



SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL COUNCIL PLAN

FROM APRIL 2026

Foreword by the Council Leader.

As we present the refreshed Scottish Borders Council Plan from April 2026, we do so knowing that times are tough. Our budget is under pressure, and demand for services continues to grow. But even with these challenges, our commitment to the people of the Borders remains strong.

This Plan shows a Council that is focused, flexible, and determined. We know what matters most to our residents, and we are working hard to make the best use of every pound we spend. We recognise that the Scottish Borders is an overwhelmingly rural region— with dispersed towns, coastal and upland communities, and long travel distances to key services. That shapes everything we do. Over the past year, we've listened more closely than ever to our communities. Through our Community Conversations in September and October, people told us what's important to them— better transport, stronger infrastructure, more housing, good jobs and skills, and a fresh look at Live Borders. These views have helped shape this Plan and confirm our shared goals.

Despite the pressures, I am proud of what we've achieved this year. We've delivered real improvements that make a difference to people's lives. And as we look ahead, we are excited that the world's biggest annual sporting event, the Tour de France, will come through the Scottish Borders in July 2027, bringing global attention, significant economic benefits, and a moment of celebration for our communities.

We also know that working with others brings bigger benefits. The Scottish Borders Levelling Up Partnership, Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, the South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy, and the Edinburgh and South-East Scotland Regional Prosperity Framework are more than just plans—they are ways to bring investment, spark new ideas, and create opportunities for our communities.

But we can't do it alone. Success depends on strong partnerships—with government, local organisations, and most importantly, with our communities. Together, we can face the challenges ahead and build a future that is fairer, greener, and full of opportunity.

I believe in our people, our partnerships, and our shared purpose. By working together, we will continue to deliver for the Scottish Borders.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Euan Jardine', positioned above the printed name and title.

Euan Jardine
Leader – Scottish Borders Council

Introduction by the Chief Executive

Over many years, Scottish Borders Council has worked hard to be a flexible and focused organisation—ready to meet long-term challenges and make the most of new opportunities.

This Plan builds on the strong work we've already done. It's shaped by what we've heard from our communities, the dedication of our staff, and the partnerships that help us unlock new possibilities across the region. It looks ahead to the future, but stays true to the values that guide us: fairness, sustainability, flexibility, and a deep commitment to our people and places.

We are operating in a period of unprecedented financial constraint, with ongoing restrictions on public expenditure. This means we must prioritise what we do, ensuring that our resources are directed towards the areas of greatest need and impact. As a result, the Council is becoming a smaller, more efficient organisation—reflecting necessary reductions in staff, buildings, and some services, while maintaining our commitment to delivering for the people of the Borders.

These circumstances will require elected members to make some difficult choices about what we can and cannot afford to do. We recognise that not everyone will agree with the decisions we are forced to make, but we are committed to working openly and honestly with our communities as we move forward.

The Council Plan and budget are developed together because they are inseparable—the budget provides the resources to deliver the Plan. This year, delays to the UK Government's budget have pushed back the Scottish Government's local government settlement. This unavoidable delay means we may need to adjust our own timetable to keep the Plan and budget aligned once the settlement is confirmed.

As you read through this Plan, I hope you'll see not just the challenges we face, but the energy and determination we bring to solving them. We believe that by working together, we can make the Scottish Borders a place where everyone has the chance to thrive.

The structure of the Plan builds on our previous approach. It is:

- Short and clear, with key actions and goals;
- Linked to our Financial Plans, so ambition matches delivery;
- Shaped by community feedback, including local priorities;
- Tracked through performance, so we can learn and improve.

The Plan is part of our long-term vision for 2033. You'll see this reflected in actions for the whole region, and for each local area—Berwickshire, Cheviot, Eildon, Teviot & Liddesdale, and Tweeddale.

But the Council can't do this alone. Real progress depends on all of us—residents, partners, businesses, and community groups—working together. Whether it's taking part in local decisions, helping neighbours, or making greener choices, every action matters.

This Plan sets out how the Council will play its part. Now, we invite everyone across the Borders to play theirs.

Together, we can build a stronger, fairer, and more resilient region.

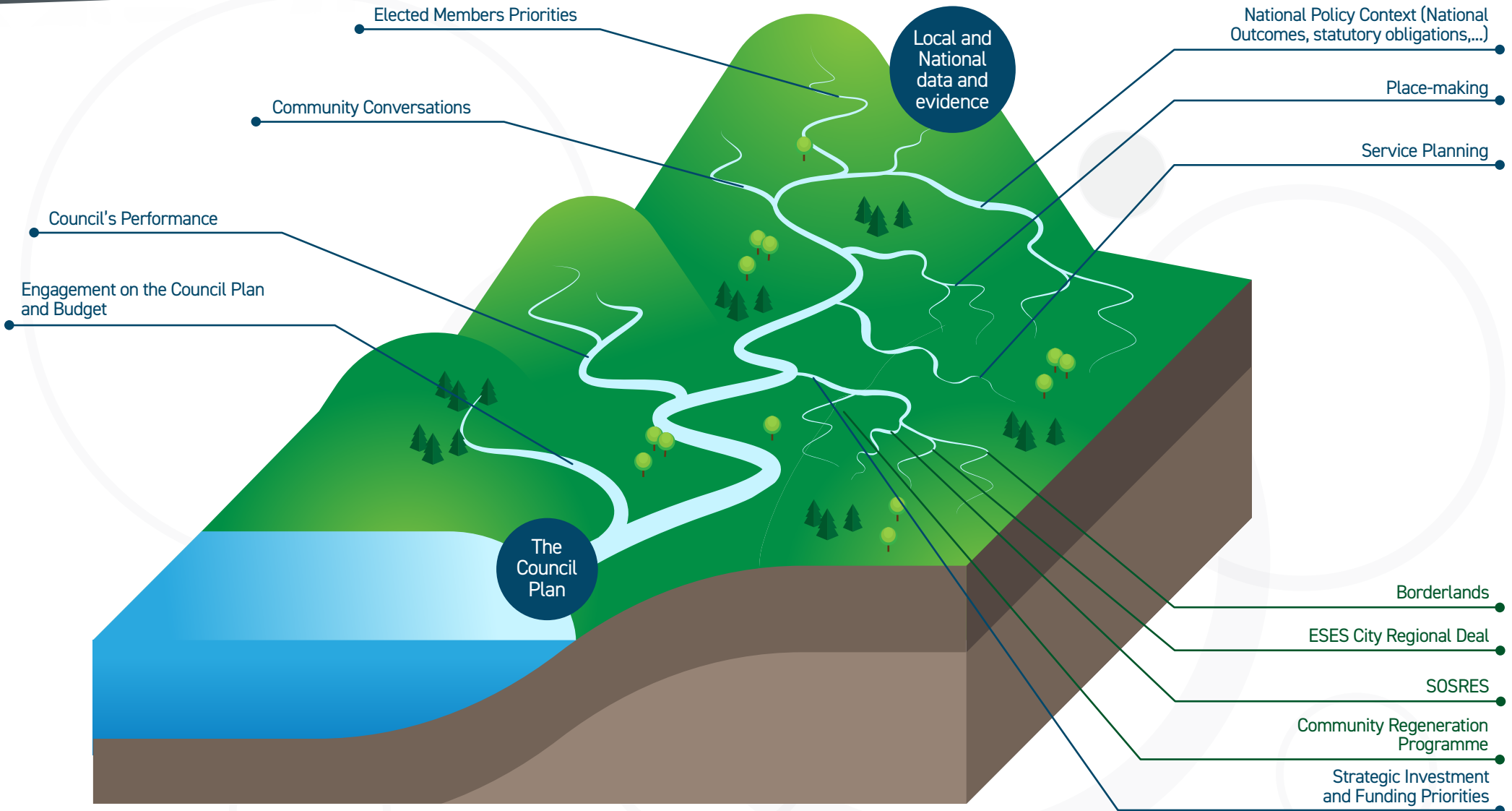


A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Robertson".

 #yourpart

David Robertson
Chief Executive – Scottish Borders Council

What shapes the Council Plan



Our Vision for 2033

Our Values

Agile

We take advantage of new opportunities to deliver good value for money, and we maximise the use of all digital opportunities.

Sustainable

We are passionate about the prospects of future generations; we demonstrate this in our decisions and delivery and ensure we live within our means.

People Focused

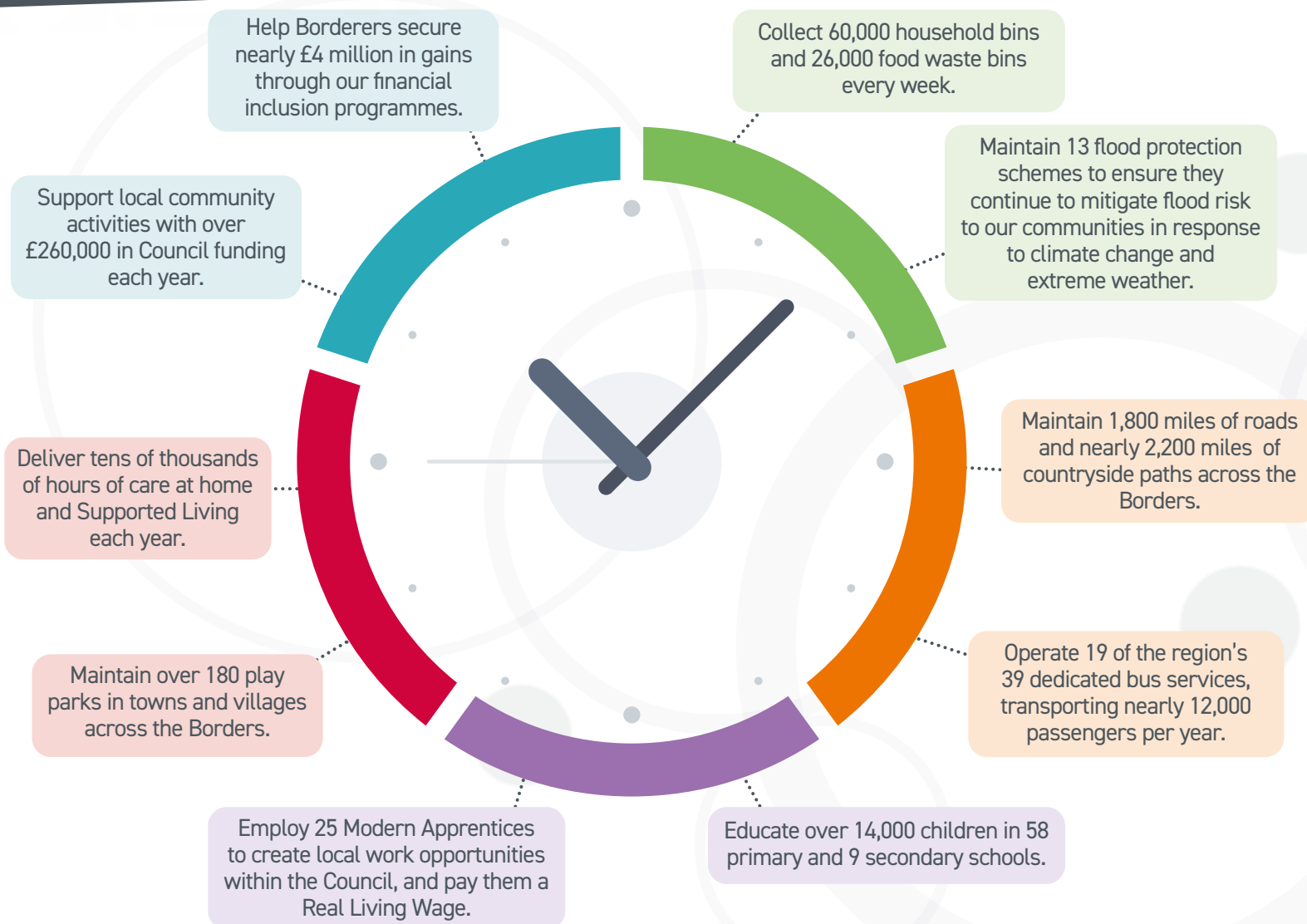
Working collaboratively with colleagues and partners, everything we do is for the benefit of our communities.

Inclusive and Fair

We ensure everyone has the best opportunities and always seek to act fairly.



Around the clock, people rely on the services provided by Scottish Borders Council.



And much more

- Provide over £370 million worth of services annually and invest £454 million in capital projects over the next decade.
- Delivered energy-efficiency measures to 120 Borders homes through £1.8 million in SBC funding.
- Generated 124 employment and skills opportunities across the Region by awarding 28 contracts with community benefit clauses.
- Supported over 400 victims of domestic abuse in 2024-2025.
- Provided 65 affordable homes in the region over the 2024-2025 financial year.
- Over the past year, we helped over 400 people move closer to positive destinations — from jobs and self-employment to work-based learning, volunteering, and accredited training that boosts long-term economic participation.
- Processed over 900 planning applications during 2024.



SCOTTISH BORDERS-WIDE ACTIONS



CLEAN GREEN FUTURE – EVIDENCE AND CONTEXT



What does the evidence tell us? The Borders has real strengths when it comes to a just transition. We're rich in natural assets, people already enjoy access to nature, the Council has improved its approach to biodiversity, and our recycling performance is excellent.

But to hit net-zero, SBC needs to focus on cutting emissions from its vehicles and buildings. Across the region, the shift to net-zero will mean greener farming, better housing, and cleaner transport.

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS – BORDERS WIDE

Most greenhouse gases in the Borders come from farming (55%), followed by transport (19%) and homes (14%).

RECYCLING

Last year, we recycled almost 58% of our household waste, while the rest of Scotland recycles about 44%.

BLUE AND GREEN SPACE

93% of people live within a 10-minute walk to parks or water, better than Scotland's 89%.

SBC FLEET

26 out of 32 of our pool cars are electric, which helps cut down on carbon emissions.

BIODIVERSITY

We take care of 51 hectares of public green spaces for nature.

SBC'S CARBON EMISSIONS

Over half of our greenhouse gas emissions come from heating buildings, and a quarter come from our vehicles.

CLEAN GREEN FUTURE

PRIORITY: Accelerate action to adapt to, and mitigate the effects of climate change and extreme weather.



Outcomes

- Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to meet or exceed our targets to deliver Net Zero by 2045.
- Positive behaviour change which supports sustainable use of resources and increased community resilience.

Actions - April 2026 to March 2027

- Deliver the priority actions set out in the Scottish Borders Council Climate Change Plan including specifically:
 - › A pathway enabling a 10% reduction in the physical footprint of our estate over the next 5 years, as part of a phased approach to reducing our carbon emissions in line with Scottish Government guidance.
 - › A minimum 3% per year reduction in SBC business mileage.
 - › A reduction in the emissions arising from our fleet by transitioning vehicles to alternative sustainable fuel.
- Work with the [Edinburgh and South-East Scotland](#) and [Borderlands](#) regional partnerships to accelerate emissions reduction and strengthen climate resilience, ensuring all programmes align with Scottish Borders priorities such as the [Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy](#).
- Continue to deliver on the Tweed, Solway, and Forth Estuary local flood risk management plans through community engagement, resilience-building and emergency response, while progressing flood studies and developing surface water management plans due by 2028.
- Develop a Climate Change Adaptation Plan that enables the Council and its partners to assess, prepare for, and respond to climate risks, ensuring long-term resilience for communities, infrastructure and the natural environment across the Scottish Borders.
- Begin developing Waste Collection Service Standards for the Scottish Borders, setting clear expectations for Council operations and public responsibility in waste collection, disposal, and recycling. These standards will enable consistent service delivery and support proper waste management to help achieve our Net Zero and recycling targets.

CLEAN GREEN FUTURE

PRIORITY: Accelerate action to adapt to, and mitigate the effects of climate change and extreme weather.



Outcomes

- An approach to energy in the Scottish Borders which is robust, affordable and which supports the region's response to climate change.
- Protected, managed and restored environments which support the wellbeing of people and nature, as part of Scotland's first Natural Capital Innovation Zone.

Actions - April 2026 to March 2027

- Continue to implement the Scottish Borders Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy and Delivery Plan (LHEES), so that our homes and buildings no longer contribute to climate change.
- Deliver Energy Efficient Scotland Area-Based Schemes (ABS) in Scottish Borders communities to improve energy efficiency, promote heat decarbonisation, and address fuel poverty. At the same time, seek to leverage community benefits where possible, building on previous examples, such as the provision of a defibrillator in Lauder and Eyemouth, or work experience for high school students with our ABS managing agent, Changeworks.
- Expand naturalised grass and habitat management across parks and greenspaces to deliver long-term biodiversity benefits, while increasing community involvement through improved on-site information, engagement, and co-designed projects supported by nature-based partners.
- Develop our first Litter Strategy to establish a strategic approach to litter management which will set clear standards, strengthen collaboration across communities, landowners, public bodies, and trunk road authorities, and ensure effective use of resources.
- Develop and publish Greenspace Management and Maintenance Plans that set out actions to enhance biodiversity and ensure the Council meets the 2030 Scottish Biodiversity Strategy target.

Fulfilling our potential – Evidence and Context



What does the evidence tell us? Overall, children and young people are doing well. School attendance is strong, most young people move on to positive destinations after school, and we're getting better at listening to their voices. But challenges remain. Attendance is lower among looked after children, and while attainment is getting better, more needs to be done to improve the results of children from less well-off families.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Over 1,000 young people helped create our [Youth Engagement Listen to Learn Strategy](#).

MODERN APPRENTICES

As of March 31, 2025, there were 783 modern apprentices in training in the Scottish Borders, with 80.8% completing their training.

NUMERACY AND LITERACY ATTAINMENT GAPS:

In the Borders, school attainment is excellent, but the gap in maths skills between students from the least well off and most affluent backgrounds is 17.5% for mathematics, and 22.4% for reading and writing. This is a significant improvement compared to 23/24, where the gap in literacy and numeracy were both over 30%.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION

We rank 6th in Scotland for participation of 16–19-year-olds in education, employment or training (95.3%). Primary school attendance reached 94%, secondary schools 90%, above the national average.

SCHOOL LEAVERS

Almost 97% of school leavers in the Scottish Borders go on to do something positive, such as a job, training or further study.

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

About 70% of looked after children in the Scottish Borders are cared for in the community, which is less than the average for Scotland (89%).

FULFILLING OUR POTENTIAL

PRIORITY: Empower schools and their communities to deliver a high-quality education focused on excellence, equity, wellbeing and improved outcomes for children, young people, and families.



Outcomes

- Create and maintain a culture that places children's rights, protection, development, and voice at the heart of decisions in which they have an interest, and ensure that the Council continues to deliver on 'the Promise' to care for experienced children and young people.
- Increase young people's participation in the planning, provision and delivery of services.

Actions - April 2026 to March 2027

- In partnership, deliver new, high-quality local residential and specialist education provision for children and young people with complex needs, reducing reliance on out of authority placements and supporting young people to live, learn, and be cared for in their own communities.
- Implement a commissioned independent advocacy service for children and young people in the Scottish Borders, shaped by their voices and those of their families, to ensure they are heard and supported in decisions that affect their lives.
- Expand the Imagine a Man programme by delivering targeted engagement sessions for parents and carers in 2026, building on school-based education to promote healthier understandings of masculinity and support whole-family wellbeing.
- Develop a dedicated engagement strategy for children aged 0-12, and begin work on a family engagement strategy to ensure that the views of our youngest citizens and their families shape local services and decisions.
- As part of the #SBCWay pledge engage children and young people, including those who are care experienced or have additional support needs, to shape what curriculum entitlement means to them, and use this insight to inform inclusive learning approaches across all settings.
- Implement the New Roots programme to provide tailored support for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children arriving in the Scottish Borders, helping them to settle, connect with communities, and access the care and opportunities they need to thrive.

FULFILLING OUR POTENTIAL

PRIORITY: Empower schools and their communities to deliver a high-quality education focused on excellence, equity, wellbeing and improved outcomes for children, young people, and families.



Outcomes

- Raise attainment through improved inclusion, equity and wellbeing for all children and young people.

Actions - April 2026 to March 2027

- Progress the transformation of the Senior Phase Curriculum (S4–S6) across all nine secondary schools by improving attainment, expanding qualification pathways, and enhancing equity of access through aligned timetables across all schools, and alternative models for S6 delivery.
- Deliver professional learning on neurodiversity and trauma-informed approaches for all education staff, and strengthen support for children and young people with additional needs through a cluster-based model that enables Additional Needs Assistants to be deployed flexibly across schools where support is most needed.
- Implement the New Quality Framework for Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) across all settings, in response to changes in the inspection regime, to drive continuous improvement and ensure consistently high standards.
- Implement revised ELC delivery models and complete Out of School Club analysis to support sustainable provision in settings with fewer than 10 children, ensuring all eligible children across the Borders can access their full ELC entitlements.
- Launch the first phase of a cluster-based family support model for children aged 0–5, providing bespoke, targeted and responsive support to help families thrive before children start school.

A Strong, Inclusive Economy, Transport and Infrastructure – Evidence and Context



What does the evidence tell us? The Borders faces economic challenges, but also real opportunities. Wages and productivity are lower than the Scottish average, even though employment is strong. There's huge potential for growth in energy, construction, and tourism, including through the notable development of Scotland's first Center Parcs between Selkirk and Hawick. We are well connected digitally and have a resilient SME base. When it comes to transport, we still rely heavily on cars, but the success of the Borders Railway shows people want better public transport, and we should build on that momentum.

PRODUCTIVITY AND WAGES

With GVA per head at £19,100 (below Scotland's £27,039) and weekly wages nearly £80 lower than the national average, we are boosting local productivity and pay by delivering major economic programmes, regenerating town centres, improving connectivity, and strengthening skills and training.

RAIL USAGE

More people used trains in the Borders in 2023/24, with a 27% increase from the previous year.

TOURISM

In 2023, there were 316,000 overnight visits to the Borders, bringing in £115 million to the region.

CAR OWNERSHIP

83% of households in the Borders own a car, showing how important cars are in rural areas.

BUSINESS LANDSCAPE

Over 95% of businesses in the Borders are small or very small, and we have more start-ups per head than the Scottish average.

EMPLOYMENT

Most jobs in the Borders are in health and social work (with 9900 employees), retail (6600 employees), and education (4700 employees).

POTHOLE REPAIRS

We ranked 1st in Scotland for number of potholes repaired, repairing more potholes than are reported.

BUS USAGE

Following our review of the bus network, passenger numbers have grown by around 70%, to 850,000 over 2024.

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

77.5% of working-age people in the Borders are employed, compared to 74% in Scotland.

STRONG INCLUSIVE ECONOMY, TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

PRIORITY: Deliver the key economic development programmes for our region - the South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy, Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, and the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal and Regional Prosperity Framework – making our economy stronger, greener and more sustainable.



Outcomes

- A stronger, greener, more inclusive economy, which promotes the wellbeing of our residents and revitalises our town centres, ensuring that local businesses and social enterprises thrive.
- Support young people and adults who face challenging barriers to finding and maintaining employment and reaching their full potential.

Actions - April 2026 to March 2027

- Deliver the Community Regeneration Programme (previously Levelling Up) comprised of:
 - › £20m in capital to develop, and implement, over 20 projects to boost the economy of Eyemouth, Galashiels, Hawick and Jedburgh.
 - › £250k in revenue to support recruitment of bus drivers, support [Borders Community Action](#), and drive place-making across the region.
- Deliver on the third year of the River Tweed Trail 5-year project, as part of the Destination Tweed Programme led by Tweed Forum, to create a 113-mile path linking Moffat to Berwick.
- Finalise the Culture Strategy and put in place the governance arrangements and action plans required for effective delivery.
- Work with [South of Scotland Enterprise](#) (SOSE) and local colleges to deliver targeted training that enables Borders residents to access upcoming roles at Center Parcs, ensuring both entry-level and skilled applicants are job-ready.

STRONG INCLUSIVE ECONOMY, TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

PRIORITY: Deliver the key economic development programmes for our region - the South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy, Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, and the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal and Regional Prosperity Framework – making our economy stronger, greener and more sustainable.



Outcomes

- Enhance digital and transport connectivity.

Actions - April 2026 to March 2027

- Continue to develop the business case for extending the Borders Railway from Tweedbank to Hawick and Carlisle, and advocate for more frequent services on the East Coast mainline to Reston station.
- Strengthen transport provision across the South of Scotland through a data-driven and collaborative approach with partners including Dumfries and Galloway Council and Transport Scotland, informed by actions arising from the Convention of the South of Scotland (COSS) and regional feasibility studies.
- Pilot a new approach to bus service promotion through the launch of a locally tailored timetable design that integrates places of interest to support tourism and increase public transport use.
- Support active travel across the region by implementing the Active Travel Strategy and Delivery Plan to promote healthier travel choices and improve connectivity, including:
 - > Develop a 'Quiet Ways' pilot, introducing reducing speeds to 40mph on rural roads to link settlements safely and encourage active travel.
 - > Complete Active Travel Audits in towns over 5,000 people to identify barriers and opportunities. Invest in active travel infrastructure such as bike parking, secure storage and improved links with public transport.

Empowered Vibrant Communities – Evidence and Context



What does the evidence tell us? We have vibrant, safe communities where people care about their neighbourhoods and want a say in local decisions. But our geography makes it hard for many to access services. Child poverty is improving but still a concern, and high homelessness rates show we urgently need more resilient housing options.

NEIGHBOURHOOD SATISFACTION:

97% of people think their neighbourhood is a good place to live.

CRIME RATES:

There were 390 crimes per 10,000 people in 2024/25 in the Scottish Borders, which is much lower than Scotland's 545.

VOLUNTEERING:

28% of adults participated in formal volunteering in the last year, more than the 18% for Scotland.

HOMELESSNESS:

With homelessness rising by 7% since 2021, the Council will reduce pressure by delivering Housing Emergency Action Plan measures and increasing access to affordable, energy-efficient homes through stronger locality-based planning.

CHILD POVERTY:

21.5% of children in the Scottish Borders live in poverty (after housing costs), a 2% reduction compared to last year and below the Scottish average.

GEOGRAPHY:

The Scottish Borders is the 6th largest council area in Scotland and the 4th most sparsely populated in mainland Scotland. Only 9 towns have more than 2,500 people.

ACCESS TO SERVICES:

With many rural communities facing long travel times to shops, essential services and employment, the Council is improving access by strengthening locality planning and investing in better-connected places.

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

With 31% of residents wanting a greater say in local decisions, the Council is strengthening community empowerment by expanding locality planning and supporting communities to shape the services and places that matter to them.

EMPOWERED VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

PRIORITY: Support communities and empower people to achieve strong, active, resilient and sustainable communities and to realise opportunities for improving people's lives.



Outcomes

- Community-led place plans across rural communities and towns to enable communities to take control of their own destinies and assets.
- Enhanced participation and engagement which empowers communities to shape the decisions which affect them.
- Reduce the number of children in poverty; and reduce the impact of living in poverty on families.

Actions - April 2026 to March 2027

- Progress the [Borderlands Place Programme](#) by finalising Town Investment Plans for Jedburgh, Galashiels and Hawick by March 2026, to be followed by Individual Project Business Cases enabling drawdown of £1.8m per town from April 2027. At the same time, progress the Eyemouth Town Investment Plan during 2026/27.
- Support communities in the Borders to develop their place plans, creating effective links within localities to deliver against the plans' ambitions.
- As part of the [Community Planning Partnership](#), develop, agree and implement locality plans for each of Bannerfield, Langlee and Burnfoot, based upon significant engagement with communities to ensure that plans respond to local needs, and inform future delivery.
- Continue to implement the 3-year Community Learning and Development plan supported by engagement with local communities, enabling us to better respond to local need.
- Deliver a targeted financial inclusion programme, using local and agency data to proactively provide income-maximisation, benefits uptake and cost-of-living support to priority families across the Borders.

EMPOWERED VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

PRIORITY: Support communities and empower people to achieve strong, active, resilient and sustainable communities and to realise opportunities for improving people's lives.



Outcomes

- Modern, sustainable and simplified services that meet the needs of communities and customers.
- Sustainable use of land and buildings.

Actions - April 2026 to March 2027

- As a pilot local authority working in partnership with the [Improvement Service](#), begin development of a [Community Wealth Building](#) strategy and action plan, including mapping current spend and impact, identifying gaps, building an anchor network, and establishing metrics to monitor progress.
- As part of the [Live Borders](#) review, support local communities to take ownership of community centres across the region, enabling local communities to better control those vital local assets.
- Deliver year 2 of the [Housing Emergency Action Plan](#), and continue to support the South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership Housing Action group to increase housing supply (including key worker and market-based homes) and improve access to the right homes in the right places through targeted awareness, and energy efficiency upgrades.
- Following public engagement, develop our '[Good Food Nation Plan](#)' in collaboration with NHS Borders, local food producers, [South of Scotland Destination Alliance](#) and [Borders Community Action](#), ensuring that everyone in the Borders has safe and reliable access to healthy and sustainable food, while promoting our local food producers.
- Continue to support [Borders Community Action](#) with over £650,000 of funding to improve the energy efficiency and sustainability of community facilities across the region.

Good Health and Wellbeing – Evidence and Context



What does the evidence tell us? People in the Borders are living longer and staying active, more so than the Scottish average. Our services are high quality and have helped cut care waiting times. But on average our population is older than the rest of the country. This is putting pressure on health and care services and will continue to drive up demand in the years ahead.

CARE-AT-HOME:

Over three-quarters of people getting care-at-home in the Borders say it has made their lives better.

CARE WAITING LISTS:

In 2024, we have made significant progress in cutting care waiting lists by 80% in 18 months, from 650 people to just over 100.

AGEING POPULATION:

26% of people in the Borders are 65 or older, and over half are over 50. For every 1,000 working-age people, there are 700 who aren't working. This is higher than the average for Scotland and is expected to grow.

QUALITY OF CARE SERVICES:

81% of adult care services in the Borders are rated good or better.

MENTAL HEALTH:

While 20% of people in Scotland have serious mental health issues, only 15% do so in the Borders.

LIFE EXPECTANCY:

In the Borders, women live to 82.1 years on average, and men live to 78.7 years, better than Scotland's averages of 80.7 for women and 76.7 for men. At the same time, improvements in life expectancy nationally have stalled.

FUTURE WORKFORCE NEEDS:

From 2024 to 2027, the Borders will need 800 more people in health and social work. From 2027 to 2034, this will grow to 1,900 people.

GOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING

PRIORITY: Ensure the people of the Scottish Borders have the opportunities and are supported to take control of their health and wellbeing, enjoying a high quality of life.



Outcomes

- People of the Scottish Borders are supported and enabled to take control of their health and wellbeing to enjoy a high quality of life. This includes ensuring support for unpaid carers.

Actions - April 2026 to March 2027

- Develop a complex transitions team to better support young adults with complex needs who transition from child to adult services.
- Improve how Self-Directed Support is applied across services for adults, ensuring better clarity for those who use SDS and empowering individuals with greater choice and control over their care arrangements.
- Scope Digital Care and proactive Technology Enabled Care supports, with a view to ensuring that this can support individuals with their health, wellbeing and independence.
- Assess and facilitate the repatriation of out-of-area high dependency clients to local care home provision.
- Develop delivery plans to achieve the outcomes in the Sport & Physical Activity Strategy.
- Redesign and procure care-at-home provision to support people in their own homes and to better meet their needs.

GOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING

PRIORITY: Ensure the people of the Scottish Borders have the opportunities and are supported to take control of their health and wellbeing, enjoying a high quality of life.



Outcomes

- Services are designed around service users' needs and focus on prevention, early intervention and minimising health inequalities.

Actions - April 2026 to March 2027

- Further develop the Community Led Support Model and strengthen the [What Matters Hubs](#), with enhancements to how we monitor outcomes, with a view to supporting continuous improvement.
- Provide a faster, more reliable Adult Support and Protection response by strengthening how we schedule and co-ordinate officers.
- Consult with key stakeholders and partners to develop the Scottish Borders Commissioning Strategy, including a focus on early intervention, prevention, evidence-based commissioning, and improved outcomes for communities.
- Review third sector provision within the community to better meet the needs of our communities and tackle inequalities through a more strategic approach to grant-giving and commissioning services based on need.

Working Together, Improving Lives

– Evidence and Context



What does the evidence tell us? SBC is facing big financial pressures. Demand for services is rising, but funding isn't keeping pace, and budget flexibility is limited. Despite this, we've taken bold steps: delivering savings, driving transformation, and focusing investment where it makes the biggest difference for Borderers.

COUNCIL TAX

Council Tax in the Scottish Borders is the 5th lowest in mainland Scotland, and 7th lowest overall once the island councils are included.

TALENTED LOCAL WORKFORCE:

SBC invests in 'grow your own', modern apprenticeship & graduate apprenticeship programmes, including for teachers, HGV drivers and social workers.

BUDGET SAVINGS:

SBC plans to deliver savings of £34 Million between 2025/26 and 2029/30.

OUR BUDGET:

We have a yearly budget of over £370 million but will face a £69 million gap in 2034/35 if we don't deliver required savings every year.

STRATEGIC PEOPLE PLAN

SBC has a [Strategic People Plan](#) to ensure the Council has the right people with the right skills in the right positions at the right time to achieve its objectives.

INVESTMENT & TRANSFORMATION:

SBC's replenishing £20 Million Change Fund is already allowing new ways of working to be developed.

FAIR WORK

Scottish Borders Council has been a fair work employer since 2019, and agreed a new [Fair Work First Statement](#) in 2025.

WORKING TOGETHER, IMPROVING LIVES

PRIORITY: Ensure that Scottish Borders Council is effective, sustainable, responsive and aligned to the needs and priorities of our communities.



Outcomes

- Services are designed to meet people's needs.
- Best value is achieved across all services.
- There is a positive and supportive Council-wide culture
- SBC maximises capacity and performance by developing necessary job skills for everyone.

Actions - April 2026 to March 2027

- Redesign Business Support and Customer Advice services by streamlining processes and embedding modern digital solutions to improve customer experience and ensure easier access to SBC services.
- Develop a programme of productivity improvements across all SBC services that maximises the use of digital tools to deliver more streamlined and efficient services, whilst maintaining and enhancing quality and customer focus.
- Deliver the full set of recommendations from the Audit Scotland Thematic Best Value Audit, to ensure robust governance and reporting around [SBC's Transformation Programme 2025-2030](#).
- Deliver our [equality mainstreaming objectives](#) and continue to develop and implement employee wellbeing initiatives.
- Deliver greater focus on learning, development, and career progression across leaner structures by digitally upskilling the workforce and continuing to develop the grow your own programme and career pathways.

WORKING TOGETHER, IMPROVING LIVES

PRIORITY: Ensure that Scottish Borders Council is effective, sustainable, responsive and aligned to the needs and priorities of our communities.



Outcomes

- SBC is an employer of choice.
- Digital technology is maximised to make service delivery better.
- Better outcomes are delivered through effective partnership working.

Actions - April 2026 to March 2027

- Promote SBC's staff benefits scheme and other advantages of being an SBC employee such as membership of the Local Government or Teachers' Pension Scheme, salary sacrifice options, and training opportunities to attract talented employees that will further enhance the quality of SBC's delivery of essential services.
- Expand the secure and ethical use of AI tools across all SBC services to maximise the opportunities for service improvement, personalised services, and financial efficiencies.
- Undertake a review of the use of all Microsoft products across SBC with a view to maximising their value in driving up productivity and providing better business solutions.
- Implement In-cab technology for Waste Collection Vehicles that allows real-time sharing of information with crews across the area to minimise missed collections; and to maximise data-driven responsiveness and customer satisfaction.
- In partnership with [Live Borders](#), deliver all 2026/27 actions within the ambitious programme of Transformation that will secure long-term sustainability of good quality Sports, Leisure, Culture and Arts services across the Scottish Borders.



LOCALITIES ACTIONS



Progress the design and delivery of a new Early Years and Family Centre in Eyemouth, aligned to the Council's December 2025 decision to withdraw previous relocation proposals and to undertake refreshed community engagement on the future of Eyemouth Primary. Phasing and site will be confirmed following that engagement, with an updated delivery timeline published thereafter.

Funded by the [Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal](#), market business units in Coldstream Industrial Estate, and develop new business units in Eyemouth, attracting businesses to grow the local economy.

Deliver an area-based, energy-efficient Air Source Heat Pump scheme, initially targeting off-gas towns in Mid and East Berwickshire, but with eligibility open area-wide, installing the first 20 systems through an estimated £330,000 investment.

Develop a proposal for Extra Care Housing in the Eyemouth area in conjunction with our strategic housing providers, and in line with local planning.

Invest £133,000 through the Coastal Communities Fund to deliver seven community-led projects across Berwickshire, enhancing coastal access, play provision, marine education, and local skills development in Eyemouth, Coldingham and St Abbs.



BERWICKSHIRE:

This page presents priority work for Berwickshire for the coming year. Many of the projects are led by others working in our communities and we will take an enabling approach to provide advice and practical support to delivery.

Continue to support [Eyemouth Harbour Trust](#) and [South of Scotland Enterprise](#) with the development of new and improved port facilities as part of the Eyemouth Masterplan.

Progress the [Pollinators Along the Tweed](#) projects in Leet Green and Coldstream enhancing biodiversity and local amenity as part of the [Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal](#).

Finalise the Berwickshire Coastal Change Adaptation Plan detailing the future management of the coastline to mitigate coastal flooding and erosion.

Deliver a destination playpark and pump track in Eyemouth. Support Coldingham Community Council, and others, in developing their vision for play park enhancement in their community.

Support the Eyemouth Town Team in implementing their Town Plan and developing the associated Investment Plan as part of the [Borderlands Place Programme](#), and support local communities in developing and implementing a place plan for each of Abbey St Bathans, Bonkyl & Preston, Coldstream, Duns and District, Leitholm, Eccles and Birgham, Foulden, Mordington & Lamberton, and Lammermuir.

Support the Jedburgh Town Team in implementing their Town Plan and developing the associated Investment Plan, as part of the [Borderlands Place Programme](#), and support local communities in developing and implementing a place plan for Smailholm, and Eckford.

Support the redevelopment of Maxmill Park in Kelso to create new business and economic opportunities within the local hospitality sector.

Progress the restoration and upgrade of the high-profile Bakery Building in Jedburgh Town Centre.

Support the transformation of disused [SBHA](#) garages in Jedburgh into accessible, affordable homes within established communities, delivering Scotland's first Garages to Homes scheme and supporting local housing needs.

Progress structural improvements at 3-5 Exchange Street, Jedburgh, to ensure the premises are safe, secure and fit for future use, with completion expected during the Summer 2026.



CHEVIOT

This page presents priority work for Cheviot for the coming year. Many of the projects are led by others working in our communities and we will take an enabling approach to provide advice and practical support to delivery.

Support S1 pupils to co-design and deliver a series of youth-led improvement projects at Kelso Skate Park, strengthening local engagement and enhancing recreational spaces for young people.

Progress the demolition and marketing of the former Jedburgh Grammar School site, subject to approval of reallocated external funding, to reduce ongoing revenue costs.

Deliver an area-based energy efficient solar PV and battery storage scheme in St Boswells, targeting 50 properties to improve their energy efficiency, with an estimated £620,600 investment

Develop a feasibility study and detailed streetscape design for the Jedburgh town centre corridor, working with the [Jedburgh Tourism Alliance](#), and progress detailed designs and a costed plan for the Gap Site streetscape project.

Deliver refurbishment of changing rooms at Kelso Swimming Pool to enhance user experience and maintain high-quality leisure facilities for the community.

Support the Galashiels Town Team in implementing their Town Plan and developing the associated Investment Plan, as part of the [Borderlands Place Programme](#), and support local communities in implementing a place plan for Selkirk and the Valleys, Earlston, Stow, Ettrick and Yarrow, and Lauder.

Progress the creation of a wildflower meadow in Tweedbank, completing plug planting by spring 2026 in partnership with [Buglife Scotland](#) and [Destination Tweed](#).

Begin delivery on the Bannerfield and Langlee locality plans, focusing on socio-economic challenges and responding to local community aspirations.

Collaborate with the Gala Policies Friends group in developing and delivering the Gala Policies Management Plan.

Progress the development of the 60-bed Tweedbank Care Village, creating a community-integrated neighbourhood that replaces institutional models of care and supports more personalised, modern living arrangements.



EILDON

This page presents priority work for Eildon for the coming year. Many of the projects are led by others working in our communities and we will take an enabling approach to provide advice and practical support to delivery.

Complete Phase 2 of the Borders Innovation Park at Lowood by 2026/27, expanding business space to support enterprise growth. Progress Full Business Cases for both the Tweedbank Strategic Site (focused on housing and a care village) and Phase 3 of the Innovation Park.

Finalise the new Galashiels Academy by Summer 2026, co-locating community sports and leisure facilities within the school building to strengthen local access, and promote inclusive use of shared spaces.

Deliver improved access to Borders General Hospital by installing a new bus stop with real-time information displays and active travel links, as part of the Community Regeneration Programme funded infrastructure investment.

Support Melrose Football Club with investment to improve changing facilities for children and young people, enhancing access to sport and community wellbeing.

Regenerate Galashiels town centre through targeted housing and infrastructure investment. Invest in Glenfield footbridge and support [SBHA](#) to acquire and redevelop assets on Croft Street, creating new social housing above and ground-floor units for social enterprise use.

Support the Hawick Town Team in implementing their Town Plan and developing the associated Investment Plan, as part of the [Borderlands Place Programme](#), and support local communities in developing and implementing a place plan for each of Upper Liddesdale and Hermitage, Upper Teviotdale and Borthwick Water, Denholm and District, Hobkirk and Southdean.

Progress the Full Business Case for the [7stanes](#) mountain biking upgrade in Newcastleton, securing £1 million investment to enhance site infrastructure and support outdoor tourism and economic growth in the South of Scotland.

Deliver training through a professional textile tutor for 5th and 6th year students in traditional heritage craft skills, supporting achievement of qualifications at SQA Higher level and a final community exhibition of items produced at the Borders Tower House Museum.

Develop the Full Business Case in 2026/27 for new business units at Gala Law in Hawick, supporting local enterprise growth and strengthening infrastructure for small businesses in Teviot & Liddesdale.

Begin delivery on the Burnfoot locality plans, focusing on socio-economic challenges and responding to local community aspirations, and continue working with the community and local partners to tackle anti-social behaviour in the area.



TEVIOT AND LIDDESDALE

This page presents priority work for Teviot and Liddesdale for the coming year. Many of the projects are led by others working in our communities and we will take an enabling approach to provide advice and practical support to delivery.

Work with the community and Cash Access UK to prepare for the opening of a community banking hub in Hawick.

Commence the refurbishment of Deanfield Care Home to facilitate a longer-term change in the model to deliver nursing, enhanced residential, and bed-based respite care.

Invest £0.5 million in housing condition surveys in Burnfoot by 2026 to assess energy efficiency needs in an area of high deprivation, informing targeted improvements that support climate goals and reduce fuel poverty.

Provide £102,000 of funding to refurbish and upgrade facilities at Hawick Youth Centre, improving access to safe, inclusive spaces for young people.

Continue to deliver a large-scale active travel behaviour change programme in Hawick, through the ['No More Ridonkulous Car Trips'](#) campaign, encouraging healthier travel choices and reduce car dependency through community-led engagement, a model which we seek to expand across the Borders.

Begin site works at the Chambers Institution in 2026 to improve building accessibility, including installation of a lift, ensuring inclusive access to this cultural and community facility in Peebles. In addition, support the Chambers Institution Trust with a Phase 2 Feasibility Study.

Support local communities in developing and implementing a place plan for Peebles, Innerleithen, Tweedsmuir, Walkerburn and West Linton, as well as the delivery of a community action plan for Skirling.

Develop a new gym, studio, and health suite, in improving community access to health and fitness services.

Continue to develop a 5G-enabled monitoring project in Tweedsmuir by 2026/27, as part of the [Destination Tweed](#) initiative, to measure visitor numbers, water levels, and air quality. If successful, expand the model to other trail locations and explore replication in remote areas, supported by a new 5G mast near the Bunkhouse.

Support [SOSE](#) in the delivery of the Mountain Bike Innovation Centre and Bike Park in a brand-new facility at the Caerlee Mill site.



TWEEDDALE

This page presents priority work for Tweeddale for the coming year. Many of the projects are led by others working in our communities and we will take an enabling approach to provide advice and practical support to delivery.

Commence demolition of the former Peebles High School site and deliver associated external works following completion of the new school.

Continue to support the local community to develop a bunkhouse to complement the existing café project at the historic Crook Inn Bunkhouse site in Tweedsmuir, linked to the River Tweed Trail.

Develop proposals for feasibility works for the Gytes Centre and Peebles Swimming Pool to identify opportunities for consolidating facilities, maximising usage, generating income, and reducing costs, and progress discussions with community groups on potential asset transfer for part of the facility.

Progress the Coming Home Programme with a focus on securing sustainable housing options, strengthening the specialist workforce, and working with partners to secure long-term funding streams to enable adults with learning disabilities and complex needs to return to, or remain in, the Scottish Borders.

Scope the options for a refurbishment of Green Gardens learning disability services, and consult on the proposal to relocate Leader Valley Tweeddale provision within bespoke accommodation in this facility.