
Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

Stage 1 Scoping and Assessing for Relevance

Section 1 Details of the Proposal

A. Title of Proposal: Council Plan from April 2026

B. What is it? A revised Policy/Strategy/Practice

C. Description of the proposal: Yearly refresh of the Council Plan, covering the financial year 2026/2027.

D. Service Area: Corporate Policy

Department: Finance and Procurement

E. Lead Officer: Cook, Michael

F. Other Officers/Partners involved: (List names, job titles and organisations)

G. Date IIA completed: 08/01/2026

Section 2 Will there be any impacts as a result of the relationship between this proposal and other policies?

Yes

If yes, - please state here

06/02/2026 Financial Plan of the Council from April 2026. Strategic People Plan – from April 2026. Any new plan and strategy from April 2026 will respond to the strategic objectives framed in the plan.

Section 3 Legislative Requirements

3.1 Which groups of people do you think will be or potentially could be, impacted by the implementation of this proposal?

(You should consider employees, clients, customers / service users, and any other relevant groups).

In considering the impact of your proposal on people with equality characteristics, you should take into account the fact that the Equality Act 2010 covers:

- A. **Elimination of discrimination (both direct & indirect), victimisation and harassment.** (Will the proposal discriminate? Or help eliminate discrimination?)
- B. **Promotion of equality of opportunity?** (Will your proposal help or hinder the Council with this)
- C. **Fostering good relations?** (Will your proposal help to foster or encourage good relations between those who have different equality characteristics?)

Protected Characteristics:

Please describe the potential impacts, and how any negative impacts could be mitigated. Some negative impacts may not be capable of mitigation, but the proposal as a whole may still be regarded as a proportionate means of achieving its outcomes.

Age: Older or younger people or a specific age grouping

06/02/2026 Positive Impacts Climate Change Commitment The Council Plan includes a strong commitment to tackling climate change (see pp. 8–10). Climate change disproportionately affects older people and children/young people (see Climate Change and the Health of Older Adults | US EPA; Climate change impacts on child and adolescent health and well-being: A narrative review – PMC). Therefore, actions to mitigate climate impacts are expected to benefit these groups significantly. Support for Children and Young People Under the Fulfilling Our Potential theme, several actions are designed to improve outcomes for younger people, including: Implementing a commissioned and independent advocacy service for children and young people in the Scottish Borders, shaped by their voices and those of their families. Developing a dedicated engagement strategy for children aged 0–12, and initiating a family engagement strategy to ensure the views of our youngest citizens shape local services. Implementing revised Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) delivery models and completing Out of School Club analysis to support sustainable provision in settings with fewer than 10 children, ensuring all eligible children can access their full ELC entitlements. Focus on Child Poverty The Empowered Vibrant Community theme prioritises tackling child poverty (see p.18). Investment in Education Infrastructure Planned development of school facilities in Gala, Peebles, and Hawick will enhance learning environments for children and young people. Indirect Impacts Strategies developed beyond the Council Plan are anticipated to have positive impacts by embedding the values outlined in the Vision section. These represent indirect benefits aligned with the Plan's principles. Fostering Good Relations The Council Plan promotes engagement and inclusion through: Extensive community engagement during

development, including targeted conversations with young people and broader engagement events (see COUNCIL PLAN and BUDGET ENGAGEMENT and CONSULTATION UPDATE). A budget survey capturing feedback from a wide demographic range (see COUNCIL PLAN and BUDGET ENGAGEMENT and CONSULTATION UPDATE). This approach supports positive relations across age groups. **Accessibility** The Plan has been designed with improved accessibility features, including enhanced text contrast, larger font sizes, and video content. These measures ensure the Plan is accessible to people of all ages and abilities. **Further Assessment** The Council Plan sets out strategic ambitions. Individual projects within the Plan will be subject to separate IIAs as they progress.

Disability: A physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities. This may be visible or invisible, progressive or recurring.

06/02/2026 **Positive Impacts Accessibility of the Council Plan** The Plan has been designed with improved accessibility features, including enhanced text contrast, larger font sizes, and video content. These measures ensure that the Plan is accessible to people with disabilities and supports inclusive engagement. **Specific Actions Supporting People with Disabilities** The Council Plan includes several commitments expected to have a positive impact on people with disabilities: 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. Expand the adoption of Self-Directed Support within Adult Social Care and Learning Disability services, empowering individuals with greater choice and control over their care arrangements. Invest in proactive Technology Enabled Care solutions, giving service users more flexibility in how their support is delivered and freeing up capacity for essential care visits. **Health and Wellbeing Focus** Under the Good Health and Wellbeing theme, the Council Plan sets out an ambition to empower residents to prioritise their health and wellbeing, with a strong emphasis on early intervention, accessibility, and prevention. **Indirect Impacts** Strategies developed beyond the Council Plan are anticipated to have positive impacts by embedding the values outlined in the Vision section. These represent indirect benefits aligned with the Plan's principles. **Fostering Good Relations** The Council Plan was developed through extensive community engagement, including targeted efforts to involve people with disabilities. This inclusive approach helps foster good relations and ensures that the voices of people with disabilities inform decision-making (see COUNCIL PLAN and BUDGET ENGAGEMENT and CONSULTATION UPDATE). **Further Assessment** The Council Plan sets out strategic ambitions. Individual projects within the Plan will be subject to separate IIAs as they progress.

Sex: Women and men (girls and boys)

06/02/2026 Positive Impacts Inclusive and Fair Values The Council Plan identifies inclusive and fair as a core value (see p.5). Actions within the Plan are designed to have a positive impact on all individuals, regardless of sex. Specific Actions Some actions are expected to have a targeted impact: Imagine a Man Programme The Plan commits to expanding the Imagine a Man programme by delivering targeted engagement sessions for parents and carers in 2026. This builds on school-based education to promote healthier understandings of masculinity and support whole-family wellbeing. Indirect Impacts The Council Plan's overarching commitment to equality and fairness is expected to generate indirect benefits for all sexes through inclusive policy development and service delivery. Further Assessment The Council Plan sets out strategic ambitions. Individual projects within the Plan will be subject to separate IIAs as they progress.

Gender Reassignment: Anybody who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing, or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.

06/02/2026 Positive Impacts Inclusive and Fair Values The Council Plan identifies inclusive and fair as a core value (see p.5). Actions within the Plan are designed to have a positive impact on all individuals, regardless of gender identity. Beyond this overarching commitment, no specific impacts—positive or negative—are anticipated for people with the gender reassignment characteristic at this stage. Further Assessment The Council Plan sets out strategic ambitions. Individual projects within the Plan will be subject to separate IIAs as they progress.

Marriage or Civil Partnership: People who are married or in a civil partnership

06/02/2026 Positive Impacts Inclusive and Fair Values The Council Plan identifies inclusive and fair as a core value (see p.5). Actions within the Plan are designed to have a positive impact on all individuals, including those who are married or in a civil partnership. Beyond this overarching commitment, no specific impacts—positive or negative—are anticipated for people with this characteristic at this stage. Further Assessment The Council Plan sets out strategic ambitions. Individual projects within the Plan will be subject to separate IIAs as they progress.

Pregnancy and Maternity: (refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth).

Answer: 06/02/2026 Protected Characteristic: Pregnancy and Maternity Positive Impacts Inclusive and Fair Values The Council Plan identifies inclusive and fair as a core value (see p.5). Actions within the Plan are designed to have a positive impact on all individuals, including those who are pregnant or have recently given birth. Beyond this overarching

commitment, no specific impacts—positive or negative—are anticipated for people with this characteristic at this stage. Further Assessment The Council Plan sets out strategic ambitions. Individual projects within the Plan will be subject to separate IIAs as they progress.

Race: including colour, nationality, ethnic origins, including minorities (e.g. gypsy travellers, refugees, migrants and asylum seekers)

06/02/2026 Positive Impacts Inclusive and Fair Values The Council Plan identifies inclusive and fair as a core value (see p.5). Actions within the Plan are designed to have a positive impact on all individuals, including those with race-related characteristics. Specific Actions A notable action within the Plan is: New Roots Programme Implement the New Roots programme to provide tailored support for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children arriving in the Scottish Borders. This initiative aims to help them settle, connect with communities, and access the care and opportunities they need to thrive (see p.12). Further Assessment The Council Plan sets out strategic ambitions. Individual projects within the Plan will be subject to separate IIAs as they progress.

Religion or Belief: different religious or philosophical beliefs, customs (including atheists and those with no aligned belief) e.g. Christianity, Islam, Hindu, pacifism, vegetarianism, gender critical.

06/02/2026 Positive Impacts Inclusive and Fair Values The Council Plan identifies inclusive and fair as a core value (see p.5). Actions within the Plan are designed to have a positive impact on all individuals, including those with religion or belief characteristics. Expected Impact Beyond this overarching commitment, no specific impacts—positive or negative—are anticipated for people with this characteristic at this stage. Further Assessment The Council Plan sets out strategic ambitions. Individual projects within the Plan will be subject to separate IIAs as they progress.

Sexual Orientation: e.g. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Heterosexual

06/02/2026 Positive Impacts Inclusive and Fair Values The Council Plan identifies inclusive and fair as a core value (see p.5). Actions within the Plan are designed to have a positive impact on all individuals, including those with the sexual orientation characteristic. Expected Impact Beyond this overarching commitment, no specific impacts—positive or negative—are anticipated for people with this characteristic at this stage. Further Assessment The Council Plan sets out strategic ambitions. Individual projects within the Plan will be subject to separate IIAs as they progress.

3.2 Fairer Scotland Duty

This duty places a legal responsibility on Scottish Borders Council (SBC) to actively consider (give due regard) to how we can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socioeconomic disadvantage when making strategic decisions.

The duty is set at a strategic level - these are the key, high level decisions that SBC will take. This would normally include strategy documents, decisions about setting priorities, allocating resources and commissioning services.

Is the proposal strategic?

Answer: Yes

If No go to Section 4

If Yes, Please describe the potential impacts, and how any negative impacts could be mitigated. Some negative impacts may not be capable of mitigation, but the proposal as a whole may still be regarded as a proportionate means of achieving its outcomes.

Low and/or No Wealth: enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future.

06/02/2026 Positive Impacts The Council Plan includes several actions expected to reduce socio-economic disadvantage and advance equality of opportunity for individuals and families with low or no wealth: Locality Planning As part of the Community Planning Partnership, develop, agree, and implement locality plans for Bannerfield, Langlee, and Burnfoot. These plans will be based on significant engagement with communities to ensure they respond to local needs and inform future service delivery. Individual projects outlined within the Plan are expected to undertake (or have undertaken) separate Integrated Impact Assessments, including consideration of the Fairer Scotland Duty.

Material Deprivation – being unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure and hobbies

10/02/2026 Material Deprivation - being unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure and hobbies 06/02/2026 Positive Impacts The Council Plan includes several actions expected to reduce material deprivation and improve access to essential services and opportunities: Public Transport Accessibility 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. Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty Reduction Continue to implement the Scottish Borders Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy and Delivery Plan (LHEES), ensuring 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. These schemes will also seek to leverage community benefits, building on previous examples such as the provision of defibrillators in Lauder and Eyemouth, and work experience opportunities for high school students with ABS managing agent, Changeworks. Access to Leisure and Cultural Services In partnership with Live Borders, deliver all 2026/27 actions within the ambitious programme of Transformation to secure long-term sustainability of good quality Sports, Leisure, Culture, and Arts services across the Scottish Borders. Individual projects outlined within the Plan are expected to undertake (or have undertaken) separate Integrated Impact Assessments, including consideration of the Fairer Scotland Duty. 06/02/2026 Positive Impacts The Council Plan includes several actions expected to reduce material deprivation and improve access to essential services and opportunities: Public Transport Accessibility 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. Invest £471,000 in targeted bus infrastructure improvements across the region, including the potential installation of real-time information screens to enhance service accessibility and user experience. Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty Reduction Continue to implement the Scottish Borders Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy and Delivery Plan (LHEES), ensuring 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. These schemes will also seek to leverage community benefits, building on previous examples such as the provision of defibrillators in Lauder and Eyemouth, and work experience opportunities for high school students with ABS managing agent, Changeworks. Access to Leisure and Cultural Services In partnership with Live Borders, deliver all 2026/27 actions within the ambitious programme of Transformation to secure long-term sustainability of good quality Sports, Leisure, Culture, and Arts services across the Scottish Borders. Individual projects outlined within the Plan are expected to undertake (or have undertaken) separate Integrated Impact Assessments, including consideration of the Fairer Scotland Duty.

Area Deprivation – where you live (e.g. rural areas), where you work (e.g. accessibility of transport), see rural proofing guidance

06/02/2026 Positive Impacts The Council Plan includes several actions expected to reduce area-based disadvantage and improve access to services and opportunities for communities in deprived areas: Public Transport Accessibility 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. Invest £471,000 in targeted bus infrastructure improvements across the region, including the potential installation of real-time information screens to enhance service accessibility and user experience. Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty Reduction Continue to implement the Scottish Borders Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy and Delivery Plan (LHEES), ensuring 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. These schemes will also seek to leverage community benefits, building on previous examples such as the provision of

defibrillators in Lauder and Eyemouth, and work experience opportunities for high school students with ABS managing agent, Changeworks. Access to Leisure and Cultural Services In partnership with Live Borders, deliver all 2026/27 actions within the ambitious programme of Transformation to secure long-term sustainability of good quality Sports, Leisure, Culture, and Arts services across the Scottish Borders. Individual projects outlined within the Plan are expected to undertake (or have undertaken) separate Integrated Impact Assessments, including consideration of the Fairer Scotland Duty.

Socio-economic Background – social class i.e. parents' education, employment and income

06/02/2026 Positive Impacts The Council Plan includes actions aimed at reducing barriers and improving opportunities for individuals from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds: Inclusive Curriculum Engagement 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. Insights will inform inclusive learning approaches across all settings. Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Access 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. Employment and Skills Development 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. Individual projects outlined within the Plan are expected to undertake (or have undertaken) separate Integrated Impact Assessments, including consideration of the Fairer Scotland Duty.

Care experienced people

Answer: 06/02/2026 The Council Plan includes actions aimed at improving outcomes and opportunities for care experienced individuals: Independent Advocacy Service 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. Self-Directed Support Expand the adoption of Self-Directed Support within Adult Social Care and Learning Disability services, empowering individuals with greater choice and control over their care arrangements. Deanfield Care Home Refurbishment Commence the refurbishment of Deanfield Care Home, introducing a nursing model that enables the return of individuals currently cared for by external providers. Individual projects outlined within the Plan are expected to undertake (or have undertaken) separate Integrated Impact Assessments, including consideration of the Fairer Scotland Duty.

Carers paid and unpaid including family members

06/02/2026 Positive Impacts Inclusive and Fair Values The Council Plan identifies inclusive and fair as a core value (see p.5). Actions within the Plan are designed to have a positive impact on all individuals, including those with the sexual orientation characteristic. Expected Impact Beyond this overarching commitment, no specific impacts—positive or negative—are anticipated for people with this characteristic at this stage. Further Assessment The Council Plan sets out strategic ambitions. Individual projects within the Plan will be subject to separate IIAs as they progress.

Homelessness

06/02/2026

Positive Impacts The Council Plan includes actions aimed at reducing homelessness and improving housing security: Housing Emergency Action Plan Deliver Year 2 of the Housing Emergency Action Plan, continuing to implement measures that address urgent housing needs and prevent homelessness. Regional Housing Action Support the Regional Economic Partnership Housing Action to increase housing supply, including key worker and market-based homes, and improve access to the right homes in the right places. This will be achieved through targeted awareness campaigns and energy efficiency upgrades. Individual projects outlined within the Plan are expected to undertake (or have undertaken) separate Integrated Impact Assessments, including consideration of the Fairer Scotland Duty.
--

Addictions and substance use

06/02/2026 Positive Impacts Inclusive and Fair Values The Council Plan identifies inclusive and fair as a core value (see p.5). Actions within the Plan are designed to have a positive impact on all individuals, including those with the sexual orientation characteristic. Expected Impact Beyond this overarching commitment, no specific impacts—positive or negative—are anticipated for people with this characteristic at this stage. Further Assessment The Council Plan sets out strategic ambitions. Individual projects within the Plan will be subject to separate IIAs as they progress.

Those involved within the criminal justice system

06/02/2026 Positive Impacts Inclusive and Fair Values The Council Plan identifies inclusive and fair as a core value (see p.5). Actions within the Plan are designed to have a positive impact on all individuals, including those with the sexual orientation characteristic. Expected Impact Beyond this overarching commitment, no specific impacts—positive or negative—are anticipated for people with this characteristic at this stage. Further Assessment The Council Plan sets out strategic ambitions. Individual projects within the Plan will be subject to separate IIAs as they progress.

3.3 Consumer Duty

This duty places a legal responsibility on Scottish Borders Council (SBC) to have regard to the matters listed below.

This applies to strategic matters so only complete this section if you have marked “Yes” in Section 3.2

How will the proposal impact on users or potential users of the service? E.g. Will the proposal affect the way in which people can access services, will it improve the range of choice accessible to service users, will it improve or hinder access to information for service users?

06/02/2026 The Council Plan is underpinned by the values of inclusivity, fairness, and transparency, which align strongly with the principles of Consumer Duty. These values ensure that proposals and services are designed to respond positively to the duty and deliver clear benefits for consumers and service recipients. Where new or revised proposals are introduced, specific assessments of their impact on consumers will be undertaken. This ensures compliance with Consumer Duty and supports informed decision-making. The Council Plan commits to improving access to information for consumers and recipients of council services. This includes making information clearer, more accessible, and easier to understand, which is beneficial for service users and promotes trust.

If there are any negative impacts, do you intend to mitigate these and, if so, how?

06/02/2026 None anticipated yet. If they are identified, they will be mitigated in relation to individual proposals outlined within the Council Plan.

3.4 Armed Forces Covenant Duty (Education and Housing/ Homelessness proposals only)

This duty places a legal responsibility on Scottish Borders Council (SBC) to actively consider (give due regard) to the three matters listed below in Education and Housing/ Homelessness matters.

This relates to current and former armed forces personnel (regular or reserve) and their families.

Is the Armed Forces Covenant Duty applicable?

Yes

If Yes:

For each of the following Covenant Duties, You should cover these two points:

The unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the armed forces;

The MOD Statutory Guidance gives the following examples – Link for this can be found here:
[MOD Statutory Guidance](#)

- Danger
- Geographical Mobility
- Separation from Family
- Service Law
- Unfamiliarity with Civilian Life
- Hours of Work
- Stress

How is the proposal impacted by the following principles?

If there are any negative impacts, do you intend to mitigate these and, if so, how?

Some negative impacts may not be capable of mitigation, but the proposal as a whole may still be regarded as a proportionate means of achieving its outcomes.

06/02/2026 The Council is committed to upholding the Armed Forces Covenant, ensuring that those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, are treated fairly and not disadvantaged in accessing services. Where new or revised proposals are introduced, they will be subject to separate assessments that fully consider the Armed Forces Covenant Duty. Several proposals within the Council Plan are likely to impact the Armed Forces Covenant directly, including: Fulfilling Our Potential (FOP) actions aimed at improving opportunities for children, young people, and families. Housing and Homelessness Proposals, such as the Housing Emergency Action Plan and Regional Housing Action, which seek to improve access to suitable housing and prevent homelessness.

The principle that it is desirable to remove disadvantages arising for Service people from membership, or former membership, of the armed forces;

How is the proposal impacted by the following principles?

If there are any negative impacts, do you intend to mitigate these and, if so, how?

Some negative impacts may not be capable of mitigation, but the proposal as a whole may still be regarded as a proportionate means of achieving its outcomes.

06/02/2026 The Council is committed to upholding the Armed Forces Covenant, ensuring that those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, are treated fairly and not disadvantaged in accessing services. Where new or revised proposals are introduced, they will be subject to separate assessments that fully consider the Armed Forces Covenant Duty. Several proposals within the Council Plan are likely to impact the Armed Forces Covenant directly, including: Fulfilling Our Potential (FOP) actions aimed at improving opportunities for children, young people, and families. Housing and Homelessness Proposals, such as the Housing

Emergency Action Plan and Regional Housing Action, which seek to improve access to suitable housing and prevent homelessness.

The principle that special provision for Service people may be justified by the effects on such people of membership, or former membership, of the armed forces.

How is the proposal impacted by the following principles?

If there are any negative impacts, do you intend to mitigate these and, if so, how?

Some negative impacts may not be capable of mitigation, but the proposal as a whole may still be regarded as a proportionate means of achieving its outcomes.

06/02/2026 The Council is committed to upholding the Armed Forces Covenant, ensuring that those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, are treated fairly and not disadvantaged in accessing services. Where new or revised proposals are introduced, they will be subject to separate assessments that fully consider the Armed Forces Covenant Duty. Several proposals within the Council Plan are likely to impact the Armed Forces Covenant directly, including: Fulfilling Our Potential (FOP) actions aimed at improving opportunities for children, young people, and families. Housing and Homelessness Proposals, such as the Housing Emergency Action Plan and Regional Housing Action, which seek to improve access to suitable housing and prevent homelessness.

3.5 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

Scottish Borders Council (SBC) has a duty not to act, or fail to act, in a manner incompatible with the requirements of the UNCRC.

This only applies to certain matters, where SBC is acting under:

- An Act of the Scottish Parliament.
- Regulations made under an Act of the Scottish Parliament.
- A general (common law) legal duty.

Is the UNCRC Duty applicable?

Yes

If "Yes", please complete below

If you have answered yes for any of the Articles, please specify whether it is positive, negative or neutral, the nature of the impact, as well as any mitigations put in place if the effect is negative. Some negative impacts may not be capable of mitigation, but the proposal as a whole may still be regarded as a proportionate means of achieving its outcomes.

Which of the General Principles of the UNCRC are engaged?

Non-discrimination (Article 2)

Impact: Yes

06/02/2026 The proposals within the Council Plan are expected to deliver clear positive impacts in relation to non-discrimination for children and young people. A key action within the Plan is the commitment to deliver professional learning on neurodiversity and trauma-informed approaches for all education staff, alongside strengthening support for children and young people with additional needs through a cluster-based deployment model for Additional Needs Assistants. This approach is designed to ensure support is allocated flexibly and responsively, directing assistance to the schools and settings where it is most needed. By improving staff knowledge, confidence and inclusive practice, and by strengthening targeted support, these actions help reduce discriminatory barriers in education and promote equitable access to learning. In addition, the Council Plan includes implementation of the New Roots programme, offering tailored support for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children on arrival in the Scottish Borders. This programme aims to help young people settle safely, build connections within local communities, and access the care, continuity and opportunities needed to thrive. This ensures that children who may be particularly

vulnerable to discrimination, social exclusion or trauma receive timely, person-centred support that upholds their rights and wellbeing.

Best interests of the child as a primary consideration (Article 3)

Impact: Yes

06/02/2026 The Council Plan includes actions that clearly prioritise the best interests of children and young people by ensuring decisions, services, and supports are designed to promote their wellbeing, safeguard their rights, and provide stable, nurturing environments. A key commitment is the development of new, high-quality local residential and specialist education provision for children and young people with complex needs. By reducing reliance on out-of-authority placements, this approach enables children to live, learn, and receive care within their own communities, maintaining continuity of relationships, education, and local supports. This reflects Article 3 by ensuring that decisions about care and placement are guided by what will best support the child's overall development, sense of belonging, and long-term outcomes. The Plan also includes the implementation of a commissioned independent advocacy service for children and young people in the Scottish Borders. Designed in partnership with children, young people, and families, the service ensures that children are better able to participate meaningfully in decisions that affect their lives. This aligns with the best-interest principle by ensuring children's views are considered, their rights upheld, and their voices embedded in assessment, planning, and review processes.

Right to life, Survival and Development (Article 6)

Impact: Yes

06/02/2026 The Council Plan demonstrates a strong and proactive commitment to upholding children's right to life, survival and development by investing in the services, environments and supports that enable all children and young people (particularly those facing complex or multiple barriers) to thrive. A key example is the commitment to deliver new, high-quality local residential and specialist education provision for children and young people with complex needs, ensuring they can live, learn and be cared for within their own communities rather than experiencing destabilising out-of-authority placements. This community-based approach strengthens continuity of relationships, access to familiar support networks, and stability across all aspects of development. The Plan also commits to implementing a commissioned independent advocacy service, shaped by the voices of children, young people and their families, ensuring that children are heard, protected and enabled to participate meaningfully in decisions affecting their lives. Together, these actions reinforce a rights-based approach that prioritises children's safety, developmental needs and long-term wellbeing. The Council Plan further supports survival and development through a range of actions that strengthen the developmental foundations of early childhood, education, safety and wellbeing. The introduction of a cluster-based family support model for children aged

0–5, alongside the implementation of revised Early Learning and Childcare delivery models, ensures that young children and their families receive timely, responsive and targeted support during the most critical developmental period. Developmental progress is also supported through professional learning on neurodiversity and trauma-informed approaches for all education staff, improving the capacity of schools to meet individual needs and remove barriers to learning. In addition, the Plan includes measures that support the wider determinants of child development, such as actions to increase young people's participation in decision-making, improve access to safe recreational spaces, and deliver programmes like New Roots, which provides trauma-informed, tailored support for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children to help them settle safely, connect with communities and access the opportunities needed to thrive.

Right to be heard (Article 12)

Impact: Yes

06/02/2026 The Council Plan demonstrates a strong commitment to upholding the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), particularly Article 12, which guarantees children the right to express their views freely in all matters affecting them. As part of the development process, the Council undertook specific engagement with schools and young people, including: A dedicated Sixth Form session in Tweedbank, ensuring that older pupils had the opportunity to contribute their views. Broader engagement activities designed to make sure the Council Plan reflects the perspectives of children and young people (CYP). The Council Plan includes actions that reinforce this commitment: Independent Advocacy Service 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. Dedicated Engagement Strategy Develop a dedicated engagement strategy for children aged 0–12, including infant voices, 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.

Other:

Impact: Yes

06/02/2026 Art. 31 - Right to play The Council Plan includes specific actions to enhance opportunities for play and recreation: Destination Playpark and Pump Track Deliver a destination playpark and pump track in Eyemouth, providing high-quality facilities for children and young people. Community-Led Play Park Enhancements Support Coldingham Community Council and other local groups in developing their vision for play park enhancement within their communities. Improved Sports Facilities Support Melrose Football with investment to improve changing facilities for children and young people, ensuring safe and inclusive access to sports.

Section 4 Full Integrated Impact Assessment Required

Select No if you have answered “No” to all of Sections 3.1 – 3.5.

Yes

If a full impact assessment is not required briefly explain why there are no effects and provide justification for the decision.

Signed by Lead Officer: Cook, Michael

Designation: Senior Policy Advisor

Date: 10/02/2026

Counter Signature Director: Douglas, Suzanne (Finance)

Date: 11/02/2026