more? Man mentioned that his experience as a Live Borders worker is that Live Borders do work with NHS Borders to offer services, and works in conjunction with a lot of other partners to offer services. This also means there is wide plethora of specialists to draw on at any one time.
- Breadth of services on offer is diverse, but do not know how to solve that.
- Has Live Borders considered its role in relation to the services advertised in Gala Life as there are so many opportunities to join up / intermesh with independently run organisations, and those run by volunteers? As there is a great swell from various organisations has the correlation between them all been thought through?



- **TC:** It is important for Live Borders to see the whole landscape and how they fit in.
- Firmly believe swimming pools are needed in all the towns and need to stay as previously they found that lots of people drowned in lakes, rivers, etc. Plus, with climate change and water rising, wild swimming is even more dangerous. Are people going to take their children elsewhere to learn to swim? I would hate to think we are going to go back to that. It is the only sport that if you do it, you could die.
- **TC:** There is a critical importance of swimming facilities coming through here.
- This is a changing world where there are less resources.
- Thinking ahead of what is coming, need to re-think matching buildings and facilities to services and activities? Are they appropriate at this time or should we change? For example, maybe a library was suitable in the past, but may not be now.
- Interconnection of everything (e.g., NHS and Live Borders with diabetes). Might be a challenge getting specialists together but would be worthwhile for them to give their opinion.
- **TC:** The public sector engages a lot with stakeholders and are held to Government guidelines. Need to mesh more.
- Gala Life covers a large range of activities. Does Live Borders have a relationship with them and do they compete?
- Yes, in general, overall facilities.
- Access? Depends on geography and transport.
- All ages? Cost dependent (swimming / music).
- Everyone wants something different – paint, skateboard, yoga / Pilates.
- Peak time usage.
- Over provision? Swimming pools in every town? Regional Centre?
- We said ‘yes’ – adequate provision for all ages and abilities.
- You do not die with a sport facility. You do without swimming pools.
- The buildings? What activities are we putting in them?
- Activities – matching – buildings.
- We need to think ahead i.e., the changing world – less resources...funds, etc. What will stand ‘the test of time’? What are the essentials?

#### **Investing in fewer, better-quality buildings**

- Lots of people in local communities have fond memories of buildings, so need to find an imaginative use for them. Could keep the fabric of the building, but re-purpose them (e.g., by turning them into conference centres or office buildings), so you can still go in and see how things used to be.
- Better quality is fine / fewer buildings rings alarm bells with me. Most expensive schools in the country use some of these services.
- There are 19th century buildings, that are leaking money and are difficult to sustain.
- **TC:** If a building is not fit for purpose, how do we make it so?
- Yes, because this could get more people into the buildings and help with climate change.
- For the new Galashiels High School, the community hoped to have an eight court games hall to have spaces for sports, dance classes, etc., but only a four court games hall was approved. Had the opportunity to do better and bigger but did not, so need people to understand that there are options available, so yes fewer, better-quality buildings.

#### **Combining a range of services and activities in one “hub” location:**

- Yes, but do not want to lose autonomy and what happens in it.

#### **Supporting communities to run their local facilities independently:**

- Focus centre is a great example of this as it is run by volunteers and is the best in the Borders, with Live Borders only being a passive party.

#### **Moving towards options for digital services:**

- **TC:** I suspect whether we like it or not, this will happen. iPhone was invented in 2007, but feels longer, so who knows what will happen in the next five to ten years? Human interaction should be driving what we are doing, and we should ensure we do not lose the human element.
- We need to drive the human element.
- Current online services are hard for people in IT, so will be harder for older people.
- Who built this? It is not fit for purpose and really angers one of the technologists, who also said there is no need for it. Strip back the complexity, although someone said that somebody somewhere will have gained something from it.
- Really difficult to use the app. and to book in advance.

#### **Increasing charges for services:**

- Gentleman from Hawick advised that the presentation has improved dramatically since Hawick as it helps to set the scene for something quite dramatic to happen.
- Not getting people in, so thinking of increasing charges – what?!

#### **Other Notes**

- What else do we need to do to address these challenges, to make it better?
- Can make Live Borders better by doing this exercise.
- Have people reviewed Scottish Borders Council and Live Borders Senior Directors and Officers to look at their work and pay packages? How long have they been there, managing the decline of these services? If this was a commercial business, would look at why this was required. However, someone else said that Live Borders and Scottish Borders Council are asking why by doing this.
- **TC:** (not being flippant) I have never worked there, but Audit Scotland can be used for this.
- Need to look at demographics and barriers to entry. People are not saying that services are rubbish, but need to book to use them and website is not great.
- Technology needs to be utilised properly.
- As there is a budget, income, and additional income through services, why isn't there a strategic plan which shows the top-line budget that can be topped up, then look at what is available for services through available finance?
- **TC:** This will feed into the Strategic Budget Review, but this piece of work needs to be done to influence what we say and will feed in so we do not repeat same mistakes and so we can understand impact of actions. If you do not do this piece of work, you will have tough choices again. What we are hearing very clearly is what is important, for example, through these conversations, money may be put aside for the app.
- This surely cannot be the only way. How many more people would you have used the facility if it was more local as there are complex problems that this forum cannot fix? How do we know the right decision is being made as does it come down to how much noise local people make in order to get something done?
- **TC:** It takes these kinds of events for these issues to be raised, as everyone may not be aware of them.
- If looking at increasing number of athletic tracks, need to speak to all athletic clubs, etc, rather than just having these types of drop-in sessions. It does not come down to local groups making decisions if it was a commercial business. A commercial organisation would do it right and run a proper investigation.
- **TC:** It is not a commercial business though. A commercial business does not need to consider politics, the economy, etc. when making decisions that public businesses do.

- A Minister of the Free Church of Scotland advised that Dundee has place that has the community centre, library and learning centres together. This means the whole community is gathered around a single space which worked well.
- Northumberland built a hub which has new centres that includes the community centre, leisure centre and soft play.
- Inverness Highlands has holiday swimming pool worked well. They are not losing services; they are investing in them to join them up.
- If consulting with local groups, could bring musicians, dancers, etc. together to decides what activities can be done in each of the buildings.
- I do not know what the culture element or working environment of Live Borders is but is possible to foster the idea of everything can always be improved, to encourage public participation, even if it is just for the one thing. For example, if someone has too many books, they can be added to a database so people can donate books to the library if people have requested them, but the library does not have the books. This could save Live Borders money. The man who suggested this had offered his library this before and they seem to be interested.
- Encourage people to donate to keep the library alive as this can result in a lot of quiet benefit, which would then benefit everyone.
- What about teenagers who are at school across the border? We need to ensure that they have access to the survey, even if they do not go to school here?
- Due to limited resources, isn't it surely going to end up at looking at what uses the least / costs the most, like a race to the bottom? That is how you would look at it commercially at least, so surely that is what this is about?
- **TC:** That would be a missed opportunity as need to consider other things, such as health benefits and outcomes, which makes the decision become more complicated as you are not comparing apples to pears.

#### Post-It Note Comments:

#### Which cultural and leisure activities and services are the most important to you, your family, and your community and why?

- All services in the community halls are important.
- Libraries, museums, and community centres.
- Pools and sports facilities for younger people.
- All – use Focus Centre every week.
- Need more swimming lessons – very long waiting list. We would then use pool more as a family.
- Kids love library bus visits to school.
- Use football at Netherdale multiple times per week.
- Use facilities at Tweedbank.
- Kids love access to sports.
- Most important: Swimming, sport, libraries, community, and culture within our towns and local communities.
- Do not make kneejerk, short-sighted decisions. We need families to come, stay and live here!
- Fitness / arts and culture – better equipped venues to hire at reasonable rates.
- Library – provides more than books. This is needed – not all digital.
- Community centres.
- Swimming pool.
- Local communities run by the people who live in the community are necessary for the vibrancy of the towns and villages of the area and without those, key nodes communities would fall apart.

- Library.
- Museums.
- Langlee Community Centre is essential for Redgauntlet Archers. It has a very rare combination of 20-yard main hall, safety curtain erected, and somewhere secure to store equipment.
- Most important – leisure centres and libraries for all ages.
- Community centres are vital to our population, as are libraries, halls, and historic buildings.
- Leisure centres.
- Museums and libraries regeneration.
- Leisure centres (Selkirk) in need of some investment, camp site and caravan park near, ideal for pensioners like myself.

**Do you feel there is adequate provision for all ages and abilities, that are inclusive across the whole community?**

- A proper museum for Galashiels.
- To make happier, healthier, stronger communities, facilities need to be accessible by various means of transport. So that people have choice to walk, cycle, bus to them – integrate into community.
- I think there is – but needs better advertising – though App. is a good move but not everyone has suitable phones, etc. Cater for non-digital users.
- Increase public transport – assist folks to get to venues, especially in the evening.
- The website is hard to use and clunky.
- No – need more for high-school aged young people afterschool and at weekends to do in and around towns.
- No – need more to keep young minds in the Borders rather than traveling outside the area.
- No – Transport is a big problem outside of core hours to enable access for all.
- Needs to be better subsidised to be affordable for all in leisure centres and other fitness hubs.
- There is adequate provision for sports in the Borders, but people who need more cultural and sedentary engagement, especially in an ageing demography, need to be better serviced.
- Opening hours at library are poor.
- Cost of tapestry is high. Would visit more regularly if cheaper.
- Need better advertising / access to info., particularly online.
- Booking system is terrible! Multiple emails required. Easy to give up.
- No – better opening hours for those without a computer.
- No – not enough open spaces for all to enjoy.
- Transport – cheaper, more regular. People would use public transport more.
- Local halls – vital to keep communities with a sense of engagement in all the great clubs, choirs, etc. Are we only supposed to get the train to Edinburgh?!
- Advertising and promoting is key! Need to ensure there are lots of different methods used to advertise, i.e., not everyone can use social media / apps.
- Poor management at present.
- Unable to book venues.
- Poor information about community centre activities.
- Acknowledge different needs: young – technology aware kids, ageing population. Bring these together?
- Yes, but not advertised well enough. Ads need more diversity in them – older people, disabled people, black and ethnic minority, etc. – to encourage people to use facilities.

### **How can the culture and leisure activities, services and facilities better provide opportunities for you and your family to learn?**

- Keep the library in the town centre and have it open 6 or 5 ½ days per week.
- Keep local community centres.
- Keep historical library where it is and have more opening hours, especially Saturday morning. It is well situated for townsfolk. Friendly, welcome, activities on, quiet for studying and light. (Someone wrote agree! on this one).
- Facilitation of face-to-face (less technology based).
- Safe community spaces.
- Arts / health and wellbeing.
- Simplicity.
- Qualified staff.
- Promoting pro-active healthy lifestyle options in real-time, not virtual.
- Libraries to remain a hub – and of books, literature, and instruction – not digital.
- You need to identify which services that need to be delivered locally, e.g., libraries and those that can be amalgamated. Some could be combined, one Borders Museum – go out and visit the new East Coastland Museum in North Berwick. Identify buildings that cannot be off-loaded, e.g., Old Gala House.
- Green spaces activities, more support for young and elderly.
- Promote community gardens for food crops, plus nutrition information.
- More activities at library / museum, for families.
- Open at weekend.
- Reduce rental rates in public halls and leisure centre access to increase use of spaces and fitness through affordability.
- Cultural services are as important as sport and leisure.
- Perhaps libraries could have longer opening hours plus be a parcel drop off / collection depot / café / community group?
- More services?
- Public toilets?
- Retain and make better use of existing facilities rather than aggregating them into fewer buildings.
- “Digital” services are unsuitable for large numbers of people.
- Moving to sustainability is vital but do not move to closing things before new services are ready to replace. We need to keep families in the Borders and give our ageing population activities to keep us all engaged in a positive life.
- How can communities run local services? Need support both financial and need expertise, e.g., qualified staff, to run swimming pool.
- Keep our library and increase opening hours. Hold events there, encourage more people to use the building.
- Extend the opening hours of the library.
- Working in partnership across services to prevent double-doing and make the most of what we have in the Borders, i.e., maximise access for all who live and work in the Borders.

### **How can the culture and leisure activities, services and facilities better benefit you and your family's physical and / or mental health?**

- Always a pleasure to visit Gala library – books well presented with new items and returned books easy to see. Best of all, the staff are always pleasant and helpful.
- Leisure centres and libraries are crucial for both.

- The Great Tapestry building cost a lot of money and appears to be a white elephant – good place for a hub?
- Certain halls, etc. used by Live Borders need ‘sprucing up’! They have seen better days. Also, staff could help to tidy up exterior, e.g., litter picking.
- Give Galashiels their park back and not a walkaround.
- Give Tapestry to Edinburgh and put resources into open spaces for all ages to enjoy.
- Open libraries more hours.
- Ring-fence libraries, museums, and history.
- GTOS should have reduced rates for residents, and nationals. @£25 is a lot of money for a return ticket when one visit can hardly cover all the content.
- Arm’s length organisations (Live Borders) do not work. Covering too wide a remit for services which are widely spread as a rural area.
- Services for all, not just sport lovers.
- Use the Tapestry more as a hub.
- One proper museum.
- Live Borders remit? Perhaps too wide-ranging (i.e., separate organisation of sport, leisure, and cultural facilities)?
- Card for seniors to make use of all sports facilities, e.g., gyms, pools, classes for a minimal amount. (S. Lanarkshire charge £75).
- Smaller centres should get more attention to explore services for communities in the villages.
- Live Borders confusing name re. pronunciation. (Someone wrote agree on this one).
- Physical activities (also impacts mental health). Embodiment.
- People need safe spaces where they can come together and just interact. Also, social activities.
- Deals for locals at tapestry on quiet days / times?
- Make it easier to find out what is happening and to book.
- Online booking and payment would make it much easier. E.g., recent party booking was about six emails to book and two calls (and several unanswered) to pay!
- Community centres and libraries are as vital for mental health as sports facilities are for physical health and must be retained and cherished.
- Community centres – lifesavers for so many who are isolated either physically or emotionally.
- Arts – escape and imagination empowering all ages to explore the mind and imagination-given opportunities which would otherwise not be available to them.
- Exercise – ‘good gracious – where to start!’ All generations, physically and mentally, so important.
- Large rural community – requires to be given a service to be used and to be proud of – local in each town please.
- Libraries – so important, especially in today’s climate for all ages – giving access to reading, imagination, and education.
- Also, some IT access to people in communities who do not have access at home, it is so important.
- Swimming pools! Vital skills that all children need to have readily available. Also, we all need to continue with these skills. This is a type of exercise so necessary and different from any gym class.

## Eyemouth

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Date: Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> August

Venue:

Attendance: 41

### Group Discussion Notes:

#### Which cultural and leisure activities and services are the most important to you, your family, and your community and why?

- All of us, most of us, use the swimming pool for health rehab. As it is a seaside town, more families need to learn to swim. The camping site brings tourists into Eyemouth and money into the economy.
- Tom Campbell (TC): Last night, someone mentioned that Live Borders are providing services that the NHS should be providing. Why is the NHS not paying for that but working as partners with Live Borders?
- Community centre is a central point for all ages and for groups (such as youth groups) who can use both halls, meeting rooms, etc.
- TC: There's question marks against the Old Town Hall, which affects several facilities.
- It is not used now.
- Library is central and has internet and computer access for people who do not have access. There is so much more online. People meet up there even though it is small, the building is not big enough.
- Museum is a separate Trust.
- Social interaction is vital and should be accessible (on doorstep) and affordable for all.
- TC: That has come up in several sessions.
- Most cost was around swimming pool – chit chat was that school used to provide that but now unsure if provided under school.
- Need to have spaces for classes (e.g., dancing), for yoga, country dancing, etc.
- Leisure is most important as it helps to be physically and mentally healthy.
- Need more play parks and safe spaces for children to play.
- TC: Are there none here?
- Yeah, but there is hardly any and they are very poor. There was a programme to rollout to the Borders and the parks are fantastic in Duns and Coldstream, but we have nothing here. Eyemouth get a makeover, but other places have purpose-built parks.
- TC: Why is that?
- People come here for a holiday, rather than a day out – Eyemouth is not seen for its potential for a day out.
- Priorities change over time, and current priorities may change in the future, it depends on your life stage (e.g., children at school will have different priorities to older people). Schools need to be engaged.
- TC: We are engaging with schools when we go back.
- The three things do not marry up – culture should not be looked at with sport and leisure, as services, such as toilets, should not have a monetary value attached to them and vital services should be accessible by people without them having to travel or having a cost attached to them.
- TC: Every council has challenges, nice to haves and must haves, so they had to make decisions.
- Disagree as the library is one of the last free, accessible spaces and it is not a nice to have. The community centre helps with social interaction. All these places are fundamental, provide valuable services and are facing a massive challenge. Picking and choosing is not the right question as need all of them. These are the fabric of society and it is unfair to pick and choose.

- **TC:** I don't disagree, but due to rising costs and challenges seen across the board including increasing pressures, we need to weigh up implications of how these are affected.
- Then let us have the conversation about finding how to be more efficient and do things better. Not the conversation about picking and choosing as that is not fair.
- Does not have anything to add as we cannot discuss any of this unless you share the budgetary / financial information, as if there is only so much available, can help to make plans, but have not been furnished with them. This information has not been made available and it needs to be.
- **TC:** It is to help plan, and to help inform tough decisions that are to be made.
- Do not see how we can contribute without the information.
- **TC:** I would ask for you to contribute as best as you can in these discussions.
- But we will contribute, which goes to the plan, but then we will not hear back from them, so there is no point in giving thoughts as we do not know how those decisions are being made.
- **TC:** I understand, but we will not make promises we will not keep.
- I would contend that you will get the same from us as you get from each community, so you will get the same words about what is important. So, it is about who shouts loudest.
- **TC:** This is about getting the themes from across the whole patch. There are themes like libraries (in Galashiels and Hawick) have come out as an important theme. I would be surprised if there are not things that are unique to Eyemouth though, and it is right that we hear the views of everyone so that we can understand the broadest themes. Have over 2,000 responses to the survey so far.
- This is not a big percentage as there are approximately 160,000 residents in the Scottish Borders.
- **TC:** We cannot force people to fill it out.
- We want to keep everything (library, community centre, and pool) and make them better.
- A community centre (library) – hub of activity / information, where people can come together, engaging with older people.
- Activities for children and young people.
- Swimming pool / leisure centre.
- Need to facilitate groups working together.
- Library: free internet and computer access to help in cost-of-living crisis, reading facilities, and group meetings.
- Museum: tourist information.
- Swimming pool: health (rehab), water safety (seaside), amenities for holidaymakers, gym, and studio – classes.
- Community centre: central hub for local community groups (U3A, EVG Youth Drama, Scouts, Guides, Brownies, and country dancing), nursery – early years, Citizen Advice Bureau.
- Old Town Hall -???
- Library – full-time.
- Swimming pool and gym.
- More communication and promotion of services and meetings.
- Community centre / community space. More variety of use.
- Lack of feedback to public consultation is very disheartening.
- Social interaction.
- Provision of accessible (on the doorstep and affordable) activities.
- Space for class-led physical activity.
- Priorities change as we age meaning you get the answer that fits the community now.
- Cultural leisure services – different categories of need.



- Leisure (swimming is essential – coastal living).
- Play parks / safe spaces to play.

**Do you feel there is adequate provision for all ages and abilities, that are inclusive across the whole community?**

- What is the community – Eyemouth or Berwickshire?
- **TC:** It reflects Eyemouth, but from perspective of people who use services here.
- We think provisions are not the problem, there is plenty of provision as Live Borders are not the only providers but need to spruce up the facilities as there is maybe some issues about the standards of the facilities. We think the issue is Live Borders have not been engaging with communities in order to best serve the communities and to encourage communities to use the services.
- Disagree in relation to sport, as you can apply to Live Borders to get coaching qualifications, as Live Borders receives funding to train coaches. There are three sport development officers for the whole region who go out and coach youngsters with football for free.
- No, there is provision, but do not think it is adequate as the library is only open half the time, the swimming pool needs work done to it as it often breaks down, and the community centre needs work done to it.
- **TC:** So yeah, there is enough provision, but it could be better managed as do not think its fit for purpose. Also need to look at social cohesion, would better provision solve that?
- Yes, it would, after covid, people are not going out as much, so there's less social cohesion, but better provision could solve that. If facilities are open better hours, have reduced rates at a rate people can afford, could help encourage people to go out more. Covid was a big hit to people. Also need much better communication as it is good to know what is happening where.
- **TC:** That is a theme that came through, advertisement, communication, and marketing need improved. The website and how well that functions needs looked at too.
- Need to encourage people to come out in the communities, but do not have adequate transport services. Public transport is not great, but Pingo (which is a rent-a-bus) is a step in the right direction but transport is a problem.
- **TC:** Someone in Hawick said that traveling for a night out can cost up to £50 just for transport (bus then taxi). Other themes that have come out are impact and availability of public transport in a rural setting, and challenges around the rural communities with transport. Transport can be an inhibitor as not all people have cars. Younger people and over 65s get bus passes, but what about people in the middle?
- We struggled with staying on the question as focussed more on solutions, we are more of a solutions table. (Not discussed, but solutions must be written on the flip chart).
- Not enough safe playparks.
- Not enough toilet facilities.
- Travel – buses.
- Provision is not the problem! (Live Borders are not the only provider!).
- Live Borders have not been engaging with communities to encourage use of provision.
- East Berwickshire – very little for young people aged 11 – 17 (unfocussed), free.
- East Berwickshire – community driven social inclusion for 65+ but cannot happen if no Live Borders building.
- No – pointless question!
- Library – not open long enough.
- Swimming pool – old and crumbling.
- Community centre – not utilised at weekends and evenings.

- Less social cohesion post-covid.
- Night classes would be good.
- Family spaces needed.

#### **Investing in fewer, better-quality services:**

- No, fewer means they are further apart, which brings us back to transport and in a rural community, transport can be killer as it will stop people trying to access services.
- **TC:** If could put a central library anywhere, where would it be?
- I am thinking about everyone else, not just Eyemouth. It would be good for Eyemouth if it was placed in Eyemouth but would not be good for anywhere else.

#### **Investing in fewer, better-quality buildings:**

- Depends on what you mean by fewer. If you had community centre and library together then that would be a good thing but not if you lose one of them.
- Scottish Borders Council in its wisdom, went PFI to build schools. Jedburgh has a campus, and Galashiels has a swimming pool and is getting a huge sport facility in the community, so Scottish Borders Council handed over Jedburgh and Galashiels schools to Live Borders to run those facilities. However, our school has been handed over to Amey and it is expensive to use and hard to book.
- **TC:** PFI is a ticking timebomb as at some point, they must be handed back.

#### **Combining a range of services and activities in one "hub" location:**

- **TC:** If you look at the AJA website, you will see examples of work on hub facilities we have helped set up, where several services are in the one building.
- Depends on if it is a possibility. What is the point in answering it if it is not an option?
- Provided feedback on original consultation. Before covid, there was an opportunity for a new primary school, which was not going to be where it is now. It was also going to be a school hub but was not consulted with parent school. Not seen plans, but what was proposed was not fit for purpose (did not have enough room for expansion) This is a golden opportunity now as could this possibly be a hub?
- This would be a solution. We raised with Live Borders to move the library into the community centre in the past, but they did not do this. Think Live Borders ignored it because they thought it would be a part of the new primary school.
- When it was raised previously, Live Borders had a Head of Library Services, but do not have that now, so they do not have that expertise anymore, so it is just ignored.
- **TC:** Does that conversation need to be re-opened?
- We are trying as we could bring the library into the community centre.
- **TC:** Need to look at rising costs.
- They did it in Duns though, they re-purposed the primary school in Duns to make it fit for purpose.
- Will need to make a quick saving though as there is a worry that they are going to look to shut the little ones, rather than larger ones. Dream is for all services to be in one building but will not happen if we are being asked to prioritise services.
- Easy solution is to have a hub, but will this be done? Inevitably we think we will lose something.
- **TC:** Solution could be to have the community centre as an interim hub. If we saw that as a steppingstone to show how important it is and how much it is used, that would be a good business case.
- But we will not get twenty million pounds in investment for a hub in Eyemouth, so think we have to re-purpose what we have in Eyemouth.
- **TC:** Could try first and then look to re-purpose if not successful?

### **Supporting communities to run their local facilities independently:**

- A difficulty we have got is who is prepared to take this on as, at that point, it is your responsibility if something goes wrong. You do not have Scottish Borders Council or Live Borders to fall back on, which leads to a downfall of a commissioned asset, but that is what we are aiming towards.
- We have been through a process to buy off the council, and we could make money, have the business case, but there is difficulty to get support within the community to take that on as there would then be no one to blame if it goes wrong. It is a lonely place, making decisions and it is difficult taking this on.
- **TC:** AJA has a subtext of being the 'destroyer of dreams' as people come in with grand ideas that will not make them money or breakeven, but we help to then create something that is grounded.
- Eyemouth, Jedburgh, and Duns swimming pools were threatened with closure, and Eyemouth came out en-masse and stormed the council building to support their swimming pool. Duns set up a trust, but the driving force was Mrs Hay of Duns Castle opening her chequebook to get the trust going because she swam there every morning. Laidlaw Trust has Jedburgh, but this is failing and there is talk of it coming back to Live Borders.

### **Moving towards options for digital services:**

- What do you mean by digital services?
- **TC:** The iPhone was invented in 2007, but feels longer, so who knows what will happen in the next five to ten years? For a lot of what you are talking about, you need human interaction and face-to-face interaction. However, as an example, this would be about things like libraries closing and library services becoming completely digital to save money.
- Not a good idea as lose out on a social interaction space, as libraries are much more about social interaction.

### **Increasing charges for services:**

- No, they have already done that, and it just makes it more difficult to benefit.
- **TC:** Increasing cost assumes you have the same volume, but, if there is less footfall, then revenue reduces too. Also, people may make decisions to bulk book something, like swim passes, but not everyone can afford to do so.

### **Other Feedback**

- Some of the building options are there, but financial and business plan needs to make them sustainable.
- Have hesitation with prioritising services as they should not be pick and choose.
- What are the costs with running the services and facilities as these could be paid for using a mixed model, with Live Borders part funding them? Although this would need further consultation.
- It is a shame that community activism requires an appetite and unfortunately it has come to this. The community only mobilises when Scottish Borders Council or Live Borders are threatening closure.
- Better communication and advertisement are needed, so people can see what is on where.
- What is happening with this feedback?
- **TC:** It will be anonymised and added as an appendix to the full report. This will then be available on the website once done.

### **Post-It Note Comments**

**Which cultural and leisure activities and services are the most important to you, your family, and your community and why?**

- Library, community centre, swimming pool, and play areas.
- The swimming pool, and the library.
- Skate parks for young people to get out and socialise and keep fit.
- Swimming pool, community centre, and library.
- Swimming good for health and mental health.
- Community centre – meeting centre for local people.
- Swimming pool, library, and community centre.
- Keep / upgrade: swimming pool, sports / exercise for young people and children, green spaces, and play parks to encourage children outside.
- Library.
- The community centre provides a vital space for social and physical activities for people of all ages, whereas the swimming pool / gym serves the physical needs of the community.
- The library provides cultural and beneficial services, all very vital to the fabric of the community.
- Having lived in the area for about 40 years, I really appreciate the library and the swimming pool.
- I used to work with young children, and they always enjoyed a visit to the little play park not far from the swimming pool. As did my grandchildren.
- The tree planting and other horticultural activities (the new 'wildflower' beds) are appreciated by everybody visiting Eyemouth.
- Swimming pool – swimming lessons are so important for a community that relies on the sea.
- Library is a meeting space, an information centre, a source of free reading, and a welcoming environment – but underused!
- Swimming pool, community centre, library, and play areas.
- The pool is a very important activity to the town and lots of people.
- It is imperative Eyemouth keeps and enhances: 1) swimming pool, 2) community centre, 3) library, and 4) playparks. We do not have infrastructure or transport links to get to other places / facilities.
- Swimming pool, community centre, library, play parks.

**Do you feel there is adequate provision for all ages and abilities, that are inclusive across the whole community?**

- Eyemouth serves the wider East Berwickshire communities. The existing facilities are very limited, particularly as Eyemouth is the main town on the A1 corridor, all the way to Cockburnspath. More activities, facilities and infrastructure are needed.
- Eyemouth does not have the same range of facilities that are available in other Border towns. The facilities need to be maintained and enhanced, not cut.
- Community is important. What we have is good but can be better.
- Playparks and other active things to encourage people outside would be good.
- Historically, Eyemouth residents have always felt we are on the edge of the Borders and do not get the facilities that the rest of the Scottish Borders gets. Facilities have been allowed to degenerate – e.g., tennis courts. Even the new school does not have the facilities that new schools in the Borders will get – e.g., 3 / 4G pitches. The community centre could be better utilised – but this will need money. Could the Borderlands money be directed to improve facilities in Eyemouth?
- No, not enough. We used to have a squash court, badminton, and tennis court – all gone.
- No.
- No – need more facilities as town growing larger.
- No – nothing for youngsters to do.
- No – also holiday resort needs facilities.
- Eyemouth do not have the adequate facilities that other Border towns have.

### **How can the culture and leisure activities, services and facilities better provide opportunities for you and your family to learn?**

- Look at salaries of “fat cat” Council officials in charge of Live Borders. Also look at how much money is wasted employing outside agencies for surveys, reports, etc. Spend money on enhancing facilities we already have.
- Scottish Borders Council has funded excellent high school provision – for community schools. So why are they closed to the community at weekends – no access on Saturdays and Sundays (or more generally outside school hours and during school holidays)? We have all contributed to these facilities – why can’t we all benefit from them? They are modern, sustainable buildings.
- The museum in Eyemouth is good for our cultural heritage but would be good to get some money invested in it to help it as it is charity run.
- A review of the existing management structure and salaries of Live Borders and Scottish Borders Council Officers that are currently in charge of budgets and spending.
- No opportunity to watch live music and theatre in Eyemouth, this needs partnership work with non-Live Borders agencies.
- Re. sport, swimming, and leisure facilities: There is a large state-of-the-art recent leisure centre in Berwick, with swimming pool, courts that can be hired for a range of activities (indoor tennis, badminton, pickleball, etc.). As Borders cannot afford such a development, could there be a formal arrangement with Berwick Leisure Centre to enable use by East Berwickshire residents?
- Perhaps a hub is what is required to bring together library, community centre, leisure facilities, under one roof that can be a flagship for Berwickshire, based in Eyemouth.
- You cannot swim digitally!!
- Community run facilities does work but is this an excuse to have off facilities that we should expect and wish to have?
- A hub will take money to start properly.
- Need to look at structure within Live Borders, etc.
- If we had fewer facilities in Eyemouth, we would have none!
- Investing into local facilities if you are promoting Eyemouth as a tourist destination.
- A review of top management – they should be going around local facilities and talking to the people, using them, and listening to ideas. Not helpful sitting behind a desk!

### **How can the culture and leisure activities, services and facilities better benefit you and your family’s physical and / or mental health?**

- The library is a good meeting place and source of information.
- The community centre: social, physical stimulation, gym, and swimming pool: physical activity, and library: intellectual and cultural stimulation – all very much needed!
- Swimming pool: - provides for all ages and abilities. Living so close to the sea and harbour, it is a lifesaving skill to be able and available to learn to swim.
- The library has bookbug sessions to help young babies to toddlers to develop social skills – books are so good for mental health.
- The library also provides IT support when users need help.
- Community centre: a good hall for various groups (Eyemouth Youth Theatre Group).
- Isn’t it interesting that your map of facilities only has a total of seven Live Borders facilities and only one is a sports facility? In this age of obesity, it is insufficient. Please compare this to the rest of Scottish Borders facilities.
- Swimming pool is a must. Having a harbour and beach, it is imperative to have access to swimming lessons. It is a lifesaving skill to have.
- Library is a must, as is a community centre. We have no town hall.
- There is not infrastructure or transport links to access elsewhere.

- Swimming pool is a must for a seaside community that is expanding. Youngsters – swimming lessons, rehab, swimming club – all have benefits for all ages.
- Swimming pool – good for all ages. Benefits: physical and mental health.

## Selkirk

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Date: Monday 14<sup>th</sup> August

Venue:

Attendance: 40

### Which cultural and leisure activities and services are the most important to you, your family, and your community and why?

- So, the first thing we picked up is the library is a central hub, and it has a book club, which supports good mental health. It has different materials, access to information, and it has the Book Bugs. Booking stuff is hard though. Unfortunately, with ours, it is a very valuable space that is not open very often as it has limited opening hours.
- As there's other ways of getting information (such as Press Reader and Borrowbox), libraries are not a high priority and are pushed further down the list.
- The library is an information hub, but it should be more of a community type / communication hub.
- When you have got young kids and it is raining, it is good to have somewhere to go, especially if you do not have a car – it is free to expose them to books, to read books, etc. They are good for people on benefits who need access to computers. Libraries are so valuable.
- It is not the fault of the person speaking, but there's bad acoustics in the hall. Can other speakers stand up to speak or talk louder?
- At our table, we commented that different age groups are attracted to different activities (e.g., older people are more interested in golf and tennis, and other groups are interested in the gym), so there is variety. They are good for physical and mental health and will reduce prescription costs for medication.
- There is less chance of spontaneity nowadays. Before, you could go out and make your own fun, but it is harder to do that now.
- Tom Campbell (TC): The list of services is very linear. What is the extent of which there are connectivity between services? Why should Live Borders provide things that NHS should? It is about connecting partners and services to the extent which there is real connectivity between Live Borders / Scottish Borders Council / NHS, so they work together collaboratively as a network.
- Very important for us from Live Borders is swimming pools to promote kayak safety. Let us see how things go with Selkirk swimming pool. Scottish Wildlife Trust use Langlee Community Centre and it is a great space but is absolutely jammed packed. Opening hours are a problem too.
- Flexible opening hours would be good.
- It is a priority that we have the local history and attractions (e.g., Sir Walter Scott Museum, textile mill, etc.) available for the local community, and visitors to Selkirk. They are great spaces but would be good if they could open more space for meetings, and if they could be more interactive, to increase footfall and encourage people to visit. We would like to see them used more as they are great facilities and would be lovely to increase the footfall and make it more of an experience.
- Halliwell's Close poses a challenge for wheelchair users / people with mobility issues.

- Very much around weekend time, the pool is closed, and the library is closed. I went to the library every weekend, so now I read about 4 – 5 books every fortnight. I do this digitally I admit, but Borrow box is there for me now. Libraries are important as they have books that help people to learn to read as they are colourful, have pictures, and are interactive. They help to create a love of books. However, due to the cost-of-living crisis, if we do not encourage kids to go to libraries then it is a missed opportunity.
- You have nowhere that is a free entertainment venue, which is not good when we are in a cost-of-living crisis.
- Is there a sauna in the Borders? Others confirmed that there is a sauna in Selkirk.
- For swimming pools, we should work with all the sports clubs of all sports across the Borders, to promote the benefit of swimming pools and saunas for physical health and recovery, but it needs to be open at the weekend. Maybe with a discounted rate? Need to support social prescribing more. I was prescribed walking in a swimming pool when I hurt my back, so it would be good to know how this could be incorporated into Live Borders.
- Need to ask what people need and how would they use it, to then look at how to encourage things that will improve physical and mental health.
- **TC:** At Kelso swimming pool, a man was recovering from a heart attack and asked Live Borders staff how he would go about fulfilling the swimming prescription his doctor prescribed.
- The concept of a communication centre is strong.
- Work with sports clubs to do discount membership to promote swimming / sauna and the benefits to fitness and recovery.
- Get the opening times right for all facilities – closed pools at weekend, and gyms open too late in the morning.
- School pupil and family discount cards.
- Increase use and improve physical and mental health.
- Health at every size – it is not about being thin.
- Work with NHS / private physios who can prescribe (at discount cost) pool exercises for recovery.
- Library opening times need to fit the community need. Cutting hours cuts access – not open at weekends!
- What is important to us? Tennis, swimming pool, gym, libraries, leisure centre classes (spin, etc.) and general health and wellbeing (physical and mental).
- Swimming pool.
- Leisure centre.
- Community halls for clubs, etc.
- Community spaces for cultural events.
- Flexible opening hours, e.g., libraries for people who work full-time.
- Support for clubs.
- Library – books, study space, free materials, open more hours, access to free, vital online portal, support to help, important to be in every town, Book Bug, Rhyme Time, social space, and DVDs.
- Leisure facilities – swimming pool, gyms, and sports pitches. Missing facilities? cinema = keep community active, transport.
- Culture – museums, galleries, cinema, theatre, music, and arts = things that have gone and never come back. Cabin and tourist information.
- Booking portal – problem. Not everyone has access for app. Is there a Plan B?
- Leisure, especially pool. Why? Fitter, healthier, and happier, local, accessible, caters for all levels of fitness. Limited hours.

- Libraries – digital apps.
- Museums – rarely / never visited.
- Libraries – as a reference point and tourism, wellbeing, education, IT – technology, and communication hub for whole town.
- Museums and culture – tourism, economic of employment, knitting together the whole community, music ability, and education of younger generation.
- Leisure centre and sports facilities – wellbeing / keeping fit (mentally and physically), tourism, community, heritage, and young generation.
- Building and halls – events, and dynamism of properties (needs to be re-energised).
- Library – important for kids to access books, to expose kids to a choice of books for free so they can see in real, physical world.
- Library – free is important for low-income families.
- Library – wet weather activity (limited what else to do on a wet day).
- Library has such random opening hours – is a bit difficult.
- Accommodation / camping facility for tourism – attractions, increasing footfall.
- Caravan park – possibly in the wrong location?
- Library needs to make local history available locally to local visiting users in an informative and interactive way.
- Important for young people to know about local heritage – needs to be accessible and engaging for all ages.
- Swimming pool – Selkirk pool has wider rural catchment area.
- Local swimming lessons always booked up! Must be needed.
- Locally produced creative services and products.
- Creative hub in Selkirk for community use, and arts.
- 2G pitch.
- Swimming pool – access to training / classes and facilities.
- Lots of young people use the local pool independently who would not use these facilities if elsewhere.
- Transport – limited services.
- Public transport has limited services / or more out of hours.
- Community meeting space.
- Centres of Excellence.

**Do you feel there is adequate provision for all ages and abilities, that are inclusive across the whole community?**

- We did not really talk about whether there is adequate provision, we talked about whether the spaces were open all the time, were they not used, and could the spaces be better utilised? There are groups that are desperate for space, and we looked at examples in Galashiels like the Focus Centre, which is open every day and at night, and could this be done here? Could the swimming pool be connected to a health and wellbeing group at the NHS? We are going down a slippery slope of things costing more, then closing, so it is better to utilise what we have got.
- **TC:** We tend to think of how we use spaces by looking at how they have been used in the past, but we should be thinking of how we can use them in a different way, so that is a strong point really about the creativity. If you were justified in keeping a space open, the community would come up with lots of innovative uses of the space.
- Areas are not as adequate in terms of accessibility, and transport, and we've all been part of a society that does not have as good access to services. There is a geographical aspect too and



if you do not have transport, you cannot access some services. There is also issues for single parents who use services, as they need to get childcare and make sure they are affordable.

- **TC:** The question on accessibility is a good thing as it is very binary, can you get to a facility or not? But there is more involved considerations, like transport. Themes that are emerging are the cost of transport and the availability of transport. In Hawick, you can get bus across to an event, but there are no buses when the event is finished, so you need to get a taxi, which means transport costs can be £50.
- If you are in Selkirk and are going to Galashiels swimming pool, you need to be able to get a bus there and back, especially for younger people.
- Transport and the lack of it is a gap. You can go to Edinburgh but cannot even get a bus back from now. People do not see these problems as they have cars, but a lot of people do not have transport at all, and people need to get their heads round that. You are up and down hills in Selkirk. People in authority need to consider this a bit more, especially with people with disabilities.
- There is a lack of facilities as there's youth clubs, but they do not seem to be what they used to be. Everything is different nowadays and what we are interested in is different to what younger people are interested in. Kids have different priorities now and we need to link so we have all-inclusive facilities as there is nowhere to mix with people, like older people with younger people and families. The social gaps do not overlap either. There is a lot of vested interests in different things, like sports clubs, football clubs, but it is hard to get everyone involved. We need to bring all the clubs together to make decisions, like about the football pitch. It needs to be across all of them.
- **TC:** If that is a gap, is there a way we can engage with multi-age groups? We need to think of out-of-the-box solutions to keep the box.
- It would be handy if the swimming pool was open so school children could use it.
- We mentioned things like the swimming pool but concentrated on the adequacy of the provision. Most people in here will not be able to fully answer as we do not know what is on were. Events used to be advertised in local papers and magazines, but they seem to be advertised on Facebook now. It is hard to answer as we are ignorant as to what is out there unless we are told what is out there. It would be useful to know all the spaces in Selkirk too.
- **TC:** So, in Selkirk it is useful to know who and what is doing what.
- There is no-one from a primary or secondary school, so that probably needs a separate engagement as schoolchildren need to be involved.
- **TC:** We have a school survey but might need an add-on engagement session.
- A lot of the things we looked at need to be refreshed, as a lot of things have not changed over the years. Things need to be more interactive. Kirkcaldy is more interactive and has a fantastic summer programme which is better for young children of all ages. We had a summer programme, leisure, and cultural facilities, but need to have a bus to go places. There is a massive opportunity for young kids here, but for three days, Market Place was closed. We need a refresh and a bit of energy put into this. Think about the children. We need more joined up thinking so that we are covering all ages and are not missing parts of the community out. Why were there no interactive things on for kids here? Our target audience over the summer would have been kids, and parents and guardians, but there were missed opportunities.
- **TC:** How would you turn the missed opportunities to actual opportunities?
- I would bring a bus to Market Square and offer to take them places. I took my kids to Edinburgh and there was a fun bus. That would have been a massive win for the town.
- There is a club sport community with progression in sport. Thinking of the UCI, we have just had a very successful championship, but I do not think we can host any other type of sport championship. We need to invest in higher earners to encourage people not just to stay here,

but to be inspired here as well. Looking for investment at the high end means we can grow the sport and people can come down here to compete, but there is no stand at Tweedbank and there is nothing to offer.

- Our conclusion was having spaces that are open, but not having to spend so much money on staff there for all hours. Not sure how this could be done though.
- Lack of facilities for top end athletics, tennis academy – Tweedbank: no stadium.
- Accessibility into (some) buildings is often very poor.
- There is a lack of provision for working people. It opens after I am at work and closes before I get home.
- Branding / strapline.
- Communication hubs / centres.
- Instead of libraries, digital hubs. Digital hubs: access to devices, access to training, access to learning (college linkages) and so much more.
- You need to live near the provision or have access to transport to use them (public transport is prohibitive in cost and does not necessarily connect people to facility).
- If services are thrown to 'community ownership' with support from Live Borders are to be led by volunteers, we are in a cost-of-living crisis, and numbers interested in volunteering have continued to dwindle. It is all well and good having a select few groups with passion for running services, but these tend to be older, therefore putting services at risk as young people are less likely to be engaged. People want services but do not really want to contribute.
- Adequate provision? What are the gaps? Very limited library opening hours, provision of information, community led web data or newssheet, and review opening at weekends.
- Provision is good but not fully utilised.
- Inclusivity – improvements needed: restricted library openings and other venues, seasonal opening of 'attractions,' e.g., Old Gala House, which is shut when weather is worse, balance of flexibility of space alongside specialisms – providing high quality services, and buses finish running before events finish.
- No.
- Gaps: lack of transport – frequency, disabled access, lack of facilities for young people that are different, all-encompassing facilities, free physical facilities, social gathering space for all ages, and link with culture.
- Transport – poor.
- Hours limited.
- Central Borders.
- Single parents.
- Income.
- Libraries – needs more up-to-date books, a list of new books, information / history that can introduce to a database of books, publication / communication, book club, history club / themed, and club becomes part of it.
- Museum and culture – need more access – disabled and older people, schools interacting and involvement, refresh exhibits / interactive / hands on arts and crafts, street exhibits (see Kirkcaldy), and emphasis on local heroes – Hogg, Scott, and Wallace.
- Leisure / sport – need more flexible opening, schools – young lifeguards, young fitness, aerobics, gym, evening programme, weekend activities – intro to various sports, elderly fitness sessions, halls – more events, variety, and school holidays, i.e., roller discos, stand-up club.
- No.

- Cost of living – be innovative. We need more animators / actors / programmers! to provide ‘content’ for buildings.
- Reignite VOMO!? Film making for young people.
- Energy costs – does Net Zero provide an opportunity?
- Local energy production?
- If we want a vibrant culture, need to support young artists / performers to develop and be inspired.
- Lack of music venues!!!
- No support for young musicians to try out performing. Only Mac Arts, very insecure and lack of funding.
- Opening hours and access not aligned to people’s needs.
- Inclusivity – low income and young people less able to travel to use facilities, no car, buses infrequent, takes time, and need close by to home services.
- Flexibility – can assets be more ‘shared’ in use – shared access / responsibility?
- Mobile facility and less buildings? Less overheads, more personnel and access, and more services.

#### **Investing in fewer, better-quality buildings:**

- **TC:** Looking around some buildings some places had cartoons. How easy it is to make innovative displays, like animation and creation, in heritage spaces?
- We’ve all seen it before and if you invest in fewer, better-quality buildings, none of them will be in Selkirk. It has been the same since the 50s. Everything gets invested elsewhere but not in Selkirk.

#### **Combining a range of services and activities in one “hub” location:**

- I feel for Live Borders as you have a large portfolio, and you will not get it right for everyone. However, we have the South of Scotland Enterprise, and they should be keying into this and building centres of excellence for sports and arts for us and our kids to use. They constantly ask how we can keep kids in the Borders, but they should be putting their hands in their pockets to do this. By creating hubs in each major town, like a sports hub, science hub, a cultural hub, etc., this would help to give a variety of things to do in the Borders.

#### **Supporting communities to run their local facilities independently:**

- Not a good idea for communities to run their own facilities.
- Not without funding.
- There is a lot of small charities and groups that pay rent but could benefit from co-existing with different charities under the same roof to make it a more viable space, like Old Gala House, and to save money.
- **TC:** There is a lot of emotion at looking at buildings across generations. It is not just costs; it is about the community investment in the space as well.
- If we had flexibility to do so, more people would hope to do so. Newcastleton have a community hub, and we need flexibility to look further afield as that might help to facilitate what communities want. We could look at existing buildings and keep some of what they do now.
- **TC:** Communities have the vision to take this forward, but normally do not have the expertise or skills necessary to do so, so any community asset transfer usually need these too. It is a shame because there is not someone to refer to or work with.
- The community needs to work together with organisations.

- **TC:** Alan Jones has been doing this for over two decades. He is known as the ‘destroyer of dreams’ as he takes the carried away dreams of people, and grounds them in commercial reality.

#### **Increasing charges for services:**

- Depends on the quality of services and its opening hours. Yes, if it is a better service, but not if it is only open for two hours. If the swimming pool was open longer and was better value for money, then yes.
- **TC:** If you increase the cost, some people may be exempt. For example, younger people and over 65s get free bus passes, but what about the group in the middle?
- I am surprised that museums are free.
- People want good services, but they are not always willing to pay which is a problem all-round. If you do not have people investing in councils, this can remove funding and cut services. It is a political issue. You need to vote for people who are going to invest in your communities. Look at the people who are running to serve you, and see if they will, and decide if they are worth representing you.
- There are interested in the sports facilities and people who are interested in cultural facilities.
- If we increase charges for tourists for museums, we will not be over-charging residents.
- **TC:** That would be a tourist tax, which can be used to invest back into communities.
- It is very important that this is for local people who live and work here. For example, Kenya changes a visitor fee for entering the country. South Africa have a local game pass for locals, but tourists pay extra for a tourist game pass. The tourist tax has been charged for 50 years in other places, so it is being done. So, you could charge locals more, but there is an opportunity to charge visitors extra while still treating them well.
- You could have a museum pass so that the tourist tax is being spread across various sites, not just one.

#### **Other Comments**

- One thing we have touched on is that things do not happen without staff, so need more Live Borders staff.
- **TC:** I agree. I have been around all the Live Borders’s facilities and the staff are exceptional.

#### **Post-It Note Comments:**

#### **Which cultural and leisure activities and services are the most important to you, your family, and your community and why?**

- Swimming – more hours.
- Library – more hours.
- Swimming pool and associated classes.
- Victoria Hall – concerts and events.
- All common good assets are important, including Selkirk Hill.

#### **How can the culture and leisure activities, services and facilities better provide opportunities for you and your family to learn?**

- Council should manage all halls and community centres – they own the buildings.
- Hub might work but needs to be town centre location.
- Have the events held in the Victoria Hall. They are usually well supported.
- Investigate the provision of electronic hubs for those who do not have home facilities – all age groups.
- Creation of a ‘Selkirk Community Hub’ / tourist information advertising as opposed to many smaller hubs centred around sports / tradition.

- Do not want to congregate services in Galashiels or Hawick so fewer services and / or fewer buildings will almost certainly do this.
- Digital? – lost social contact so not good.
- Increase charges – but need to be affordable.
- A blended approach to moving towards digital services (signs, internet, paper materials).
- Multiple services provided from fewer hubs to increase efficiency.

## Kelso

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Date: Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> August

Venue:

Attendance: 27

### **Which cultural and leisure activities and services are the most important to you, your family, and your community and why?**

- We discussed a couple of services to begin with that Live Borders do not have control over. For example, transport and access.
- Tom Campbell (TC): Transport is an issue that has come up. Someone in Hawick said that traveling for a night out can cost up to £50 just for transport (bus then taxi), then you have got the cost the actual night out (event tickets, refreshments, etc.) therefore, it becomes unaffordable.
- If I live in Galashiels, I would go to Newcastle or Edinburgh to spend my money instead if it is costing as much.
- £50,000 is given to the community and a quarter of that is used for transport. This includes funding Morebattle children to learn to swim, which should be funded by Scottish Borders Council.
- TC: Younger people and over 65s get bus passes, but what about people in the middle?
- Swimming is the most expensive sport here as you move up in levels. Kelso has one of 12 females swimming in the world games, but we need to expand on that.
- Libraries are Live Borders and Scottish Borders Council staffed. The Carnegie Building library could be a hub.
- There is not a museum or focal point for tourists to visit. There is a fishing museum in the Town Hall, but not a local history museum.
- Staff that work in the library contact centres are very good and enjoy the job. When it was just a library in Woodmarket, you would be lucky to get one person a day. However, now people are going in to use the library, pay their Council Tax, etc. all the time.
- I do not have a librarian to help me, but it works well as a community hub. There is a lovely garden at the back of the library which is run by a group. It is more about the function than the building.
- I can get information online rather than going to the library.
- There is no museum, but the library is great and there are more facilities within the library than just getting books. It is a live example of how it can work with more than one function in the space.
- The assumption is that everyone has a computer, but 50% of people do not. So, computers in Live Borders are very important as they allow people to sign on electronically if they must digitally sign on every week.

- We need a reader's club. We have something similar but need someone to sponsor and support a reading group at the library.
- Sports facilities turn over to Live Borders at 6 pm every night. We have got a strong hockey club that needs access to the facilities, but management will not open for one hour so we can run an activity, so need the support there too.
- The accessibility of the facilities is not good. I would love to get in before the 6 pm cut-off but sometimes it is sitting all weekend and not being used.
- **TC:** Eyemouth made a point of having a PPP or PFI school in Eyemouth, but they cannot access it all the time or it is expensive to use.
- The museum was opened in 1986 but has since closed. The artefacts were removed later.
- In Kelso there are excellent facilities. They are competing with other classes, etc., but they are doing well.
- One thing I and other people have noticed is that the booking system is very poor.
- **TC:** Can you tell me why you think that?
- Booking on the website can be very difficult. Once you sign in, it is very slow, and it always defaults to Eyemouth for some reason. Once you get into the booking system, it might show that the class is full, but when you get there, it is not. It would be good if people could un-book themselves easily.
- **TC:** Let me pose a question. I do not have access to a computer, how do I book a class?
- If you go there, they might say they are booked up, but you can see that they are not.
- If you want to book a hall, you need to go to the hall. It is over complicated as people do not know where to go for classes as we have the hall, the pool, and the school. The old system was good and there was nothing wrong with it.
- **TC:** We think of accessibility as disabled barriers, but it covers other things.
- What we did remember, was two to three years ago, when everything was open for covid, you had to book your space as only limited numbers were available in the pool or class, but we still have the line of 'you need to book your space.' The barrier needs to come back down again.
- **TC:** What was it like in 2019?
- You would just turn up.
- **TC:** I notice you have arts and crafts; can you tell me about that?
- There are arts and crafts programmes in Galashiels and Hawick, and I was lucky enough to be able to go to Hawick for a lovely book binding workshop, but it would be great if they were here or if there was transport or a bus organised to take a group of people to go to them. It was easy for me because I have a car but it is not so easy on the bus network.
- Berwickshire has Pingo (rent-a-bus), that would be good to implement here. The bus will pick you up and take you to your destination.
- **TC:** Transportation is something that I am hearing has a bit of a shadow over some of the decisions.
- I am really concerned, and I want to see a balance. Small pockets are important.
- Every second Tuesday in Abbey Row I run a curling group (curling with castors as there is no ice). A lot of people who go to the curling are from outwith Kelso, such as Coldstream, so it would be good to have a bus to get here. A lot of people have mental health issues, so they might not be able to understand the timetable as it is too complicated, but if there was a dedicated bus service to bring these people across, it would be a blessing to them as they would not be disadvantaged. There are three big rooms that can be used too.

- I know a teacher who runs classes that cannot afford to pay the increasing costs of venues, so it is becoming unviable. Some services are commercial, but just like a pool, it is a health benefit. It is a physical and mental health benefit.
- At Abbey Row, I think the fees are very reasonable. It is £18 normally, but for youth groups, it is only £3, so there is a sliding scale.
- So, that is a commercial thing, I work for Live Borders, but run my own business too. Fitness instructors are classed as businesses so must pay commercial rates, but we are not making enough money. So, if you pay for a venue, you need four or five people to attend the class to make money. I get both sides of the argument though.
- They could reduce prices to begin with and increase them when more people are coming in.
- Rural transport – education – Scottish Borders Council remit.
- What are priorities? Swimming pool, library, and interpretation / museum. Hub.
- Visitors.
- Social media?
- School available / open – Abbey Row?
- Abbey Row – exercise classes. Concern about cost of room hire and viability for teachers, groups – ‘scale of charges?
- Swimming pool – timetable of classes. Including at high school, praised. Members can book spaces and not turn up, so limited space for drop ins. Reminders?
- Library – times – young people.
- Gym facilities at high school – booking system poor. Do we still need covid controls, e.g., lane?
- Arts and crafts, e.g., bookbinding workshops, but these need to be accessed, e.g., at Hub in Hawick.
- Activities for young people 14+ - lacking / non-existent, unless sport based.
- We could access these elsewhere but no transport – Pingo on demand for Cheviot area (flexi transport).

**Do you feel there is adequate provision for all ages and abilities, that are inclusive across the whole community?**

- What does this mean?
- **TC:** Thinking about the whole estate, e.g., sports, leisure, etc., is there enough provision?
- For some ages yes, but other children (say for ages 14 – 17), unless you are sports based, there is very little or nothing. We were contacted by a few children of that age group who said there was nothing for them. You get a small handful causing mischief, but 99% do not. However, they all get tarnished with the same brush. If they go to the park to sit, someone will come along and say that is ridiculous and chase them out.
- Behind Abbey Row there was a disco when I was young, and it was heavily used; it shut and nothing has taken its place. We have a hall here. Why not have a 14-17 disco dry bar once or twice a month to give them something to do?
- **TC:** So, do you think it is more about how the spaces are used?
- The dry bar was volunteer based – Yetholm ran it. It is also, is this something that the community council should be putting on or Live Borders?
- **TC:** Or should a commercial business come in to make a profit?
- There are provisions for the older generation, such as Meeting of Minds, as there’s companies doing things independently, but they are not working with Live Borders or Scottish Borders Council. They are doing great, but could Live Borders or Scottish Borders Council offer more support?
- **TC:** Do you think the lack of activities is to do with a lack of space or resource, like staff?

- I am not sure, but I know the independent organisations do great and could use more support.
- Abbey Row is managed by a management group and three days a week, people with additional needs are using it.
- One thing that certainly gets used here is the Wednesday Lunch Club for the mature people of the town because the provisions are here. They have got the kitchen, and they have got the space, so it works well here.
- **TC:** One of the points raised has been for the Live Borders and Scottish Borders Council buildings being used by non-Live Borders or Scottish Borders Council functions, so it is important for things to connect.
- What do you go to Edinburgh for? Bowling. Well, why doesn't the Borders have a bowling alley? Why doesn't the Borders have a go-karting track or more cinemas? I have spoken to local councillors about this in the past as these would give people things to do in the Borders.
- **TC:** I have not noticed a lot of empty shop buildings in the towns.
- You should see Galashiels.
- There are several independent groups that you have operating here.
- Scottish Borders Council does not have a good track record of doing things. This town gets up and takes a stand and does things for itself.
- There are not things to do for 14 – 17-year-olds. If you ask them what they are doing, they will say there is nothing to do. If you ask them why they do not go to the park, they say it is for the young ones. I have asked Planning about this.
- **TC:** What about the skatepark here?
- It is brilliant, but there has been complaints about leaving litter, although most people are good at not leaving any.
- I think there will always be a challenge for the 14 – 17-year-olds as that is the time they drift away. When you think about it, they have got a bit of catching up to do after the last couple of years due to covid, which will affect their mental health and social skills.
- The cost of transport is an issue too. Another one is the state of the facilities, like there's older radiators in the buildings, but this gets back to the finances again as there is no magic wand.
- In the past, after Kelso swimming pool closed, there was a disco that was always busy. There are some things here, but for the sports and cultural side of things, there is nothing.
- Good provision.
- Plenty of clubs, but by individuals and clubs.
- Parental support.
- Costs / transport.
- Upkeep of facilities.
- Plans with Borders Youth Theatre.
- Disco night at pool.
- Young people want safe, age-appropriate places to be together. Get told to move on. Used to be a dry bar behind Abbey Row. Direct consultation with young people required.
- Older generation – loneliness, and companionship.
- Local organisations, like Meeting of Minds, organise activities for children and young people with additional support needs. Are any of these activities provided by Live Borders?

#### **Investing in fewer, better-quality services:**

- Yeah.
- **TC:** Regionally or within towns?
- In towns as you know what is where and can concentrate on it and make the most of it.
- Personally, I would do away with Tait Hall.



- There is the Heritage Hall, Textile Mill and one more in Hawick.
- **TC:** Would you favour investing in fewer, better-quality services and investing in fewer, better-quality buildings, locally rather than regionally?

#### **Investing in fewer, better-quality buildings:**

- I think Abbey Row is not used enough. It has got a car park and a lot of money has been spent this past year on it.
- **TC:** Do you have better centres, but close local facilities as you are investing in fewer buildings?
- What do you mean by locally?
- **TC:** The town itself being the centre, such as Kelso or Hawick.
- What is Kelso's capacity for bringing people in for music, etc. if we lost Tait Hall? We will not be able to accommodate everyone.
- Lots of people come in for the Borders Union Show at Springwood Park.
- **TC:** Unless a production is going to bring in 500, it is not viable. So, if they do not come to Kelso, where will they go? They will probably go to Edinburgh as there is not the seating capacity within the Borders to accommodate this.

#### **Combining a range of services and activities in one "hub" location:**

- **TC:** We have probably talked about this quite a bit to be honest, with the library and contact centre. Someone in Selkirk suggested having the library as a communication hub as it would give people the space to gather and get information.

#### **Supporting communities to run their local facilities independently:**

- What do you mean by this – is it giving money or support? What does it look like?
- **TC:** That is a good question. This does happen across Scotland. So, some community groups have a vision for things, but might not have the expertise and skills to apply for funding. So, I am not saying that is what is happening, but if it does, it might mean a mix of different things and asking community groups what they would want to take on. AJA has a subtext of being the 'destroyer of dreams' as people come in with grand ideas that will not make them money or breakeven, but we help to then create something that is grounded.
- It is about getting community groups to take them on and offering support and training.
- If that is something that is viable, then there may be some elements and communities to take over the facility.

#### **Increasing charges for services:**

- It is hard to answer as it will be possible for some services, but not all.
- We are unique in the Borders as we have a low wage area here, so if you start putting prices up, people will probably start staying in and watching TV.
- When you go to the Highlands, you can see lots of centres, as there is a lot of grants and funding put there, but we are not seen like that. Years ago, Hawick was seen as an area of multiple of deprivation, so money was being continuously spent there, but Kelso has the second-best swimming pool in the Borders and did not receive the same funding. People will also hire the rugby club because it is cheaper.
- Scottish Borders Council and Live Borders have too wide a variety for them to manage, but they need to bring their services down so they can manage them better. People can book church halls and other buildings instead.
- That is another dynamic is the competitors, like rugby clubs and churches. They should be complimentary, not competitors.
- Kelso is a health and wellbeing town.
- **TC:** Do you think that is accurate?
- Yes, Visit Kelso is driving it forward and being pro-active and is seeing how to get visitors in, looking at improving health after covid, etc.

- Why isn't another town like Hawick a health and wellbeing town?
- We are not sure as we do not know their community groups, etc. There are about 25 community groups.
- What tends to happen is that volunteers are involved in many things and there can be burn out. Mapping of that has not been done and perhaps should be considered as multiple clubs are using multiple facilities.
- There's a couple of projects ongoing. Someone has WW1 books and Walter Scott memorabilia that he wants to display, so we are talking to Live Borders about that. We are hoping that a local councillor can help to turn Abbey Row into an interpretation centre and doing up the rooms. If there were two or three people paying for permanent rooms, it would help to fund things too.
- How do we get money?
- Abbey is the oldest abbey in the Borders – how do we market that?
- Abbey Row could maybe support this?

#### Other Feedback

- Pitch at high school is not a great facility for playing hockey as it's slippery. I usually feed this back to Live Borders / Scottish Borders Council.
- Maintenance is poor and Berwickshire is far better maintained. All those aspects are better, but they are not in Kelso.
- Appalled at the state of the pitch at Jedburgh. I wrote to Scottish Borders Council about it not being looked after.
- I taught at Kelso High School for years and the facility is not being looked after or maintained. The pitch at the old high school was used as a dumping ground for the building equipment, so it is ruined.
- I think we are missing to get club feedback captured. There was not a forum or opportunity to give this feedback.
- I know there is a staffing problem with Live Borders. They are meant to maintain it by brush it weekly, opening the facility, and treating the moss on the pitch as well as it gets slippery. They let the grass grow too close to the pitch which creates more moss on the pitch. It is not being maintained. It has been strimmed but they are not collecting grass cuttings.
- I have been reporting to Des / swimming pool who then passed them onto Live Borders but nothing is being done.
- We are a major stakeholder using the 2G pitch and it is really frustrating as there is a bolt missing from one of the goals. It is not great anywhere as the same issues are at Tweedbank.
- There are strange decisions like planting trees near the pitch. This is not useful.

#### Post-It Note Comments:

#### Which cultural and leisure activities and services are the most important to you, your family, and your community and why?

- Swimming pool and good teaching is a must for all young people.
- Libraries seem to be the poor relation – hours cut, etc. Again, a must for young and old. They are most valuable to any community and need to be funded as needed!
- Events and venues for young children aged 13 – 18. They are too old for the youth charity, and too young to go to pubs or clubs.
- Library needs longer hours and to be more welcoming for students.
- More for those 13 – 18 to do safely. Being able to hang out in larger groups safely.
- Sports and traditional music. Music for the young and learning traditional music and songs locally.
- Museums and attractions. Is there an option to have one in the town?

- Library – I know it is a contact centre. Could it become part of Live Borders?
- Swimming pool – both my kids learned to swim there; they loved it – hopefully it can be kept open.
- A good theatre would be amazing, coupling as an ad hoc cinema.
- Kelso needs a museum.
- Young people (13 – 17) need more to do in the evenings.
- The library, which is brilliant. The staff are also helpful and welcoming, and they have a wide variety of books.
- Museums. I enjoy visiting and learning from them.
- Leisure centres are a vital community resource. If people have good, accessible swimming pools and gyms that have acceptable costs, then use of the centres will improve health, both physically and mentally.
- Community centres also support community activities.
- Including a swimming pool with each new school built would improve the health of the whole community.
- Limited opening times for certain sections of public in swimming pools, for older people.
- Changing areas for the elderly with mobility issues require more room to move (Kelso).
- Hawick: limited opening times with fewer places for members of the public as staff ratio dictates numbers.
- While Hawick pool allows for a shallow walk in, Kelso only has ladder system which is limiting the use of the hoist. When it is available, it is not always suitable and is quite undignified for some.
- People need good community integration for good all-round health, both mental and physical, and wellbeing.
- Libraries.
- Swimming pools.
- Community halls / centres for reasonable hire.

**Do you feel there is adequate provision for all ages and abilities, that are inclusive across the whole community?**

- No! Only if you live in the centre of populations. Out in the sticks you have heehaw!
- Accessibility for people outwith the main centres of population.
- Cost of hiring rooms / halls for communities to use is too high. Far better that those areas are used rather than the fabric of those halls deteriorating. Far better all ages benefit by their use, contributing to the overall health and mental health wellbeing, which in turn reduces the costs of attending to the general health of the population.
- In the younger age groups, having cheap access to events like scouts, cubs, brownies, etc. Stops kids being aimless or causing issues elsewhere. From a community policing point of view, it must be a bonus to know where youngsters are in general.
- What is the Live Borders charter? What are its key functions? Do these reflect what the community needs and what is / are the relationships with other services?
- Improve the fabric of the leisure centres and people may start to use them. Look at East Lothian. Their council can support a vibrant leisure service and they reap the benefits.
- No. Most facilities are town based and there is no provision for transport.
- Building new schools without a swimming pool attached is a sheer waste of resources.
- There will never be enough. There is simply not enough money. More pressure needs to be put by Councillors on Committees and Scottish Government. It would be money which would pay dividends in employment, mental and physical health, and community cohesion. The same case must be stressed with the public at large – everything comes with a cost, but there is also

a huge cost if facilities and services are not there in terms of isolation, loneliness poor mental health and is a disadvantage compared to urban areas.

- Live Borders should have a very high public profile as regards advertising each building within its operating area and the weekly / monthly events within those venues. Why not take space in local newspapers as not everyone is involved with social media?
- Most certainly not across the Borders. Much depends on where you live and access to public transport, which is virtually nil. Cost of running a car is expensive. Also, it must not be assumed that all residents have internet, computers, or the skills to access them.
- Having some sort of museum / visitor attraction in the town would benefit the whole community – attracting tourism as well as providing options for local families.
- Need more for teens (13 – 18). Teens are left out. Loads for young kids and adults. Need more events (disco / party once a month at Tait Hall possible), a dedicated youth area for those 13 – 18 to stay off streets, and make the library accessible for students after school hours.

### **How can the culture and leisure activities, services and facilities better provide opportunities for you and your family to learn?**

- Hub locations.
- Better public transport to access other hubs, e.g., demand responsive Pingo buses.
- Being open when the community wants to use them.
- Offering coaching and support for children and adults who require it.
- Encouraging diversity in culture.
- Library services require a broader spectrum of choice, especially in number of available talking books.
- Opening times of libraries and accessibility.
- Online booking is not straight forward.
- Parking is often a problem.
- More joint usage of buildings in general.
- Have more events to optimise building use.
- Invest in people who are running events as an interface with the public.
- Could library services be rationalised across the region? More 'click and collect,' but also 'books by post' – with costs of postage covered by savings from closing physical libraries?
- Libraries must be open.
- Probably need to rationalise venue provision – large venues, e.g., Volunteer Hall, Tait Hall, are too expensive for many groups. Buy smaller venues, e.g., Abbey Row, Focus Centre, etc. Do not have facilities required.
- Community run? With proper support, not just lip service!
- The people of Kelso could be the answer of many of the highlighted 'problems,' but they need to be empowered to be effective. That does not mean asked a few questions every so many years! Approach existing clubs and organisations. You may be surprised.
- Provide fewer but better services, e.g., Tait Hall vs Abbey Row Community Centre. Do more events at Tait Hall? E.g., the Skerryvore gig?
- I use the library (Borrowbox). Having access to more titles online would help.

### **How can the culture and leisure activities, services and facilities better benefit you and your family's physical and / or mental health?**

- Bus to Edinburgh has been stopped! Public transport in Kelso is very poor. Therefore, it is essential to keep all services funded and running properly. We have the basics – swimming pool.

- Abbey Row Centre, former school, is a historic building, but difficult to transform into a real active and valued centre. Much thought needed so it can reach its full potential.
- Consider multifunctional hubs, probably based around swimming pools. Build new if cannot be implemented effectively within the existing estate.
- Jedburgh appears to have a well-run, pleasant, and popular swimming pool. Maybe being independent of Scottish Borders Council has something to do with that!!!
- Being available, accessible, and affordable.
- In the Borders, we have numerous swimming pools that are under-utilised due to poor maintenance, and unacceptable temperatures in both the changing rooms and pools.
- Have a swimming pool we can access easily.
- Have sessions a man can get a swim easily. At times, easy to use with transport times = buses.
- Have pools that are not freezing, windy and have cold showers! We do not use Borders pools as they are just cold, draught, and not suitable. We go to East Lothian / Dunbar.
- Access at reasonable cost of free. This must include a joined-up transport network.
- Support for organisations which provide opportunities for all, irrespective of ability / background.
- Be more available to more people.
- Ensure properties are invested in or closed to free up resource to invest in the ones kept open.

## Duns

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Date: Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> August

Venue:

Attendance: 21

### **Which cultural and leisure activities and services are the most important to you, your family, and your community and why?**

- Are these the ones managed by Live Borders?
- Tom Campbell (TC): Yes, the ones managed by Live Borders.
- So, how many is that? TC showed slide showing the names of Live Borders facilities.
- Is it just the ones in Duns or everywhere?
- TC: Both, it is looking at the provision in Duns, but also looking at the provision elsewhere if you use their services and facilities.
- We've all got different viewpoints. I am an artist and started an art group in the Men's Shed as it is an underused facility. We have outgrown the space, so places like Southfield Community Centre are very important, but they are not suitable as there is no storage space, so you need to bring things along and take them out again. Buildings are not being used but are not available and we cannot store things. You find that with most places. I also have a disabled daughter who comes here with Border Links, which is very important as there is not much for disabled adults and children to do.
- Some of the things we talked about that are very important was culture, heritage, archiving and museums. Community centres are also important as they can be used for meeting places, community larders, etc. There are all sorts of things going on at Southfield Community Centre, and I have been using it for over 30 years with girl guide groups, and we can do lots here, like pitching a tent and camping outside. They are so important.

- We had a big discussion about accessibility and the opening times; the facilities do not have good opening hours. Accessibility is important for people not just with wheelchairs, but with buggies too.
- Costs have gone up and now the meeting charges included all adds up to and if they go up more, I will find it very hard to find more money to do things.
- **TC:** We think of accessibility in terms of disability, but it includes other things like transport and cost. We will come back to that though.
- **TC:** And opening hours.
- First thing to acknowledge is that the Live Borders footprint in this area is quite modest. There are not a lot of sports facilities here and sport is all community run. There is a facility in Duns, but it does not have the space for a lot of local groups. For the library, there's positive comments on its online service. I have used the online facility and the archiving in Hawick is well worth supporting. We have also got a couple of good museums here, whilst there are not a lot of museums for tourists in the Borders. Such as the Jim Clark Museum, which was a huge amount of investment in this area and was underwritten by a private group.
- We essentially had a big debate about transport. You need things to be accessible as the rurality of Berwickshire is important.
- I work for BAVS (Berwickshire Association of Voluntary Services) and we rely very much on buildings like this. I have just finished a lottery project that deals with social isolation and if you take away this building, you take away the community.
- For us in the rural area, we need to create our own community as they must provide village halls, etc. themselves with no support. I am sorry to go back to it, but it brings me back to transport.
- **TC:** Please do not apologise as that is an issue that has come through from the other sessions. Someone in Hawick said that traveling for a night out can cost up to £50 just for transport (bus then taxi), then you have got the cost the actual night out (event tickets, refreshments, etc.) therefore, it becomes unaffordable. Someone in Kelso then asked why would I go out in the Borders when I can go to Edinburgh for the same price? Also, younger people and over 65s get bus passes, but what about the group in the middle for transport?
- I am the co-ordinator of the Duns Food Bank, and we are facing unprecedented levels of demand now. We would love to do a community larder here, like Eyemouth, and a social café. We ran one for six months, but it was not ideal. Refurbishing the annexe here would be an ideal location for that and I would like that to be considered.
- **TC:** The issue with rural poverty is it usually goes under the radar as it is not happening in one of the big places like Aberdeen and Glasgow. Rural poverty is a big thing, but it usually goes under the radar.
- Something else we talked about is that Eyemouth has the only swimming pool in the Berwickshire area that is run by Live Borders. There is a swimming pool here, but it is run by a private organisation and the Jim Clark Museum is owned by a private company.
- It is run by Live Borders though.
- My concern, having visited a community asset transfer in Peebles is the state of the building as it was terrible. This is what I am worried about, that we will be offered buildings that should be called liabilities not assets and it is not fixing the problem, it is moving the problem.
- We had a big consensus; the Jim Clark Museum is the obvious one. It is a gem for Duns, the Borders and beyond as it is hugely important and interesting to people. We want Southfield Community Centre to remain, as there is a few groups here who help people with disadvantaged lives and that should be put at the top of the list. There are groups on for all ages to do things, plus we have the Citizen's Advice Bureau upstairs which is so important for the lives of people here.

- Duns' library is very important. Because it is a library, we first think of books, but they are probably the least important now. But it is important as it has the Book Bugs, which not many know about, the contact centre, and it is the only space in the town to have local exhibitions, so it is important to the community and vital for the community. Libraries are less about borrowing and lending the books and are more about having a community space.
- **TC:** This is coming through across the events. At one of the other sessions, someone mentioned the libraries being a communication space.
- Everything has been covered apart from needing the services and facilities as they are so important for mental health.
- We raised about transport too, but Live Borders do not manage this. But we are stuffed without transport.
- **TC:** No, but it is a problem that needs to be solved, maybe not through Live Borders, but it needs to be solved. Other events have mentioned Pingo.
- Pingo is not that good.
- **TC:** Other communities have said it would be good if they had something like Pingo as well.
- Community centre and libraries (short opening times) = mental health company.
- Buses (transport links).
- Sports centres – rehabilitation.
- Tourism?
- Access to art – exhibitions, teaching / learning, and 'studios.
- Museums and heritage culture, and archives.
- Community centres and meeting spaces.
- Education.
- Community larders.
- Community fairs.
- Libraries – accessibility and opening hours.
- Leisure centres: accessibility – opening hours and school use.
- Youth – lack of facilities.
- Disability – a place to go.
- Storage opportunity limited.
- Transport.
- Eyemouth swimming pool.
- Library.
- Archive in Hawick.
- Online services – Borrowbox and Press Reader.
- Libraries.
- Southfield for spaces it offers groups.
- Visitor attractions, e.g., museums and galleries.
- Jim Clark Motorsport Museum.
- Southfield Centre.
- Duns' library, e.g., internet, events like Book Bug, access centre, and local exhibitions.

**Do you feel there is adequate provision for all ages and abilities, that are inclusive across the whole community?**

- Is this about Live Borders?
- Yes, but if you are aware of any non-Live Borders organisations that run things, that's also important feedback as it would be good to know what is important for you but is provided by

someone else. Also, people have said about why is Live Borders providing things instead of the NHS, so that is something to consider too.

- We started off by saying no, there's not adequate provision. Inevitably though, I would think the need for space is important as people look at this building from the outside and they think it is huge, but inside, the layout is not ideal, so we have had to turn away things like the Men's Shed, local NHS events, etc. as we do not have the space.
- It also depends on volunteers. We have a lot but it is not ideal.
- **TC:** I think volunteer fatigue is a big thing too.
- Real further education opportunities are not here either as they have gradually faded away. And there is a need for community activities to bring people together as the internet is killing things. We need to create the opportunity for people to come together to do things.
- Is that about the buildings or people running things?
- Probably a bit of both.
- Circular chat, there are very few facilities in Duns. Going back to its footprint, it is already very small. Going back to this man's points, there is not the space for the groups. Also, do we need the library as a community front door for people to access things as it has moved on from just books? The opening hours would need to be increased.
- **TC:** Do you think there is an increasing need for facilities and for more facilities or do you think there has never been enough?
- Yes, as I think the third sector has taken on a lot more things that ever before, some of which was done by Live Borders, but they do not have the space for it.
- We have also got an increasing population and there is a lot of home building going on.
- There are a lot less night classes too. University for the third age is growing and is good for Duns, as each task gets taken on by another group, which is brilliant as they will do things in the town, but they then need the space. Like Heart of Duns, which I am fond of, but they are two very different beasts. We are not like other towns where you have pubs where you can hire function rooms. We have not really got the school either.
- Even down to further education for high school students to early twenties, they will not find it easy to get to the college.
- So, we are all in agreement, but whatever is adequate now, will not be adequate in the future, but there will not be a review for a while. When was the last review and when will the next one be?
- **TC:** For the planning that is done, there is some futureproofing that can be done. I am not saying it will be done, but for example for here, you could have some big storage units so groups can store things. There are probably some quick fixes that could be done to help.
- No! We went through different groups in our community and the access to buildings available. Girl Guides, Brownies and Rainbow groups used to meet at the old Duns PS, but, as far as we are aware, it closed due to covid and has not re-opened. My group wanted to play pickleball at the high school, but they could not get someone to come down from Edinburgh to open the building, so we had to use the Swan Centre in Berwick.
- But that is because there are not janitors.
- Well, they should hire janitors.
- Other groups that used the old primary school have had to move to the Southfield Community Centre.
- I will speak to the Director of Education about the opening of the old primary school and will also check with the Council about what is happening with the janitorial staff.
- There's parent and toddlers group here, but there is not the janitorial support for places in Duns, which means that spaces cannot be used as they have not been cleaned. I worked in



East Lothian and the schools had shifts of two janitors, so it meant the building could be used by lots of groups after school.

- U3a (University of the Third Age) is great here and is keeping us active and mentally active.
- Cost can be a big factor.
- Mobile libraries live on the edge of a financial precipice. For us who live in very rural areas, as there are no libraries out there, without mobile libraries, you would not have access to anything. They also supply to the schools. It is only arriving once every three weeks now.
- Have Live Borders had conversations with a Heart of Duns? As they do things that would be good to tie-in with Live Borders.
- **TC:** I am not aware that the conversation has been made, but it shows there is an increasing need for multiagency conversations about facilities critical to mental and social health.
- How does all this fall into the placemaking programme that we have been asked to look at?
- **JC:** Live Borders are a key partner in terms of all towns developing place plans, as well as some other key partners.
- So, they will be participating in the meetings coming up in September?
- **JC:** Yes, they will be.
- We should not be asked if there is adequate provision. We should be asking if it is fit for purpose in 10 – 15 years and whether it is making the Borders attractive for the future (including now), and for young people.
- **TC:** I agree with you and that we should be looking forward and this information will feed back into the plan, but there is also an immediacy of just now for some things.
- We are just getting by on the work of volunteers, but we are close to breaking point. The consensus is that we need more, not less.
- I work in Education, and we have got some fantastic new high schools in Eyemouth, Earlston and Duns, as well as Duns primary school. It makes sense that Live Borders should work much closer with schools but cannot see much of this now. And I work with a multiple sclerosis group which is important, so I am interested in physical activities for people with ongoing conditions. Also, where do people keep fit here? You must run, cycle, and walk here as there is nothing here!
- We go to Berwick.
- I am an ex-teacher, and there's so little funding available for schools to do extra things for children but opening the schools for groups and the communities and charging them to use them, would allow that money to be put back into things for the kids.
- Library – opening hours.
- Yes! But it is everchanging.
- No!
- Youth – after school access in DPS since covid?
- Young parents – support groups.
- Working adults – janitorial support for out of school hours.
- Mature age group – U3a is vibrant in Duns but need venues.
- Accessibility – provision not adequate.
- Cost – affordable spaces.
- Information centre / forum / hub for 'what's on' and spaces available. Community diary.
- No.
- Library – services are not frequent enough, not everyone wants to access online, it cannot be run as a business, and it is a social and warm space in winter.
- Rural poverty – community centres could play a huge part in combating this.

- Not adequate provision, but need for space, need for volunteers, absences of real further education, and need for community activities (online killing things).

#### **Investing in fewer, better-quality buildings:**

- **TC:** What about somewhere that was a space for everything you needed?
- Good luck trying to find somewhere!
- It would need to be built. It would need to be something new.
- **TC:** And where would you want it?
- Someone joked: One centre in Duns, that has everything and has constant buses to and from it. It would also need to be the size of Edinburgh!

#### **Combining a range of services and activities in one “hub” location:**

- **TC:** When we talked about a hub, if you look at the Alan Jones Associates (AJA) website, you will see examples of work on hub facilities we have helped set up, where several services are in the one building. They are right and work for some people, but not for everyone.

#### **Supporting communities to run their local facilities independently:**

- **TC:** We have already kicked the can with this, but that is something you mentioned already.
- Some smaller communities have already been forced down the community asset transfer route as there was no other option.
- **TC:** I am going to ask a loaded question. Do they feel supported?
- No!
- They need time to get everything they need, like training and support, but they do not. I have been in local authority for 40 years and its bloody hard work. I feel empathy for anyone who has served on a committee. It is not worth it; it is not worth the sleepless nights.
- Community groups need to think outside of the box for creative solutions.
- **TC:** It is worth it for those that you impact on positively though, with the volunteering.
- But you reach volunteer fatigue very quickly.
- **TC:** You raised a good question. How do we support communities as some communities may have some capacity as they have already been working on something? I am not pitching for AJA, but other communities have gone in with grand plans of wanting to do things and he is known as a ‘destroyer of dreams’ as he takes people through their vision and then grounds it.
- One of the grounds things is that for some groups, there must be a commitment to long term relentless fund raising which then takes away from the core thing you are trying to achieve.
- So that could be Live Borders’ job. Or is there evidence that communities could run places better than Live Borders?
- **TC:** Alan Jones has raised £40 million pounds for sports and cultures. Other consultants can do this too. But should this be Live Borders’s job?
- We are wee villages and towns, which means there are only so many people who can be involved in things, but they are not able to be able to be involved in new things as they do not have the capacity. We looked at the rugby club for a girl guide group but did not look at it for long.

#### **Increasing charges for services:**

- No way, we cannot raise the money for what we have got, never mind increasing things.
- Windfarms!
- **TC:** Also, increasing cost assumes you have the same volume, but, if there is less footfall, then revenue reduces too.
- It is also not about who you are getting through the door, it is who you are excluding.
- Every community group here has someone who applies for grants, but we are all competing for the same grants.

- Does Duns get windfarm money?
- Cllr Rowley (**MR**): Yes, there is a modest amount that comes through from the Black Hill windfarm.
- Where does this modest amount go?
- **MR**: To lots of different community groups through the years.
- **TC**: Do you think you need a community fundraiser for Duns, who looks at what funding is available as there is different funding available for different things?
- BAVS used to do this, but it is now held centrally by the Community Action Group. They work with groups in each locality to help with things, including with applying for funding, so they could help with this.

#### Post-It Note Comments:

#### Which cultural and leisure activities and services are the most important to you, your family, and your community and why?

- All facilities are important to me. I use most facilities in the community run by LIVE BORDERS and enjoy the range of facilities – art, museums, shows, swimming, community centres, libraries, etc.
- Southfield caters for people of all ages, has several groups for people leading disadvantaged lives, has physical exercise classes, hobby groups, U3a and the office of CAB – it covers a wide spectrum of local life.
- Me – museums, archives, and libraries.
- My family – museums, archives, and community hall.
- My community – museums, community hall, and sports facility.
- People also alter their interests over time – when you have a family, you may start using swimming pools or art venues. Some facilities are also Borders-wide – such as the archiving museum in Hawick, while others have a presence in multiple towns.
- Me – library and community centre.
- Family – leisure facilities, museums, and community centres.
- My community – library, leisure facilities, museums, and community centres. A community is not a community without these spaces for us to get together.
- As a U3a representative, I find it difficult to choose ‘most important’ services as to us the big issue is variety. A spread of activities, choice of leisure pastimes, mix of educational themes and different ways for people to mix. Focusing too strongly on one model risks isolating some.
- Community centre (Southfield). My Trefoil Guild have met here since 1980!
- Library – essential.
- Sports facilities – for general health and wellbeing. A group I belong to could not find a court locally in June / summer, so had to go to Berwick!

#### Do you feel there is adequate provision for all ages and abilities, that are inclusive across the whole community?

- Could and should be more joined up working but a lot of people do not want to pay for services. Make what we have better.
- Sports venues are not often available at weekends / outwit school term.
- Library not open as often as it used to be.
- Alcoholic Anonymous (AA) – 1) crucial support to addicts across the spectrum, 2) part of the structure of AA means that we are required to support other addicts through the process of a 12 Step Programme in order to maintain our own sobriety, 3) Southfield is a much loved, appreciated, welcoming, and accessible building, 4) in order for the recovery process to work, as many meetings are needed as possible and it is already a challenge to travel to other towns for meetings, 5) I drive and I already travel to Berwick on a Sunday and Wooler on a Monday,

which is a challenge for health reasons, so am incredibly grateful to have a local meeting so I can attend all three, and 6) many recovering addicts are valuable members of the community who, if they don't work already, often end up 'giving back' in working in addiction or caring services as well as volunteering within and outside of AA.

- Adequate does not seem a very ambitious word. Let us aim higher. We need stimulating, motivating and positive provision for all ages.
- I think it is important to mix more, so dislike groups restricted to a particular age or similar. Let us get older folk sharing skills with younger and vice versa!
- Over the years, some facilities have been very down in accessibility, e.g., the library used to be open four weekdays, two early evenings and every Saturday morning. Reduced and erratic hours limit access and put people off. It is important that small towns retain access to facilities like libraries, and that the Borders has region-wide services, like archives, available to all.

#### **How can the culture and leisure activities, services and facilities better provide opportunities for you and your family to learn?**

- They need to be open!
- Not too expensive!
- Accessibility is important to think about. U3a uses many different venues, but some are very difficult for wheelchair users to either access or use. This also impacts on parking – wheelchairs / restricted mobility.
- More advertising in many ways to attract and welcome everyone.
- Offering a wide range of activities, social and educational – working with third sector organisations.
- Making it easy and affordable for organisations to book spaces.
- Hollowing out of services by overworking fewer staff, reducing opening hours or closing sites ultimately reduces usage and so closes opportunities. Myself and my family want a museum, library, and community centre in Duns – and in other towns – plus regional archive, arts, and entertainment venues in the Borders. We already lack LIVE BORDERS sport facilities in Berwickshire except for Eyemouth pool. Ultimately the choice is to adequately subsidise such services or lose some of them: the latter is a political choice for which Councillors will be responsible.
- There may certainly be mileage in combining services in community hubs, e.g., the plan (currently on the back burner) is to move BAVS to Southfield and combine with CAB, which has been here for many years.

#### **How can the culture and leisure activities, services and facilities better benefit you and your family's physical and / or mental health?**

- Facilities need to be open regularly.
- Must not be too expensive!
- Already many great activities important to keep up facilities for the community.
- Alcoholics Anonymous.
- Art groups / exhibitions.
- Theatre group.
- Regular opening hours. Open in the evening as well as during the day.
- Large spaces for group activities are important for tackling social isolation.
- Through the mixture of learning, entertainment, physical and mental wellbeing, social and community opportunities. They not only enhance personal and family life but the social fabric of wider society. These do not make money – they are wanted by society. Museums bring visitors from outside the Borders who spend money to support local business. In this way, they do more than simply support local interests.

Date: Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> & Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> August

### EVENT ONE – 8 Attendees

#### **Question 1: Which of the sport culture and leisure services are most important to you and your community and why?**

- **HW** - Uses the 3G pitch and the Tweedbank Track operated by Live Borders – as a family, these are important. The community centre in Langlee has always been the hub of the community and it has always been. Lots of local groups – sports, activities, Alzheimer’s club, crafts, choir etc.
- **SB** - A swimmer – individual rather than club – sporting facilities are very important, we want our young people to be able to swim for their safety – we want school swimming to be an opportunity, we want teenagers to be able to engage in sports activities. All in terms of health and wellbeing. In contrast to cultural services – libraries do not have the range or the accessibility – the report done on the utilisation of LB services over the last two or three years indicated a growth in the use of pools and sport and decline in library services – it could be argued that the public are voting with their feet. Was involved in the decision of combining Sports and Leisure with other services. It is now an unmanageable conglomeration. Community centre struggles to fit within or between sport and library etc. Of the personal view that this is now unmanageable. Finally – this is all about money, there was a £550,000 agreed after the budget to help LB balance the books. It is vital that this is upfront and discussed. I feel this has been around a long time and was prior to covid – it is a legacy issue from the combination and were not tackled effectively. SBC are not providing sufficient funding for the expectations.
- **JA** – As a youth theatre organisation – the village halls are the most important to us, for use and for the shows etc that are coming to the local area. It could be better; we are currently having a conversation with LB relating to the funding that is being provided to the Group – this might be replaced with free hire.
- **PG** – For me it is the Eastgate Theatre for the breadth of things that it offers for all ages in terms of mental health, physical fitness, stimulating interest, kids, dance, Parkinson etc. This is over and above being a cinema and providing things locally for those that cannot travel to bigger cities. It is a large concern that LB might not be able to continue supporting the theatre in the same way.
- **JL** – Use the gym three times per week and understand that we have shifted and changed as a world in how we use services. I think removing things, if the money is not there, then you cannot provide the same, change always happens – worry about how much we change and what do we still provide. IF we do not provide facilities, this feeds into people’s mental health and wellbeing – preventative to illness. Without LB and the facilities, people will be worse off in terms of their health and wellbeing. This will put more pressure on the national health service. The current provision is amazing and extensive – it is about how we get people back in and using the community spaces and facilities – people have got out of the habit. There are still people at home with a fear to return to the services and activities.
- **LB** – Dementia Friendly Tweeddale – we need proper premises, we are in a day centre that had closed, but has reopened. We share but need better space. If it works for people with Dementia it works for everyone.

#### **Question 2; Is there adequate provision for all ages and abilities.**

- **DS** – Works in care and often use the LB centre in Hawick for clients to swim, spin, and musical pool classes. It is very positive for those clients. Soft play is also useful for adults with additional needs this is a niche gap in the provision just now.
- **JA** – Wheelchair users have some difficulty accessing all the building now – some floors including the one in Melrose only have a stairlift – this does not suit everyone. This could be improved.
- **HW** – The Langlee Community Centre is superb, and all rooms are accessible and well provided. Apart from the caretaker, we have nobody there to run it – they rely on volunteers to run groups – nobody from LB comes and asks what can be done. Winter fund to welcome people was centred at the centre, but nobody is there to apply for the funding and run the facility or groups. This would help the community – there is a massive gap for people who can support groups and are professionally competent to develop the centre and community asset.
- Discussion re CAT and issues around Langlee Community Centre – to take offline.
- Discussion re Facilities for Dementia Group – to take offline.

### Strategic Thoughts?

- **SB** - There is a thought that there will be fewer services – this is a fear. A lot of people do not think they will be listened to. Questioning why the council was establishing a pool in the school but leaving the public opening. Having invested the pool into the academy – this is one way that they can reduce the costs of running the totality. People need help to understand the rational and decision making more. Inevitably, you will come to investing in fewer services – there is a missed opportunity to educate people in the process and thoughts behind the decisions and direction.
- **SB** – Specifically about swimming. We are customers, not service users. We are not treated as a customer; we are referred to as a service user. Customers are not informed about decisions – there needs to be better communication. People travel past the LB facilities to be better treated. LB needs to look better at competition – private operators have set up Gyms that are competing with LB. Focus has improved recently – there is still a long way to go in terms of working with their customers.
- **HW** - Close to Langlee facilities are excellent – track, pitch, pool, community centre. Not managed in the best way and would welcome a greater focus on a few, to then develop and move onto the others. There was too quick a focus on getting everything up and running, rather than focusing on doing it well and carefully. It became clear that there were too many to be focused on at once. Worried if they cut services or facilities as they would need replaced.
- Positive view on the hub model noting that various options could be included. A central hub would be welcomed – people could find out what and when things were on, and what is happening locally. We have the Chambers Institute and Burgh Hall in Peebles but they are closed if not booked – so it is not welcoming. Peebles Drill Hall is a good centre, but it is just for sport – does not provide adequately for other activities, again there is not usually people there.
- **PG** – Communities running their own facilities is an interesting question – unsure how this would work, and this might have to be reflected in the report. Could consider the process and options.
- **JA** – also would be keener to understand how much support there would be.
- **SB** – There are several locations that run their own community centres – nearby there are LB facilities. Those that can run them are living and vibrant communities where people come together. We are not cultures in this Country to come together and manage facilities – the Council needs to recognise the need for cultural, educational and development support

required to support this shift. Libraries are an interesting challenge – in Brechin City, they build a new high school and combined a new series of community facilities – the library is run from the school. This seems extremely sensible – Peebles has a relatively run down library in the Chambers and in the School. The people likely to use them are the school students as much as anyone else. We need better mechanisms to combine libraries and schools.

- **PG** – Taken back to 40 years ago in the Wirral when there were huge social problems – council assigned a member of leisure services to steer community groups through the process of developing what they wanted.

## **EVENT TWO** 8 Attendees

### **Q: Which cultural and leisure activities and services are the most important to you, your family, and your community, and why?**

- **MD** – Representing the MS Group and Melrose Community Council – interested in libraries and attend Pilates (paid for by the MS group), also interested in Museums. Questions on how it is financed – clarified by Alan. MS Group currently pays for services provided by Live Borders. Noted that GP's can refer people to the MS group to make use of these paid activities.
- **BM** – In order of priority, swimming pool (Galashiels), questions around the changeover, speaking to other users, there is concern around the changeover and how the access will be provided to the new pool. People with a disability are unsure how they will be able to use this due to drop off, parking etc. Hawick hub is another facility that he uses. Libraries are important as are museums. In terms of libraries, you can order one that is elsewhere, and it will be moved to you. Believes that sport and leisure are the priority for the community – whether swimming, running, football or whatever. It is crucial for people, and we are always being told to stay healthy. Pools provide for all ages from infant to elderly.
- **LG** – Representing the NHS – Uses a lot of health and social prescribing including various walking groups and fantastic activities based in the museums and libraries where people meet and have a book group with a walk etc. Some drama activities have been great to support re-socialising. Hard to determine the most important as I recommended and refer them all. It is too difficult to separate out the areas of provision. Are we missing a trick in not having access for people who are visiting to make more use of things. The variety and the range, and the skills, training, and flexibility of teams are amazing.
- **LC** – Timings for access are an issue – Galashiels library is not open on a Saturday – people who are working with families used to use services like that at the weekend. As a volunteer – have tried to book community centres and got no reply – feels that LB has let things wither, more things are closed than open, and many community centres appear closed and unavailable, but are open and people are unaware. Concerned that there is a need to reduce costs, but think it might be better to use them differently. I worry that SBC and LB are not publicising the services well.
- **MD** – Many people have stopped using facilities because costs have risen so they are using halls or churches elsewhere. There needs to be a balance of affordability to get people / groups through the door.
- **SC** – We are a family of two, older, and living close to their son with three children. We use the Gytes leisure centre in Peebles (especially when the kids were young). The swimming pool that closed for two years, so the third daughter does not know how to swim very well – this is important. Went to get the public swimming but there was only one hour available – the rest of the time was restricted, and the information was confusing. For Peebles, it is the only one that I know of, there are others in Hotels but you need a membership for these. Is there a possibility of a Council using hotel / private pools where there is too much demand. Family's primary function is the Eastgate Theatre – it is highly cherished, and it was asked if it is Live

Borders. Concerned that the Theatre is now struggling. Experience in classes and activities here is wide and positive, noting the coffee shop is a popular local space (and well used). Found the libraries were not offering anything special – it was just to borrow a book or DVD. Libraries could use the physical spaces for more cultural stuff where possible. Cardrona seems underused for a good quality facility.

**Q: Do you feel there is adequate provision for all ages and abilities, that are inclusive across the whole community?**

- **MD** – Re. swimming, there should be greater availability. The issue around swimming is greater access availability rather than more facilities.
- **BM** – The booking system is good, but I use it for lane sessions. It may be more that it needs to be more accessible around information and promotion. People should find it easier to find this out and access the relevant information.
- **SC** – There should be easier lists of what is on, alphabetised, perhaps by term. There should be a better system to find things by interest, rather than by place (current situation). People might be more likely to travel if they focus and search by activity, rather than place.
- **LC** – Young people, they do not get much of a look in. We have new schools and school facilities – but not much else. There is a new gym in Galashiels – but LB and the Schools have the facilities, so they should be used better. There seems to be a huge disconnect between school facilities and availability. I have found the staff to be excellent on every occasion – they appear to be trying hard to do their best in a muddled system. People should not lose jobs to save money, if the systems are not working well.
- **LG** – We have had access to all the leisure centres LB provide, it has become increasingly complex to try and book things – we used to approach the manager of each space, and they would make it work. This was for Borders Sport & Leisure Trust – now things are clunky. Important to note that not all communities need the same – staff appear somewhat apologetic at times around the hours and limitations. Eyemouth can be highlighted as a success – ten years since rehab and support group was formed, and now have 160 members all due to the local manager and a fitness instructor at the time. Website is dreadful – TriFitness have an app which works well.
- **SC** – Regarding youth, I have a 14-year-old Granddaughter – on a Saturday they meet with other girls to go to town, I worry about what they are doing. There is a need for feedback for youth. Young people need a space. Places like skateparks that are publicly available are key for young people – there does not need to be a focus on teaching.

**Q: Thoughts on Strategies**

- **MD** – Increasing costs will reduce the number of people facilities.
- **LG** – The hub idea can work very well having a lot of things under one roof – Example in Hawick which I can see working. The charges do not seem excessive but are not that cheap -there is some support but probably cannot go much higher. We do need a better culture of just going and doing things. There is a need to promote greater lifestyle choices – understanding the locality, and individual small population would be key. People in a hub will see other things happening and this will grow participation across functions, activities, and services – example if the book group and walk sessions mentioned previously.
- **DM** – I like the hub idea, but really, we are looking at more efficient use of the resources that we have, and perhaps bring in more. All have advantages apart from the increasing charges of services. You would hope that the increase in Council Tax is to help provide higher payment to fund the services.
- **MD** – Agree that with the exception of increased charges, the rest all have potential. Greater advertising of what is there is key.



- **LC** – Need to look at where services are delivered well to lots of people – look for examples of best practice. Lots of people do not know about some of the services like Borrowbox and Press Reader – Worth looking at other Authorities – activities like coding etc that are done elsewhere and will not cost much.
- **SC** – I think the hub location is great, the only downside might be that if that organisation is in trouble, or badly managed things, then there are no alternatives, there is the risk of all eggs in one basket. Agree that investing in better building is key to cut costs. In Northampton, the Council invested too much in public buildings and went bankrupt. I am all for moving forward with digital services – Covid showed how well that worked – worked with a college in London which I would never have had the chance to do. Digital can work in terms of connecting the Borders and beyond for courses etc. Digital services and activities also help reduce issues with weather in the winter months, and support access for those with mobility issues.

### **Comments from Online Chat Function**

Could we see a time in which Live Borders became part/partners of the Health & Social Care Partnership? There may of course be legislation preventing this, but might be a work-around? We are all about quality of life.

The tapestry should be removed from Live Borders, it drains resources that should be used for community services.

### **FOLLOW UP FEEDBACK PROVIDED**

*I completed the survey last week although most of it did not apply to me. Personally, I am only interested in what Peebles offers. I am not interested in what happens anywhere else because it is too far to travel.*

*For me nowadays, easy access, good acoustics and comfortable seating are the most important things. Most of the public halls in Peebles (including church halls) are bleak and basic with dreadful acoustics, and toilets and kitchen facilities that have been added as an afterthought.*

*They need to be cared for and cleaned regularly and have a caretaker whose office and reception point is manned. They should be managed locally - not remotely. Village halls do very well in rural communities because they are managed by their own.*

*The Peebles Community Hall is a multi-purpose hall with a very large area for indoor football and netball and other indoor sports. There are smaller rooms - somewhat stuffy and tatty for smaller groups. The office there is always empty when I go. There are not enough keys to give out to group organisers at weekends when the office is not manned (that is so ill-considered).*

*Peebles is too big to have one community. The Burgh Hall is part of the Chambers Institution which was gifted to the people of Peebles by William Chambers but because it was managed by a group of Town Council officers and "lay" people the new Regional Scottish Borders council inherited it by default and appointed their own trustees - our 6 elected regional councillors - who are told what they can do by the officials at SBC. It has fallen into disrepair - only this year has anything been done to improve it and so much more needs to be done.*

*Our Peebles Community Council seems to be powerless and has no money to make decisions about anything to do with local affairs, so people are no longer engaged, because whatever we want is disregarded by the Regional Council. There is not much point in asking councillors from Hawick to vote on matters that pertain to Peebles and vice-versa. But that is how the regional council must work - and it does not work.*

*We are very badly "governed" in Scottish Borders.*

*Live Borders has the same problem. Different towns have different needs and traditionally were (and still are) independent. People have not changed, and now feel that nobody really cares - what is the point of local government? It is no longer local.*

*Another thing - here is an example of crazy thinking - Live Borders organises local walks for health and wellbeing in every town. The national movement is "Paths for All" and there are books about walks to be had for free. In my role as a volunteer founder of Dementia Friendly Tweeddale, I finally tracked down the woman who is employed by SBC to oversee and manage this facility. She is employed by the SBC Planning and Building Department. I was incredulous - "Why" I asked? ON the basis that local walks might be affected by changes in land ownership and building development in the future. Nothing to do with health and wellbeing. In finding out about provision for people living with dementia we have found that several different departments have responsibility for the various aspects of dementia needs and these departments do not talk to each other. They each have their own agendas and schedules and plans with no reference to others. It is inefficient and ALL ABOUT MONEY.*

*We are finding the same inefficiencies in 3rd sector funding. We are constantly bombarded with emails from the Age Scotland, Alzheimer Scotland, Borders Care Voice, Outside the Box, and several other well-meaning and otherwise helpful and useful national 3rd sector organisations to tell us about the same new fund and the deadline date for application. All receive their funding from Scottish Government, all seem to be duplicating each other's aims and objectives, and all of them are getting paid to do this! the whole system has gone crazy and right over-the-top.*

*Dementia Friendly Tweeddale started in February 2022 with no money. We were advised to apply for the local grant awarded by Tweeddale Area Partnership, but we had to hurry because the deadline was 31st March. So, we cobbled together what we thought we would need for hire of meeting space and PVGs, publicity etc for the next year. We are now embarrassed because we did not need to spend most of it. we were offered free meeting space and we only needed PVGs for transport which our clients did not need because they had their own cars! Now we are being advised to get a grant to spend on consultancy advice on how to "progress" our organisation. We do not need to do that. We know what we want to do!*

## **Online Event – Education Partners**

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Date: Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> August

Attendance: 21

- **Selkirk High School** . Games hall is being used, Selkirk High School is not the newest school, and the facilities are not the most up to date. Also, a trustee of the Harris Trust for autistic rugby – they are keen to continue over the winter months. Challenges are who opens the building on a Sunday and it is the good will of the janitorial team in good will. That dependency on good will / volunteers varies from location to location. The school has hosted drama performances and has a recording studio that they are trying to invite people to make use of. There are opportunities – challenges are when activities need to happen during the school day. School day is full of transitions between classes, toilet facilities being accessed etc – there are not enough to separate facilities – public un-vetted adults cannot access.
- **Jedburgh Campus** – Campus was built around community access – there is a challenge around availability of facilities. We have 15 primary classes also using the space 2 hours each per week on top of the secondary curriculum (in the winter). We have young people / preschool and other young people activities running during day. It is great to see and is well used, but requires a degree of staff involvement, monitoring and management. Toilets are used by everyone in this school – no barrier to stop people. The community library is now based in the main atrium of the school – it is not heavily used during school time, probably due to accessibility and location (car park is full during the day).
- **Peebles High School** – Re opportunities – Peebles would be an example of where that is happening most nights – users and clubs in our new (2014) sports facility. This has brought challenges around staffing, and in recent weeks, our facility has been left unlocked in the evening by LB staff. The challenge

is perhaps around LB attracting suitable level of responsibility of staff (keyholders etc). This has an impact on staff who are picking up the pieces.

- **Peebles High School** – We have a female cleaner who found the building unlocked at 5am and had to check alone. Trying to stress to pupils to look after the building but does not help when others.
- **Kelso High School** – Moved into the new school in 2018 and ended up in a formal partnership around evening and weekend use. This is something we did not have previously. For the most part this is a positive experience, with a competent and helpful local manager. The age and experience staff issue mentioned is a concern – very young inexperienced people being given the keys to facilities. The opportunities are there – but it comes down to systems and making sure that these are followed correctly. My experience in the involvement with the build process was not as positive as it could be – could have been more responsive to the need for increased facilities and ancillary space. There needs to be better discussions that are forward thinking and consider the balance of school and public use and overlap. Lasswade High School is a good example of a working space that functions as a school alongside a rich community provision.
- **Hawick High School** – Working from an older estate – community use is more challenging as there is only two changing rooms – day time community use of these is therefore impossible. Games halls booked out most evenings for indoor football, we also have a gymnastics club in twice a week. One other challenge is the upkeep of equipment – it is used more than school use so needs repair and replaced sooner but we do not see the income to cover this. Most schools in England have leisure centres attached with constant use. In Dorset would work closely with the leisure centre to timetable effectively. There was a split on costs between the two – 75/25% so there was an investment.

**Note** – HT has oversight of any public day time access, but little sight or control over the afterschool hours.

- **Kelso** – WE have an agreement as part of the new build agreement – if it is something in the sports facility, money is available to support repairs and replacements. We have school use until 6pm then public to 10pm. There are opportunities for other activities – there are challenges around the build and the trust and the contract around how much access out-with school is allowed.
- **Hawick** – We have a lot of community use in the evenings, as highlighted we have issues around damage and wear and tear. We are excited for the new school but need to look at stronger relationships and agreements around school access priorities, and replacement of damaged items.
- **Live Borders** spent a lot of time working on the new contract between the public and school use. A lot of people did not want to move to the new building – it is now used extensively. Helps with usage, costs etc – there are still things that need resolved but it works well.
- **Jedburgh Grammar** – We are absolutely working hand in hand with the community and that is so important to me – we were lucky to have the positive partnership working. We have 7 days per week use between school and community. If we need it for events, they are good at working around it. With good communication and partnership working, the groups and communities understand that most of the time.
- An example of a good partnership is that between Selkirk High School and the community use of the horticultural facilities – Selkirk Community Shedders who maintain the grounds – there are orchards, chickens, bees, fruit. There are managed interaction with the pupils throughout term time.
- **Galashiels** . The context in our school is that we are the next new school – 2 years away. It is so much about partnership working, in our experience the architects have been superb with over 30 meetings. Agree with the point of moving things along and changing things – there was a genuine partnership and flexibility for the facilities in the design – the lower floor will have the pool and games hall, working with Live Borders. The work with Live Borders has been excellent. A lot of budgeting behind the scenes in relation to the use of pool etc that works two ways. With the child protection consideration – we have worked hard on how this will work around joint access and the design will now support this. SportsScotland have also been a good partner and the proposed sports facilities are set to be excellent.
- **Eyemouth** – Confirmed it was a PPP school and whilst unaware of the details, there are classes in the evening in sports, but unaware of other community use. We do have excellent facilities. It is a PPP school which is managed by AMEY who also provide janitorial – it does help with some elements but possibly provides other issues. The agreement does seem to keep it separate from the school – we have tried to book school facilities for school events, and there has been a clash, but nothing unworkable.

- Noted that hub model appears to be used in various guises across the school estate with different methods and processes. Noted that the management of the process and facilities is key.
- **Q – is it harder to provide access during the day.** Selkirk is more challenging due to the quality, location, and security of the provision. Secure entrance systems would be needed, and we cannot compartmentalise as much. Very depended on facilities – and can be purpose built. Kelso – timetable is maximised and every room is being used, there is no space or time at the point for that reason. **Jedburgh-** As a campus, we have no secure entrance and whilst there are challenges it is workable. Also, to echo the need for timings and areas that are successful – there are limitations around heavy use spaces.
- Agree that we would love to have the community in more, but it is a capacity issue – example is exam space use in the halls.
- Noted the queens centre might close and the new campus needs adequate capacity for community and school in all weathers.

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