



In the absence of being able to get out to all the sites where A&I colleagues are based and from where services are delivered, I'd like to take this opportunity, as we approach Christmas, to introduce myself.

I started in the A&I Service Director role in September of this year having previously worked at Turner & Townsend and Scotland's Rural College.

Over the last few months I've come to learn what a wide range of essential and valued services you are key to delivering, services that affect every single person living and working in the Borders.

In addition, I have to admit to already feeling pride for the way in which the A&I team have risen to the challenge in dealing with the unprecedented pandemic situation that we have all endured this year.

For your contribution I would like to give you my sincere thanks. As you'll be aware, we are not out of the woods just yet, however I am relying on your continued support and efforts as we work together through this difficult period of time, as we deal with new Level 4 restrictions and as we deal with the aftermath.

The changes we have experienced and the resilience you have shown is something that you yourselves should be proud of personally and, as a member of the Scottish Borders Council team.

In particular I would like to recognise the services of A&I frontline and support staff and managers, those who are seen by many as the "face of the Council" and who are key in maintaining SBC's excellent reputation with so many.

At the start of lockdown, when the streets were deserted, many of you were still out there making sure statutory Council services were being delivered to the general public and businesses; making sure that streets and parks etc were ready and safe for when they were able to be used. This must have been a very strange experience I'm sure and is much appreciated.

### **Change & FF24**

As you may be aware, the Council's Transformation FF24 programme has restarted after a period of pause whilst we prioritised dealing with the pandemic.

Through this programme, I am keen that we protect, develop and improve our services to ensure they are fit for the future. It is vital that **all** staff have the opportunity to work and develop themselves in a safe and supported environment. Change is a natural part of life and it can be difficult to deal with. My view is that sustainable and effective change is only really possible when staff have the opportunity to contribute and engage.

To support this I am pleased to say that in conjunction to working closely with all Service Managers, a dedicated team has been identified to work on the A&I programme. Julie Rankine, A&I FF24 Programme Manager, is taking a key role in communications and staff engagement.

There is a lot of work to get through and your involvement is essential. I look forward to seeing how we can work together as we develop our services and build upon the good work that you have done. There will be more to follow in the next FF24 briefing from Julie in the New Year.

**Finally I'd like to thank you all for your services this year, for taking the time to read this Briefing Note, and to wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas.**

John Curry, A&I Service Director