

Appendix 2: Response to Consultants Recommendations

Identifier	AJA Recommendation	Response to AJA Recommendation	Recommendation to Council	Priority	Resourcing	Links to	23/24	2024	2024	2024	24/25	
							Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2025
IG1-INCOME GENERATION 1	The Council transfers to Live Borders the full management fee at the start of each financial year.	Do not agree Propose to reject this recommendation due to the fact that the Council receives its funding on a monthly basis meaning this approach would have an impact on the Council's cash flow position. Officers propose instead to explore other options around the phasing of management fee payments over the financial year which may be beneficial to Live Borders.	Agree to explore other options around the phasing of management fee payments over the financial year which may be beneficial to Live Borders.	HIGH	SBC							
IG2-INCOME GENERATION 2	The price for sports and leisure activities is reviewed, with a view to increasing the average income per visit by 10%.	Amend Propose to amend this recommendation by widening the scope. This recommendation is narrow and prescriptive; instead it would be helpful to see a widening of the scope to a Pricing Review across all services. Being mindful that our communities are at the heart of what we do and we play a unique role in promoting wellbeing, active, healthy communities. Progress work already commenced to align SBC and Live Borders pricing strategies.	Agree to conduct a review of pricing across all services delivered by Live Borders and associated SBC pricing to align pricing and increase external income opportunities for the Trust to support future financial sustainability.	CRITICAL	SBC & Live Borders	Operational 1 - Business Plan						
IG3-INCOME GENERATION 3	The café facilities currently operated in-house at Teviotdale Leisure Centre are considered for a franchise arrangement with a third party in return for an annual rental fee.	Amend Propose to amend this recommendation by widening the scope. This recommendation is narrow and specific; instead we propose widening the scope to a review of ancillary offerings across all facilities run by Live Borders which will help to inform the Business plan identified in Operational 1.	Agree Live Borders review all ancillary offerings, including retail, catering/hospitality etc across all relevant facilities with a view to increasing external income opportunities which support future financial sustainability.	HIGH	Live Borders	Operational 1 - Business Plan						

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IG4-INCOME GENERATION 4	Where space allows, third party services such as sports clinics, physiotherapy and other treatment providers are offered rental agreements to provide income and enhance the breadth of services offered within Live Borders sports, leisure, and community facilities.	Agree Propose to proceed with this recommendation. This is a key recommendation for Live Borders to progress and support future financial sustainability. A systematic review of the services which are currently offered is expected with consideration of the optimum mix going forward. This recommendation has strong links to the Business Plan in Operational 1 and in creating an organisation-wide focus on commercial revenue growth opportunities and future income generation detailed in Operational 9.	Agree third party services such as sports clinics, physiotherapy and other treatment providers are offered rental agreements to provide income and enhance the breadth of services offered within Live Borders sports, leisure, and community facilities, where space allows.	MEDIUM	Live Borders	Operational 1 - Business Plan Operational 9 -						
IG5-INCOME GENERATION 5	That Live Borders and the Council consider the introduction of an admission charge for all museums for visitors who do not live in the Scottish Borders Council catchment area.	Agree Propose to proceed with this recommendation. Although this recommendation has strong links to both Further Work 4 - strategic review of museums and Further Work 3 - Cultural & Arts Strategy, it is recommended to proceed with this recommendation as a separate workstream and in a timely manner by end of Q4 2023/24. Could consider seeking external input.	Agree to consider the introduction of an admission charge for all museums for visitors who do not live in the Scottish Borders Council area.	HIGH	SBC & Live Borders	Further Work 3 - Cultural and Arts Strategy Further Work 4 - Strategic review of museums						
IG6-INCOME GENERATION 6	Live Borders set a target figure for bringing in external grant aid and consider appointing a fund raiser on a commission only basis as part of an overall strategy for accessing grant aid funding.	Amend Propose to amend this recommendation and implement as a priority. One of the main drivers for the creation of an arms-length organisation with charitable status was to have greater flexibility and access to external funding and investment opportunities not available to SBC. It is imperative that a target figure is set with some urgency. The development of a fund raising strategy is pivotal and should be developed to provide a professional focus. This should be resourced accordingly.	Agree to set a target figure for bringing in external grant aid and consider appointing a professional fundraiser on a commission only basis (or resourced accordingly) as part of an overall strategy for accessing grant aid funding. A fund raising strategy should also be evidenced.	CRITICAL	Live Borders	Operational 1 - Business Plan						

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IG7-INCOME GENERATION 7	Scottish Borders Council contracts with Live Borders to deliver a proactive social prescribing programme of activities across their facilities network through payment of a grant from the Scottish Government's Healthier, Happier, Stronger Fund.	Agree Propose to proceed with this recommendation by revisiting the original business case submission by Live Borders and progress the recommendation to further support our communities. There are very significant opportunities to integrate sport and leisure services with health and place based outcomes.	Agree that Scottish Borders Council contracts with Live Borders to deliver a proactive social prescribing programme of activities across their facilities network through payment of a grant from the Healthier, Happier, Stronger Fund which has been funded by Scottish Government.	MEDIUM	SBC & Live Borders							
IG8-INCOME GENERATION 8	A full review of the One Club scheme is undertaken, including a review of the quality of facilities, with a view to develop a more appropriate and attractive sports, leisure, and culture package.	Agree Propose to proceed with this recommendation and also propose Live Borders perhaps incorporate a review of Gyms and the impact of their commercial competition.	Agree that a full review of the One Club scheme is undertaken, including a review of the quality of facilities, with a view to develop a more appropriate and attractive sports, leisure, and culture package.	HIGH	Live Borders	Income Generation 9						
IG9-INCOME GENERATION 9	A Salary Sacrifice Scheme is considered providing employees of key businesses low cost or subsidised access to sports and leisure, and to any newly developed membership scheme such as that in recommendation 8.	Agree Propose to proceed with this recommendation. Income generation is essential to future financial sustainability and increasing membership is important for the health and well being of our communities. A Salary Sacrifice Scheme and other opportunities to deliver on these two outcomes are actions which should be prioritised in the Business Plan. Consideration needs to be given to existing schemes that are already in place within SBC.	Agree that a Salary Sacrifice Scheme is considered, providing employees of key businesses low cost or subsidised access to sports and leisure, and to any newly developed membership scheme such as that in recommendation (Income Generation) 8.	MEDIUM	Live Borders	Income Generation 8 - One Club Review						

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OP1-OPERATIONAL 1	Live Borders create a 10-year Business Plan and a Business Continuity Management Plan.	Amend It is proposed that Live Borders develop a 12 month business plan based on existing environmental conditions whilst progress through the 12 month transformational change programme is made. This can allow development of both Sport and Culture strategies to help inform a longer term business plan. It is proposed to align the Business Plan with the Council Plan. Development of the Business Plan should consider short, medium and long term outcomes, with a process in place to refresh annually.	Agree that Live Borders create a 12 month Business Plan and Business Continuity Plan whilst the transformational change programme is implemented and support the development of a longer term Business Plan and Business Continuity Plan in alignment with the Council Plan to ensure financial sustainability going forward.	CRITICAL	Live Borders		12 month Business Plan					
OP2-OPERATIONAL 2	Live Borders create and implement a robust Marketing and Communications Strategy and Implementation Plan to support the Business Plan.	Amend It is proposed that Live Borders develop a 12 month Marketing and Communications Strategy and Implementation Plan to support the Business Plan based on existing environmental conditions whilst progress through the 12 month transformational change programme is made. This will allow development of both Sport and Culture strategies to help inform longer term strategy and plans. Development of the Marketing and Communications strategy and implementation plan should consider short, medium and long term outcomes, with a process in place to refresh annually.	Agree that Live Borders create a 12 month Marketing and Communication Strategy and implementation Plan to support the Business Plan whilst the transformational change programme is implemented and support the development of a longer term strategy/plans in alignment with the Council Plan.	CRITICAL	Live Borders	Operational 1 - Business Plan	12 month Marketing & Comms Plan					
OP3-OPERATIONAL 3	That the current booking systems are reviewed and a single booking system is created that is easy to use and links to a revised and updated website and App.	Agree Propose to proceed with this recommendation. Live Borders has already secured expert help through SOSE and is currently progressing a review. Knowledge sharing opportunities with SBC can also be exploited. This recommendation links into a wider consideration of digital opportunities which could be considered and developed across the whole service offering.	Agree that the current booking systems are reviewed and a single booking system is created that is easy to use and links to a revised and updated website and App.	CRITICAL	SBC & Live Borders							

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OP4-OPERATIONAL 4	That the Council and Live Borders jointly consider whether Elected Members should continue to sit on the Live Borders Board.	Amend Propose to further strengthen this recommendation. It is recognised that there is work to be done to strengthen the current Board arrangements (in line with revised Governance arrangements).	Agree to review other Trust models/best practise with a view to strengthening the current Live Borders Board arrangements.	CRITICAL	SBC & Live Borders							
OP5-OPERATIONAL 5	That a skills audit of Live Borders trustees and Senior Managers is carried out to assess if there are any skill gaps in the Board and Management Team. Where skills gaps are identified, the appropriate recruitment and or training should be undertaken.	Agree Propose to proceed with this recommendation. It is important that this recommendation is progressed and should be further reflected within the new partnership agreement. Beyond this piece of work, some thought should also be given to wider consideration of skills and capacity across both organisations, linked to the development of both Sports and Culture strategies and associated action plans, and the review of governance arrangements.	Agree that a skills audit of Live Borders trustees and Senior Managers is carried out to assess if there are any skill gaps in the Board and Management Team. Where skills gaps are identified, the appropriate recruitment and or training should be undertaken.	CRITICAL	Live Borders							
OP6-OPERATIONAL 6	A process is set up by which staff are actively encouraged to bring forward ideas and innovations, and as a result feel an increased sense appreciation, and valued for their work. Underpinning this, a staff incentive scheme should be considered.	Agree Propose to proceed with this recommendation. This is an important area for Live Borders to explore and develop across the organisation and one which should be reflected within the new partnership agreement.	Agree a process is set up by which staff are actively encouraged to bring forward ideas and innovations, and as a result feel an increased sense of appreciation, and are valued for their work. Underpinning this, a staff incentive scheme should be considered.	HIGH	Live Borders							
OP7-OPERATIONAL 7	Live Borders continue to develop and implement a robust staff performance appraisal system in order support staff training opportunities, and effective succession planning.	Agree Propose to agree this recommendation. Both organisations agree this is fundamental to any high-performing organisation and is something that Live Borders will continue prioritising, developing and embedding.	Agree that Live Borders continues to develop and implement a robust staff performance appraisal system in order support staff training opportunities, and effective succession planning.	MEDIUM	Live Borders							

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OP8-OPERATIONAL 8	That an independent review of support service operations (payroll, IT, Human Resources etc) be carried out to assess if there are economies of scale for the Council and Live Borders.	Amend After positive discussions across both organisations, it is proposed to amend this recommendation by initially progressing together jointly, before considering an independent review. Due to the potential staff impacts this requires careful consideration and a fully scoped out proposal and appropriate engagement with staff groups at both organisations. In the meantime there is an opportunity to provide accommodation for office-based Live Borders staff at the Council offices at Newtown St Boswells. The detail of this requires further discussion between both parties.	Agree to conduct a joint comprehensive review of support service operations (such as payroll, IT, Human Resources, Finance) to investigate efficiencies. Also agree to progress discussions with a view to Live Borders staff moving into SBC accommodation as soon as is reasonably possible.	HIGH	SBC & Live Borders	Property 1- Maintenance & Repairs						
OP9-OPERATIONAL 9	A new post of Business Development Director is created for Live Borders to focus on commercial revenue growth opportunities and future income generation.	Amend After positive discussions across both organisations it is proposed to amend this recommendation and support further investigation with any gaps identified during the skills audit (Operational 5). If required, it will be supported by a robust business case. In the interim are supportive of an organisation-wide focus on commercial revenue growth opportunities (links with Operational 6 innovative ideas)	Agree Live Borders increases its focus on commercial revenue growth opportunities and future income generation and resources accordingly.	CRITICAL	Live Borders	Operational 5 - Skills audit Operational 6 - innovative ideas						
P1-PROPERTY 1	All repairs and maintenance responsibilities relating to council owned buildings, currently leased to Live Borders, reverts to Scottish Borders Council. This should be reflected in all future leases, and in the Service Provision Agreement.	Amend Propose to amend this recommendation. This is a critical component to get right and therefore requires in depth consideration, pulling in research from other councils and best practise. Should also link into Operational 8 - looking at shared services. Must also be clearly defined within the updated leases and Service Provision Agreement.	Agree to conduct a review of other Trust models/best practise and work with Live Borders to identify the optimum model which should be reflected in all future leases, and in the new Service Provision Agreement. Agree a joint temporary working arrangement is put in place.	CRITICAL	SBC & Live Borders	Property 4 - Leases Operational 8 - shared services						

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P2-PROPERTY 2	Full buildings condition and structural surveys are carried out on all buildings leased to Live Borders.	Agree This recommendation is crucial to progress as a priority to inform progress on many subsequent recommendations. Any health and safety matters identified through this piece of work or separately should be managed as priority through the temporary working arrangement as set out in the recommendation above.	Agree to commission independent Building Surveyors to conduct full buildings condition and structural surveys.	CRITICAL	External contractors	Property 1 - Repairs & Maintenance Property 7 - Options appraisal						
P3-PROPERTY 3	A full energy audit is carried out on all buildings leased to Live Borders and from this, a programme for investing in more effective and efficient green energy solutions can be developed.	Agree This recommendation is crucial to progress as a priority to inform progress on many subsequent recommendations. Buildings will be prioritised to optimise the work programme. It will also be important to manage expectations on what can be achieved across an ageing estate.	Agree to commission energy consultants to conduct full energy audits.	CRITICAL	External contractors	Property 1 - Repairs & Maintenance Property 7 - Options appraisal						
P4-PROPERTY 4	All existing leases should be reviewed in line with the recommendations above, and these should be for a period of 25 years, commencing 1st April 2024.	Agree Propose to progress this recommendation. It is important to understand existing leases as soon as is possible, with a view to updating once we have agreed the repairs and maintenance model.	Agree all existing leases should be reviewed in line with the recommendations above, and these should be for a period of 25 years, commencing 1st April 2024.	HIGH	SBC	Property 1 - Repairs & Maintenance						
P5-PROPERTY 5	When the current energy provider contracts expire in March 2024, that the responsibility for all future utilities and energy costs transfers to the Council. It is recognised that this will result in this cost being removed from the annual management fee.	Do not agree Propose to reject this recommendation. Both SBC and Live Borders use the Scottish Government's Frameworks for utilities and benefit from the same energy contracts. And propose an amended recommendation to closer align both organisations through their respective financial planning processes to ensure the use of the same budget assumptions for energy costs.	Agree to closer align Scottish Borders Council and Live Borders financial planning processes and use the same budget assumptions for energy costs.	HIGH	SBC	Property 3 - Energy Audits						

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P6-PROPERTY 6	The future responsibility for all Community Centres reverts to the Council pending further work to support community ownership options.	Amend Propose to amend this recommendation. Community Centres equate to approximately £150,000 Non Domestic Rates per annum. A financially sound decision is for Community Centres to remain with Live Borders whilst the organisations work collaboratively with communities to understand and support what they would like to achieve, including supporting community ownership options through the Placemaking framework where appropriate.	Agree Live Borders retain responsibility for Community Centres whilst both SBC and Live Borders engage positively and work collaboratively with communities and management committees, including as part of the Placemaking programme and Local Place Plans, to consider options which supports the community in the long term. This may include community ownership.	HIGH	SBC & Live Borders	Property 7 - Options appraisal						
P7-PROPERTY 7	A further detailed options appraisal and associated consultation is undertaken on the future of buildings identified as meeting the following criteria: a. High repair and maintenance cost b. Decreasing user numbers c. Increasing running costs d. Potential to relocate or co-locate services locally (e.g., school estate, consolidation etc.)	Agree This recommendation will further progress the joint report on options for future service delivery that was presented to Council in June 2021 and now needs to be revisited, aligned with strategic vision and progressed. The delivery of services as they are currently configured can no longer be sustained – particularly from an ageing property estate – and SBC and Live Borders need to work collaboratively with service users, communities and other stakeholders to redesign sustainable services that best align with community needs.	Agree to progress a further detailed options appraisal and associated consultation is undertaken on the future of buildings identified as meeting the following criteria: a. High repair and maintenance cost b. Decreasing user numbers c. Increasing running costs d. Potential to relocate or co-locate services locally (e.g., school estate, consolidation etc.)	HIGH	SBC & Live Borders	Property 4 - Leases Property 2 - Condition Surveys Property 3 - Energy Audits						

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P8-PROPERTY 8	A strategic approach for future shared school/community use of campus-based sports and cultural activities should be continued and expanded by the Council, based on existing successful models.	Agree Propose to proceed with this recommendation and build on the strategic approach already taken by the Council. This will be further informed by the development of our Sports and Culture strategies (Further Work 2 and 3).	Agree to continue and expand on the Council's strategic approach for future shared school/community use of campus-based sports and cultural activities, based on existing successful models.	HIGH	SBC & Live Borders	Further Work - 2 Sports & Physical Education Strategy Further Work 3 - Culture & Arts Strategy						
FW1-FURTHER WORK 1	A Property Rationalisation and Disposal Strategy	Agree Propose to proceed with this recommendation, and develop an SBC Property Rationalisation and Disposal Strategy. The building condition and structural surveys, and energy audits identified in recommendations Property 2 and 3 will help inform this work. Recommendation Property 7 can continue to be progressed ahead of this work being completed.	Agree to develop an SBC Property Rationalisation and Disposal Strategy.	MEDIUM	SBC	Property 2 - Condition surveys Property 3 - Energy audits						
FW2-FURTHER WORK 2	A Sports Facilities and Health and Wellbeing Strategy	Agree Propose to proceed with this recommendation, and develop a Borders wide Sport and Physical Education Strategy through a co-production model involving extensive consultation with the Sport sector, local communities and with Live Borders also taking a pivotal role in helping to shape the strategy. It is expected that one of the outcomes of the strategy development will be an associated action plan. In the first instance, a Borders Sports Forum will be created, chaired by the Leader, to drive policy and the development of the strategy. It is expected that one of the outcomes of the strategy development will be an associated action plan.	Agree to develop a Borders wide Sports Facilities and Health and Wellbeing Strategy.	HIGH	SBC & Live Borders	Operational 1 - Business Plan						

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FW3-FURTHER WORK 3	A Cultural and Arts Strategy	<p>Agree Propose to proceed with this recommendation, and develop a Borders wide Cultural and Arts Strategy through a co-production model involving extensive consultation with the Cultural sector, local communities and with Live Borders taking a pivotal role in helping to shape the strategy.</p> <p>In the first instance, a Borders Cultural Forum will be created chaired by the Executive Member for Communities & Culture to drive policy and the development of the strategy.</p> <p>It is expected that one of the outcomes of the strategy development will be an associated action plan.</p>	Agree to develop a Borders wide Cultural and Arts Strategy.	HIGH	SBC & Live Borders	Operational 1 - Business Plan Further Work 4 - Strategic Review of Museums						
FW4-FURTHER WORK 4	A strategic review of museum provision	<p>Agree Propose to proceed with this recommendation. Although it is strongly linked to the development of the Cultural and Arts Strategy identified in Further Work 3, it should be progressed as a separate workstream that complements the strategy development.</p>	Agree to develop a strategic review of museum provision.	HIGH	SBC & Live Borders	Further Work 3 - Cultural and Arts Strategy Income Generation 5 - consider Museum Admission charges						
FW5-FURTHER WORK 5	A community engagement support plan to enable capacity and capability challenges to be addressed.	<p>Agree Propose to proceed with this recommendation. SBC is committed to empowering our communities. Officers will continue to build on work already commenced through Placemaking (capacity building and signposting to organisations who can help); our Community Engagement Strategy and our Community Planning Partners work plan which are both currently being refreshed.</p>	Agree SBC develop a community engagement support plan to enable capacity and capability challenges to be addressed.	HIGH	SBC							