

Part 2 Full Integrated Impact Assessment

5 Data and Information

What evidence has been used to inform this proposal?

(Information can include, for example, surveys, databases, focus groups, in-depth interviews, pilot projects, reviews of complaints made, user feedback, academic publications and consultants' reports).

P. 4 of the Council Plan highlights, amongst other things, the key strands of evidence and policy which shape the Council Plan. Three elements of this diagram ought to be highlighted within this section.

1. The Council Plan is informed by local and national data and evidence. This includes, for example, demographic data (e.g. [Scottish Borders Council Area Profile \(nrscotland.gov.uk\)](https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk)), of data pertaining to poverty and deprivation ([SIMD \(Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation\)](#)), or of data related to climate change (see, e.g. [Scottish Emission Targets & Progress in reducing emissions in Scotland – 2022 Report to Parliament - Climate Change Committee \(theccc.org.uk\)](#)). Some of the data and evidence supporting the strategic vision expressed by the plan also arises from the Council's own documentation, such as the Council's Public Bodies Report, the Council's Education improvement plan, or the Scottish Borders anti-poverty strategy. This broad range of data underpins the vision for the Council for 2033, as detailed on p.5, ultimately providing the strategic context for the actions outlined in the rest of the document.

2. The Council plan is informed by the experience and aspirations of local communities. In gathering feedback on priorities for the draft plan, the Council has benefitted from engagement across a range of different processes, including:

- **Place-making.** Fundamental to the Council's engagement efforts are the town plans or place plans currently being developed within the four priority towns of Hawick, Eyemouth, Jedburgh and Galashiels identified within the Borderland Inclusive Growth Deal, as well as the place plans at different stages of progress across 58 other settlements. The purpose of these efforts is community led development in which communities come together to develop plans tailored to the needs and aspirations of their respective localities. By working with communities, particularly through its Community Engagement Officers, the Council enhances its understanding of what communities want, improving its decision-making about priorities and budgeting.
- **Community Conversations.** Undertaken through nine separate Community Conversations during September 2023, the Community Conversations are locality-based discussions led by Elected Members and senior officers to hear the thoughts and opinions of the members of the public on what is important to them. A report on 2023's Community Conversations was presented to Council on 25 January 2024 highlighting common themes of discussion around public transport, lack of local facilities, and the building of new schools.

- **Council Plan/Budget Consultation.** An online survey, between the 30th of November 2023 and the 31st of January 2024 invited members of the public to give their views, providing valuable feedback on citizens' priorities within key services areas.
 - **Secondary Schools Students Survey.** An online survey, between 9th of January 2024 and the 7th of February 2024 seeking the views on students at Scottish Borders secondary schools on the opportunities and challenges they face, the most important issues for region and how they would prioritise these.
 - **Consultation with all Trade Unions as part of the Council Plan and Budget planning processes.**
 - **Dialogue with Community Planning Partners.** Building on existing dialogue with partners across the region, a draft of the Council Plan was issued to Community Planning Partners for comments. The response from Community Planning Partners was supportive of the contents of the Council Plan.
3. Finally, performance against the Council Plan is reported to the Executive Committee on a Quarterly basis (see [Performance | Scottish Borders Council \(scotborders.gov.uk\)](#)). The performance reports inform the contents of the Council Plan at two levels. First, by measuring performance against the actions outlined in the Plan. Where the implementation is not progressing at an appropriate pace, this should generate improvement action, or, in some circumstances rescheduling of actions, including within future Council Plans. Second, in also focusing on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), the Council's performance reports facilitate differentiation of positive progress from problematic or a lack of progress, stimulating improvement activity where appropriate.

Describe any gaps in the available evidence,-then record this within the improvement plan together with all of the actions you are taking in relation to this (e.g. new research, further analysis, and when this is planned)

Strengthening the connection between data and research and the Council's strategic decision-making. In particular SBC is developing a new operating model and one of the workstreams within this is 'Data', recognising that a Data and Information Strategy is also already in development. Through these initiatives, the aim is to significantly improve the use of data and evidence across all Council departments, including the Council's business planning process.

Reason for recommendation:

As the analysis above highlights, there do not appear to be any negative effects arising from the proposals outlined within the Council Plan from April 2024. In addition, where said proposals will lead to new policies or projects, it is anticipated that ad hoc IIAs will be conducted.

Signed by Lead Officer:	Michael Cook
Designation:	Senior Policy Advisor
Date:	4 January 2024
Counter Signature Director	Clair Hepburn
Date:	06/03/2024

6 Consultation and Involvement

Which groups are involved in this process and describe their involvement

As noted above, the Council Plan is informed by consultations with local communities via the Community Conversation sessions which were organised over the Summer 2023, via the Council's place-making process, and via a consultation organised the Winter 2023-2024. It should be noted that the Community Conversations organised this year took place in schools across the Borders ensuring that the voices of younger people were represented and influence the Council's business planning process.

In addition, the Council Plan was informed by a substantial and broad range of internal consultation with services across the organisation, providing them with the opportunity to provide key actions to be delivered against the plan's 6 themes. The plan was also developed with oversight from the Council's Corporate Management Team, and Elected Members.

Describe any planned involvement saying when this will take place and who is responsible for managing the process

It is expected that future community conversations will be delivered over the year 2024, led by the Council's Communities Team, CMT and Elected Members. Feedback from the sessions will inform the plan as it is refreshed over the year 2024/2025. The same applies to the Councils' place-making process. In addition, continued engagement with Council services will continue as part of the development of the next iteration of the Council Plan.

Describe the results of any involvement and how you have taken this into account.

During Communities Conversation sessions, local residents expressed a broad range of concerns, in particular regarding the lack of transport connectivity across the region. Whilst improving transport connectivity has been one of the Council's key strategic objectives, we have ensured that transport actions feature prominently within next year's plan, notably under p. 9.

Engagement conducted with Borderers as part of the Community Conversations, place-making and the Council Plan and Budget Survey revealed concerns particularly about local public transport, a lack of local facilities, and the need for more efficient council services. As highlighted above, and in the *Council Plan and Budget Engagement and Consultation update* report, these concerns have informed the contents of the Council Plan, as reflected by a focus on public transport, actions aimed and improved service delivery, and actions focused on a more sustainable estate and service delivery, in partnership with local communities.

What have you learned from the evidence you have and the involvement undertaken? Does the initial assessment remain valid? What new (if any) impacts have become evident?

(Describe the conclusion(s) you have reached from the evidence, and state where the information can be found.)

The main conclusion from the evidence we have gathered is summarised on p.3 of the Council Plan. In essence, the Borders face a number of complex long-term challenges which have an impact on local citizens across equality characteristics: a Just Transition to Net Zero; Poverty; and Low Economic Productivity and Wages, as well as an ageing population, and issues surrounding transport and digital connectivity.

These conclusions are consistent with those we had reached prior to the publication of the Council Plan from April 2023. This was to be expected as those challenges are well-documented, long-standing, and require long-term solutions, as expressed on the same page.

7 Mitigating Actions and Recommendations

Consider whether:

Could you modify the proposal to eliminate discrimination or reduce any identified negative impacts?
(If necessary, consider other ways in which you could meet the aims and objectives of the proposal.)

Could you modify the proposal to increase equality and, if relevant, reduce poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage?

Describe any modifications which you can make without further delay (e.g. easy, few resource implications)

Mitigation			
Please summarise all mitigations for approval by the decision makers who will approve your proposal			
Equality Characteristic/Socio economic factor	Mitigation	Resource Implications (financial, people, health, property etc)	Approved Yes/No

8 Recommendation and Reasoning *(select which applies)*

- Implement proposal with no amendments
- ~~Implement proposal taking account of mitigating actions (as outlined above)~~ _____
- ~~Reject proposal due to disproportionate impact on equality, poverty, health and Socio-economic disadvantage~~ _____

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This assessment should be presented to those making a decision about the progression of your proposal.

If it is agreed that your proposal will progress, you must send an electronic copy to corporate communications to publish on the webpage within 3 weeks of the decision.

Complete the below two sections. For your records, please keep a copy of this Integrated Impact Assessment form.

Action Plan (complete if required)

Actioner Name:	Action Date:
What is the issue?	
What action will be taken?	
Progress against the action:	
Action completed:	Date completed:

Monitoring and Review

State how the implementation and impact of the proposal will be monitored, including implementation of any amendments? For example what type of monitoring will there be? How frequent?

The Council Plan will be monitored via the Council's Performance Framework. Performance report detailing delivery against the objectives within the plan are presented to the Executive Committee on a quarterly basis. Said report also includes the council's performance against key performance indicators.

In addition, the Council Plan is reviewed on an annual basis, providing a key opportunity to adapt delivery on the basis of the Council's performance.

What are the practical arrangements for monitoring? For example who will put this in place? When will it start?

Details regarding the monitoring for the Council Plan were presented to Council in a report on the 23rd of November 2023 (see here: [Agenda for Scottish Borders Council on Thursday, 23rd November, 2023, 10.00 am - Scottish Borders Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)). Monitoring is undertaken by the Performance Team, on a quarterly basis.

When is the proposal due for review?

The Council Plan is reviewed on an annual basis, with the present (2024/2025) iteration of the plan expected to be agreed by Council in February 2025.

Who is responsible for ensuring that this happens?

The responsibility for the development of the Council Plan lies with the Council's Business Planning Team, comprising of officers drawn from the Transformation Team and Corporate Policy Team.