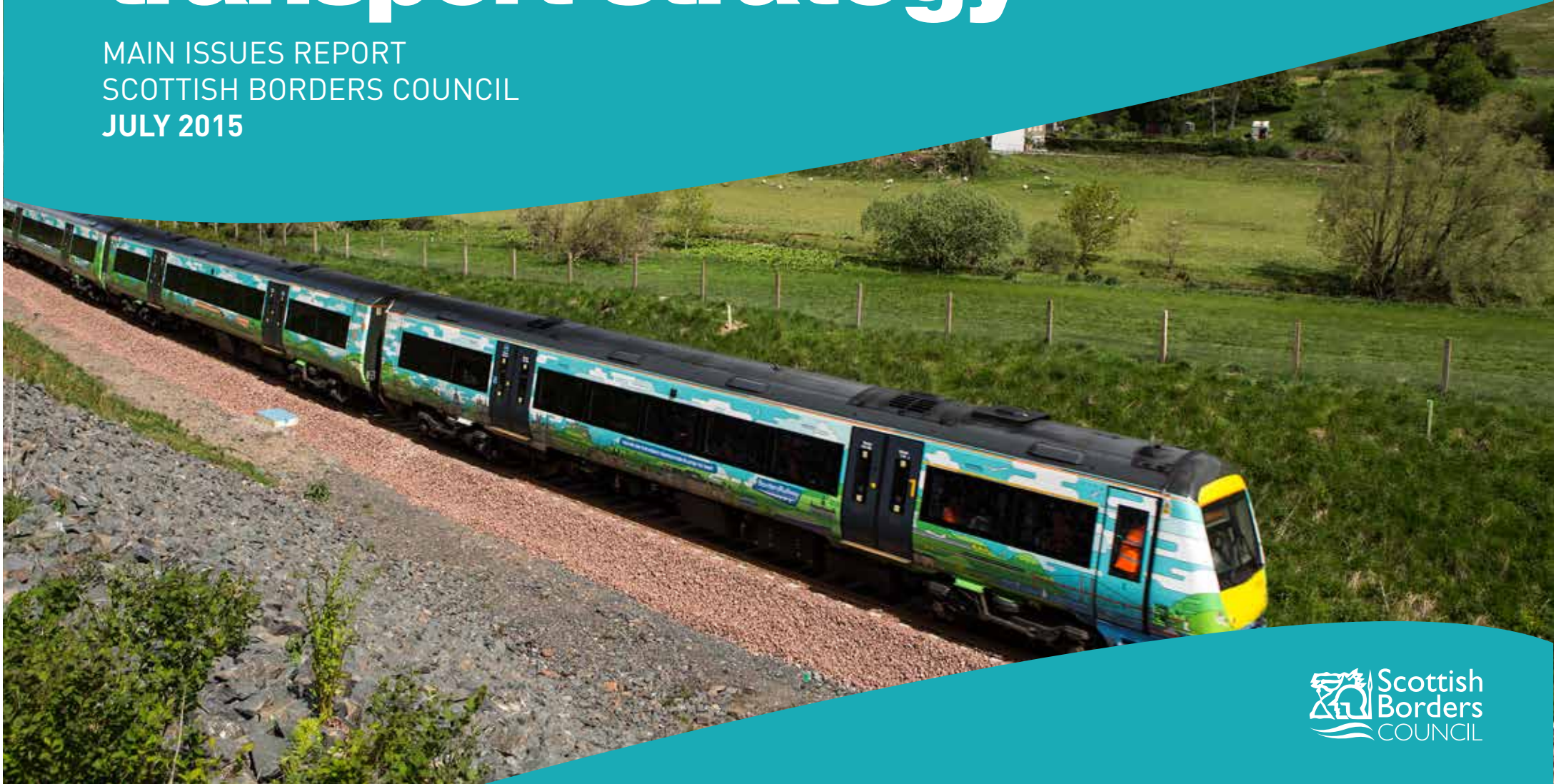


local access and transport strategy

MAIN ISSUES REPORT
SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL
JULY 2015



LOCAL ACCESS AND TRANSPORT STRATEGY

MAIN ISSUES REPORT

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LOCAL ACCESS AND TRANSPORT STRATEGY MAIN ISSUES REPORT FOREWORD



Cllr Ron Smith



Cllr Gordon Edgar

Transport and access issues are an essential part of everyday life for the people who live and work in the Scottish Borders, but also for the people who visit our area. We want to ensure that our transport infrastructure and associated services are fit for purpose and encourage economic development and tourism, whilst serving the people who make the Scottish Borders their home.

The Local Access and Transport Strategy can influence the decision makers and offer direction to help make the Scottish Borders a more connected place.

The publication of this Main Issues Report is the first stage in the preparation of this Strategy and presents people with an opportunity to discuss the issues and make suggestions in terms of future proposals. This document sets out a number of key issues for your consideration including potential improvements to transport infrastructure, the development of walking and cycling networks and how we promote and develop the newly constructed Borders Rail Service.

There are also a number of key questions in the document where you have the opportunity to provide your views on a range of issues and we will use these responses to help with the development of the main strategy document.

As part of the consultation process we will be running a number of events across the Local Authority area and there will also be an opportunity to provide electronic comments through the Council website or by sending written comments to Council Headquarters.

Please feel free to respond to as many questions as you like within the consultation exercise. Please do not feel obliged to provide answers to all of the questions.

We would encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity to provide us with your views on a range of transport issues which will influence the Borders transport infrastructure in the years ahead

Councillor Ron Smith

Executive Member for Planning & Environment

Councillor Gordon Edgar

Executive Member for Roads & Infrastructure

WHERE TO SEND YOUR RESPONSE

The Main Issues Report is available on the Council website at:
<http://www.scotborders.gov.uk/lats>

A hard copy of the report can also be viewed in all Libraries and Council Contact Centres.

Responses to this Main Issues Report may be sent to the Council by one of the following means:

- Direct through the Council's website by submitting the online form at:
www.scotborders.gov.uk/haveyoursay
- By email to localplan@scotborders.gov.uk
- Using the forms provided and sending to:

PLANNING POLICY AND ACCESS

Regulatory Services | Council Headquarters | Newtown St Boswells | Melrose | TD6 0SA

It is recommended that your response is by electronic means and is sent only once in order to avoid unnecessary duplication. For your own reassurance all responses will be acknowledged shortly after receipt.

LOCAL ACCESS AND TRANSPORT STRATEGY

MAIN ISSUES REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The development of a Local Access and Transport Strategy (LATS) for the Scottish Borders is a key document for the Local Authority area, setting out what we consider to be the key transport and access issues affecting the Scottish Borders, along with the Council's proposed approach to these issues.

1.2 The document will also provide linkages to other key strategy documents such as the Strategic Development Plan for Edinburgh and the South East of Scotland (SESplan), the Regional Transport Strategy, promoted by the South East Scotland Transport Partnership (SEStran) and the Local Development Plan for the Scottish Borders (LDP).

1.3 The publication of the previous Local Transport Strategy document for the Scottish Borders was in 2008.

1.4 An important new aspect in the preparation of this new document is the incorporation of access alongside transport. It was felt that there were a number of synergies between these two disciplines and a joint approach to the development of a strategy document would provide a number of benefits.

1.5 The Council also considers that there are strong linkages between strategic transport planning and development planning, with transport and accessibility being an important consideration in relation to future development.

The key aspects:

- Providing accessible and sustainable development
- Promoting town centres
- Providing green networks around towns
- Ensuring that development does not adversely impact on the transport network
- Identifying requirements for developer contributions to help mitigate against any adverse impact on the transport network from development.

- 1.6 This Main Issues Report (MIR) provides the basis for consultation on the Local Access and Transport Strategy. It provides what we consider to be the key transport and access related issues that currently affect the Scottish Borders and asks a number of specific questions that will help mould our approach.
- 1.7 It is anticipated that the MIR will be available for consultation over a twelve week period during which there will be a number of events to publicise and explain the proposed strategy in more detail and to encourage public participation.
- 1.8 Following consultation, there will be a report to Council to consider the public response and to agree the proposed strategy approach.

LOCAL ACCESS AND TRANSPORT STRATEGY

MAIN ISSUES REPORT

2. EXISTING CONTEXT

THE SCOTTISH BORDERS

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The Scottish Borders Council area is the 6th largest Local Authority in Scotland in terms of land mass and has a total population of around 114,000 based on the data collected in the 2011 census.
- 2.1.2 The Scottish Borders is a rural Local Authority where 30% of the population lives in settlements of under 500 people or in small hamlets. The largest town is Hawick with a 2011 Census population of 14,029, followed by Galashiels with 12,604 – although, if neighbouring Tweedbank were included, Galashiels would be the largest town in the Scottish Borders with a population of 14,705. The only other towns with a population of over 5,000 people are Peebles, Kelso and Selkirk.

- 2.1.3 The low densities of population in the area make long journeys necessary in order to reach centres with educational, medical, shopping and leisure facilities, with the Scottish Government classifying a third of our area as being remote rural in nature. The area has one of the longest lengths of road in Scotland with approximately 1,900 miles of adopted routes.

FIGURE 2.1 – LOCATION PLAN

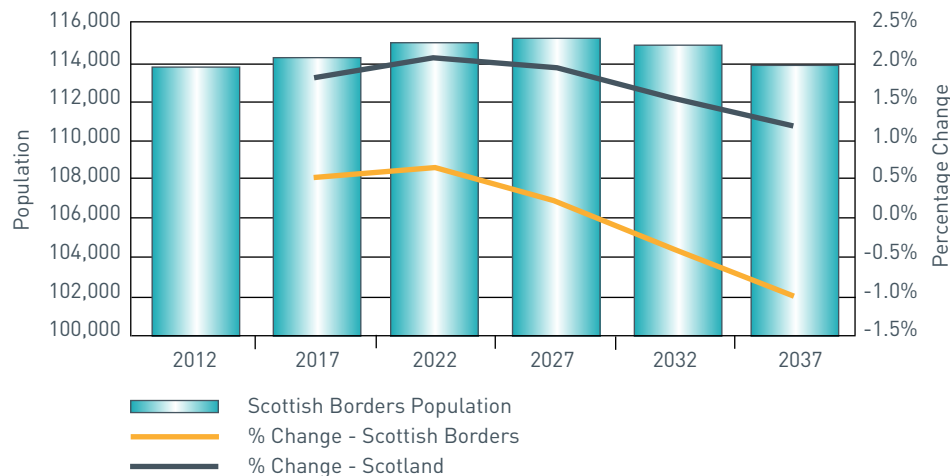


2.2 Age Profile

2.2.1 The National Records of Scotland project a slight increase in population for the Scottish Borders between 2012 and 2027 and then a slight decline and a return to 2012 population levels by 2037. These projections along with a comparison with the whole of Scotland are shown in Figure 2.2 below.

FIGURE 2.2 – POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Population Projections for the Scottish Borders (2012-based) and % change compared to Scotland



2.2.2 The proportion of pensioners in the Scottish Borders is projected to increase substantially between 2012 and 2037, particularly the proportion of people aged 75 or older which is set to increase by over 95%. There is also projected to be a significant increase in the numbers of people aged 65 to 74. However, the number of people aged under 65 is expected to decrease, with the working age population (16-64) projected to decline by over 13,500 or 20%.

2.2.3 This demographic profile has significant implications on the delivery of services into the future, especially in relation to the provision of care, on our future workforce and on economic development.

2.3 Economy

2.3.1 It can be noted that the Scottish Borders has a smaller proportion of people of working age compared to Scotland and this is likely to continue. Also average earnings are lower in the Scottish Borders¹, being consistently below the Scottish average. Since 2001, wages for people working in the Borders have increased by only 5%, compared to an increase of almost 38% at the Scottish level.

2.3.2 Compared to Scotland, there is a higher reliance in employment terms on wholesale/retail, manufacturing, health and public sector activity, and lower than average levels of employment in financial, professional and business support service sectors. We also have a higher proportion of employment in managerial and senior occupations, indicative of the reliance, in employment terms, on the public sector for employment for both the Scottish Borders and Scotland as a whole.

2.3.3 The demography of the Scottish Borders shows we have proportionately less young adults and more people over 65 than the rest of Scotland. This identifies a common challenge for rural areas with higher levels of out-migration of young people and an increasingly ageing population.

2.3.4 The key challenge to try and reverse out-migration is to try and make the Scottish Borders a more attractive place to live and work and importantly offer alternative options to stay in the area; locate to the area; and raise the value of employment on offer.

2.3.5 Transport and increasingly digital connectivity are vital to the future development of the Scottish Borders and a key element of potential economic opportunities in the future will be the opening of Borders Rail services in September 2015.

¹The average weekly wage in the Scottish Borders Council is £456, compared to £519 for the whole of Scotland – Office for National Statistics

2.3.6 Additional economic information and analysis can be found on the Scottish Borders Council website².

2.4 Environment

2.4.1 The quality of the natural and built environment is one of the areas key assets. There are many outstanding landscape and conservation areas throughout the region and air and noise quality is generally good. However, it must be noted that the rural nature of the Scottish Borders will continue to make access to services and amenities a challenge.

2.4.2 There is an increased emphasis on climate change adaptation by the UK and Scottish Governments and in particular, this relates to climate change and the avoidance of flood risk. The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, details the proposed targets of a 42% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020, and for 80% by 2050.

2.4.3 The primary focus of the MIR and also the Development Plan process is to ensure that the right type of development is directed to the right location, with an emphasis on the promotion of public and sustainable transport, although it must be noted that the economic resilience of the Scottish Borders will continue to be dependent on road transportation.

2.4.4 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a requirement for public plans and strategies which seeks to assess the impact that a strategy will have on the local environment.

2.4.5 The idea is that the SEA should run in parallel with the appropriate plan or strategy from the initiation of the project, thereby giving more credence to environmental issues.

2.4.6 There are a number of organisations that have an influence on transport strategy and delivery in the south east of Scotland. A number of the key organisation are detailed below.

2.5 South of Scotland Transport Partnership (SEStran)

2.5.1 SEStran is one of seven Regional Transport Partnerships in Scotland, set up under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005. SEStran contains eight constituent council areas – City of Edinburgh, Clackmannanshire, East Lothian, Falkirk, Fife, Midlothian, Scottish Borders and West Lothian (Figure 2.3).

FIGURE 2.3 – PLAN SHOWING SESTRAN AUTHORITIES



²http://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/230/advice_and_support_for_businesses/130/economic_information_and_analysis

2.5.2 A key requirement under the Act is for Regional Transport Partnerships to develop a statutory Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) to provide a strategic framework for transport management and investment throughout the Partnership area over a 10-15 year period. The first SEStran RTS was published and approved by the Scottish Government in 2008.

2.5.3 Since the establishment of the Regional Transport Partnerships, their role has moved away from direct funding and implementation of transport measures to a more strategic and co-ordinating function working in partnership with the Scottish Government, Local Authorities and other stakeholders. The purpose of the RTS is to set a policy framework that will guide effective transport provision over the wider city region by marshalling resources, including for cross-boundary measures, by promoting connectivity requirements essential to the whole regional economy and by supporting the transport functions of the constituent Local Authorities.

2.5.4 SEStran has recently drafted a second Regional Transport Strategy with the help of all eight constituent Authorities and this document is due to be published in 2015. The RTS has a direct effect on the content of the Local Access and Transport Strategy.

2.5.5 Additional information on the role of SEStran can be found on their website³.

2.6 **SESplan**

2.6.1 The South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan Authority (SESplan), is a partnership of six Member Authorities comprising the City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian, Fife, Scottish Borders and West Lothian, working together on strategic development planning matters.

2.6.2 SESplan's key role is to prepare and maintain an up to date Strategic Development Plan (SDP) for the South East Scotland area. This process involves engaging key stakeholders and the wider community. The first SDP was approved by Scottish Ministers in June 2013.

2.7 **Strategic Transport Board**

2.7.1 Following a strategic review of sustainable social transport carried out in late 2013, the Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership agreed to the formation of a Strategic Transport Board (STB) to oversee a programme of transport improvement across all partners and to lead on the development of more integrated community and transport provision in the Borders. The STB was established in May 2014 with an overall focus on improving outcomes for all communities and individuals through more joined-up, more efficient and sustainable transport services. Its work includes:

- Helping to determine longer-term plans for Borders-wide community & passenger transport services;
- Co-ordinating transport commissioning in the area;
- Overseeing joint efficiency and improvement projects in the Borders; and
- Improving community capacity and resilience in transport provision and supporting the development of the Community Transport sector in the Borders.

2.8 **South of Scotland Alliance**

2.8.1 The South of Scotland Alliance is a partnership formed between Dumfries and Galloway Council, Scottish Borders Council and Scottish Enterprise. This forum has been developed to look specifically at the main economic challenges facing businesses and communities in the south of Scotland and develop proposals that will impact on key areas such as transport and telecommunications.

2.9 **Borderlands**

2.9.1 The Borderlands Report⁴ explores the potential of greater collaboration between the south of Scotland and the north of England and highlights the potential opportunities such as a joint approach to economic development, policy coordination and strategic transport proposals between Scottish Borders Council, Dumfries and Galloway Council, Cumbria County Council and Northumberland County Council.

³<http://www.sestran.gov.uk/>

⁴<http://www.northeastcouncils.gov.uk/curo/downloaddoc.asp?id=589>

LOCAL ACCESS AND TRANSPORT STRATEGY

MAIN ISSUES REPORT

3. VISION FOR THE SCOTTISH BORDERS

3.1 Vision Statement

- 3.1.1 The vision and aims of the Local Access and Transport Strategy set the direction of the Strategy and are aimed at delivering the key outcomes.
- 3.1.2 The Vision is that our transport, communications and access networks will provide opportunities for sustainable economic development, improved social services and increased health and well-being. There will be high quality digital connectivity available to all communities, a good quality road network serving key markets, a public transport network providing access to employment areas and services and an access network surrounding all of our towns.

**QUESTION 1 – Do you agree with the Vision for the LATS?
Do you have any alternative proposals?**

3.2 Key Aims of the Strategy

3.2.1 The key aims of the Strategy are:

- The improvement of strategic routes to market;
- To help promote and develop the newly constructed Borders Rail Service;
- The development of a strategic cycling and walking network throughout the Scottish Borders;
- The promotion of improvements to the public transport network;
- To help provide a more integrated and connected transport network in the Scottish Borders;
- To help promote and deliver more vibrant town centres;
- To deliver a safer and better maintained road network;
- To help promote low carbon transport and measures to help reduce the need to travel such as digital connectivity;
- The provision of a network of charging points for electric vehicles.

**QUESTION 2 – Do you agree with the main aims for the LATS?
Do you have any other alternative proposals?**

LOCAL ACCESS AND TRANSPORT STRATEGY
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TAKING FORWARD THE LOCAL ACCESS AND TRANSPORT STRATEGY

LOCAL ACCESS AND TRANSPORT STRATEGY

MAIN ISSUES REPORT

4. THE KEY ISSUES NO.1 – THE ROUTE TO MARKETS – RAIL, ROAD, AIR AND SEA

4.1 Making the Scottish Borders more accessible and permeable, thereby improving our links with the rest of the UK and ensuring that the area is open for business. Potential major infrastructure improvements for our area could include the following elements.

4.2 Rail Projects

- The Borders Rail Project is due to be operational in September 2015 and will terminate in the Central Borders. Scottish Borders Council has an aspiration to extend the Borders Rail Project to Hawick and potentially Carlisle in the future;
- The delivery of a local rail service to serve Eastern Berwickshire from Edinburgh and Berwick-upon-Tweed with a new station facility at Reston is seen as a vital component in revitalising this part of our region. Scottish Borders Council along with East Lothian Council and SEStran are currently working with the Scottish Government and Network Rail to help develop this opportunity.

4.3 Road Projects

- Scottish Borders Council has been lobbying for strategic improvements to road infrastructure such as the complete dualling of the A1 between Edinburgh and Newcastle and the delivery of an A7 Selkirk Bypass for a number of years. Other selected improvements to the Trunk Road Network such as potential improvements on the A68 (Pathhead and Oxton) and the A7 south of Galashiels are also priorities.
- The key strategic road network that travels through the Scottish Borders, primarily runs from north to south. The Council has gradually improved the east to west linkages throughout the region, but further improvements are required to roads such as the A72 in Tweeddale and selected improvements on the A6105 in Berwickshire. Other key road infrastructure improvement projects include a new proposed road bridge for Peebles and a potential new road configuration at Tweedbank which may include the provision of a new road bridge at Lowood.

4.4 Access to Airports

- Improved cross-boundary links to Edinburgh, Newcastle and possibly Carlisle Airports would help ensure that the area is well connected to the UK and other world markets and would also help to encourage business and potential employment to our area.

4.5 Access to Ports

- Scottish Borders Council will be working with partners to deliver improved linkages to ports such as Rosyth, Newcastle and Stranraer/Cairnryan. There could also be potential opportunities to develop Eyemouth in terms of off-shore renewables and as a port destination for leisure craft.

QUESTION 3 – What key projects should we be prioritising to help deliver the maximum benefits to the Scottish Borders?

BEST PRACTICE

A1 Road Improvements in Northumberland

The UK Government recently announced improvements to the A1 north of Newcastle towards the Border with Scotland. The package of improvements included 13 miles of dual carriageway, 2.5 miles of climbing lane and selected junction improvement schemes adjacent to the towns of Morpeth and Alnwick.

www.gov.uk/government/news/patrick-mcloughlin-visits-a1-north-of-newcastle

A96 Dualling – Inverness to Aberdeen

The Scottish Government has provided a commitment to upgrade the 99 mile corridor between Inverness to Aberdeen to dual carriageway by 2030. The plan is to promote this route as a development corridor between these two key cities to help encourage economic growth and improve access and journey time reliability.

<http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/project/a96-dualling-inverness-aberdeen>

A9 Dualling – Perth to Inverness

The Scottish Government has committed to upgrade 80 miles of single carriageway between Perth and Inverness to dual carriageway by 2025. The scheme has been designed to encourage economic growth on the transport corridor, enhance access for tourism related activity and to improve the existing accident record.

www.transportscotland.gov.uk/project/a9-dualling-perth-inverness

Reopening of Laurencekirk Station – Aberdeenshire

The Scottish Government re-opened Laurencekirk Station which is located on the East Coast Mainline between Dundee and Aberdeen in 2009 following a well organised public campaign to re-establish passenger services at a station that was closed as part of the Beeching cuts during the 1960s. The estimated annual station user figures were 36,000 at the time of opening. Recent data from the Office of Rail Regulation indicates that usage figures were approximately 136,000 in the year 2013/14.

www.transportscotland.gov.uk/news/Laurencekirk-re-opening-signals-new-era-commuters

DISCUSSION POINTS

Extension of Borders Rail beyond Tweedbank

Scottish Borders Council would like to see the future extension of the Borders Rail Line to Hawick and Carlisle and is proposing to work with the Scottish Government to initiate feasibility work that will look at extending the line south to Cumbria.

A1 Dual Carriageway between Edinburgh and Newcastle

The A1 between Edinburgh and Newcastle has been identified by the Scottish Government as a key development corridor between Scotland and England. Scottish Borders Council has been a member of the A1 Working Group for a number of years alongside other Local Authority partners such as East Lothian Council, City of Edinburgh Council and Northumberland County Council with a view to upgrading the route to full dual carriageway status and encouraging opportunities that arise from improved road access. The UK Government has recently announced improvement work on the English side of the Border which brings into focus potential improvements for the Scottish section of the route.

A7 Selkirk Bypass

The development of a Selkirk bypass would provide the opportunity to improve the town centre environment, enhance road linkages within the Central Borders and speed up journey times from Hawick northwards. A route for a new bypass is safeguarded within the Local Development Plan. However, as the A7 south of Galashiels is classified as Trunk Road, a commitment from the Scottish Government would be required to promote the project. Until this commitment is received, the uncertainty is a significant constraint to the planning of longer term development in Selkirk and associated environmental improvements.

East West Linkages

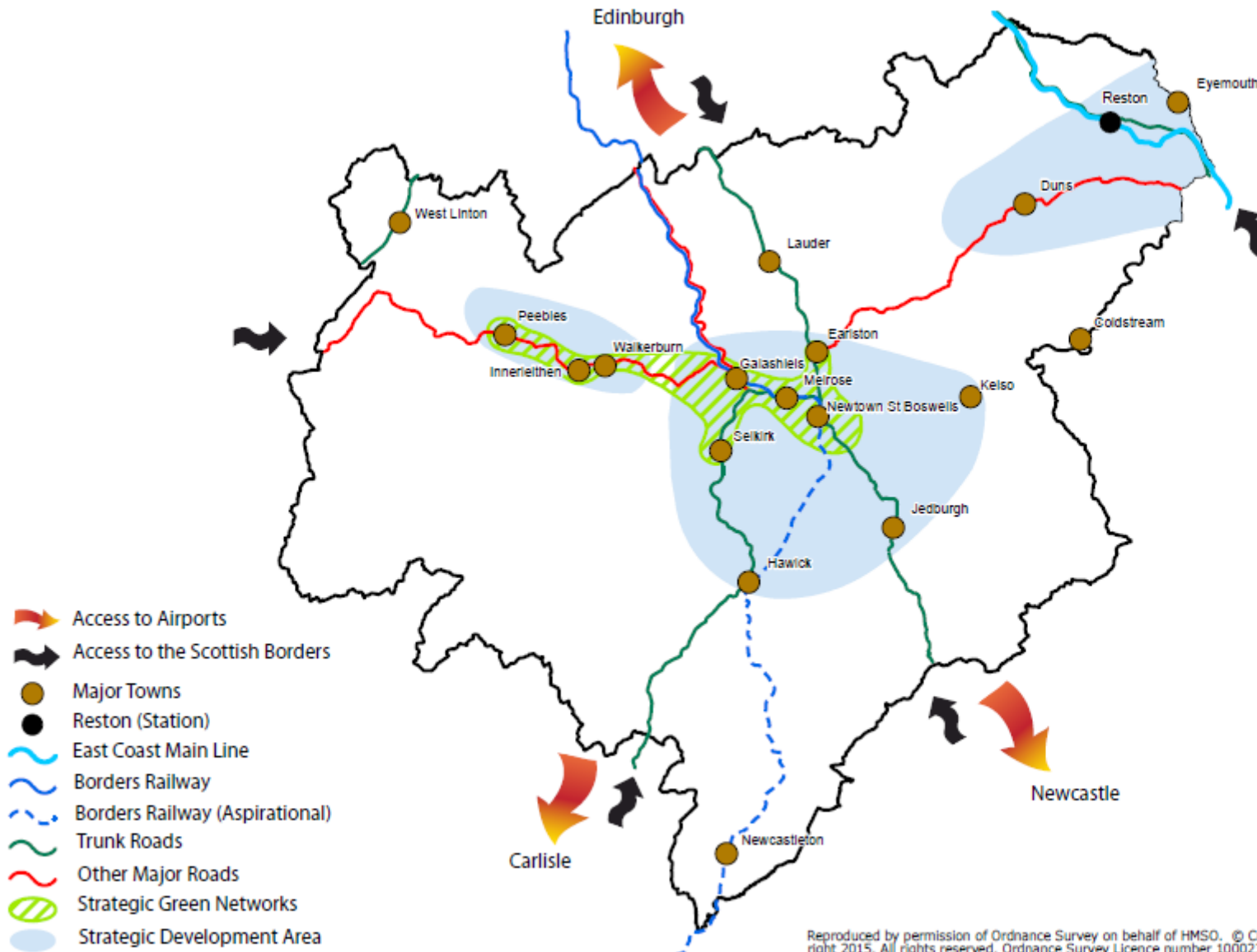
There are three Strategic Development Areas in the central, western and eastern parts of the Scottish Borders which are highlighted in the Local Development Plan. These areas could benefit from improved east to west linkages including key road infrastructure improvements on specific road corridors such as the A72 in Tweeddale and the A6105 in Berwickshire.

THE ROUTE TO MARKETS



 Scottish Borders COUNCIL

 1:500,000 (A4)



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LOCAL ACCESS AND TRANSPORT STRATEGY

MAIN ISSUES REPORT

5. THE KEY ISSUES NO.2 - PUBLIC AND INTEGRATED TRANSPORT

5.1 Integrated transport relates to how the various modes of transport work together to provide a better service for the general public. This can include trying to ensure that buses are synchronised with trains to help ensure seamless travel or it could mean linking our town centres with good walking and cycle routes or providing good levels of signage for all travel users.

5.2 **Borders Rail**

5.2.1 The new rail service to the central Borders is due to be operational in September 2015 which will offer opportunities to provide co-ordinated bus and rail services in Galashiels, Tweedbank and Stow and provide potential connections for towns such as Hawick, Kelso and Selkirk.

5.2.2 Scottish Borders Council will work closely with the rail and bus industries to try and encourage more seamless journeys and will also seek to develop more economic and tourist related opportunities that may be initiated by the return of rail services to the Scottish Borders.

5.2.3 One of the key aspects of the new rail service to the Central Borders is the provision and promotion of good access to the new stations, especially in relation to walking and cycling. There will also be opportunities for bus and taxi operators to deliver a more integrated and connected service, especially in the Galashiels and Tweedbank areas with buses and taxis meeting trains, providing people with opportunities for onward travel.

5.2.4 Scottish Borders Council also would wish to see the delivery of an extended rail service to Hawick and potentially Carlisle in the future and the Council is looking to work with partners, including the Scottish Government to initiate this rail feasibility work in the near future.

QUESTION 4 – What should we be doing to try and encourage more economic and tourist related activity as a result of Borders Rail?

QUESTION 5 – What do you think are the positive and negative aspects associated with developing a relatively short extension of Borders Rail to Hawick and a longer extension to Carlisle?

5.3 **Edinburgh – Berwick Local Rail Service**

- 5.3.1 Scottish Borders Council has been promoting the introduction of a new local rail service in Berwickshire which would include the re-opening of new stations at East Linton in East Lothian and Reston in the Scottish Borders as part of the new ScotRail Franchise.
- 5.3.2 The Scottish Government has recently included the potential for a new rail service between Edinburgh and Berwick-upon-Tweed serving Eastern Berwickshire within the new ScotRail Franchise. Scottish Borders Council and East Lothian Council have recently made a joint application to the Scottish Government to provide new stations at East Linton and Reston. This could have a significant effect on Berwickshire, offering opportunities for development, employment, tourism and education throughout the area. In addition, consideration would also be given to the provision of connecting bus/shared taxi services at Reston with surrounding communities such as Ayton, Chirnside, Coldingham, Duns and Eyemouth. Consideration would also be given to developing walking and cycling access provision to the station.

QUESTION 6 – If the bid to develop a new local rail service between Edinburgh and Berwick is successful, what can we do to help ensure the long term viability of the service?

5.4 **Ticketing**

- 5.4.1 Integrated ticketing for bus and rail travel is important when people are transferring between types of transport such as the bus departing shortly after the train arrives and vice versa. However, public transport is by and large an un-nationalised commercial business in the UK and therefore it is sometimes difficult to guarantee seamless travel in this country.

- 5.4.2 The National Concessionary Travel Scheme was introduced in 2006 and provides free bus travel for Scottish residents who are either disabled or who are over 60 years of age. The scheme allows residents free bus travel anywhere in Scotland and on cross-border bus services to Berwick-upon-Tweed and Carlisle. There is currently no free travel on the national train network, although there are discounts available for regular travellers, concessions, young people and off-peak travel.
- 5.4.3 The Scottish Government provides additional information on integrated transport on the Transport Scotland website⁵

QUESTION 7 – What potential improvements to ticketing provision would you like to see implemented within the Scottish Borders?

5.5 **Information**

- 5.5.1 The provision of relevant information is a key element in the successful promotion of all aspects of transport delivery. From basic sign posting in our towns and villages and paper-based timetable information for bus users to Smart-Phone Apps and Real-Time Information, which tells us when the bus will arrive, there are a large number of aspects that contribute to delivering good information to the travel user. We are hoping to introduce Real-Time Information at key points in the Scottish Borders in the future.

QUESTION 8 – Are there any aspects of information provision that require immediate improvement?

5.6 **Bus Services**

- 5.6.1 Bus services are an essential part of the Council's transport strategy and the provision of these services throughout the Borders is one of the Council's main priorities.

⁵<http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/public-transport/smart-and-integrated-ticketing>

- 5.6.2 The general public expect efficient, direct and comfortable services that take them to their destination quickly and for a reasonable cost. However, it must be noted that the dispersed nature of the towns and villages in the Scottish Borders, along with the popularity/necessity of the private car makes the provision of regular, viable bus services throughout our area difficult to achieve.
- 5.6.3 There is a strategic network of bus services that run between the majority of the main towns and villages in the Scottish Borders. The majority of these services are provided by private bus companies, although most routes operate with subsidies provided by Scottish Borders Council. There are a small number of entirely commercial routes in the Scottish Borders such as the X62 between Galashiels, Peebles and Edinburgh, which don't require subsidy.
- 5.6.4 More and more services in the Scottish Borders are operating with newer vehicles and the majority of these vehicles have low floor access which is very important to a whole range of bus users. National legislation dictates that by 2017, midi-buses and full sized buses providing local bus services in the UK will require to be accessible to wheelchair users.
- 5.6.5 From previous consultation work it is clear that the general public require more direct and quicker journeys in good quality and comfortable vehicles and importantly they want competitive fares and good information.

QUESTION 9 – What are the positive and negative aspects of our existing bus services?

QUESTION 10 – What would attract you to use the bus more often?

5.7 Taxis

- 5.7.1 Taxis and Private Hire Cars are an important part of an integrated transport system and can be used to fill the gaps in public transport routes. They are also especially useful late at night, when most other forms of public transport are unavailable. A number of vehicles are also equipped with facilities to help disabled and elderly passengers.
- 5.7.2 The majority of larger settlements in the Borders such as Galashiels and Hawick have designated facilities for taxis and private hire cars. In other towns and villages there are usually informal arrangements in place, the majority of which are acceptable to the local community. However, the location of taxi ranks and volume of taxi operators in some towns can cause tension between other transport users and businesses and residents.

QUESTION 11 – What possible improvements are required for taxi provision within the Scottish Borders?

5.8 Community Transport

- 5.8.1 Community Transport (CT) services can be an important part of an integrated transport system especially where there is no access to a wider public transport network. This is particularly relevant in remote rural areas where the flexibility offered by demand responsive CT services can provide an effective form of public transport which feeds into the main bus and rail system.
- 5.8.2 The main CT service providers in the Borders are the “Wheels” organisations, British Red Cross and Royal Voluntary Service. It is recognised that the CT sector needs to be further supported and developed in order to provide an enhanced and better co-ordinated sector. This is essential in improving social transport locally and should make it better placed to meet the needs of remote communities, thereby playing a fuller part in an integrated transport system in the Borders.

5.9 Galashiels Transport Interchange

5.9.1 A new high quality transport interchange building is currently being built in Galashiels. This new facility will help provide waiting facilities for bus and rail passengers and offer opportunities to deliver a full range of travel information. The new building will also offer bike storage for passengers and real time information for trains and buses. The Transport Interchange is due to be completed in the summer of 2015.

5.10 Real Time Information

5.10.1 SEStran has recently developed a real time information network for the bus network on the key transport corridors throughout south east Scotland and an accompanying "App" for smart phones and tablets (SEStran Bus). It is hoped that within time there will be a number of signs on the key bus routes in the Scottish Borders. Currently there are three real time information signs in our area (Galashiels, Selkirk and Hawick).

BEST PRACTICE

Smart Ticketing

The Scottish Government is currently looking at a national smart ticket scheme called "E-Purse", which will allow people to purchase tickets on a number of different modes of transport with one smart card which would be very useful in the promotion of integrated travel throughout Scotland.

Lincolnshire – Interconnect Project

The County's intention was to provide a better more direct service for their residents. The Council provided high frequency direct services on the primary routes and then provided a secondary network that fed into the primary routes. Other improvements included the provision of high quality accessible vehicles, improved bus stances and an agreement between operators to offer a shared ticketing arrangement.

This project has proven to be very successful in Lincolnshire with increased patronage and a reduction in social exclusion throughout the Council area.

DISCUSSION POINTS

Integrated Transport Provision in Galashiels and Tweedbank

With the recent appointment of Abellio as the new ScotRail Franchise Operator and the construction of the Galashiels Transport Interchange, there is an opportunity to develop a more integrated approach to public transport provision by linking buses to the new rail service, especially in the Galashiels/Tweedbank area. However, this approach will require co-operation between the bus and rail operators. There are also opportunities to develop cycling and walking links between the new stations and to discuss the potential capacity for cyclists on rolling stock with the new rail operator.

Strategic Network

What balance should be taken on the key strategic routes between providing quicker journeys and serving more communities?

Areas of Employment

Should the Council consider offering more services to the key areas of employment as well as the key settlements within the Scottish Borders?

Customer Information

Easily accessible and clear customer information will be critical in the promotion of the new rail service and the proposed bus connections throughout the Central Borders. This information will need to be provided in a combination of electronic and written media.

It is expected that a range of travel related information will be available at the Galashiels Transport Interchange.

Taxi Facilities at Tweedbank

Taxi provision at the Borders Rail Stations will be a key and integral part of the transport offering at Stow, Galashiels and Tweedbank.

LOCAL ACCESS AND TRANSPORT STRATEGY

MAIN ISSUES REPORT

6. THE KEY ISSUES NO.3 – PROMOTION OF WALKING, CYCLING AND HORSE RIDING

6.1 Strategic network of routes

6.1.1 Walking and cycling are fundamental parts of any integrated transport system, offering a wide range of benefits including cheap flexible transport, increased health benefits and pollution-free travel.

6.1.2 Walking, cycling and horse riding are key components in the Scottish Borders tourist portfolio and the area is becoming very popular for activity related holidays and short breaks.

6.1.3 The area is well served with a large number of quiet minor roads which are ideally suited to cycling and these roads provide the majority of links within our existing cycling network. However, some roads are becoming less attractive for cycling because of increasing traffic flows and excessive speeds, especially when considering safer routes for younger children. In addition, approximately 90% of the Scottish Borders population live within 5 miles of a town or village with a population of over 1,000 people, therefore cycling and

walking could be a realistic proposition for commuting as well as leisure trips.

6.1.4 Scottish Borders Council has recently developed an off-road route on the former railway line between Peebles and Innerleithen which has proven to be very popular with over 70,000 people using the path on an annual basis. Subsequently, a number of communities throughout the Scottish Borders have indicated a desire to see a strategic network of routes that would help to connect local towns and villages together.

6.1.5 There is also an argument to suggest that we should be trying to link strategic cycling and walking routes to key points in our areas such as railway stations, key areas of economic activity and tourist destinations to help maximise any economic benefits.

QUESTION 12 – Where should the priorities for an improved off-road shared access network between towns and villages in the Scottish Borders be located?

6.2 Provision of a specific network within our larger towns

6.2.1 As well as promoting a strategic off-road network of routes between our towns and villages, we should also consider developing networks of good quality local walking and cycling routes within our larger settlements to help encourage healthier lifestyles and also to try and reduce the number of vehicles on our public roads. These local routes should ideally be connected to the strategic off-road network thereby creating an integrated network.

6.3 Quieter Road Networks

6.3.1 Scottish Local Authorities such as Clackmananshire⁶, Stirling and Perth and Kinross have successfully introduced a number of quieter roads in their areas. These roads are carefully selected, providing links between walking and cycling networks and most have reduced speed limits and voluntary restrictions on larger vehicles. This could be something that Scottish Borders Council may potentially consider.

QUESTION 13 – If the Council was to consider introducing a section of quieter road in the Scottish Borders as a pilot project, where should this pilot project be located?

6.4 Safer Routes to School

6.4.1 Scottish Borders Council promotes sustainable travel-to-school options for children in our area by developing school travel plans and initiatives such as new footpaths and encouraging children to walk and cycle to school where it is appropriate to do so. At the present time 63 of the 65 primary schools in the Scottish Borders and all of the high schools have a travel plan in place.

6.4.2 The reasons for encouraging children to walk to school are numerous and include:

- Exercise can help lower obesity levels;
- Independent travel can be beneficial for a child's personal development;
- The environment and road safety issues in our towns and villages can be improved by reducing the localised congestion and pollution produced by the dropping-off and picking-up of children at peak periods.

QUESTION 14 – What other measures might encourage walking and cycling to school?

6.5 Travel Planning

6.5.1 Travel planning is the process of encouraging more sustainable forms of transport such as walking and cycling, especially in relation to the journey to work. A small number of larger employers in the Scottish Borders such as Tesco, Asda and Marks and Spencers have travel plans in place as part of the Council's planning requirements. The key reasons for promoting a travel plan are:

- A healthier workforce;
- Reduced levels of congestion at peak times; and
- Improved air quality.

QUESTION 15 – If you believe travel planning should be a priority, how should the Council promote travel plans more vigorously with employers?

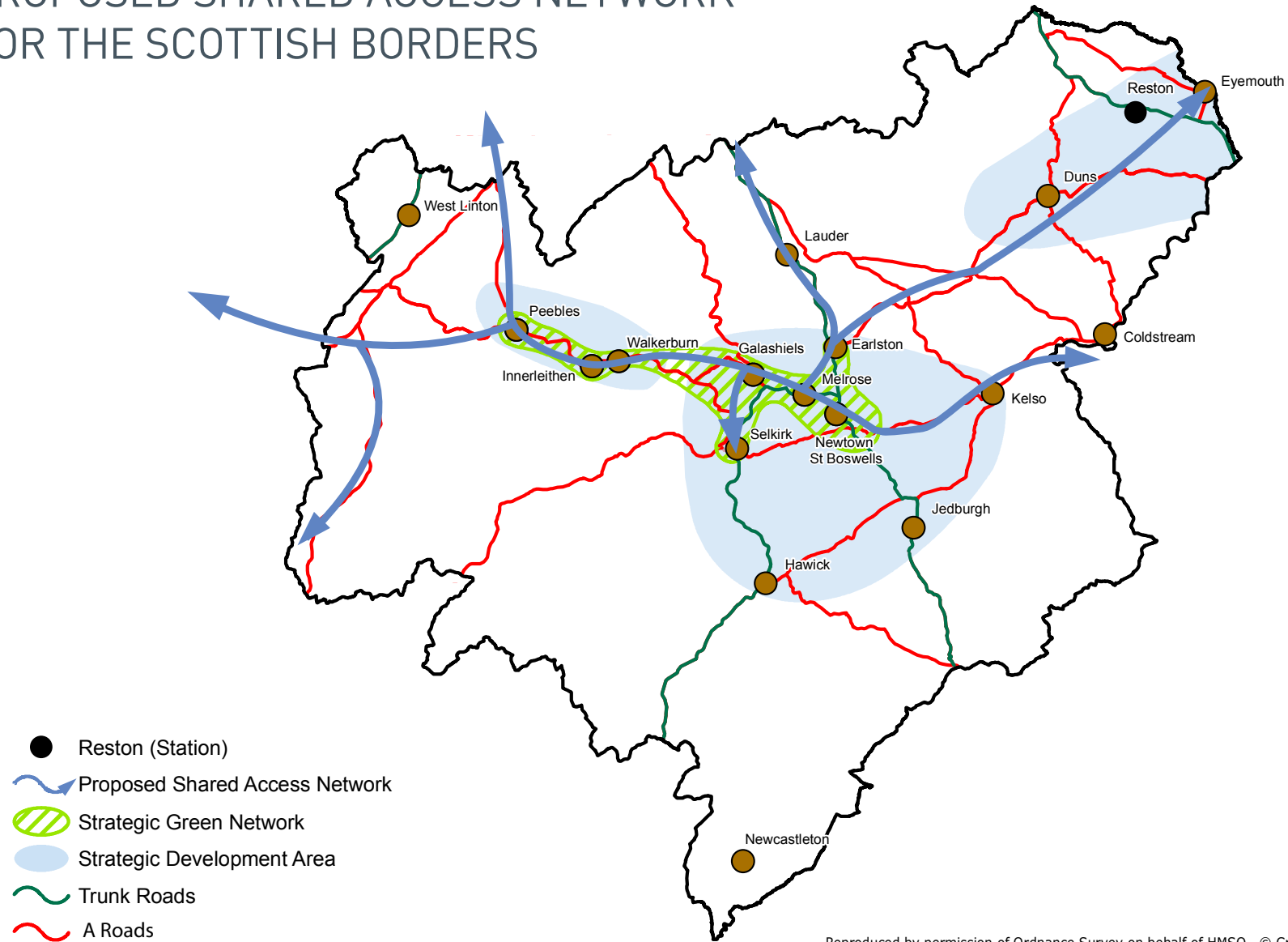
⁶<http://www.clacksweb.org.uk/transport/friendlyroads/>

6.6 Equestrian

6.6.1 Horse riding is an important part of life in the Scottish Borders and therefore should be protected and enhanced where possible. Equine tourism is also becoming more popular and is an expanding market bringing more people to the area and generating income. There are a number of promoted routes in the Borders that can accommodate horse riders and a number of these routes use the road network or shared access paths which can lead to an element of conflict with vehicles and other users.

QUESTION 16 – Should the Council consider the promotion of further promoted routes for horse riders and if so where should these routes be located?

PROPOSED SHARED ACCESS NETWORK FOR THE SCOTTISH BORDERS



-  Reston (Station)
-  Proposed Shared Access Network
-  Strategic Green Network
-  Strategic Development Area
-  Trunk Roads
-  A Roads

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6.7 Countryside Access

6.7.1 The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 radically altered the nature of access rights within Scotland and there are now three categories of access:

- Core paths provide the basic framework of legally recognised promoted and signposted paths;
- The wider network consists of other formal and informal paths and tracks;
- A general right of responsible access in the open countryside which is not restricted to paths and this is termed “rights of responsible access”.

6.7.2 It should also be noted that public Rights of Way can exist within the first two categories and that all of the paths are classified as shared paths to be used by non-motorised means such as walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

6.7.3 The current countryside path network within the Scottish Borders is well developed and extends to around 3000km, of which over 1100 km are Core Paths. In addition, the network also includes 256 bridges and 7000 items of wooden “furniture”.

6.7.4 These paths can be categorised into the following hierarchy:

- Scotland’s National Trail⁷ is an informal trail of 764km throughout the length of Scotland, with the first 122km located in the Scottish Borders;
- The Great Trails⁸ is a national brand hosted through Scottish Natural Heritage and six out of the thirty four trails lie within the Scottish Borders. These longer distance routes include the Borders Abbey Way; St Cuthbert’s Way; Southern Upland Way and the Berwickshire Coastal Path, Cross Borders Drove Road and the Roman and Reivers Way.

6.8 Path Maintenance

6.8.1 There has been a significant investment in path development and promotion over the past 15 years providing a key tourism asset as well as important infrastructure for local communities.

6.8.2 It should be noted that the vast majority of the paths are on private land and co-operation with landowners and farmers is crucial and for the most part positive. Other key stakeholders of land include the National Trust for Scotland and Borders Forest Trust. Of key significance in the Borders is the role of the Forestry Commission estates, for a range of access benefits and some well developed hotspots for mountain biking.

6.8.3 The current position, is that the Council intends by 2016/17 to reach a “plateau” in terms of the scale of the network and whilst there will always be monitoring and review in light of changing circumstances, this is intended to be a fine tuning exercise as the budget and resources are finite. This is likely to require the majority of any additional networks to be maintained locally, noting that it is unlikely that the staffing and budgets available are to increase in the current climate so increasingly it is about efficiency and hard choices.

QUESTION 17 – Should the Council only concentrate on the key access routes within the Scottish Borders in terms of development, promotion and maintenance?

QUESTION 18 – How do communities feel about taking responsibility for managing a proportion of the local network?

⁷ <http://www.scottishnationaltrail.org.uk/>
⁸ <http://www.scotlandsgreattrails.org.uk/>

6.9 Use of the network

- 6.9.1 The networks have largely been derived around settlements and selected long distance routes for tourism. Explicit in their development has been linkages to and interpretation of key heritage assets within the Borders. There are 57 heritage sites ranging from a solitary board to a major site such as Lindean or Coldingham Bay. The Tweed Rivers Heritage Project (1999-2006) was a major focus of integrated enhancement and this also included an extensive public art programme to enhance the visitor experience. More recently the network has been promoted to link with investment in major attractions, with the Paths Around Abbotsford booklet, one of a series of promotional publications.
- 6.9.2 More recently the health benefits of outdoor access have been detailed in “Let’s Get Scotland Walking” The National Walking Strategy 2014⁹ which highlights functional (transport), recreational and health and well being benefits.

QUESTION 19 – How should the Council promote walking in the Scottish Borders?

- 6.9.3 In 2015, the Borders will be once more directly connected to the railway network from Edinburgh with three stations at Stow, Galashiels and Tweedbank and potentially Reston in the future. It is important to ensure that the networks are integrated with the stations and opportunities are afforded to give choices to walking and cycling. On a strategic level, there could be an opportunity to create a “Golden Triangle” with links to the rail stations at Tweedbank, Dunbar and Berwick-upon-Tweed to try and maximise the economic benefits of providing links between three of Scotland’s Great Trails.

In the longer term, a link to New Lanark would allow access to the Clyde Walkway and the west coast of Scotland¹⁰.

QUESTION 20 – Should we provide more of a focus or prioritise developing more information for cycling / walking routes linked to key tourist attractions?

- 6.9.4 The shared use of paths can create maintenance issues, arising from the nature of the use by certain groups, the intensity of use and the nature of the path. In addition, there can be perceived conflict between user groups (walkers, cyclists, mountain bikers and horse-riders). Fortunately in the Borders, the scale of the network and low population densities, does mean that these issues are generally localised. However, there are emerging issues of maintenance and crucially conflicts with land management objectives through the increasing use of the network for commercial and charity events and this will need monitoring and review.
- 6.9.5 The Core Path Plan also defines 21 “access points for water recreation” that have equal protection under the 2003 Act. They represent launch or landing points, where canoe clubs and/or others have historically taken access to inland waterways.

QUESTION 21 – Are there any other aspects of Countryside Access that need to be addressed?

⁹ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0045/00452622.pdf>

¹⁰ <http://www.scotlandsgreattrails.org.uk/southern%20trails.html>

BEST PRACTICE

Quieter Roads

A selected number of Scottish Local Authorities such as Clackmananshire, Stirling and Perth and Kinross have successfully introduced a number of quieter roads in their areas. These roads are carefully selected, providing links between walking and cycling networks and most have reduced speed limits and introduced voluntary restrictions on larger vehicles.

<http://www.clacksweb.org.uk/transport/friendlyroads/>

The Camel Trail

The Camel trail in Cornwall is an 18 mile off-road multi-use path which travels between Padstow, Bodmin and Wenfordbridge, offering a largely traffic-free and virtually level trail that follows the route of a former rail line. The Camel Trail is considered to be one of the most successful recreational routes in the country with approximately 400,000 annual users bringing in an estimated economic benefit of £3million per annum for the local area.

http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/countryside/cycle-routes-and-trails/the-camel-trail/?altTemplate=_Standard

Paths Around Towns

The Scottish Borders benefits from a decision to develop a comprehensive set of local paths around each settlement with a population in excess of 1000. The Paths Around Towns series now covers eleven settlements in the Scottish Borders with a further five planned for Chirnside, Newtown St Boswells/St Boswells, Lauder, Earlston and West Linton finishing the series. These networks provide opportunities for healthy living and also promote tourism throughout the Local Authority area.

http://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/1504/walking_cycling_and_horse_riding/164/paths_around_towns_and_town_trails

Cycle Scottish Borders Website

Scottish Borders Council has recently developed a website that promotes recreational cycling in the Scottish Borders. The website contains a whole range of route information that has been designed to help sell cycling in the Scottish Borders.

<http://www.cyclescottishborders.com/>

Walk-it Programme

Walk-it is the Paths to Health project that is run throughout Scotland. The aim is to help people become more physically active through providing low level and friendly led walks. Council employee Denise Carmichael was awarded a Paths for All award in 2013.

http://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/1504/walking_cycling_and_horse_riding/311/walking_for_health/3

DISCUSSION POINTS

Sections of Quieter Roads – Pilot Project

There could be a possibility of undertaking a pilot project to promote a section of quieter road in the Scottish Borders at a selected location that would be specifically linked to the development of a strategic shared access network for the Scottish Borders. It should be noted that consultation with the local community and appropriate levels of support would be required before Scottish Borders Council would consider taking this proposal forward.

Development of a Strategic Off-Road Network for Walking and Cycling

The development of an off-road network for shared access has a number of key benefits:

- It would deliver economic and tourism related benefits for the area;
- It would Increase the opportunities for active travel throughout the Scottish Borders;
- It would help provide additional health benefits associated with more people taking exercise;
- It would offer more opportunities for children to cycle and walk on safer traffic free routes.

Maintenance of Paths – Investment in Countryside Access

The path network that Scottish Borders Council currently maintains is extensive and it is unlikely that this size of network can be maintained in the short to medium term with the level of funding currently available. The issue of local communities looking after path networks needs to be explored in more detail.

Should there be an investment in Walking web/apps to complement the recent investment in cycling?

The cycling website (Cycle Scottish Borders) has proven to be successful. Is there an opportunity to develop the website to incorporate walking as well?

Development of Links Between Rail Stations

The provision of specific and improved shared access linkages between rail stations is one of the key aspects associated with helping the development of tourism and economic related opportunities in the Scottish Borders.

The Safeguarding of Former Railway Lines

There is a network of former railway routes throughout the Scottish Borders, estimated to be over 125 miles in length which have the potential to be used as safer walking, cycling and horse riding routes. There is a policy within the Local Development Plan to safeguard these routes for recreational purposes and there is an argument to suggest that this policy direction should be followed in the Local Access and Transport Strategy.

LOCAL ACCESS AND TRANSPORT STRATEGY

MAIN ISSUES REPORT

7. THE KEY ISSUES NO.4 – ROADS MAINTENANCE

7.1 The Road Network

7.1.1 The road network in the Scottish Borders is considered to be a significantly valuable asset for an area that currently is totally dependant on road transportation. Ensuring that this asset is well maintained is considered to be an important part of any sustainable transport strategy. There are approximately 1,900 miles of Council maintained roads and over 1,250 bridges throughout the Scottish Borders.

7.1.2 The term “road” covers a wide variety of assets such as carriageway, footway, footpaths, kerbs, drainage, signs, lines, street lighting, bridges, safety fences, etc. At an estimated gross replacement value of £3bn, the roads infrastructure is the Council’s most valuable asset.

7.1.3 It is clear that our roads are increasingly fragile and less resilient to damage from wear and tear, ageing, increasing traffic and severe weather. This regularly results in visible defects like potholes, damaged road signs, defective street lights and in extreme cases, damage to bridges.

7.1.4 Managing our roads is now a critical challenge for Scottish Borders Council, with an ageing network and understandably high public expectations for safer, reliable and more comfortable travel. At the same time, available resources are reducing, with less funding available and increased pressure on all council services. Scottish Borders Council currently lies in the bottom quarter of the 32 Local Authorities in Scotland in terms of the current condition of our overall road network.

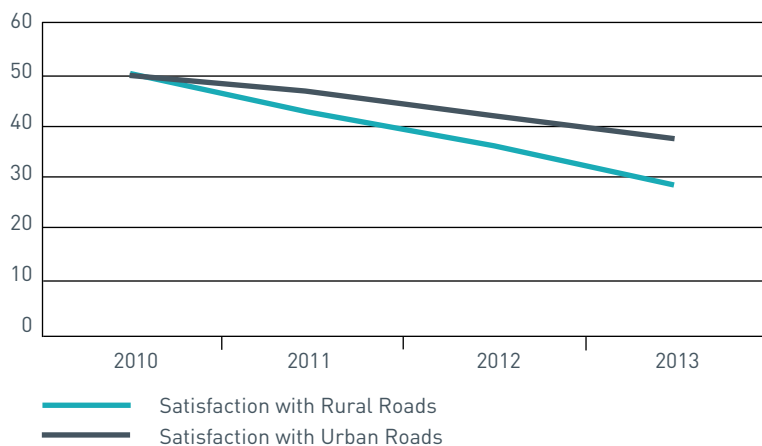
7.1.5 The road network is critically important to the economic vitality of the area and helps support a large number of businesses and commercial activity. It is essential that we have a good quality road network in the Scottish Borders to provide routes to internal and external markets and to help attract inward investment to our area.

7.2 Household Survey

7.2.1 Roads are vital to the economic, social and environmental well being of our area. They provide access for business and communities, as well as contribute to the area’s local character and to the public’s quality of life.

7.2.2 The most recent household survey showed a reduction in the satisfaction levels for the road network in the Scottish Borders, with 28% of respondents satisfied with the condition of rural roads in our area, down 24% since 2010. Regarding the condition of roads in towns, 40% of respondents were satisfied, down 12% since 2010.

FIGURE 7.1 – RESULTS OF ROADS SATISFACTION SURVEYS IN THE SCOTTISH BORDERS



7.3 Road Asset Management Plan¹¹

7.3.1 The Council Executive approved a Roads Asset Management Plan in April of this year which will help direct funding to the most appropriate locations throughout the Scottish Borders.

7.3.2 Asset Management is a collection of processes designed to ensure that assets are maintained as efficiently and effectively as possible within the available budget, through an inspect, prepare, prioritise and implement cycle.

A strategic Roads Asset Management Plan defines the strategy, policies and operational standards for managing and maintaining the Council’s roads asset.

7.3.3 It is the ambition of the Council to be in the upper quarter of Scottish Local Authorities in terms of the condition of our road network and associated infrastructure, but to achieve this ambition will require significant investment.

QUESTION 22 – The road infrastructure in the Scottish Borders is a very valuable asset. How do we ensure that this asset is suitably maintained and enhanced accordingly?

7.3.4 Additional information on road maintenance can be found on the Transport Scotland website¹²

¹¹<http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/consultations/j235740-00.htm>

¹²<http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/consultations/j10351-00.htm>

BEST PRACTICE

Blackpool Council – Project 30

Blackpool Council has undertaken a major four-year project ('Project 30') to address the backlog of maintenance on its highways and footways and to generate significant savings over the medium to long term. A significant outcome for Blackpool Council has been the ability to approve an investment of £30M in remedial works to bring the highway network into a condition that is fit for purpose and which will potentially save the Council an estimated £100m over the next 25 years.

Edinburgh, Lothians, Borders and Fife – Shared Services

Local Authorities are all facing the same challenge of constrained budgets and roads services that are experiencing a reduction in staff numbers, loss of expertise and limited specialised equipment required to meet public expectations. The ability of Local Authorities to work together is therefore considered an essential requirement to deliver efficiencies and ensure the sustainability of roads services for Scotland's communities. Developing formal sharing practices in roads services strongly aligns with Scottish Government's shared services agenda and response to the recommendations contained within the Christie Report.

The Edinburgh, Lothians, Borders and Fife Forum (ELBF) has been meeting for some time to discuss issues of best practice and potential sharing arrangements in a number of disciplines, including road maintenance.

To maintain momentum and development of work already undertaken, the ELBFF joined the Governance First Project in April 2014 to explore more formal governance options that would allow the participating authorities to benefit from collaboration from a legally secure and accountable body.

DISCUSSION POINTS

Maintenance Hierarchy

Should Scottish Borders Council concentrate funding on the key strategic road network (A and B class roads) in the Scottish Borders?

Future Funding and Management of the Road Network

In national terms, it is estimated that approximately £2 billion would be required to clear the maintenance backlog for the whole of Scotland, noting that this figure is split between Local Authority roads and the trunk road network.

Evidence suggests that the existing short term reactive approach that is currently adopted by Local Authorities throughout Scotland is inefficient and research has shown that reactive repairs can be four times more costly than planned preventative treatments. What approach should Scottish Borders Council take in relation to upgrading the local road network and reducing the existing maintenance backlog?

LOCAL ACCESS AND TRANSPORT STRATEGY

MAIN ISSUES REPORT

8. THE KEY ISSUES NO.5 – FORESTRY

8.1 Forestry in The Scottish Borders

8.1.1 Almost a fifth of the Scottish Borders is covered in forestry and the majority of this crop has reached or is approaching economic maturity. The transportation of timber from source to the point of processing can produce a number of social and environmental issues. However, timber harvesting is an important element of the Borders economy and timber transportation on the public road network is part of the harvesting process.

8.1.2 However, it should also be acknowledged that large timber vehicles can have an impact on existing roads, especially the minor roads which invariably link the forests to strategic road infrastructure. They can also have an effect on our small rural communities and therefore the management of this industry is a key issue for the more rural areas of the Scottish Borders.

8.2 Scottish Borders Timber Transport Forum¹³

8.2.1 Scottish Borders Council is a member of the Scottish Borders Timber Transport Forum and part funds along with other Local Authorities and the forestry industry a dedicated Timber Transport Officer to provide a direct link between the operators and the local communities.

8.2.2 The idea behind the development of the group was to try and identify a set of agreed rules for the transport firms and operators, including the production of an agreed routes map which is a network of roads throughout our area that are more suitable for timber transportation than others. This is a voluntary protocol that operators agree to implement to help restrict the number of timber related movements on routes that are less suitable for timber vehicles. More information on the agreed routes for timber transport throughout the Scottish Borders can be found on the Timber Transport Forum website¹⁴

QUESTION 23 – What other measures could be put in place to help improve and minimise the impact of forestry transportation in the Scottish Borders?

¹³<http://www.timbertransportforum.org.uk/Default.aspx?pid=1>

¹⁴<http://timbertransportforum.gaist.co.uk/#/PublicMainPage>

BEST PRACTICE

The Timber Transport Forum

The Timber Transport Forum was established in February 2000 to provide a mechanism for sharing ideas and best practice on timber haulage issues. A network of eleven Regional Timber Transport Groups - seven in Scotland, three in England and one covering Wales, help enable specific operational solutions to be found through Local Authorities working in collaboration with the forest industry. The Forum brings together representatives of the Regional Timber Transport Groups from England, Scotland and Wales; local government; central government agencies and the timber industry. Scottish Borders Council is a member of the Scottish Borders Regional Timber Transport Group.

Timber Transport Officer

The Timber Transport Groups of Dumfries & Galloway, Scottish Borders and Ayrshire have a dedicated Timber Transport Officer who acts as the liaison between the forestry industry, the public sector and the general public. They also facilitate the process of bidding into national funding and administering timber transport projects.

Good Practice Guide

The Timber Transport Forum has produced a good practice guide for all of the partners that are involved in the timber haulage industry. A link to this document is provided below.

http://www.timbertransportforum.org.uk/Upload/Documents/22_GoodPracticeGuide2012.pdf

DISCUSSION POINTS

The Rural Road Network

One of the key issues associated with timber extraction in the Scottish Borders is the impact of HGV traffic on local communities. The nature of the forestry industry means that the extraction of the timber to market normally has to take place on an inadequate minor road network, normally using roads that were not designed to take heavy vehicles and thereby presenting maintenance related problems to Scottish Borders Council.

Timber Transport Management Plans

There are a number of routes in the Scottish Borders which are recognised as being key to timber extraction but which are not up to Agreed Routes standard. Consultation with the Local Authority is required and it may be necessary to develop a management plan which can agree issues such as the number of loads per day, timing of loads and allowable tonnage etc. before the route can be used. An example of a route management plan in the Scottish Borders is on the B709 north of Innerleithen.

LOCAL ACCESS AND TRANSPORT STRATEGY

MAIN ISSUES REPORT

9. THE KEY ISSUES NO.6 – ROAD SAFETY

9.1 Approach Taken By Scottish Borders Council

9.1.1 Scottish Borders Council has a statutory duty to carry out traffic related accident studies in relation to the roads within the Scottish Borders and to try and take appropriate measures to help prevent such accidents. The three key elements of road safety development in the Scottish Borders are:

- The three “E”s of Enforcement, Education and Engineering;
- Scottish Borders Road Safety Working Group;
- Road Safety Strategy.

9.1.2 In June 2009 the Scottish Government set revised targets for accident reduction across a number of key headings. The base figures taken for these targets is the average accident figures between 2004 – 08 and the proposed target reduction is by the year 2020 with interim targets set for 2015.

9.2 Enforcement

9.2.1 Accident and casualty reporting is initially undertaken by the police and the statistics are passed to Local Authorities for validation. It should be noted that only injury accidents are recorded and notified by the Police and the accident figures quoted include those that occur on the trunk road network which is controlled by the Scottish Government.

9.3 Education

9.3.1 In common with almost every area in Scotland, young drivers make up a disproportionate amount of those involved in injury accidents, with road users under 26 making up a third of all casualties recorded. In addition young drivers make up a quarter of all fatal and serious casualties involving car occupants. Locally we continue to target new and future drivers through various education initiatives at schools and more recently the Scottish Borders has been leading the country with its funding of Advanced Driver courses for young drivers¹⁵. Nationally more stringent tests, graduated licences and night-time curfews are some of the areas that remain under active consideration.

¹⁵http://www.road-safety.org.uk/driving/young-drivers/young-driver-interventions/interventions/police_areas/lothian-and-borders/

9.3.2 Motorcyclists have also been a particular concern for the Scottish Borders for a number of years as they are attracted in large numbers to the area; in part by the nature of the roads and the challenge that they can present. There have been ten motorcycle fatalities in the area in the last five years and many more serious casualties which continue to be dominated by those over the age of thirty five. One area we have been attempting to address motorcycle accidents through is the “Around the Corner Campaign” which originated in the Lothian and Borders and has gone on to win national acclaim including a Prince Michael International Road Safety Award.

9.4 Engineering

9.4.1 The Council undertakes the engineering aspects associated with accident prevention on the local road network throughout the Scottish Borders and will continue to direct limited resources to locations where accidents are occurring. An annual allocation of £50,000 is currently available to spend on accident investigation prevention schemes in the Scottish Borders.

9.5 Scottish Borders Road Safety Working Group

9.5.1 The Scottish Borders Road Safety Working Group is the overarching body looking at road safety and vehicle accident prevention in our area. The Working Group is multi-partnership with representatives drawn from the Police, Fire and Rescue, RoSPA, Trunk Road Operating Company AMEY (formerly BEAR) and Lothian and Borders Safety Camera Partnership, in addition to the Council Departments of Place and People.

9.6 Progress

9.6.1 The long-term trend for the Scottish Borders is positive in that all categories of accident (fatal, serious and slight) are showing a reduction and that the rate of that reduction for fatal and slight accidents is in line with or better than the national targets that have been set.

FIGURE 9.1 – NUMBER OF PEOPLE KILLED IN THE SCOTTISH BORDERS BETWEEN 2004 AND 2013

Target 1: A 30% Reduction in the Number of People Killed by 2015 and a 40% Reduction by 2020

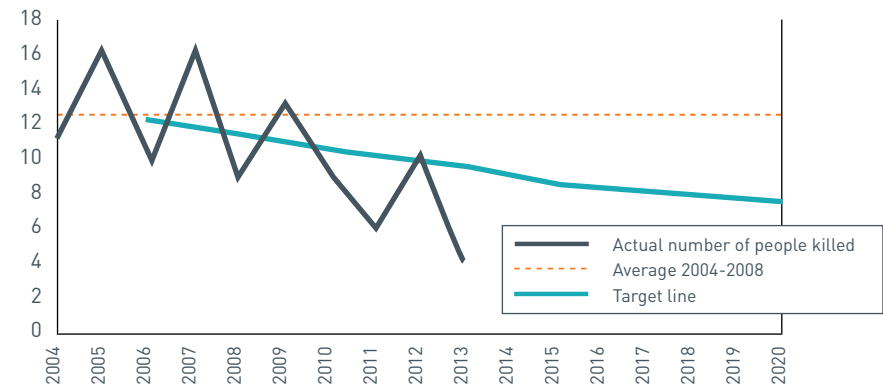


FIGURE 9.2 – NUMBER OF PEOPLE SERIOUSLY INJURED IN THE SCOTTISH BORDERS BETWEEN 2004 AND 2013

Target 2: A 43% Reduction in the Number of People Seriously Injured by 2015 and a 55% Reduction by 2020

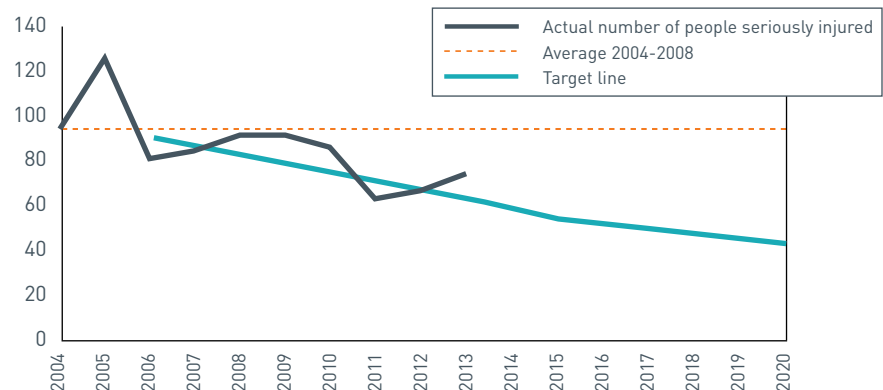
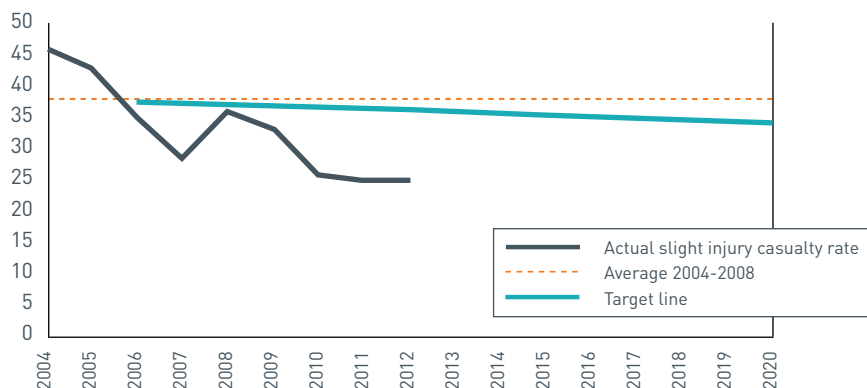


FIGURE 9.3 – NUMBER OF PEOPLE SLIGHTLY INJURED IN THE SCOTTISH BORDERS BETWEEN 2004 AND 2013

Target 5: A 10% Reduction in the Number of People Seriously Injured Rate by 2020



For more information on Road Safety please refer to Road Safety Scotland¹⁶

QUESTION 24 – How effective are existing prevention methods in the Scottish Borders?

QUESTION 25 – What other road safety initiatives would you like to see Scottish Borders Council initiate?

QUESTION 26 – If the Council was to consider more 20mph zones in the Scottish Borders, where should there new zones be located?

BEST PRACTICE

Around The Corner Campaign

Around the Corner is a proactive motorcycle campaign that was initially launched in the Scottish Borders and was designed to help reduce the number of collisions and casualties involving motorcyclists on selected routes. The Police use their own motorcyclists to interact with the biking community and inform them of the dangers of rural motorcycling. This unique initiative has played a significant part in reducing the number of motorcyclists killed and seriously injured in the Scottish Borders and is now being launched as the first Scottish National Motorcycle campaign. A link to the website is provided below
<http://www.aroundthecorner.org.uk/>

Advanced Driver Courses For Young Drivers

In common with almost every area in Scotland, young drivers make up a disproportionate amount of those involved in injury accidents, with road users under 26 making up a third of all casualties recorded. In addition young drivers make up a quarter of all fatal and serious casualties involving car occupants.

Locally we continue to target new and future drivers through various education initiatives at schools and more recently the Scottish Borders has been leading the country with its funding of Advanced Driver courses for young drivers. Nationally more stringent tests, graduated licences and night-time curfews are some of the areas that remain under active consideration.

¹⁶<http://www.road-safety.org.uk/>

DISCUSSION POINTS

Vulnerable Groups

There are a number of road users that continue to be of particular concern to Scottish Borders Council. These vulnerable groups include pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and young drivers. The Council will be prioritising projects that make an impact in relation to these more vulnerable groups.

Existing Budgets

Taking all the aforesaid statistics into account it is suggested that the Council continues to concentrate its Accident Investigation and Prevention resources on locations identified through the moving cursor programme that identifies where accidents are occurring. At the present time, the annual budget for road safety improvements is approximately 50k per annum.

Safety Cameras

The Lothian and Borders Safety Camera Partnership was set up in 2003 to help reduce collisions on the road network. The key aims were to:

- Reduce the number of people killed and injured on the Lothian and Borders roads;
- Help raise public awareness of the issues and dangers of inappropriate speed;
- Make speeding as socially unacceptable as drink driving; and
- Change long-term driver behaviour in relation to speeding and red light running.

The Partnership is made up of Police Scotland, the City of Edinburgh Council, Scottish Borders Council, West Lothian Council, East Lothian Council, Midlothian Council, Transport Scotland, NHS Lothian, NHS Borders, Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service and the Scottish Ambulance Service.

Safety cameras are normally placed at areas where there is a history of collisions and speeding.

20mph zones

The Council has implemented a number and variety of 20mph speed limit zones predominantly around schools. The aim of this initiative is to try and improve road safety conditions in our streets and encourage more of our children to walk and cycle to school. Should we be encouraging more 20mph zones throughout our towns and villages?

Other Issues

Nationally more stringent driving tests, graduated licences and night-time curfews are some of the areas that remain under active consideration to help improve road safety.

LOCAL ACCESS AND TRANSPORT STRATEGY

MAIN ISSUES REPORT

10. THE KEY ISSUES NO.7 – PARKING

10.1 Parking Management

10.1.1 Parking management is an essential part of an integrated transport strategy, helping to control the amount of vehicles in our towns and villages, ensuring that shoppers and visitors can access local facilities and providing enforcement for dangerous and indiscriminate parking.

10.1.2 Disabled Parking and the use of “Blue Badges” continues to be a key issue in the Scottish Borders. New laws were recently passed by the Scottish Government which gives Local Authorities the powers to confiscate and cancel blue badges if they are being misused.

10.1.3 There are currently 245,000 legitimate blue badge holders in Scotland, and Holyrood’s Local Government Committee said misuse of the blue badge scheme was having a “major impact” on the lives of people who rely on disabled parking spaces. In addition, research by Transport Scotland said that 83% of legitimate badge holders had encountered misuse. The new legislation will come into force next year.

10.1.4 The promotion of more sustainable forms of transport in the Scottish Borders such as cycling, developing our tourist offering and making our town centres more vibrant, requires secure and safe cycle parking in our towns and villages and needs to be debated.

10.1.5 Scottish Borders Council has delivered a programme of cycle parking provision in the majority of our settlements. However, are the current levels of parking adequate and are they in the right place to help encourage more people to cycle in our area and to visit our town centres?

10.1.6 For more information on parking please refer to the Scottish Borders Council web site¹⁷

10.1.7 On-street enforcement in the main towns and villages of the Scottish Borders is currently provided by Police Scotland. However, there has been a policy shift recently (February 2014) with Police Scotland making the decision to withdraw the role of Traffic Wardens across the whole of Scotland. Police Scotland is currently in the process of implementing that decision.

¹⁷http://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/1265/parking_and_car_parks

enforce on-street parking law in cases of illegal or indiscriminate parking of vehicles will adversely affect many communities in the Council area. Police Scotland have however consistently advised that “where parking is dangerous or causes significant obstruction they will task Police Officers to resolve the issue using the appropriate enforcement measure such as parking tickets.

QUESTION 27 – Have you noticed a difference in parking behaviour locally since the removal of traffic wardens – please expand on your answer?

QUESTION 28 – Is the current level of cycle parking in your town or village adequate? Is it safe and secure? What other facilities would you like to see which might encourage you to cycle?

QUESTION 29 – Are there adequate levels of disabled parking (off-street and on-street) in our towns and villages?

QUESTION 30 – What additional measures should the Council be doing to improve the parking in our town centres?

BEST PRACTICE

Ring – Go – Cashless Parking

Ring-go is an electronic application for mobile phones or tablets that allows you to pay for parking without putting money in a meter. The City of Edinburgh Council has embraced this technology and you can also use Ring-Go in selected towns within the Scottish Borders (Galashiels, Hawick, Melrose and Peebles).

DISCUSSION POINTS

Town Centre Parking

Should we look again at town centre parking charges in selected locations to help encourage turnover for shopkeepers? Should we consider reviewing the parking strategies for our key settlements, including the possibility of introducing electronic systems which indicate the number of free spaces in the busier locations?

Parking Enforcement

Scottish Borders Council is currently discussing how to deliver parking enforcement to the towns and villages of the Scottish Borders, following the decision by Police Scotland to remove the traffic warden service. One option is to go down the route of decriminalised parking enforcement which would probably consist of a private company employed by the Council undertaking the duties of the traffic wardens. However, this option would be expensive for the Council to implement.

HGV Parking

Do we have enough parking for heavy goods vehicles and are they located in the right places?

Cycle Parking

Should we provide more cycle parking in our towns and villages?

LOCAL ACCESS AND TRANSPORT STRATEGY

MAIN ISSUES REPORT

11. THE KEY ISSUES NO.8 – REDUCTION IN TRAVEL/LOW CARBON/ROAD TRAFFIC REDUCTION

11.1 **Electric Vehicles**

11.1.1 The Scottish Borders is seen to be an attractive area in terms of having a good work-life balance and has a hardworking and skilled workforce. A balance needs to be struck between encouraging increasing levels of business related traffic attracted by a growing and diversifying economy and the problems caused by localised congestion and levels of pollution.

11.1.2 One of the key areas of development in relation to climate change is the introduction of a network of charging points for electric vehicles. The Scottish Government is delivering a network of public 'rapid charger' charging points for electric vehicles (EV) across Scotland, which will provide charging for EV drivers. The charging scheme will also connect with points in Northumberland.

11.1.3 The £2.6million scheme, which includes £750,000 from Transport Scotland, will deliver charging points within every 50 miles on trunk roads and it is envisaged that an integrated network will join electric

vehicles with public transport. Charging points will also be available at leisure facilities, in Local Authority controlled car parks and at ferry terminals for travel to and from the islands.

11.1.4 In the Scottish Borders we currently have a growing network of charging points that are located throughout the area and are currently free to use. For more information on electric vehicles and charging provision, please refer to the Scottish Borders Council website¹⁸

11.2 **Digital Connectivity**

11.2.1 The development of a superfast broadband network for rural areas which encourages working from home and the development of local businesses is a key issue for the Scottish Borders. The provision of an upgraded network could encourage more businesses to our area and could enhance the productivity and opportunities for existing employers. More information on the Superfast Broadband Programme can be found at the Digital Scotland Website¹⁹

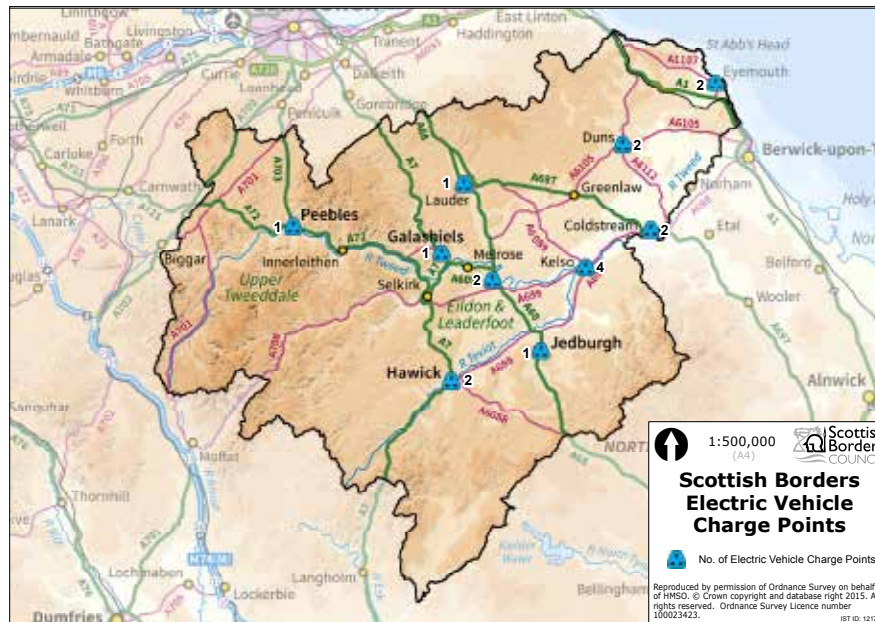
¹⁸ <http://www.scotborders.gov.uk/electricvehicles>

¹⁹ <http://www.digitalscotland.org/superfast-broadband/>

11.3 Flexible Working

11.3.1 Flexible working practices can deliver opportunities for employers and employees, including key aspects such as the introduction of a work-life balance for employees, especially in the area of child care and the reduction of commuting in peak hour travel, potential for reduced parking provision and office accommodation.

FIGURE 11.1 – DIAGRAM SHOWING ELECTRIC CHARGING POINTS



11.4 Climate Change Act (Scotland) 2009

11.4.1 The Climate Change Act (Scotland) 2009 sets a target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050. In order to achieve this target both culture and behaviour change is needed in addition to the use of new technologies and reduced carbon activities. Within Scottish Borders Council a carbon management plan is currently being developed to help address the targets proposed within the Climate Change Act and these proposals include flexible working, car sharing and the promotion of sustainable transport modes.

QUESTION 31 – What is your opinion on the provision of a network of charging points for electric vehicles throughout the Scottish Borders?

QUESTION 32 – What would be required to encourage you to work from home on a more regular basis?

BEST PRACTICE

Digital Connectivity

As previously noted in this document The Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband Programme is currently upgrading the existing network to provide superfast broadband to 85% of premises in Scotland by the end of 2015/16 and 95% by the end of 2017/18.

Electric/Hybrid Vehicles

Scottish Borders Council has helped develop a network of electric vehicle charging points throughout the local authority area and has also purchased a number of electric and hybrid vehicles as part of the Council fleet to help reduce the effect on the environment.

Edinburgh Hybrid Buses

Lothian Buses has recently purchased a number of single deck hybrid buses as part of its fleet of over 700 vehicles. The Volvo vehicles offer enhance fuel consumption and a much smoother operation for city journeys.

<http://lothianbuses.com/our-community/environment/hybrid-buses>

Hydrogen Bus Project - Aberdeen

Aberdeen City Council has invested in ten hydrogen fuel cell operated buses which are considered to be the world's largest fleet of this type of vehicle, along-with a hydrogen refuelling station. The buses are operated by First Group and Stagecoach and only emit water vapour, thereby reducing carbon emissions and air pollution.

<http://aberdeeninvestlivevisit.co.uk/Invest/Aberdeens-Economy/City-Projects/H2-Aberdeen/Hydrogen-Bus/Hydrogen-Bus-Project.aspx>

DISCUSSION POINTS

Mobile Phone Coverage

A recent Scottish Government report has highlighted the challenge facing the Scottish Borders in relation to 2G or 3G phone signal coverage. For example, the B709 north of Innerleithen has no signal for 90% of its length. Scottish Borders Council continues to argue that enhanced phone coverage is vital for rural areas such as the Scottish Borders in order to develop more opportunities for business development and flexible working.

Alternative Fuels

Should Scottish Borders Council along with public transport operators be investigating new fuels such as Hydrogen?

Flexible Working

Scottish Borders Council's 2011 Travel to Work Survey asked if people thought they could carry out their job more flexibly and if they did so at the moment. The results indicated that over 50% of respondents thought that they could do their job effectively from a hot-desk. A clear majority 63.7% thought they may be able to carry out their job effectively from home compared to the 26% that currently do. Nearly 32% thought they may be able to carry out their job effectively 'on the move' if they had the right technology, with just over 10% currently carrying out their job 'on the move'.

LIST OF SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

QUESTION 1 - Do you agree with the Vision for the LATS and do you have any alternative proposals?

QUESTION 2 - Do you agree with the main aims for the LATS? Do you have any other alternative proposals?

QUESTION 3 - What key projects should we be prioritising to help deliver the maximum benefits to the Scottish Borders?

QUESTION 4 - What should we be doing to try and encourage more economic and tourist related activity as a result of Borders Rail?

QUESTION 5 - What do you think are the positive and negative aspects associated with developing a relatively short extension of Borders Rail to Hawick and a longer extension to Carlisle?

QUESTION 6 - If the bid to develop a new local rail service between Edinburgh and Berwick is successful, what can we do to help ensure the long term viability of the service?

QUESTION 7 - What potential improvements to ticketing provision would you like to see implemented within the Scottish Borders?

QUESTION 8 - Are there any aspects of information provision that require immediate improvement?

QUESTION 9 - What are the positive and negative aspects of our existing bus services?

QUESTION 10 - What would attract you to use the bus more often?

QUESTION 11 - What possible improvements are required for taxi provision within the Scottish Borders?

QUESTION 12 - Where should the priorities for an improved off-road shared access network between towns and villages in the Scottish Borders be located?

QUESTION 13 - If the Council was to consider introducing a section of quieter road in the Scottish Borders as a pilot project, where should this pilot project be located?

QUESTION 14 - What other measures might encourage walking and cycling to school?

QUESTION 15 - If you believe travel planning should be a priority, how should the Council promote travel plans more vigorously with employers?

QUESTION 16 - Should the Council consider the promotion of further promoted routes for horse riders and if so where should these routes be located?

QUESTION 17 - Should the Council only concentrate on the key access routes within the Scottish Borders in terms of development, promotion and maintenance?

QUESTION 18 - How do communities feel about taking responsibility for managing a proportion of the local network?

QUESTION 19 - How should the Council promote walking in the Scottish Borders?

QUESTION 20 – Should we provide more of a focus or prioritise developing more information for cycling / walking routes linked to key tourist attractions?

QUESTION 21 – Are there any other aspects of Countryside Access that need to be addressed?

QUESTION 22 – The road infrastructure in the Scottish Borders is a very valuable asset. How do we ensure that this asset is suitably maintained and enhanced accordingly?

QUESTION 23 – What other measures could be put in place to help improve and minimise the impact of forestry transportation in the Scottish Borders?

QUESTION 24 – How effective are existing prevention methods in the Scottish Borders?

QUESTION 25 – What other road safety initiatives would you like to see Scottish Borders Council initiate?

QUESTION 26 – If the Council was to consider more 20mph zones in the Scottish Borders, where should these new zones be located?

QUESTION 27 – Have you noticed a difference in parking behaviour locally since the removal of traffic wardens – please expand on your answer?

QUESTION 28 – Is the current level of cycle parking in your town or village adequate? Is it safe and secure? What other facilities would you like to see which might encourage you to cycle?

QUESTION 29 – Are there adequate levels of disabled parking (off-street and on-street) in our towns and villages?

QUESTION 30 – What additional measures should the Council be doing to improve the parking in our town centres?

QUESTION 31 – What is your opinion on the provision of a network of charging points for electric vehicles throughout the Scottish Borders?

QUESTION 32 – What would be required to encourage you to work from home on a more regular basis?

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PLANNING POLICY AND ACCESS

Council Headquarters | Newtown St Boswells | MELROSE | TD6 0SA

tel: 01835 825138 | email: gjohnstone@scotborders.gov.uk | www.scotborders.gov.uk

