A Cultural Strategy for the Scottish Borders

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and commissioned by
Scottish Borders Council**

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Executive Summary

This report on a Cultural Strategy for the Scottish Borders was commissioned by Scottish Borders Council (SBC) with support from Creative Scotland. It was compiled by a team of consultants under the direction of Noble Openshaw Limited (NOL).

The **brief** from SBC emphasised that the need for a Cultural Strategy had been articulated in a number of recent reports, and set out a clear central task for the Strategy:

> *'A cultural strategy for the Scottish Borders will establish shared priorities that drive collaborative work across organisations and sectors and make it possible for us to contribute successfully to wider regional agendas and key national strategies.'*

The brief also stressed the primary importance of developing the Cultural Strategy through a process of wide **consultation**, across the cultural sector in the Scottish Borders and with key national and regional public bodies.

As this is a Cultural Strategy for the Scottish Borders as a whole, and not for one agency or partnership, NOL begin the report with a contextual **Essay**, *Unweaving the Tweed*, which sets out the team's perception of the past and present place of culture in this distinctive part of the country, thereby proposing a foundation for the principles and recommendations of the Strategy itself.

The **Strategy** proper then follows. As this is expected to be read and used independently of the larger report, it begins by summarising the **Findings** of the contextual essay, under six thematic headings identified early in the consultation process:

- Visibility
- Connectedness
- Sustainability
- Traditions
- Ambition and Quality
- Unity and Diversity

There follows a series of **Underlying Principles** which, it is proposed, should be adopted or acknowledged by those who support the Strategy's recommendations, leading to a statement of the **Vision** of the Cultural Strategy:

By 2019 the Scottish Borders will be recognised and celebrated for what it is – one of the richest, most distinctive and diverse cultural regions in Scotland.

To achieve this vision the Strategy then sets out four **Aims**:

- Communicate
- Connect
- Value
- Empower

Each aim is then articulated in specific **recommendations**. Some of these are directed to SBC as the commissioning body, but most require partnership and cooperative working by national and regional agencies, other sectors and—above all—by cultural organisations, groups and people across the Scottish Borders.

The core Strategy concludes by connecting its recommendations to the **priorities** of the current SBC Corporate Plan, and the 2013 Single Outcome Agreement between the Scottish Government and the Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership.

The Strategy is followed by an **Action Plan** which outlines how the Strategy's recommendations can be implemented. Its core elements are:

- A region-wide **Cultural Forum**, to be convened for the five-year period of the Cultural Strategy
- A regular cycle of **Cultural Gatherings** to bring together the cultural sector and relevant stakeholders
- A small, lightweight **Support Unit** to act as an executive on behalf of those working together to deliver the Strategy's recommendations
- A **Concord** of national, regional and local agencies, in support of the Strategy's aims.

The Action Plan should guide a detailed **Development Plan**, to be reviewed and reported on annually during the Strategy's lifetime. The Action Plan also recommends some form of mechanism to facilitate more effective **cross-Border** working.

The Action Plan also proposes specific **Partnership Projects** and **Short-Term Interventions**, several of which could begin as soon as the Cultural Strategy has been adopted. Finally, the Plan suggests some external benchmarks, such as the Quality of Rural Life Survey and the Creative Scotland Creative Place Awards, as a means of **objectively marking** success in strengthening cultural, community and economic success in the Borders.

Introduction

Running forty-five miles on its north/south axis and sixty miles east/west from Peebles to Eyemouth, the Scottish Borders is one of the most rural parts of the UK, facing many of challenges that confront rural Scotland. Against this backdrop, the Scottish Borders has unique cultural traditions that are expressed in world-renowned literature and storytelling, traditional music and song and custom and folklore. The Scottish Borders' identity is preserved and expressed in the Borders towns and their distinctive Common Riding and civic celebrations; and the Borders Diaspora is present worldwide in the Reiver families. The history and heritage of the region is represented in a host of iconic buildings – castles, country houses and museums – as well as the region's collections and archives, while community initiated cultural activity - events, festivals, exhibitions and projects - all contribute to a sense of identity and belonging. There are comparatively high levels of participation in cultural and creative activity.

However, there is no overarching cultural strategy for the Scottish Borders. The Scottish Government's view of culture and heritage – "our heart, our soul, our essence….not….merely products that can be bought and sold…", Creative Scotland's interest in building long-term relationships with local authorities through its Place Partnership Programme and Scottish Borders Council's need to review its Cultural Services division, together with the evidence in landmark reports both in the south of Scotland and elsewhere, have served to highlight the need for strategic cultural planning in the region. Scottish Borders Council launched an open Invitation to Tender in July 2013 and subsequently commissioned Noble Openshaw Ltd to develop a cultural strategy, not for the Council, but for the region.

The brief was clear that the need for a Cultural Strategy had been firmly articulated in many recent reports, particularly in relation to the importance of the creative sector to the economy of the region. The brief stated that:

> 'The 2012 Economic Contribution Study: An Approach to the Economic Assessment of Arts & Creative Industries in Scotland by DC Research, commissioned by Creative Scotland in partnership with Scottish Enterprise, placed the Scottish Borders as the third highest area for arts and creative industries employment intensity across Scotland as a proportion of the total population.
>
> According to a report the same year by EKOS Limited, the creative sector in the Scottish Borders is **estimated to be worth £21m GVA** and **employ**

some 720 people, contributing not only economic benefit but also environmental and social benefit across the region.

> The importance of the sector has also been recognised by Scottish Borders Council ['SBC'] in the Administration's partnership agreement "Ambitious for the Borders 2012" which states that economic development is the key driver for the Administration and commits the Council to "continuing support for the Borders creative arts industries." It is also recognised as a key sector for the area in the Draft Scottish Borders Economic Strategy.'

The specific stimulus for commissioning this Strategy came however, from Creative Scotland selecting Scottish Borders Council for one of its Place Partnerships:

> 'The Scottish Borders is one of five Place Partnership Programmes announced by Creative Scotland in 2012/13. The Partnership is between Creative Scotland and SBC who will jointly decide on priorities for development and investment after extensive consultation with the region's creative sector.'

The brief sets out a clear central task for the Strategy:

> *'A cultural strategy for the Scottish Borders will establish shared priorities that drive collaborative work across organisations and sectors and make it possible for us to contribute successfully to wider regional agendas and key national strategies.'*

This Cultural Strategy has been prepared by a team of four individuals who came together for this task under the banner of Noble Openshaw Ltd: Robert Livingston (Lead Consultant) who for twenty years led the Highlands and Islands' cultural development agency, HI~Arts; Sue Crossman, with a wealth of professional experience in the tourism and hospitality industries, and a base in the Borders; François Matarasso, a specialist in socially engaged arts practice who has recently undertaken major studies of cultural development in Orkney and Aberdeenshire and Simon Noble, the company's founder, and a specialist in managing change.

Throughout our work on the Strategy we have been supported by Scottish Borders Council staff, and we have also been grateful for the generosity and openness of everyone we have met and spoken to, across the region and in every aspect of cultural activity.

2.1 Format

This Document is in **four parts**.

(i)   We begin with an **Essay** (Unweaving the Tweed) reflecting both the journey taken by the team and the stories revealed by those we have consulted as we have met and mapped their place in the cultural landscape of the region. It is our response to our experiences of working in the Scottish Borders, which for some of the team goes back for decades, while for others the region was largely *terra incognita* when we started work. The essay sets out to explain how we came to form the core concepts and recommendations of the Strategy itself. This has been a short and intense process—just ten weeks from starting research until completing the first draft— so despite our best efforts we may have missed some areas of activity, and though we have taken considerable efforts to reach out and consult widely, and then consult again, we may have misread some of what we have seen or heard. We hope that readers will recognise the overall portrait we paint, even if they may wish to take issue with some of the detail.

(ii)   Then follows the **Strategy** proper. As a Strategy for the Scottish Borders as a whole, this aims to be visionary, broadly based, and long term. Our intention is that it properly represents the issues which we have discussed, and offers broad principles and recommendations for development which can be widely adopted, from national agencies to local voluntary groups and individual artists. It is intended to be used in support of, and alongside, more detailed future plans, ideas and aspirations. We expect it will take on an independent life from the rest of this Report, and for that reason it repeats some key points already cited in the essay.

(iii)   The Strategy aims to take a long view. It is followed by an **Action Plan** which is intended to be more immediate in its focus. It is deliberately *not* a menu or wish list of all the hopes, aspirations and concerns which people have shared with us. It is instead a practical blueprint for getting started on implementing the Strategy, for taking prompt and immediate actions which will see results in the short term.

(iv)   Finally, we explain our methodology – how we developed the brief and managed the process of consultation; how we arrived at the strategy and action plan. The subsequent **Appendix** includes details of all the agencies, organisations, groups and individuals we have been in contact with, and

all the documents, reports, audits and strategies which we have consulted.

2.2   A series of conversations

Our brief from Scottish Borders Council stressed the central importance of consultation in preparing a Cultural Strategy. Although we did make use of online surveys and questionnaires, our chief means of consulting was a series of conversations: with individuals, in small groups, and in open meetings. That approach has enabled us both to explore emerging issues in depth, and to make our research a progressive process, bringing to each new encounter the accumulating views and information from all the preceding discussions.

What we discovered, by this means, was something of a paradox: that while the fragmented and diverse nature of Borders communities was a constant theme, nonetheless what emerged from these conversations was a remarkably coherent and consistent picture, both of the current state of affairs, and of the potential for the future. There was a widely shared sense of **optimism**, despite the obvious challenges of the financial environment, and of **ambition** for the region as a whole, and a common belief that, culturally, the Scottish Borders has something exceptional to offer the rest of Scotland and beyond. Such consistency was by no means to be expected, and it is a rare strength on which to build, and a solid foundation for the aims of this Cultural Strategy.

On 29th January 2014, just before the completed strategy was submitted to Scottish Borders Council, Creative Scotland announced that Peebles had won a 2014 Creative Place Award, in the category of communities with under 10,000 residents. This independent recognition of the achievements of one Borders community is an important milestone for the cultural development of the region.

Unweaving the Tweed

A contextual essay by Noble Openshaw

Telling the Story

We work in a world dominated by data: statistics, targets, outputs, outcomes. These are, of course, important—in a time of shrinking resources, it's vital to be able to demonstrate that those resources are being used efficiently and effectively—but they do not tell the whole story. There is a risk that, if you only count trees, you don't see the wood as a holistic eco-system. The public sector is increasingly recognising that 'the numbers' are not enough, if there isn't also a means of telling the wider story, whether through Quality of Life surveys, case studies, or understanding how early prevention can be more beneficial, both socially and economically, than later remedial action.

A Cultural Strategy for the Scottish Borders needs to ensure that the story can be told of the rich contribution which culture makes to the region as a whole, and, by that means, enable the telling of the even more important story: what the Scottish Borders brings to Scotland as a whole.

'As Ithers See Us'

The Scottish Borders is the only Local Government region in Scotland which takes its name, not from geography but from a political and cultural construct—a national border. That Border, and the idea of 'borders', of boundaries and distinct, often competing, communities, are central to the identity of the region.

Borders are, inevitably, contested areas, where identities are defined by the presence of 'the other', where local affiliations count for more than regional or national loyalties, and where 'crossing the Border' can trigger conflict, or cooperation. 'Enemies as neighbours', was how one person defined Borders culture for us, and they didn't just mean the English.

Though fought over for centuries afterwards, much of the present day Border between Scotland and England was defined almost a thousand years ago, by Scottish king Malcolm II, after his victory against Northumbrian forces at the battle of Carham (or Coldstream) in 1016 (or perhaps it was 1018). That makes

the Anglo-Scottish border—legally established by the Treaty of York in 1237—one of the oldest extant borders in the world, though such legal recognition didn't stop it being, or being seen as, a wild and lawless territory for many hundreds of years after.

Yet an administrative region formally called 'The Scottish Borders' only came into being with the last reorganisation of Scottish Local Government in 1996. Prior to that, a two tier structure involved 'Borders Regional Council' covering an area that also included four District Councils, which equated to the former, historic, shire boundaries—identities that remain very strong within the region today, as do those of the former Royal Burghs.

So why was it felt necessary to include the word 'Scottish' in the title of the new unitary authority? Not, it would seem, from any pressing need to distinguish the region from its English counterpart. Search online for 'Scottish Borders' and you'll find hundreds of references to the Council, the attractions of the region, and its history and landscape. Do a similar search for 'English Borders' and you'll be directed to a host of sites concerned with hardy perennials and horticulture. Northumberland seems in no hurry to contest that 'Borders' label.

What this suggests is a region that has a rather uncertain sense of its identity. Look at how tourism operators describe the Scottish Borders. Shearings' coach tour of the region invites their customers to 'see **quaint** Kelso', 'visit the **quiet country town** of Peebles' and 'enjoy the Victorian spa town of Moffat' (which, of course, is in Dumfries and Galloway). Rabbie's offers a one day tour to the '**unsung** beautiful rolling hills and valleys of the Scottish Borders', while Touring Scotland refers on its website to 'the land of gentle sloping hills, of burbling streams and of **ballad and folklore**', and 'charming old fashioned hotels which are somehow **preserved in aspic**, ideal locations if you want to immerse yourself in the 19th century'. Catswhiskers Tours describes the region as 'an **oft overlooked gem** hidden away between Edinburgh and the North of England'.

This is not the Scottish Borders that we have come to know through consulting on this strategy. Individually, Borderers often possess a deep and rooted sense of their history and identity. We've seen entrepreneurial businesses, and great houses with business models firmly based in the 21st century, and we've met artists with international networks, and

- *The Borders has a high percentage of business start-ups and has outperformed the national three year survival rate for start-ups each year since 2002 up until the most recent figures for 2007 (to 2010) where Scottish Borders fell behind.*
- *The high percentage of 16+ who are self employed indicates a strong entrepreneurial workforce.*
- *Attainment in the Scottish Borders has, and continues to, compare [sic] favourably to the Scottish average.*

Strategic Assessment for the Scottish Borders, June 2013

voluntary groups fully conversant with current Government policies and priorities. This is a region where history and tradition are known and valued, but also one with a high percentage of business start-ups, with a level of volunteering well above the national average, and with a cultural and creative sector that has grown enormously in just a few years.

One key challenge, then, for a *Cultural Strategy for the Scottish Borders*, is not to throw the baby out with the bath water. While sustaining, and indeed developing, those historical features and traditions which are so important, and are clearly so eminently marketable to visitors, it must also help to present a picture of the Scottish Borders which is **dynamic**, **contemporary**, **and forward-looking**. An identity which will encourage younger visitors to the region, will attract families to settle, will encourage inward investment and business relocation, and will present the Scottish Borders as a distinctive and significant component of a modern Scotland, not, as those tour adverts imply, some Lowland version of 'Brigadoon'.

The Past in the Present

Border regions tend to be heavy with history, and often with a version of history that can sit uncomfortably within a nation's image of itself: think of Alsace and Lorraine, or Gdansk/Danzig. It's an ironic accident of chronology that the 500th anniversary of Scotland's greatest military defeat at Flodden fell this year, just one year before the 700th anniversary of its greatest victory, at Bannockburn. The single most ubiquitous image of the Borders, that of the **Reiver** - so distinctive it features in the Council's logo - is at best an ambiguous figure: violent, lawless, fiercely clannish and resistant to efforts at central control. Though the textile industry is still very important to the region, nonetheless the abandoned mills, like the former Clyde shipyards, have become a stereotypical symbol of Scotland's 20th century industrial decline. Even the Common Ridings, in their almost pagan celebration of massed horses and riders, can rouse atavistic feelings that might seem out of place in a globally connected, sophisticated modern nation.

It's a history, moreover, that - Sir Walter Scott's efforts aside - stands apart from the sentiment/sentimentality and myth-making that is so prevalent in much of Scotland's image as presented to the rest of the world. There is little of the Romantic nostalgia associated with the Jacobites, replaced instead by the much harsher heritage of the Covenanters. That harsh, often ruthless strand also runs through the writings of James Hogg, and the historical novels of John Buchan.

And physical reminders of that history are so ubiquitous and inescapable. The massive remains of four great abbeys and one priory are palpable evidence of a time when the Scottish Borders, and Scotland as a whole, were part of a European cultural mainstream: there is nothing provincial about their superb Romanesque and Gothic architecture, as there was nothing parochial about the agri-businesses built by those monastic communities. Gaunt peel towers and brooding castles speak eloquently of the centuries of violence and warfare between Flodden and Culloden, while the great houses and estates of the region, symbols of a post-'45 prosperity, neither present a National Trust for Scotland uniformity, nor are alienated through absentee landlords, but continue to play a significant economic role as local employers and hosts to small businesses. Perhaps the single most defining architectural characteristic of the region is the mix of Georgian and Victorian townscapes that grew out of the agrarian and industrial revolutions. By comparison, a few edge of town superstores and modernist public buildings aside, the built heritage of the region often seems to have been barely touched by the last hundred years.

That very distinctive Border history, and its almost overwhelming presence in contemporary life, has led, paradoxically, to two almost directly opposed character traits. The first is a sense of entrepreneurialism, of making your own arrangements, of '**can do**'—hence those high figures mentioned earlier, for business start-ups and levels of volunteering. But, on the other hand, there is that typical Borders phrase, '**it's aye been**', whether used as a means of deflating new ideas, or of mocking those who would seek to do so. Both these, apparently opposed, traits can mask a deeper reality: that the Borders has often been the region of Scotland which has led in **innovation in social change**: whether it be the communities of monks invited in by David I in the 12th century, patterns of land ownership and agrarian use after the Act of Union, or the early adoption in Scotland of factory techniques, with the building of the first Borders textile mill in 1800, just 14 years after Owen's pioneering developments at New Lanark.

Taking that historical perspective, it's possible to see the Borders as a region that has often been at the **cutting edge** of social change, that has at different times established and exploited strong international links, and that, whether in the architecture of the abbeys, the interiors of the great houses, or the higher end products of the textile industry, has shown an ambition for quality, craftsmanship, and sophistication.   Far from being limited by the presence of their past, people in the Scottish Borders are building on those examples to stake a claim for the region as being both forward- and outward-looking.

What is Culture and where do you find it?

Kilts
Clothing
Food
Haggis
Shortbread
Bagpipes
Stereotyping
Seasonal
The way we live
Influential figures
Heritage
Rugby
Sports
Tradition
Language
Society
Knowledge

Scottish Borders West Youth Voice, 19-11-13

Culture has many definitions. For the purposes of this strategy we have adopted a definition similar to that used for the landmark Charter for the Arts in Scotland, 20 years ago, one that includes all aspects of the arts, of heritage, museums and libraries, and of the creative industries. Sport, though not included in the definition, cannot be ignored, because, for example, of the cultural impact of rugby in the region, and nor, for the same reason, can the Common Ridings.

For many of the reasons already outlined, cultural activity appears to be deeply embedded in the **communal life** of the Scottish Borders. The Online Borders Directory of voluntary groups has 155 entries under 'arts and entertainment' and a further 34 under 'local history and heritage'. With a population that makes up about 2% of the Scottish total, the Scottish Borders has more than 10% of the membership of the University of the Third Age in Scotland, organised by four out of U3A's 44 Scottish groups. The annual Scottish Borders Brass Band competition, being held in Jedburgh this year, will feature no less than 20 bands. Selkirk, with a population of less than 10,000, can field four different bands—silver, pipe, flute and fiddle. Duns and District

Cultural Organisations in Tweeddale include

West Linton Music Society, Carlops Jazz Band, Carlops Village Hall (which runs a high quality programme of cultural events), Lamancha Hub (set up as a community and creative centre for a scattered rural community), Broughton Choral Society, Tweedsmuir Music Festival, Eddleston Voices, Peebles In Chorus, Peebles Singers, Peebles Concert Band, Peebles Silver Band, Peebles Players, Peebles Orchestra, Peebles Youth Orchestra, Sing Out children's choir, Music In Peebles, Peebles Folk Club, Nomad Beat music teaching centre, Tweed Theatre, Fiona Henderson School of Dance, Southside Dance, Pan Dance, Peebles Film Club, Peebles Photographic Group, several commercial galleries, Peebles Art Club, Chambers Institution, Embroidery Guild, Beltane Studios bronze foundry, Buchan Heritage Centre, Kailzie Gardens, Innerleithen Amateur Operatic Society, St Ronans Silver Band, Innerleithen Music Festival, Traquair House, including Borders Books and Bikes, and Shakespeare at Traquair

From Caroline Adam, Eastgate Theatre

Operatic Society, in a town with a population of 2,500, regularly perform their productions to a sell-out audience of 250 a night over four nights.

Being either informal, or organised within and for a particular community, much of this cultural activity is often '**under the radar**'—and indeed many of those taking part probably wouldn't consider what they do as 'culture' or 'the arts': those terms can too easily be seen as referring to something 'out there', the province of a perceived exclusive group. Yet, whether through introducing younger people to an artistic skill, and the idea of performing, or offering older people a means of self-expression and a community of shared interests, such activity—too often limited by the terms 'amateur' or 'voluntary'--is the crucial bridge between the region's built and intangible cultural heritage, and the work of contemporary and professional artists and performers.

Within the last decade the region has benefitted from a substantial number of new and refurbished cultural **venues**, from the Eastgate Theatre ten years ago, to the reopened Abbotsford in 2013. Plans are under way for many more: in Galashiels, Duns, Selkirk, Eyemouth and Coldstream among others. There is no objective measure of the appropriate level of *cultural* facilities for a given population size (equivalent to Sport Scotland's Facilities Planning Model). In the Scottish Borders, as in many parts of Scotland, it's been shown how new arts facilities, in particular, can increase audiences in tandem with their own development. That also applies to new ways of presenting the arts, such as the programmes of live satellite relays now on offer at venues across the region.

Wee Stories were commissioned by Creative Scotland to carry out research into venue development needs in the Scottish Borders and Dumfries and Galloway and together with a networking and consultation event facilitated by SBC Arts Development and CABN in late 2011, this explored what potential there would be for a Scottish Borders Rural Touring Network. The results confirmed the need for:

- *a rural touring support with a co-ordinated approach to securing funding,*
- *high quality product in programming*
- *development of online presence*
- *promotion and marketing of touring events*
- *targeted co-ordinated approach to providing training provision given to a predominantly rural volunteer promoter community*
- *sharing ideas, experiences and contacts with other venues and developing partnerships*
- *engaging with children and young people through touring workshops and education training programme*

SBC Arts Development

Nonetheless, population size and travel distances do impose significant limitations. There are strong views that the Scottish Borders needs a major, central space for the visual arts. In other regions, such as Highland, or Dumfries and Galloway, it could be argued that footfall would naturally require such a space to be in the major settlement of the region. That argument can't be applied in the Scottish Borders. This is not a reason for not aspiring to such an ambitious facility, but it is an argument that any such development would need to be innovative in the way it engages with the communities of the region as a whole. The operation of a similarly centralised facility, the Heritage Hub at Heart of Hawick, may offer interesting lessons in that regard.

Capital developments inevitably require long lead times. Much can be achieved in shorter timescales with the adoption of **informal and temporary spaces**. Selkirk offers two such models: the three pop-up shops which are bookable on a weekly basis and have been occupied by, among other businesses, artists, and crafts businesses such as the Melrose-based Crafters cooperative; and the use made of The Haining during the inaugural YES Festival, both as an exhibition space and as the backdrop to a community event. There are good examples elsewhere in Scotland of such an approach working in the longer term: Deveron Arts which takes the whole town of Huntly as its venue, and Atlas Arts working across the island of Skye.

Deveron Arts is a contemporary arts organisation based in Huntly, a market town in the north east of Scotland with a population of 4,500. We work here with the history, context and identity of the town.

Deveron Arts has no gallery - instead the town is the venue - *acting as studio, gallery and stage for artists of all disciplines invited from around the world to live and work here. For this we use found spaces throughout the town and its surrounding areas: supermarkets, churches, garages etc. to name just a few. Engaging with local people and the community through topics of both local and global concern, Deveron Arts works through a 50/50 approach. This brings together artistic and social relationships in a global network that extends throughout and beyond the geographic boundaries of Huntly.*

Deveron Arts website

At the same time, the region has a wealth of **community and public spaces** which have the potential to host cultural activities. The strong network of over 90 village halls is an enormous asset, and the role of the Bridge in supporting that network is of crucial importance. We've been told that more could be done to make schools available out of hours on an affordable basis, and that the Borders General Hospital, and other NHS facilities in the region, could do more to display art and work with artists, perhaps inspired and mentored by the work which Artlink does in hospitals across NHS Lothian.

For many people, who may be time-poor or cash-poor or both, the intense experience of **festivals** is increasingly their preferred means of engaging with

culture. As with venues, the Scottish Borders has seen significant growth in its festival offering in the last decade. These range from mainstream events equivalent to, and in many ways competitive with, their counterparts elsewhere in the UK, such as the Borders Book Festival, to others which either have very strong roots in the region's traditions (the Border Gaitherin in Coldstream), or present a highly distinctive offering with no immediate Scottish counterparts (the Alchemy Film and Moving Image Festival in Hawick, or Books, Borders and Bikes at Traquair). Again, there is no benchmark for how many festivals are 'right' for a given region: if a new festival can attract an audience without causing significant displacement from existing events, and especially if it is offering something that is either new to, or deeply rooted in, the host community, then it is likely to be worth attempting.

709 submissions were received for the 2014 Alchemy Film & Moving Image Festival:

76% from outside the UK

176 from the USA and Canada alone

The importance of libraries as gateways to knowledge and as access points for trusted, local "What's on" and other cultural information remains important, particularly for those who struggle with technology for any reason. The integration of SBC Libraries with Contact Centres appears to have worked, and has hopefully awakened an interest in the use of public libraries by the communities affected. Further opportunities exist for "mainstreaming" libraries within culture, such as linking the mobile Library network with rural schools and their use as familiar and accessible venues for other forms of culture – related to literature or not.

Libraries have real potential to support the work of tourism bodies particularly with respect to ancestral tourism. This is a key Scottish Government priority and is estimated to bring billions of pounds in to the Scottish economy. SBC's libraries already participate in the Ask Scotland (www.askscotland.org) virtual enquiry service. Ask Scotland was introduced in the first Year of Homecoming and enables users across the globe to pose a question to a Scottish librarian, thus opening up the rich and varied cultural resources held in the area and promoting these to a global audience. SLIC could support SBC's libraries to get further benefit from this service and to improve the ancestral tourism offer across the SBC area.

Scottish Library Information Council

Aspiring to Quality

Central to any Cultural Strategy must be a commitment to aspire to, and support, the highest **quality** of cultural experience. But 'quality' is a controversial topic. In the arts in particular (unlike, say, sport) there are no absolute standards, no records to be broken (except at auction). 'Quality' is unavoidably a subjective, and therefore contested, matter. Simply ignoring the issue, however, is not the answer. In the interests of accountability, if for no other reason, recipients of public funding must be able to demonstrate the qualities of being well-managed, fiscally robust, compliant with relevant legislation, and properly promoted and evaluated. The challenge to the public bodies is to make the process of assessing these 'operational' qualities as straightforward and accessible as possible, so that it does not favour those whose ability to fill in forms is greater than their cultural value.

'Quality', moreover, is a flexible concept. For example, a professional production of a new play, playing to small but enthusiastic audiences, is not intrinsically 'better' or 'worse' than an amateur operatic production which is seen by a third of the local population. Context is everything. A Cultural Strategy, therefore, should aim to provide a context in which it is not only possible to make decisions based on perceptions of quality, but also to encourage aspirations to the highest standards.

Culture—and the Arts

Many working in the arts—and in heritage, for that matter—are wary that an inclusive 'cultural' approach will lead to their own areas of interest being marginalised. After all, 'the arts' as a sector no longer has a dedicated national body working for it, with Creative Scotland's remit extended from that of the Scottish Arts Council to include the screen and creative industries as well.

'The Arts', moreover, already includes a huge diversity of practice, from commercial galleries to amateur operatic groups, and from writers to rock bands. In the past, those involved in the arts, whether amateur or professional, might have expected a specific strategy focused solely on their own areas of interest and activity.

Nonetheless, the Scottish Borders seems ready for a *cultural* strategy, because we've seen throughout the region such fruitful cooperation across the cultural sector as a whole—between museums and historic houses on the one hand, and artists and arts organisations on the other, and between artists and the wider community.

It is reasonable to ask, however, if the necessarily broad recommendations of a cultural strategy can successfully address the very different and particular circumstances of, say, a professional theatre company, an individual artist, or an amateur operatic society. In one sense the answer has to be 'no', but in a wider sense it is intended that the Strategy's recommendations will lead to an environment, and a set of resources, in which those diverse needs can be properly addressed, and we have included a speculative example in the Action Plan to demonstrate how this might work.

There is a growing arts infrastructure in the Scottish Borders, but much of it is very new and hence very fragile, with a plethora of new venues, festivals and companies coming into being in the last decade, or even the last five years. Experience elsewhere indicates that it can take a minimum of ten years for a new arts venue, or a festival, to 'bed in', and achieve a degree of stability and a broad acceptance of their value, or even of their right to exist. Throughout our consultation we got a strong sense from artists and arts workers of excitement, of potential, and of ambition for growth, especially in terms of international links. But there is also evidence of frustration, of having to achieve wonders on not just modest, but unpredictable levels of funding, and of a degree of burn-out among those whose voluntary contribution is critical to managing, advocating for, and inspiring arts ventures.

This Strategy may therefore be appearing at a crucial stage. The forthcoming changes in Creative Scotland, with a move to a 'flatter' approach to regular, multi-year funding, the Place Partnership with SBC, and the possibility of SBC's cultural services being transferred to a charitable trust, all offer real long term opportunities, but there is a vital need for short-term, bridging support, to avoid a loss of momentum, and the possible loss of key initiatives before they can achieve a measure of sustainability.

Culture—and 'Placemaking'

If 'culture' is a hard term to define, then 'placemaking', a term that's currently common in official policy documents and public statements, in the Scottish Borders as elsewhere, can be even more confusing. The Scottish Borders Council's own website offers sound advice on placemaking in the context of architecture and design, but the term has a much wider reach. A 2010 Scottish Government briefing paper on *Participation in Placemaking* argues that:

> 'integrating placemaking and community empowerment can contribute to prosperity by maximising the potential of both of these areas to sustainable economic growth. By prosperity, we do not mean a simple

economic definition of prosperity, but a broader definition that includes well-being and social benefit.'

Clearly, cultural engagement has a fundamental role to play in enhancing well-being in this context.

What, then, creates 'a sense of place'? There's a lot of land in the Scottish Borders: it's people who make places. When we speak of 'a sense of place' what we mean is a place we can sense, and make sense of—land that, because of what people have done to it and the stories they have told about it, becomes rich in meaning. A single artist can achieve that transformation, as Iain Hamilton Finlay did at Little Sparta and Walter Scott did at Abbotsford. But it is usually the result of a long process of accumulation. The settlements of the Scottish Borders owe their legibility as places to the ordinary, everyday activities of thousands of people over hundreds of years. It is they who created shelter, usefulness, beauty, even transcendence, from stone, wood, earth and water—and they still do.

There's been much talk of 'branding' the Scottish Borders. We would argue that what the region will benefit from is not a new logo and a strap line, but a growing recognition of and reputation for the creative and cultural strengths of the Scottish Borders, as a central and integral feature of 'placemaking' in the region. A place fit for people, which makes sense to those who fit there.

> *The Whipman Play is West Linton's summer festival. This year will be the 211th year of our celebrations since "The Whipmen of Linton Society" was instituted in 1803 as a benevolent society. It has always been a time for joyful reunion of old friends and family, some of whom travel great distances to be here. The children especially look forward to it, and every year it is the subject of poetry and art competitions in local schools. The principals of neighbouring town festivals also participate, but, above all, it is for the enjoyment of the local people, and long may the tradition continue.*
>
> **Whipman website**

Perceived weaknesses can be turned to strengths. The culture of the Scottish Borders differs in many respects from the familiar Scottish norms. Those differences should be celebrated. The region has no one major centre with 'critical mass', comparable to an Inverness or a Dumfries—instead every town and village has different characteristics to be explored and developed. In that context, we should expect creativity, and the structures which support it, to take different, and unusual, forms in the Scottish Borders. That differentiation can be a real competitive advantage.

Rural Proofing

Rural Proofing is designed to help ensure that the needs of rural areas are fully taken into account in the development of all new Council policies and strategies. Rural Proofing aims to check that rural areas are not overlooked or adversely affected by Council policy and strategy decisions. A 'Rural Proofing Checklist' has been developed for use by all Departments. It recognises that in the countryside, needs frequently differ from those in towns. The checklist will be used to demonstrate that the needs of rural areas have been properly taken into account. Rural proofing provides the Council with a useful tool to remind policy-makers to 'think rural' when developing new policies and strategies.   It will also demonstrate that the needs of rural areas have been properly taken into account.

SBC Guidance

Coincidentally, this Strategy is being developed at the same time as the Scottish Borders Council is participating, along with Aberdeenshire Council, in a pilot programme related to the Scottish Government's **Land Use** Strategy of 2011. In taking an 'eco-system approach' to questions of land use, the programme identifies 'cultural services' as one of the four elements of that approach, and

A Pilot Regional Land Use framework for the Scottish Borders
The Scottish Borders has been selected by the Scottish Government as one of two pilot areas to develop a pilot regional land use framework, more commonly known as the Land Use Strategy pilots. The Land Use Strategy (LUS) seeks a more integrated approach to land management in recognition of the increasing number of pressures and demands placed upon the countryside. The objective of the pilots is to produce a common flexible framework which will guide different "users" to make informed decisions, achieve their objectives more effectively and facilitate debate on conflicting demands. The pilots will run from April 2013 until the spring of 2015 and will help inform the revision of the national Land Use Strategy which is to be published in 2016.

Central to the LUS approach is the need to employ an ecosystems approach to managing natural assets and this is very much part of the Forum modus operandi. Although the LUS pilot process is being led by [Scottish Borders Council](#), they have recognised that they need to work closely with land managers and other relevant stakeholders and will therefore be working closely with Tweed Forum, who will co-ordinate stakeholder engagement over the next few years.

Tweed Forum website

'cultural' as one of the three pillars of sustainability, along with 'environmental' and 'economic'. The issues on which the pilot is focusing have strong resonances with the Cultural Strategy - thinking outside traditional silos; a focus on quality; the role of SBC - and the partnership of SBC with the Tweed Forum to deliver the pilot potentially offers a model for delivery of this Cultural Strategy (Presentation to the RSA, 4th November 2013).

That focus leads to a wider recognition that artists can and do play significant roles in investigating, and raising awareness of, issues of environmental sustainability. As the Land Use Strategy recognises, decisions on future land use must be informed by a complex mix of history, local values, economic potential and environmental sustainability, and the arts are often especially well placed to tease out the strands of such a mix.

Unweaving the Tweed

Historically, two interlinked industries have defined much of the Scottish Borders—sheep farming and textiles. The bulk of the raw materials for the mills may now be imported, and the textile industry itself may be small compared with the 1940s, when it employed one third of the Borders workforce, but the region still has the highest densities of sheep farming in Scotland, and Borders textiles and knitwear continue to have an international market and reputation.

The very term 'tweed' is an example of the reticence of the Borders. For most people, round the world, the word is indissolubly linked with 'Harris'. But the Scottish Borders is the fabric's true home, and one story has the very name coming from a London merchant in the 1830s confusing the Scots word 'tweel' (for twill) with 'Tweed', the place of the fabric's origin. True or not, tweed offers a useful **metaphor** for culture in the Scottish Borders. View a length of tweed from a distance, and you will be struck by its overall texture, its harmony of colours, its evenness of pattern. Move in more closely, and you will gradually be able to distinguish the separate threads, the distinct colours, that make up the warp and weft of the overall fabric, often with different colours twisted together to make a two- or three-ply yarn. And getting that close in, it becomes apparent that what at first seemed smooth and even, is actually made up of rough threads, a roughness that gives the fabric both its distinctiveness and its strength.

The same is true of the cultural weave of the region. Look closely, and it is far from uniform. It's not simply that each town, indeed each village, has a highly distinctive personality, it seems more that the region makes a virtue of diversity. Where there are Borders-wide organisations in place, they often exist to support such diversity—whether it be the Bridge Third Sector Interface for the voluntary sector, Borders Creative, the network for creative services businesses, Youth

Borders, a network of voluntary groups in youth work, or the Creative Arts Business Network.

This can lead to a challenging sense of **entitlement**: that a given community may feel it has a right to retain, or aspire to, its own museum, festival, or cultural venue. And that might prevent the achievement of a sustainable critical mass, by splitting resources or audiences. This cannot be addressed by applying rigid guidelines—it requires rather an ongoing process of dialogue and negotiation, and an understanding and acceptance of all parties involved of where any one element may fit within a bigger vision for the region.

Stewardship of the Unruly

Beach huts, Coldingham
(photo: Robert Livingston)

By their very nature, creative people tend to resist tidy categories and limiting definitions. Creativity is an *unruly* process, not readily amenable to deadlines, pre-determined targets, or clear-cut Performance Indicators. 'Numbers through the door', for example, is too crude a measure to evaluate the lasting impact of a cultural experience on a given individual or group. The 'Return on Investment' in Culture—whether measured in economic or social terms—may take years to fully manifest itself, whether through the growth of an industry (such as music in the Highlands), or by supporting a young person at risk of criminal behaviour (one of the aims of the Big Noise project in Stirling and Govan).

But some people, it appears, would apply the term, '**unruly**', to the folk of the Scottish Borders as a whole; it is an intrinsic legacy of that borderland, Reiving

history, and a necessary by-product of a self-reliant, 'can do' attitude. Far from being the peaceful havens portrayed in the tourist literature, Scottish Borders communities can have an edge, and sometimes even a quality of danger, that make rugby the perfect sport for the region, and the Common Ridings the most typical expression of its character.

In a region of the geographic scale of the Scottish Borders, there is another 'unruly' aspect—the perception that some areas within the region—the lowland and coastal 'East Borders', for example, or the 'deep Borders' south and west of the Selkirk/Galashiels axis—lose out on access to facilities and services. A Cultural Strategy should include an aspiration to **'parity of opportunity'**, regardless of location.

Yet there is another, very different quality which also appears to be intrinsic to the Scottish Borders, and that is the concept of **'stewardship'**. It is most obvious in the prevalence of landed estates throughout the region. One estimate was that there are 83 different estates in the Tweed Basin, many of them now perhaps no more than farms, but still thought of as 'the estate' by local communities.   But it's clear that, in a much wider sense, that concept of 'stewardship' is of fundamental importance to the Scottish Borders: it is at the heart of the continuation of the Common Ridings, and many other regional traditions, such as stick dressing. It underlies the strength of feeling when a community's museum or library is threatened with closure. It powers the huge range of amateur and voluntary cultural activities, especially those that involve passing skills to young people. It is about taking the long view, cultivating both the seedlings and the centuries-old trees, allowing space for natural growth and change.

The power of this sense of stewardship can seem overwhelming, perhaps even antagonistic, to those who are seeking to develop contemporary work, whose ideas might be seen as challenging traditions, or who simply want to work more in an international mainstream.   However, in a Scottish Borders context, 'stewardship' is not about uniformity, a single way of doing things, or only one correct story to be told. That's why we offer **'stewardship of the unruly'** as an underlying theme for this Cultural Strategy, to encourage an approach that values idiosyncrasy, that refrains from imposing top-down models, and that recognises that fostering the contemporary and the innovative, is another form of stewardship: of the heritage of the future.

Crossing the Border

If the Anglo-Scottish Border is a political construct, then the Tweed river basin is the natural geographic feature which draws together communities on both sides of that border, in a shared ecology and way of life. That shared riverine ecology

has long required formal cross-border cooperation, currently in the shapes of the Tweed Foundation and the Tweed Forum. Many artists and cultural groups based in the Scottish Borders have developed formal links with partners in the North of England, either for specific projects or courses, such as current and recent links with Newcastle, Sunderland and Lancaster Universities, or on an ongoing basis, such as the Crossing Borders group which brings artists and craft makers from the Scottish Borders and north Northumberland together. And this cuts both ways: as an English-based venue the Maltings in Berwick receives no funding from Creative Scotland or SBC, but is heavily reliant on the box office income generated by its audiences from the Scottish Borders, and would wish, if the administrative hurdles could be overcome, to work much more with partners in the region.

Indeed, it has been argued that North Northumberland in general—and not just culturally—finds more in common with the Scottish Borders than it does with the more urban south of the county. This was made apparent by the programme of events to commemorate the 500th anniversary of Flodden, and in particular the development of the Flodden Eco-museum, which, starting out with 12 locations linked directly to the battle, on either side of the Border, has now extended out to embrace a further 27 locations, reaching from the Ord in Caithness to the Mary Rose Museum in Portsmouth.

The 2014 Independence Referendum will, one way or another, bring about change in Scotland in the lifetime of this Strategy. We can't anticipate the outcome, but we can attempt to propose a means of collaborative working which will stand, whichever way the vote goes. The Flodden Eco-museum offers a particularly interesting model for how this might be done, with its combination of lightweight core company, unconstituted steering group, and contracted-in services (from the Woodhorn Trust).

But there are also Council boundaries to cross within Scotland itself. SBC's Museums Service is an active member of the East of Scotland Museums Partnership, which, by bringing together 40 organisations, together responsible for 75 museums in the East of Scotland, can achieve economies of scale that would be impossible for Scottish Borders alone. Both CABN and Creative Clusters were collaborations with Dumfries and Galloway Council, although it has been suggested to us that differing contexts and priorities in each region made joint delivery difficult. This too may have a geographic basis—historically people have been much more reluctant to cross watersheds than river basins, and even today the only direct road through Moffat is long, narrow and winding, compared with the many north-south road and rail arteries running through the Scottish Borders.

Finally, there is one important border that is easily overlooked: that between land and sea. Throughout our consultations, it was a reiterated perception that the coastal communities of the Scottish Borders lose out by comparison with their more central counterparts, and that their distinctive heritage is overshadowed by landward customs and traditions. But an awareness of that boundary with the North Sea is also a constant reminder that the region does not only look inwards, and of the potential for productive links with European neighbours, such as those regions of Denmark and Southern Sweden which share many of the region's environmental and cultural attributes.

One consultee encouraged us not to limit our thinking, and to highlight the potential for **'Scottish Borders in the World'**, and there are indeed already good models of such global thinking, whether it be the Alchemy Film Festival, the Borders Book Festival, or the Books, Borders and Bikes Festival at Traquair. The region is, after all, fortunate in being within relatively easy reach of *three* international airports.

> *Selkirk horseriders are being openly invited to stay with Danish townsfolk during Jutland's 'ringriding' festivals next year to learn the mediaeval equestrian sport of tilting, and then bring the skills back home to the Borders.*
>
> *Tilting, or riding at a ring with a lance, was once popular in Scotland, but now only exists as a competitive game in south Jutland, near Denmark's border with Germany, where the annual tilting festivals share some features with the Borders common ridings.*
>
> *Through the Borders Festival of the Horse, a group of two riders from Kelso and a third from Smailholm competed in the Sonderborg Tilting Festival for the first time this year.*
>
> **Selkirk Advertiser, July 22, 2012**

The Cultural Services of Scottish Borders Council

Culture does not fit conveniently within one department of Scottish Borders Council. The various cultural services teams come under Education and Lifelong Learning, while the Council's Events Strategy, and Tourism Strategy, and the relevant officers, sit within Economic Development. A team within Environment and Infrastructure has responsibility for planning in relation to listed buildings, townscapes, and archaeological sites. This last is a huge responsibility: the region comes second in Scotland, on a per capita basis, for listed buildings and conservation areas, and has 15,000 registered archaeological sites, and many more as yet unexamined and unregistered. A long term programme of improvements to central townscapes, from Duns twenty years ago, to plans under development for Selkirk, has had a significant cultural and economic

impact in stressing the individual character of each town, and encouraging town centre retail developments.

Melrose Town Centre
(Undiscovered Scotland)

Historic circumstances mean that SBC is the direct custodian of an unusually large number of museums, growing out of individual community collections. That history presents significant challenges in terms of a commitment to free admission, and strongly held views about the possibility of closing or merging any of the different buildings. The result is that, despite excellent work by the Museums Service team, the quality of which is recognised nationally, the museums themselves often suffer from long term under-investment, creating a downward spiral in which visitor numbers are declining. This is not a challenge unique to the Scottish Borders: across Scotland there is a widening gap between the huge visitor figures for new and refurbished national and city museums, and declining attendances at smaller, more local facilities. But the overall mix in the region is unusual, with only a modest *independent* museum sector, supported by Council staff, and the dominant presence of the great houses, a number of which are also registered museums. There is an opportunity here to develop a more integrated and holistic approach to the heritage of the region, bringing the Council, independents, and national bodies such as Historic Scotland and Museums Galleries Scotland, to work together.

Within Education and Lifelong Learning, the Council's various cultural teams—museums, libraries, archives, arts development, Heart of Hawick—already collaborate extensively, but still have the potential to work together in an even more strategic and coordinated manner. Moreover, just like so much community cultural activity, these Council teams are also often working 'under the radar'. Their success in attracting external funding for their projects, the extent of their involvement with young people, schools, and community groups, their links with national bodies, whether performing arts companies or cultural agencies, are all insufficiently recognised, both within the Council and externally. Officers of both Creative Scotland and Museums Galleries Scotland have been at pains to praise the achievements of the Culture Teams in 'doing so much with so little'.

Inevitably, it is hard for the outcomes of individual projects, or the achievements of individual teams, to be made visible within the very much larger, corporate presence of Scottish Borders Council. It's significant, but not surprising, that the two Council cultural programmes which have the highest awareness in the wider community are those which have been able to establish distinct identities through marketing and online media: Heart of Hawick, and the Creative Arts Business Network (CABN).

There is, moreover, a perception, quite widely held, that the Council does not 'care' about culture, and is not sufficiently supportive of cultural facilities and activities. In reality, Scottish Borders Council's overall spend on culture, per capita, is overall around the national average for Scotland (although there are notable variations across the different cultural services). Similarly Creative Scotland's spend in the region, also per capita, places Scottish Borders exactly in the middle of Scotland's 32 local authorities. This is not grounds for complacency—one interviewee spoke eloquently of the dangers of 'aspiring to be average'--but it is both a solid base on which to build, and a level of investment that needs to be acknowledged, and its impacts demonstrated and understood.

What is a Strategy for?

There is no shortage of strategies out there, national, regional and sectoral. Like all local authorities, Scottish Borders Council agrees an annual Single Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Government, a system that in 2013 has been extended to include other members of the Community Planning Partnership. This Agreement, signed off in September, makes no reference to arts, culture or heritage in the course of its 57 pages, and only one reference to the creative industries, as a key sector for growth. Its overall priorities, however, are for **economic growth** and the improvement of **quality of life** and, as Government guidance to Local Authorities has demonstrated, culture is well placed to help to achieve these key aims. Rather than a single Outcome or Measure in itself, culture—as many have said to us—is the glue that holds those wider aims together.

Particularly important in this national context are the key recommendations of the Christie Commission on the Future of Public Services in Scotland, which include a drive towards prevention, and a greater focus on 'place' to drive better partnership, collaboration and local delivery. The cultural sector has a major opportunity to demonstrate how it is well placed to support both of these priorities.

> *A cycle of deprivation and low aspiration has been allowed to persist because preventative measures have not been prioritised. It is estimated that as much as 40 per cent of all spending on public services is accounted for by interventions that could have been avoided by prioritising a preventative approach.*
>
> *Tackling these fundamental inequalities and focussing resources on preventative measures must be a key objective of public service reform.*
>
> **Commission on the Future Delivery of Pubic Services, June 2011**

This Cultural Strategy has been commissioned as part of the process of agreeing a Place Partnership between Scottish Borders Council and Creative Scotland, this being Creative Scotland's preferred approach to engaging with Scotland's Local Authorities on a one-to-one basis. Place Partnerships are intended to enable strategic interventions, to promote dialogue and cooperation, and to lead to a 'step change' in a given Council's engagement with the cultural sector. Creative Scotland is itself going through a period of significant change following the appointment of a new Chief Executive, and its own new Corporate Plan will not be available until some point in 2014.

Museums Galleries Scotland works closely with the SBC Museums Service, and with the independent museums in the region, and the agency is currently focusing on delivering the objectives of its recent delivery plan *From Strategy to Action*, in its newly defined role as the National Development Body for museums. That Plan is itself drawn from *Going Further: the National Strategy for Scotland's Museums and Galleries,* published in 2012.

Within Scottish Borders region, there are new strategies in areas which are directly relevant to those who work in culture, as professionals or volunteers, including a Council Events Strategy, and a Scottish Borders Tourism Strategy drawn up by the Scottish Borders Tourism Partnership.

This Cultural Strategy must take account of, and as far as possible work with, these strategies and the agencies which deliver them, but it is different from all of them in one highly significant respect: although commissioned by the Scottish Borders Council, the Cultural Strategy is intended to be for the Scottish Borders as a whole. That has two important implications: first, that its recommendations must be capable of being welcomed, and adopted, by a broad cross-section of the region's population and, second, that delivering those recommendations will require a broad-based partnership between regional and national agencies, and those working within the cultural sector, and within communities.

Looking for Leadership

Though this may be a Cultural Strategy for the Scottish Borders as a whole, nonetheless, as the Strategy's Action plan recognises, Scottish Borders Council

has a crucial role to play in implementing the Strategy's recommendations, through offering leadership in two distinct ways: first, with other agencies, regional and national, both through the work of the Community Planning Partnership, and through using the Place Partnership with Creative Scotland as an opportunity to build a wider network of agencies to adopt and deliver the Strategy; second, through offering support and guidance to the wider community of the Scottish Borders—whether professional businesses, voluntary groups, or individual practitioners—to help them to realise their potential.

Scottish Borders Council has an encouraging record in playing this leadership role, through the partnerships that have delivered such programmes as Creative Clusters and CABN, and through those programmes supporting such independent developments as the Alchemy Festival or Borders Creative. This Strategy now presents the opportunity to extend, consolidate and integrate that role through establishing a more inclusive support mechanism which can work across the cultural sector as a whole, fostering new partnerships and encouraging new developments.

But there is no doubt that the most important leadership role will come from specific individuals. In the case of Orkney, that included Ole Gorie returning to start her jewellery business in the 1960s, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies's inspiration for the St Magnus Festival, or Margaret Gardiner offering her collection as the basis of the Pier Art Centre. Over the years the Scottish Borders has also benefitted from the vision and commitment of many such individuals, acting as pioneers, inspirers and enablers.

The crucial point is that no Strategy can predict where, when or how such leaders will appear. A cultural strategy written ten years ago, for example, could not have anticipated that a number of established

CABN has been able to achieve a notable scale of activity, which, given the aforementioned capacity limitations is an achievement, and is recognised as being due to the commitment from the CABN Creative Leader, and the other individuals involved in CABN. One lesson from the delivery of CABN in 2010-2012 relates to what can be realistically achieved with this scale of person resource, and this should be borne in mind when considering the future delivery of CABN.

A clear finding from the primary research is that networking and collaboration is regarded as a key aspect of the role of CABN, and is an area that CABN has had clear success in – especially around: improved awareness of the wider creative sector in the Scottish Borders for individuals; stimulating collaboration between creative individuals; and helping creative individuals appreciate and realise the benefits of meeting people in the same area of work/art form.

SOSCEI Scottish Borders 2010-12, Project Evaluation, December 2012

artists in different disciplines would move to the region and start up important collaborative projects that forge new contemporary and international links. What a Cultural Strategy can do, however, is aim to ensure a supportive and dynamic environment, which will attract such established creative individuals to relocate, will also tempt back the Ola Gories of the future to start up new businesses, and will encourage ambition and aspiration from within Borders communities. It has been made very clear, throughout the consultation process, how crucial CABN, in particular, has been in creating such an environment, and CABN offers both a potential model, and also a challenge to ensure that any such extended CABN-style service can achieve a measure of security that will make possible long term planning and development.

The consultation highlighted the high levels of community involvement in culture in the Scottish Borders, both as participants and voluntary workers and supporters, and of the importance of valuing such activity on its own terms, uninfluenced by the unhelpful labels 'professional or 'amateur'. And it's often stressed how such engagement contributes to a strong 'sense of place' for a given community, whether it be town, village or hamlet.

But we've also been introduced to many projects and activities where cultural activities are directly contributing to community health and wellbeing, whether it be the Artbeat Studios in Hawick, working with people with mental health and learning disabilities; the Lanark Lodge Day centre in Duns using music and art; the Coldstream Reminiscence Project working with the SBC Museums Service, or the arts and music groups operating as part of the New Horizons Borders service for those suffering from mental health illnesses. These are tangible examples of the need to take a holistic view of cultural provision, to appreciate how active Council cultural services, and a sizeable and engaged artistic community, can interact with social and health services, in the widest sense, to enhance wellbeing and, in stark economic terms, reduce the long term costs of public services.

Research (including clinical research) has shown that participation in cultural or sporting activities (including physical activity)has led to improved physical and mental health (eg reduced stress levels, reduction in anxiety and blood pressure, reduction in visits to GP etc). Non clinical outcomes have included improved communication skills, new skills and confidence, improved interpersonal skills and increased social networks and enhanced sense of well-being.

Literature Review of the Evidence Base for Culture, the Arts and Sport Policy, Scottish Executive, 2004

As already noted, it's neither practical nor desirable to attempt to replicate comparable levels of cultural provision in all the larger communities of the Scottish Borders, and indeed more than one consultee has suggested that it may be appropriate to encourage individual towns to

play to their cultural strengths—Selkirk and visual arts, Galashiels and popular music, Coldstream and traditional music, and so on. While this approach has its attractions, it is dependent on two crucial factors: the willingness of people in one community to travel to another, and, above all, the *ability* to do so. This Strategy is being compiled at the same time as SBC has commissioned a review of Sustainable Transport, and the interim findings of that exercise reveal some fascinating parallels: current activity is not coordinated, and is not supported by adequate data. There is scope for greater efficiency, and the roles of the SBC and its partners in the Community Planning Partnership are critical to any successful developments. There is some hope, therefore, that the recommendations of the Cultural Strategy, and of this Transport Review, might be integrated to mutual benefit.

One particular transport service—a Community Transport Programme—is among the various voluntary activities, networks and groups supported by the Bridge Third Sector Interface. The Bridge contributes directly to cultural provision in the Scottish Borders through its support for the region's network of village halls and community venues, and through its provision of advice and information for groups setting up, and needing help on becoming constituted. It will therefore be an important partner in the process of implementing this Strategy's recommendations. But it may be more than that—it may be a practical model for the kind of support mechanism that we believe the Strategy will require, and it may even be a means by which such a mechanism could be hosted and provided with a governance structure.

Culture—and young people

Strategies look to the future, and a Cultural Strategy in particular must offer real and lasting opportunities for the young people of the Scottish Borders. And by 'young people' we have been encouraged to mean, not just those in fulltime education, but from pre-school years to 25 and above—to the point at which, so the demographic evidence predicts (see next section), many young people will leave the region for opportunities elsewhere.

Consultation with two groups of the Scottish Borders Youth Voice proved to be illuminating, as both groups saw culture very strongly in terms of history, heritage, customs and traditions. That in itself may not be surprising, but both groups also saw this emphasis in a very positive light, and both stressed those traditions, and particularly the Common Ridings, as important factors in influencing whether they would choose to stay in, or return to, the region. As one group put it, when asked what 'culture' meant to them: 'it includes you in society'.

SBC's **Arts Development Team** already works closely with the Council's Education services, through the delivery of the Youth Music Initiative in primary schools, through the Creative Learning Network, and the role of Cultural Ambassadors in each school, and is currently working on a Creative Learning Strategy for SBC's Education Department. This will take on board recommendations from Scotland's Creative Learning Plan, published in September 2013. We understand there is a strong take up by schools of the education programmes offered via SBC Museums Service, Historic Scotland, Abbotsford, Paxton, Bowhill, Archaeology Scotland and others, and this despite the transport problems that must be involved in such a rural region. And of course culture is a major driver for the Curriculum for Excellence, and schools are often the means by which children are first offered cultural experiences, both local and global.

> *The expressive arts can enable young people to explore difficult ethical questions and, by providing ways of expressing responses to personal and social issues, help young people to question and develop stances and views. Children and young people can explore the importance of cultures, the arts and heritage in Scotland and other societies, and gain understanding of the cultural values and achievements of different societies. In this way they can deepen their insights and experiences of cultural identities and come to recognise the importance of the arts to the identities of nations.*
>
> *There is tremendous scope to work in partnership with the wide range of artists and musicians, co-ordinators and organisations in culture and the arts who are able to enliven and enrich young people's experiences and learning.*
>
> **A Curriculum for Excellence: Building the Curriculum I**

Crucial as such curriculum-related and in-school activity is, it's also true that for many children—especially those not at ease with formal academic processes—the most influential and lasting cultural experiences are often those which take place outside the school setting. That has been well documented in the impact of the national Feis movement of Gaelic-based music tuition, which, for understandable cultural reasons, has not been taken up by Borders communities.

One of the Youth Voice Groups emphasised the difficulties involved in experiencing a wide range of culture outside school—events can be expensive for a whole family: some libraries have limited opening times: members of a band can find it hard to get together if they live in different communities; museum displays can seem for 'grown-ups' with too much reading; apart from companies visiting schools, their experience of theatre is mostly of amateur groups. This suggests that lack of opportunity is a greater challenge than lack of interest!

One important aspect of such informal cultural engagement is that it is less likely to be broken by the transition from fulltime education, as can be demonstrated by, for example, the experience of Borders Youth Theatre. There is a wealth of independent and voluntary cultural activity for children and young people across

the Scottish Borders, but without a full audit of what is currently going on, it is not possible to assess whether it is comprehensive, inclusive, or fully fit for purpose, or whether (as is readily documented in the Feis context), young participants carry their skills and experiences forward into their careers, whether directly in the creative industries, or through competitive advantage in other fields.

A project such as SBC's long-standing Voice of My Own programme reaches out directly to young people living in communities designated as being of multiple deprivation, or those at risk of offending, but it can be harder for independent and voluntary groups to have the skills, and to make the links, to ensure such inclusive approaches, and this is where there may be scope for closer working between those groups, SBC teams, and the wider voluntary sector.

The region has a strong presence from the Tertiary Education sector, with Heriot Watt University's campus at Galashiels, and Borders College's links with Queen Margaret University and other institutions. But the links between these institutions and secondary education have the potential to be stronger—it seems to be the case, for example, that few pupils from Borders schools go on to study at the School of Textiles and Design. CABN's Resource Talent Hub project with Heriot Watt is a valuable example of how partnership can expand access to the School's resources for artists and makers in the region, especially beneficial for recent graduates still starting up in business.

Voice of My Own (VOMO) is a project within Arts Development, Education & Lifelong Learning, Scottish Borders Council. Its aim is to allow young people to express themselves through the medium of the moving image. Over the seven years it has existed it has worked in partnership with youth organisations, schools and local community groups to produce a range of films, from documentary to animation and drama. Key elements of the process are nurturing skills and talent among young people, providing a constructive outlet for those who may be at risk, and fostering a sense of self-reliance and team spirit in those who are in need of direction in their lives.

VOMO is funded by Creative Scotland, Awards for All, Cashback for Communities, Fairer Scotland and Scottish Borders Council.

SBC Press Release

Culture—and the Creative Economy

Twenty years ago there was no such thing as 'the creative industries'. Of course people made and sold art, staged performances, designed things, and made films

and TV programmes, but those activities were not seen as a clearly defined whole, in terms of economic value and impact. Now the creative industries are an area of key growth in the Scottish Borders 2013 S*ingle Outcome Agreement* with Central Government, but, as we noted, that Agreement makes no other reference to arts, heritage, or culture.

This raises again the problem of definitions. For example, some use the term '*cultural* industries'—at one end of the spectrum—to refer to those parts of the 'creative industries' which are more concerned with delivering other forms of value than the purely economic (such as museums and libraries), while others— at the other end of the spectrum—use the term 'creative *services'* to cover such business sectors as advertising, graphic design, public relations, website design, etc--the membership, for example, of the Borders Creative network.

The reality, of course, is that all these segments are inter-linked and inter-dependent. It makes no more sense to divide them up, than it does to consider the arts as having nothing to do with heritage. As noted in the Introduction, the recent report by EKOS estimated that the Gross Value Added (the standard economic impact measure) of the creative sector in the South of Scotland was more than that of the forestry and fishing industries combined. But that is only a direct measure. The cultural sector has an economic impact well beyond any one organisation's own turnover. A recent evaluation of the Borders Book Festival, for example, estimated that it generated an indirect economic impact in the region of £3.5 million—a figure which compares very favourably with other, longer-established festivals in rural areas.

The creative sector in the South of Scotland is estimated to generate revenue of almost £60m per annum, employing 1,337 FTEs. This equates to an estimated GVA of £37-£39m per annum. This is larger, for example, than forestry and fishing combined and demonstrates the important economic contribution of the sector.

The Creative Sector in the South of Scotland, EKOS, May 2012

EventScotland hosts a website, www.eventimpacts.com which provides an online tool for event organisers to estimate the economic impact of their event—and also the social and environmental impacts. This tool is not just for the big players. We were told of an annual weekend of Scottish Country Dancing which brought 200 people, out of season, to a Borders village. Even if all the organisers of such an event need to argue for, is low cost or free access to venues, being able to demonstrate the economic impact of their event will greatly help their case, and help also aggregate the overall economic impact of the sector.

But there is a more fundamental sense in which culture is vital to the economic growth of the Scottish Borders. High quality cultural facilities and activities—whether with a national or a local profile—are key to presenting the region as forward-looking, sophisticated, and welcoming—whether to visitors, new residents, or inward investment. The National Records of Scotland predict that the population of the Scottish Borders will grow by 10% by 2035, but that all that growth will be in the age ranges up to 29, and especially over 64. The crucial economically active age ranges—30-64—are predicted to decline in number by an average of 13% over that same period. A strong cultural identity, and all that that implies, is central to attracting and retaining those in that crucial age range.

And a rich diversity of cultural activities is also crucial for those younger and older age ranges, in hard economic terms: to provide young people with the skills and abilities that will aid them in finding employment or starting businesses, and to encourage older people to be physically and mentally active, to reduce the future costs of social and health care.

Finally, it's important to recognise that the 'creative industries' are not a uniform sector. Orkney, for example, is highly unusual in having a 'traditional' craft—jewellery and silversmithing—as its dominant creative industry. In the Scottish Borders it is logical to foster new businesses that relate to the region's rich textile heritage. But there are other kinds of creative business that grow directly from the specific context of the Scottish Borders. The Border Studio, for example, started by servicing the region's high level of amateur dramatic and operatic productions, but now provides sets and props for amateur productions throughout the UK and internationally, employs eight staff, and occupies a large former mill that would likely otherwise be derelict.

Culture—and Tourism

Critical mass is a recurrent theme throughout this Strategy. The Borders population, small as it is, and divided between small towns and scattered rural communities, cannot by itself ensure the long term viability of many cultural venues and events. Cultural tourism is of central importance, both to sustaining those cultural facilities for the benefit of the resident population, and to maximising their wider economic impact. At £176 million, the visitor spend accounts for 10% of the total GVA in the Scottish Borders (2011 figures, from the 2013 Scottish Borders Economic Assessment).

But the Scottish Borders Tourism Strategy 2013 – 2020 does not make a single specific mention of culture (or any particular art form) although there is a significant focus on one aspect (heritage, both as townscape and as visitor attractions) and events and festivals are recognised as an asset. How are the Border's visitors to be amused, entertained and culturally stimulated? There is a need to demonstrate the existing, under-recognised value of culture to the visitor economy and indeed to grow it as a means of increasing visitor spend. Making comprehensive, timely What's On listings information available and promoted to visitors in an online format would be a good starting point. Better collaboration between the two industries – tourism and culture - should also be an ambition and visitor revenues represent a potentially important contribution to the sustainability of cultural organisations.

> - *To develop and capitalise on the growth markets identified in the National Tourism Strategy through proactive and innovative partnership approaches within the Scottish Borders. To address seasonality and grow visitor numbers and average spend sustainably in line with National ambitions;*
>
> - *To maintain, improve and protect the region's tourism assets, attractions and essential characteristics to provide authentic experiences. At the same time improve the customer journey by developing our own capabilities by enhancing quality and skills and marketing;*
>
> - *Ensuring full engagement of all in the tourism community and beyond in achieving the Regional goals by understanding that "working collaboratively achieves more"*
>
> **Aims of the Scottish Borders Tourism Partnership 2013-2020, April 2013**

The Borders Railway should have a beneficial impact, but it may also make it even more possible for visitors to 'do' the Borders in a day, and a narrower band of the Borders at that. As one interviewee said, Tourism needs to be the business of everyone in the Borders, and its benefits need to spread across the region as a whole.

There is no room for complacency. Bed night numbers have been falling in the Scottish Borders even while they remain stable nationally (2013 Strategic Assessment), as have visitor numbers at the Historic Scotland owned abbeys (Historic Scotland data) – a reasonable barometer for tourism performance--and there is considerable spare capacity in most tourism operations even at the height of the season. Those running the heritage houses to which we have spoken, all warn of their financial fragility and are

> *Guest house and B&B occupancy in the Borders has fallen by a very significant 11% and 13% for bed and room occupancy respectively since 2008. Nationally rates have remained relatively stable, down 1-2% over the same period.*
>
> **Strategic Assessment for the Scottish Borders, June 2013**

actively seeking to diversify their offer. Cultural venues and events can of course play an important role in extending the tourism season and encouraging more visitors in the 'shoulder months' as called for by the tourism strategy, but at present it is not economical for many cultural attractions—such as the historic houses—to remain open beyond October or to open earlier than Easter.

But there are many positive indicators in the Borders that can support growth of cultural tourism: Abbotsford House and the opportunities it allows better to exploit the legacy of Sir Walter Scott's international standing is an obvious one. By combining a visit with a railway ticket (from, of course, Waverley Station just a stone's throw from the Scott Monument), transfers and perhaps an additional "literary" or complementary activity, we have a new product well suited to the day visitor from Edinburgh.   Or perhaps the evening visitor in summer.

However real value comes from overnight stays, and those operating the improving hotel stock and food experience will hopefully be ready, for example, to exploit the Borders outstanding new archive facility to develop ancestral tourism (for which there is a growing appetite fuelled by the suitability of the web for research, digitisation of records, and fall in the price of DNA testing, as well as trends for visitors to be seeking trips that are more self-fulfilling and experiential).

The Scottish Government's recently announced Years of Focus could have been purpose designed for the Borders: 2014 being Homecoming, followed by Year of Scotland's Food and Drink, Year of Innovation, Architecture and Design, Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology and in 2018: Year of Young People.

Pilgrimage or spiritual tourism is another niche on an upward trend, being better served through initiatives such as the Pilgrim Journeys led by Scottish Churches Trust. The Borders is arguably unique in the proximity of its magnificent collection of abbeys, and the heritage of ancient pilgrimage routes both south and north, and this calls for innovative new product.

Finally, Scottish Borders Council has shown serious intent in its support of events and festivals and the industry have responded with a strong portfolio of national and regional events.   But we feel that yet more could be done in this area – where are the events exploiting the textiles heritage for example?   Could the Borders have an ambition to promote the longest festival in Scotland – a year long calendar?

Ambitious for the Borders

That phrase appears in the Scottish Borders Council's *Economic Strategy 2023*. For some, it is anathema to talk of culture in economic terms, as we have done

many times in this essay, though we have also tried to stress the much wider and more fundamental values of culture--of the arts and of heritage. But economic growth is the central priority both for this Council administration, and for the Scottish Government, and a Cultural Strategy must take that into account if it is going to have any traction in political circles.

- *Creating the conditions for businesses to compete - reflecting our entrepreneurial strength and the need to create the conditions for businesses to grow, and/ or to attract entrepreneurial people;*

- *Building on our assets - attracting and retaining people and growing businesses will be helped by what the Scottish Borders as a place has to offer and by our ability to maximise our assets;*

- *Developing the workforce of the future - fundamental to future prosperity and competitiveness is the supply of, and demand for, a skilled workforce. As there are fewer jobs available here than residents in work, people are travelling outside the area for work and this means economic performance is lower;*

- *Providing leadership - essential for successful economic development to be achieved, leadership will also help deliver other policy and organisational priorities too – around education, health, and the public good.*

Scottish Borders Economic Strategy 2023

Too often the argument is posed of a stark opposition between 'art for art's sake' and the 'instrumental' uses of the arts—or heritage—to deliver wider social and economic aims. The reality is not so crude. As the Culture Secretary acknowledged in her speech at the Talbot Rice Gallery in June of this year:

'Of course the culture and heritage sectors make an invaluable contribution to our economic life, but despite these challenging times, we do not measure the worth of culture and heritage solely in pounds and pence – we value culture and heritage precisely because they are so much more, because they are our heart, our soul, our essence.'

Our heart, our soul, our essence—it's no exaggeration to state that that is how we have found culture in the Scottish Borders—something so tightly woven into the fabric of Borders life that it can, perhaps, sometimes be taken for granted.

The consultation process looked at models, case studies and comparators elsewhere, and some of them are cited in this essay, but the clear evidence of the consultation is that all the models needed, for this Strategy to work, are already present in the Scottish Borders. The Flodden Eco-museum, Youth Borders, Borders Creative—these and other networks and partnerships indicate how a region-wide cultural forum might work. CABN has shown how a small, lightweight unit can, through a clear purpose and good leadership, deliver benefits far beyond its apparent reach. Bowhill, Traquair, Mellerstain, Paxton and other great houses have shown how heritage, community and the arts can be fruitfully combined to the benefit of all concerned. Heart of Hawick, and the

Eastgate Theatre, and have demonstrated how culture can drive, or contribute to, town centre regeneration. In their very different ways Abbotsford, and the Alchemy Film Festival, have proved that the Scottish Borders can have an international cultural reach. As this strategy was being finalised, the news came that Peebles had won a 2014 Creative Place, from Creative Scotland. If such an award existed for entire regions, the Scottish Borders could make a very strong case for winning.

> *Cultural institutions provide the glue that binds communities together. Culture attracts people to a place, just as much as good schools, housing or transport and creates an environment in which other industries, goods and services can grow. Museums, galleries, libraries and archives are treasure troves of knowledge and inspiration, providing interpretation and understanding of the world around us. Arts, drama and music help us to explore our emotions and to understand what makes us human. Communities cannot thrive without these cultural experiences that help us to gain a deeper sense of our selves and our shared heritage. Society cannot restore respect or a sense of worth to communities with police and anti-social behaviour orders alone. Without cultural services and cultural experiences communities die.*
>
> **Values and Vision: The Contribution of Culture, Arts Council England and Museum umbrella bodies, 2013**

In being ambitious for *culture* in the Scottish Borders, this Strategy is also being ambitious for the Borders as a whole. The vision of the *Scottish Borders Economic Strategy 2023* is

> 'that by 2023 we will be amongst the best and most productive rural economies in Scotland'.

The vision for this *Cultural Strategy* is that by 2019 – the intended life of this Strategy – the Scottish Borders will be recognised and celebrated for what it is – one of the most distinctive, diverse and rich cultural regions in Scotland.

*'Culture Includes You in Society'**

A Cultural Strategy

for the

Scottish Borders 2014-19

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* *Response from a member of the Scottish Borders Youth Voice to the question 'What does Culture mean to you?'*

The Scottish Borders
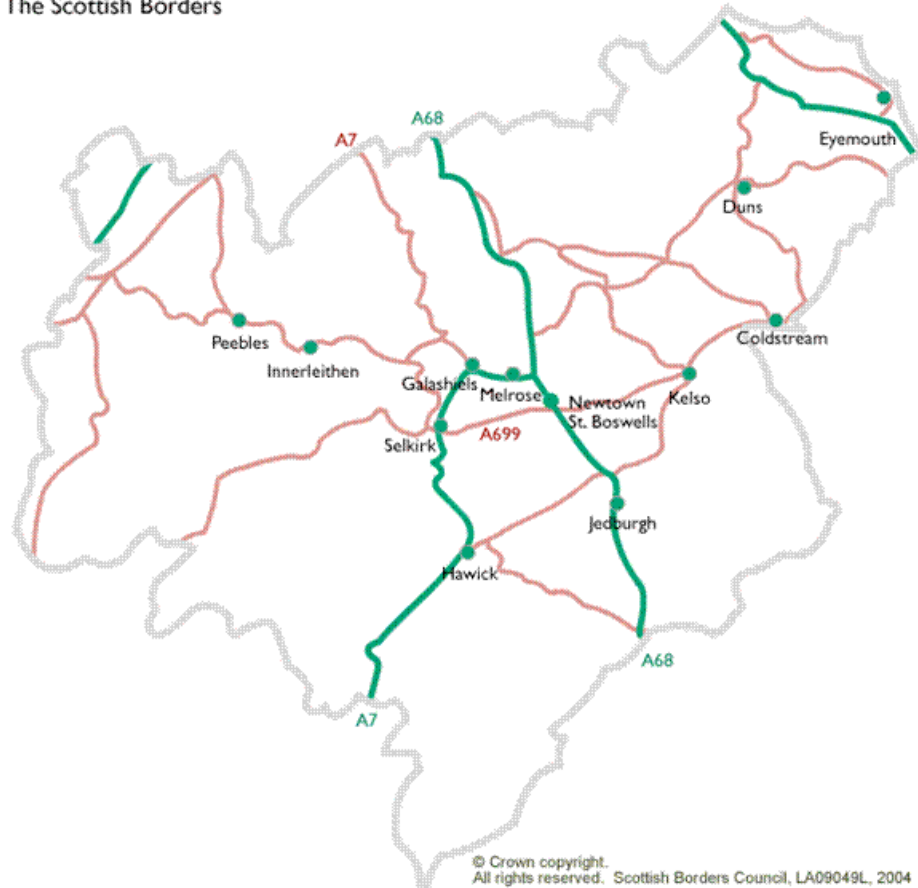
Despite its small and scattered population, the Scottish Borders has a cultural richness and diversity that can stand comparison with any other rural region in the UK, and not a few urban ones too.

Not only are its history, traditions and built heritage of exceptional depth and quality, but it is home to an increasingly dynamic, ambitious, and internationally aware creative community.

Its unique Border status gives it a special role to play in Scotland's national identity.

A Cultural Strategy

4.1. Who needs a Cultural Strategy for the Scottish Borders?

Everyone. Huge numbers of people are involved in cultural activities: as audiences, participants, members, performers, volunteers, organisers, artists, curators, writers, teachers, musicians, learners, managers, and supporters. Cultural activities create jobs, bring life to community spaces, attract visitors, involve young and old, and tell the stories of Border communities. There's hardly an aspect of Borders life—shopping on the high street, teaching the young, caring for the elderly, building communities, improving the environment--that isn't touched by culture. Culture is the glue that binds communities together.

But culture needs a place at the table. Public policy for the Scottish Borders is developed through the Community Planning Partnership, and endorsed through the region's annual Single Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Government. Culture--which ranges so widely, from creative services to historic houses, from amateur operatic groups to Common Ridings, from festivals to genealogy--is not represented in that process by a single clear voice. By contrast, Tourism, an equally diverse sector, is represented in the public arena by the Scottish Borders Tourism Partnership, and the opportunities and needs of those involved in tourism are laid out in the *Scottish Borders Tourism Strategy*.

This is a Cultural Strategy *for the Scottish Borders*. It's not owned by any one agency or public body. It's been drawn from what people in the region have said is important to them about culture in the Scottish Borders.

This Strategy takes it for granted that *engagement with culture* is a fundamental human right. As one American cultural charity puts it:

> 'Cultural expressions are the soul of being human, and their diversity and vitality comprise the beauty of humanity... Creativity is that element in human existence that allows for change and transformation, enabling both continuity and adaptability.' (www.christensenfund.org)

But cultural activities also have important *functional* values that can support vital areas of public policy. This is not a matter of 'either/or', but of 'win/win'. This Strategy aims to set out ways in which cultural activities can be valued both intrinsically *and* functionally. Some examples:

- The Borders Book Festival is estimated to contribute £3.5 million to the Scottish Borders economy

- Local branches of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society hold classes across the region, for adults and in schools, that also promote physical activity and wellbeing

- The Heart of Hawick development is estimated to have created 94 full-time-equivalent jobs

- As part of the Luminate Festival The Eildon Tree creative writing magazine collaborated with Scottish Borders Library Service to deliver workshops for older people exploring memory and ageing.

4.2. What is Culture?

Culture has many definitions. This Strategy adopts one that is inclusive, without trying to be comprehensive. It includes:

- All forms of the arts, including film, and forms using new technologies
- Heritage, including museums, the built environment, traditions and other forms of 'intangible cultural heritage', libraries, and archives
- The creative industries, including 'creative services' such as design and marketing

In the Scottish Borders, these different aspects of the Cultural Sector interact and overlap to a remarkable degree: arts events hosted and organised by historic houses; collaborations between the Archives Service, Historic Scotland, and contemporary composers such as Michael Nyman; theatre companies exploring the meaning and legacy of Flodden; festivals celebrating Hogg and Scott, but also showcasing cutting edge moving image work from around the world. That is one of the region's cultural strengths, and a key foundation for this Strategy.

4.3. Culture in the Scottish Borders – Six Recurrent Themes.

Early in the consultation process, the consultancy team identified six key themes. These underpin the contextual essay *Unweaving the Tweed,* which presents the resulting picture of the region and provides the foundation for the online surveys and ultimately, the Strategy itself. The themes are:

- **Visibility**

- **Connectedness**

- **Sustainability**

- **Traditions**

- **Ambition and Quality**

- **Unity and Diversity**

4.3.1 Visibility

External perceptions and promotion of the Scottish Borders are often of a region that is old-fashioned, quaint and conservative. This is compounded by the region's own uncertain sense of its identity.

The rich and distinctive history and heritage of the Scottish Borders is an asset of immense value, and eminently marketable to visitors, but it should be complemented by the presentation of a cultural life that is also dynamic, contemporary and forward-looking.

The process of changing external perceptions of the region will be best served, not by logos and strap lines, but by fostering a growing recognition of, and reputation for, its creative and cultural strengths.

The value of culture to the visitor experience, and the tourism economy, is under-recognised. A coordinated approach to cultural tourism is required, with, as a vital starting point, making comprehensive, consistent and timely What's On listings information available and promoted online.

The extent and depth of Scottish Borders Council's cultural services is not widely appreciated. It is significant that the two cultural programmes of Scottish Borders Council which have the highest awareness in the wider community are those—CABN and Heart of Hawick—which have been able to establish distinct identities through marketing and online media. Moreover, the extent of collaboration between the Arts Development Team, the wider cultural community, and the schools in the region, is perhaps not fully appreciated or articulated, nor the extent to which cultural initiatives can inform educational programmes and curricular design.

4.3.2 Connectedness

Cultural activity is deeply embedded in the **communal life** of the Scottish Borders often '**under the radar**': such activity—too often limited by the terms 'amateur' or 'voluntary' - is the crucial bridge between the region's built and intangible cultural heritage, and the work of contemporary and professional artists and performers.

There is scope to make much more extensive, and imaginative, cultural use of community and public spaces—village halls and community centres, schools, NHS premises.

There is a great deal of valuable cultural work being done with and for young people, but it is not possible to assess how comprehensive or inclusive a service it provides, and there is scope for auditing the range of work, improving connections, identifying gaps, and showcasing success.

There is an appetite for, and there are good examples of, national and international working, but there is a need for a more formal and sustainable means of fostering and supporting such connections.

There are valuable parallels for the cultural sector in how support for the voluntary sector has been organised through the Bridge Third Sector Interface, and the Bridge itself has the potential to be part of an ongoing support mechanism for the cultural sector.

Many regional strategies—for Economic Development, or for Tourism—make no explicit reference to culture. But rather than requiring separate measures in such documents, culture should be seen as the 'glue' which can hold wider aims together.

SBC should take a leadership role both in working with national and regional agencies and in partnering, supporting and guiding the cultural sector in Scottish Borders. It has the opportunity to synchronise policy developments in transport and land use, as well as education, health and social care with this cultural strategy in ways which have enormous potential to improve wellbeing and economic growth.

4.3.3 Sustainability

Throughout the region there are many ambitious capital projects at the planning or development stages. Each needs to be assessed with great care with regard to its long term viability, and often the case for such a development may be better tested through informal and short term projects, rather than through feasibility studies.

Much can be achieved in the short terms by cultural groups that are not limited by the demands of a building, but can work through partnerships, and through the adoption of informal and temporary (pop-up) spaces.

More can be done to ensure that cultural venues and events can play an important role in extending the tourism season, through supporting collaboration between the cultural sector and tourism agencies.

While recipients of public funding must be able to demonstrate the qualities of being well-managed, fiscally robust, compliant with relevant legislation, and properly promoted and evaluated, funders need to ensure that the process of assessing these qualities should be as straightforward and accessible as possible.

There is a growing arts infrastructure in the Scottish Borders, but much of it is very new and hence very fragile: there is a vital need for short-term, bridging support, to avoid a loss of momentum, and the possible loss of key initiatives before they can achieve a measure of sustainability.

CABN has shown how a small, lightweight unit can, through a clear purpose and good leadership, deliver benefits far beyond its apparent reach.

The Cultural Strategy is for the Scottish Borders as a whole, so its recommendations must be capable of being adopted by a broad cross-section of the region's population and it will require a broad-based partnership between regional and national agencies, those working within the cultural sector and within communities.

4.3.4 Traditions

Such rooted traditions as the Common Ridings and the Melrose Sevens are exemplary expressions of key aspects of Scottish Borders character and identity.

For members of the Scottish Borders Youth Voice, 'culture' meant to them: 'it includes you in society'. The region's customs and traditions, for those young people at least, would be a major factor in influencing them to stay in, or return to the region. For many young people it seems that lack of opportunity, or perhaps obstacles such as opening times or transport, are a greater challenge than any lack of interest.

The Land Use Strategy pilot programme which SBC is undertaking on behalf of the Scottish Government offers a direct example of how culture and the environment can interact, and may offer a useful model for delivery of this Cultural Strategy: thinking outside traditional silos; a focus on quality; the role of the council and the partnership of SBC with the Tweed Forum.

The Flodden 1513 commemoration was a successful model of cultural awareness-raising and cross-Border partnership, and the Flodden Eco-museum similarly offers an interesting model for collaborative delivery, with its combination of lightweight core company, unconstituted steering group, and contracted-in services.

A more integrated and holistic approach to the heritage of the region, bringing SBC, independents, and national bodies such as Historic Scotland and Museums Galleries Scotland, to work together, could strengthen current offerings, augment the use of existing resources and facilitate collaboration and growth with education and tourism sectors.

4.3.5 Ambition and Quality

There are strong views that the Scottish Borders needs a major, central space for the visual arts: population size and travel distances impose significant limitations, so any such development would need to be innovative in the way it engages with the communities of the region as a whole.

Nationwide, the intense experience of **festivals** is increasingly a preferred means of engaging with culture. The Scottish Borders has been successful in hosting a significant number of distinctive festivals, but there is room for more. New festivals should—but need not-- not cause significant displacement from existing events, and will need time to "bed-in".

The value of the creative industries to the region's economy has been recognised and assessed in a recent EKOS report. It's important to recognise that the 'creative industries' are not a uniform sector. In the Scottish Borders, while it is logical to foster new businesses that relate to the region's rich textile heritage, there are also other kinds of creative business that can grow and blossom from the specific context of the Scottish Borders, and others again, (like jewellery in Orkney) which may grow, unpredictably, from the commitment of a single individual.

SBC could look to embed cultural objectives in each of its areas of responsibility as a means of expanding the influence and impact of the cultural strategy.

Though it cannot be predicted where new leaders will emerge in the cultural sector, it is vital to foster a nurturing and welcoming environment that can cultivate leadership skills and ambitions in both the professional and voluntary sectors.

4.3.6 Unity and Diversity

'**Stewardship of the unruly**': an approach that values idiosyncrasy, that refrains from imposing top-down models, and that recognises the importance of fostering the contemporary and the innovative

The Scottish Borders is not a uniform region: it encompasses a huge variety of communities and environments, and its history is not uniform, but is instead one of flux and growth, in which the region was often at the cutting edge of social change, and can be so again.

Perceived weaknesses can be turned to strengths. The culture of the Scottish Borders differs in many respects from the familiar Scottish norms. Those differences should be celebrated and can be a real competitive advantage.

The lack of a single dominant centre in the region—a Dumfries or an Inverness-- can lead to a challenging sense of **entitlement**: that a given community may feel it has a right to retain, or aspire to, its own museum, festival, or cultural venue.   This cannot be addressed by applying rigid guidelines—it requires rather an ongoing process of dialogue and negotiation.

4.4   Underlying Principles

The objectives of this strategy have been drawn up on the basis of the following:

Culture Matters

History and heritage, customs and traditions, how we express ourselves through language and through all the possible forms offered by the arts, are central to our sense of personal and communal identity.

Culture should be Available to All

Historical and demographic circumstances mean that cultural resources and facilities are not evenly dispersed across a large and diverse region. There should as far as possible be *parity of opportunity* to participate in cultural activities across the region as a whole, and regardless of age or social background.

Culture Supports Economic Growth

Culture and creativity are renewable resources. They repay nurturing and investment through direct and indirect economic impacts. *Gross Value Added* (*GVA*) measures the contribution to the economy of each individual producer, industry or sector. It has been estimated that the GVA of the Creative sector in the South of Scotland is greater than that of the forestry and fishing industries combined (*Creative Sector in the South of Scotland*, EKOS, 2012). And culture also underpins economic growth indirectly. A rich and varied cultural calendar will attract new residents and help retain or draw back young people, and will enhance the appeal of the region for inward investment and business relocation.

Culture Improves Lives

We know that culture can improve people's health and quality of life. The evidence, both nationally and internationally, is conclusive: people who take part in cultural activities—even just as audience members—tend, on average, to live longer, healthier and more fulfilled lives. To take part, people need places and opportunities: places where culture can happen—whether a theatre, a museum, a library, a school, or a village hall—and people to make it happen—artists and organisers, volunteers and professionals.

Culture Strengthens Communities

Culture is about the places where people live, work, and enjoy their leisure. Culture brings communities together, it shapes local and regional identities, and it challenges people with new ideas, experiences and opportunities. Cultural facilities—libraries, museums, theatres—can be 'anchor

organisations', underpinning a community's identity and cohesion   The Scottish Borders identity is made up of a tapestry of very distinctive communities, proud of their local character, their history and traditions, their communal activities and what they have made of their environment—in short, their culture.

Culture Promotes Innovation

Creativity drives innovation, in all walks of life. Heritage and history provide the raw materials that inspire creativity. Culture can bring together exciting collaborations and new partnerships from different sectors to enable new thinking and build experience

Culture is Crucial to Shaping the Future of the Scottish Borders

Over the last two centuries the Scottish Borders has experienced change on a massive scale, with the rise and decline of a world class industry. Culture charts and reflects that change, and its impact on the communities of the region. It helps people to understand where they are and how they got there. And it also offers creative ways of telling a different story about the Scottish Borders: one that is about a history of innovation, of international links, of crafts skills and sophistication, and about shaping a positive future for the region.

4.5   Cultural Strategy – The Vision and Aims

The Vision of this Cultural Strategy is:

Our vision for this *Cultural Strategy* is that by 2019 – the intended life of this Strategy – the Scottish Borders will be recognised and celebrated for what it is – one of the most distinctive, diverse and rich cultural regions in Scotland.

To achieve this Vision, the Strategy sets out four Aims each of which has a number of Recommendations:

- **Communicate**

- **Connect**

- **Value**

- **Empower**

4.5.1 Aim 1: Communicate

The Scottish Borders has a 'quiet voice' within the rest of Scotland. Culture is the most effective means of letting that voice be heard. Culture can tell the story of the Scottish Borders in the 21st century through marketing and promotion, through media coverage, through online reputation and word of mouth.

But first those involved in Culture across the region need to be more visible. Their activities need better and more coordinated promotion, challenges and opportunities need to be discussed, and the potential for cooperation explored. Those involved in related areas—health, tourism, education—need to know who they can work with, and what they might achieve together.

Cultural achievements need to be documented, shared, integrated and recognised, so that the scale of the cultural sector's impact throughout the region can be appreciated.

Communicate: Recommendations

1.1 Database - A comprehensive database should be set up, of those active in all aspects of culture in the Scottish Borders, built on the many existing, separate and overlapping databases.

1.2 Online Presence - A strong online presence should be established for culture in the Scottish Borders—enabling those involved to link to each other, and to promote what they do both locally and internationally. This should include an integrated, consistent and comprehensive online **What's On Guide** for the region linked to effective methods of delivering online bookings.

1.3 Opportunities to exchange ideas and develop cooperation - Regular opportunities are needed, at an area level, for those who are active across the cultural sector (arts, heritage, creative industries) to exchange ideas and develop cooperation. These can be combined with training opportunities and briefings on regional and national policy.

1.4 Cultural Gathering for those active in the sector - A major cultural gathering for the Scottish Borders should be held at least every third year.

1.5 Tourism promotion - The rich reality of Scottish Borders culture—traditional and contemporary—needs to be fully represented in tourism promotion, and in placemaking initiatives both for individual communities and for the region as a whole.

4.5.2. Aim 2: Connect

There is an enormous amount going on in the Scottish Borders in every area of cultural life, but too much of it is fragmented and not joined up. There are many good examples of the benefits of joining together, both independent— University of the Third Age, Borders Creative, Crossing Borders, Youth Borders, Historic Houses Group, the Bridge—and also through Scottish Borders Council: the Creative Learning Network, the Creative Arts Business Network, links between the Museums Service and schools. But more needs to be done to build links across the cultural sector as a whole, and then with related networks and umbrella bodies, such as the Scottish Borders Tourism Partnership, Scottish Borders Food Network, NHS Borders, or the Scottish Borders Chamber of Commerce.

Connect: Recommendations

2.1 Cultural Forum for the Scottish Borders - An inclusive and representative Cultural Forum for the Scottish Borders should be set up to support the implementation of this Strategy, to act as a voice for the cultural sector in formal planning processes, and to link with comparable bodies in related sectors, such as Tourism and Wellbeing.

2.2 Forum Executive Body - A small, lightweight **executive body** is required, on the model of the Creative Arts Business Network, to work with the Forum, and to foster and support both regional and sectoral networks with information, advice and training.

2.3 More integrated approach within SBC - A more integrated approach within Scottish Borders Council should be adopted to delivering cultural services in the widest sense, and to linking those services more consistently with the wider cultural sector.

2.4 Cross-Border collaborations - A mechanism is needed for fostering and supporting more, and more effective, cross-Border collaborations, drawing on the models that already exist.

2.5 Access to specialist expertise - External partnerships and contracts should be developed wherever these can result in **efficient working** and access to specialist expertise, on the model of the relationship between Heart of Hawick and Edinburgh Filmhouse, or of the WASPS-managed studios in Selkirk, for example in developing a working relationship for the proposed printmaking resource in Selkirk with the Glasgow or Edinburgh Print studios.

4.5.3. Aim 3: Value

The value of culture can be found at many levels—in personal wellbeing and development, in communal experiences, in business growth and in regional promotion. That value can be generated by highly-trained professionals and by committed volunteers, by commercial businesses and social enterprises, by informal groups and constituted societies. Culture can also add significant value to other initiatives: to outdoor and environmental activities, to tourism providers, to town centre regeneration and to care services.

Value: Recommendations

3.1 Sharing achievements of the cultural sector - A means should be set up of **documenting** and sharing the achievements of the cultural sector, and of showcasing examples of good practice.

3.2 Support the demonstration of social and economic returns - More support should be offered for cultural groups, of all sizes, to be able to demonstrate the social and economic returns on investment for their activities.

3.3 Enhancing the visibility of the creative sector through extending access to otherwise disused premises, extension of the 'open shop' model, enhanced provision of facilities where work can be made, rehearsed, or presented.

3.4 A Cultural Tourism initiative should be developed, to bring tourism providers and cultural activists together to grow audiences and increase overnight stays across the region and throughout the year

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3.5 Support Quality - Public bodies and agencies should express a commitment to aspire to, and support, **quality**, both in cultural value and in operational processes; to fair and open methods of **assessing** quality; and to sharing and highlighting examples of **good practice**.

3.6 Cultural diversity - Public bodies and agencies should express a commitment to promoting the sheer cultural diversity of the region—in terms of its very different geographies, from river valleys to coast; in terms of the distinct identity of each community; and in terms of valuing equally the historical, the traditional and the contemporary.

4.5.4. Aim 4: Empower

The cultural potential of the Scottish Borders is still far from being fully realised. Historic sites and creative artists, museums and festivals, libraries and great houses: these all have under-used capacity to offer to the task of fostering a prosperous and healthy Scottish Borders. This Strategy should be the means of giving to those who are active in, and support, cultural activities *the means and ability to shape the future of culture in the region*, for the greater benefit of all.

The Scottish Borders has to compete, to attract visitors, businesses, inward investment and in-migration. Culture has a central role in enhancing the region's competitiveness—through promoting a distinctive regional identity, creativity in business, employability and community entrepreneurship.

Empower: Recommendations

4.1 Working with other regional and national agencies - Scottish Borders Council should take a leading role in working with other regional and national agencies to adopt and implement the recommendations of this Strategy.

4.2 Community Planning Partnership - The role of culture should be appropriately integrated within future Community Planning Partnership processes and documents, and hence in future Single Outcome Agreements.

4.3 Actively involve young people in culture - Building on the achievements of both Scottish Borders Council and independent groups, a more integrated approach should be developed to involving young people in culture, from pre-school to post-education.

4.4 Better access to Cultural Spaces - More and better access should be provided to spaces where culture can happen and be presented: through dedicated cultural spaces (where need, benefit and viability can be demonstrated), through easier access to Council premises, through partnership initiatives like 'pop-up' shops, or by adopting other informal and temporary spaces.

4.5 Develop Leadership - The emergence of new leaders within the cultural sector should be fostered and supported, through training, networking and information sharing.

4.6   Strategic Context and Reference Points

No Cultural Strategy can exist in isolation. It must link with, and demonstrate its relevance to, the wider priorities of Local and National Government, and of other public bodies, especially those which are members of the Community Planning Partnership. The development of the Cultural Strategy was itself informed by the SBC's Strategic Assessment of June 2013. **SBC is one of only 3 Scottish Local Authorities to publish such a detailed Assessment.**

Of the eight priorities in the **Scottish Borders Council Corporate Plan, 2012/13 to 2017/18**, five are directly supported by the recommendations of this Cultural Strategy:

Scottish Borders Council Corporate Plan 2012/13 – 2017/18		Scottish Borders Cultural Strategy 2014-19
Priority 1	*Encouraging sustainable economic growth*	1.2, 1.5, 2.2, 3.3, 3.4, 4.5
Priority 2	*Improving attainment and achievement levels for all our children and young people, both within and out with the formal curriculum*	2.3, 4.3, 4,4
Priority 4	*Building the capacity and resilience of our communities and voluntary sector*	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4,2.1,3.1, 3.2, 4.4, 4.5
Priority 5	*Maintaining and improving our high quality environment*	1.5, 2.4, 3.6, 4.4
Priority 6	*Developing our workforce*	1.3, 3.1, 4.3, 4.5
Priority 7	*Developing our assets and resources*	All of Aim 1, 3.6, 3.3, 4.4

The **Single Outcome Agreement (SOA)** is the means by which the Scottish Government agrees spending priorities for each of the 32 Scottish Local Authority areas. From 2013 the SOA is with, not only Scottish Borders Council, but all the members of the Scottish Borders Community Partnership. This SOA has three over-arching priorities, related to six of the Scottish Government's 15 'National Outcomes'. These, too, can be readily aligned with the recommendations of this Cultural Strategy.

Scottish Borders SOA Priorities	National Outcomes	Scottish Borders Cultural Strategy
Grow our economy	01. We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place to do business in Europe	1.2, 1.5, 2.4, 3.6
	02. We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people	1.3, 2.2, 3.3, 3.5
Reduce inequalities	05. Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed	2.3, 4.3
	07. We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society	
	08. We have improved the life chances for young people and families at risk	3.2, 4.5
Maximise the impact from the low carbon agenda	14. We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production	3.2

Action Plan

In more conventional strategies, at this point an Action Plan would normally set out a series of *tactical* actions which were designed to implement the recommendations of the Strategy. With a Strategy for the Scottish Borders as a whole, matters are less straightforward. While the Scottish Borders Council (SBC) should be the 'prime mover' in facilitating the Strategy's recommendations, it cannot do so alone, and the cultural sector as a whole requires a route by which it can be a crucial part of monitoring, and shaping, the Strategy's implementation. Above all, the Strategy requires a structure which can confer **legitimacy** on both its recommendations, and their implementation.

This Action Plan, therefore, has **three parts**.

First, it outlines a **mechanism** by which the Strategy's recommendations can be taken up and delivered, a structure that will enable the broad cultural sector in the Scottish Borders to be central to that process.

Second, it proposes a number of **immediate partnership projects** which can be initiated by SBC, while the longer term structure is being put in place.

Finally, the Plan sets out a number of **short term interventions** which can begin to address some of the key recommendations.

5.1   A Mechanism for Delivering the Strategy

This proposed mechanism is intended not only as a practical means of implementing the Strategy's recommendations, but also as a way of responding to the key issues identified at the outset of the consultation process: the visibility of the cultural sector, to itself and to the wider world; effective communication and better means of developing connections and cooperation, and working towards sustainability through linking the cultural sector more directly to the processes and priorities of Scottish Borders Council and other public bodies.

The proposed mechanism has four elements:

- a Cultural Strategy Forum

- a Cultural Gathering

- a Cultural Support Unit,

- a 'Concord' of public bodies

5.1.1 Scottish Borders Cultural Strategy Forum

SBC will work with partners to develop a Scottish Borders Cultural Strategy Forum (working title). The Forum will not be a constituted body, and instead its membership and activities will be defined by a set of 'terms of reference'.

It will be time-limited and task-based, focused on supporting the successful implementation of the recommendations of the Cultural Strategy, for the life of that Strategy, from 2014-2019.

To minimise the demands on its voluntary members, the meetings and operations of the Forum will be supported by a secretariat: either the existing Culture Services Administration Services team, or an independent unit (see below).

Purposes:

- to monitor, and advise on, the implementation of the Cultural Strategy
- to work with Council staff and other partners in the preparation of a detailed Development Plan based on the Strategy's recommendations
- To provide input to Borders-wide proposals relating to culture (e.g. comprehensive database, online what's on, input to future policy documents such as the Single Outcome Agreement)
- To promote and facilitate cross-Border working (e.g. by linking with Northumberland Strategic Arts Forum, by sharing contacts and best practice)
- To ensure a voice for culture, and where appropriate representation, in parallel groupings, such as the Scottish Borders Tourism Partnership
- To promote and facilitate greater cooperation across the cultural sector.

How will it be set up?

The Forum should decide its own Terms of Reference, but the following is one possible model:

- The Forum will not be a membership organisation. Those interested in the Forum need only register online.
- There will be a crucial role for an informed, but independent, Chair
- Representatives will be invited first from existing umbrella bodies and cultural networks--Crossing Borders, Borders Creative, venues group, the Scottish Borders Common Ridings and Festivals group, historic houses group, etc.

- Nominations will then be sought for sectoral reps--visual arts, music etc-- to be voted for by those registered online (or, alternatively, by geographic region, or both)
- In future new umbrella groups can apply to join
- Relevant regional and national agencies - SBC, Creative Scotland, Museums and Galleries Scotland, Visit Scotland, etc - will be invited to participate, (and see the proposals for a 'concord' below)
- There should be no more than two physical meetings each year; activity will otherwise be conducted online.
- The Forum should appoint a small Steering Group from its participants, which will meet more often (bimonthly?) and be the main link to the secretariat and to public bodies.
- It will be open and transparent, to prevent any accusation of "star chamber" bias.

The purpose, value and structure of the Culture Strategy Forum, and the need for its continued existence, should be reviewed as an integral part of the process of monitoring and evaluating success in delivering the Strategy's aims.

5.1.2 Cultural Sector Gathering

The Forum will be launched at a major Cultural Gathering to be held in 2014/15. This will be a mix of conference, workshops, showcase, marketplace and networking opportunity for the sector.

Purposes:

- To make the broad cultural sector—arts, heritage, creative industries— more visible to itself, to the rest of the Scottish Borders, and to the rest of Scotland.
- To review and debate the implementation of the Cultural Strategy.
- To promote cooperative working, across the cultural sector as a whole, with other sectors such as health and tourism, and with partners in the rest of Scotland and across national borders.
- To provide opportunities for training, learning and sharing.

5.1.3 Cultural Support Unit

The Forum, and the Gathering, will be supported by a new, small, and lightweight Cultural Support Unit. This will resemble the current Creative Arts Business Network (CABN) model. The core purpose of the Unit will be to facilitate the process of implementing the Strategy.

Purposes:
- Enable and support partnerships and cooperative working.
- Provide a secretariat to the Scottish Borders Cultural Strategy Forum (if not provided by the existing Cultural Services Administration team).
- Act as the executive body, as required, for Scottish Borders-wide initiatives, such as integrated databases, online What's On, etc.
- Act as 'traffic manager' (on the model of EU Media Antenna offices) to direct those developing new projects and initiatives to the best sources of information, advice and guidance.

The Unit will benefit from a measure of independence from Scottish Borders Council, either as part of a Cultural Trust, should SBC decide to pursue that option, or hosted by an existing independent body, such as the Bridge Third Sector Interface, or as a new, stand-alone entity. In all these options, consideration should be given as to whether the Unit would function more effectively as an expansion of the existing CABN operation ('CABN+') or as a complementary operation.

5.1.4 Concord of agencies

The relationship of key national and regional public bodies to the Strategy will be defined through a Concord of agencies. This will be an alignment of agencies initiated by Scottish Borders Council, initially bringing together the arts, heritage, tourism and voluntary sectors, and will involve:
- An acknowledgement by participating bodies of the Underlying Principles of the Strategy
- Each participating agency to note which of the Strategy's recommendations are relevant to their remit and priorities, and to indicate how they might be involved in the implementation of this recommendations. This might be through flagging up appropriate funding schemes; in-kind officer support; refocusing existing initiatives, or developing new partnerships.
- An agreement to participate in the activities of the Scottish Borders Cultural Forum, and through that to contribute to discussions on the role of culture within the work of the Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership, and future Single Outcome Agreements.

5.1.5 Development Plan

These four elements will together provide the means for devising and delivering a tactical **Development Plan** which will identify a series of actions and initiatives which will provide a detailed means of delivering the Strategy's

recommendations. This Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis by officers of SBC, the Cultural Strategy Forum and the members of the Concord.

5.2   Partnership Projects

The final key element is a mechanism that will promote more extensive **partnerships and cooperation**. This can either be integrated with the above model of Forum, Concord, and Support Unit, or may require a separate mechanism—this will require further exploration, drawing on such existing models as the Tweed Forum and the Flodden Eco-museum. The following are examples of immediate opportunities for partnership working.

5.2.1   Creative Scotland

Creative Scotland is the national organisation that funds and supports the development of Scotland's arts, screen and creative industries to ensure these sectors achieve their full potential in Scotland and beyond. Acting as funder, advocate and development agency, and working in partnership with others, Creative Scotland supports individuals, organisations and companies to innovate and grow.

A central part of Creative Scotland's work is to embrace the contribution that places make to a creative Scotland, working closely with local authorities and others through their Place Partnership Programme to realise the potential of all parts of Scotland. The Scottish Borders is one of five place partnerships announced by Creative Scotland in 2012/13.

Creative Scotland is keen to emphasise that the Place Partnership Programme is to do with building long term relationships - with Creative Scotland, SBC and the local creative sector - partly in order to create a plan for the Scottish Borders which everyone can sign up to but also to inform how we can all work together more holistically. Creative Scotland has welcomed the development of a cultural strategy to inform future creative activity in the Scottish Borders, both through the Place Partnership and in the wider cultural sector.

5.2.2   Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS)

In May 2013 MGS was relaunched as the National Development Body for museums and galleries in Scotland. In that role, and in implementing its own Delivery Plan, *From Strategy to Action,* MGS may be able to play a facilitating role in fostering greater integration and collaborative working across the heritage sector in the Scottish Borders, working with SBC's Museums and Archives Services, independent museums, historic houses, and Historic Scotland and its portfolio of sites in the region.

The aim of such a process might be: to build stronger links with the arts and creative sector in the Scottish Borders to develop opportunities for community participation and learning, for events and festivals, and for residencies and commissions, building on the many successful examples of such work that have already taken place in the region. In particular, MGS's recent focus on recognising and recording Scotland's *Intangible Cultural Heritage* has a particular relevance to the Scottish Borders, with the central role of the Common Ridings in many communities, and continuity and survival of many other customs and traditions in the region.

In addition, such a process could contribute to greater collaboration with tourism bodies, and in particular Visit Scotland and the Scottish Borders Tourism Partnership, to offer more dynamic and innovative ways of engaging visitors (from within the region, and to the region) with heritage sites and resources, to increase visitor numbers, extend stays, and increase both direct spend on those facilities, and in the region as a whole.

5.2.3   Scottish Library Information Council

SLIC has been working on developing a national library strategy with COSLA and the Scottish Government through the COSLA Sports, Arts and Culture working group which is chaired by Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs. One of the key strands of this proposed document focuses on the library's role in the cultural life of the nation. SBC's libraries have a history of contributing to both national and local cultural events. Further engagement with the national library strategy as it develops could assist the SBC Library Service to sharpen the focus of its cultural offer and present opportunities to learn from good practice elsewhere.

5.2.4 Culture Republic

This new national gateway to cultural engagement in Scotland was launched in September 2013, combining the expertise of Culture Sparks (Glasgow) and The Audience Business (Edinburgh) to provide cultural organisations with the support they need to understand and engage with the public – both local and visiting. Culture Republic has been developed to respond to Creative Scotland's call for a single, consistent, nationwide approach to fostering cultural engagement.

Culture Republic are specialists in the use of digital technology to gather, analyse, and apply the lessons, of, audience data. They are also experienced in using online technologies to promote and market culture engagement, through formal systems and via informal social media. They are in the process of developing

ways of working across Scotland, and a Scottish Borders partnership would be an early extension of their role to a rural region.

Culture Republic have also indicated the possibility of facilitating a focus on Scottish Borders issues by a network of comparable bodies, such as the Cultural Enterprise Office, Arts and Business Scotland, and Artlink, either as part of the proposed 'concord' or as a parallel initiative.

5.2.5   The Touring Network

SBC's Arts Development Team is already in discussion with the Highlands-based Touring Network about possible involvement in the Network's 'Tourbook' software to aid the development of a Scottish Borders Rural Touring Network. The need for, and potential of, such a network was flagged up in Creative Scotland's Review of the Theatre Sector, July 2012.

5.3   Short term Interventions

Some suggestions for short term interventions include:

5.3.1   A Community Cultural Challenge Fund

Geography, demographics and resources mean that it is not feasible for SBC and partners to enable every community to have the cultural facilities to which they might aspire. Nor would it be appropriate for SBC to make unilateral decisions on what is 'right' for each community. A mechanism is needed to assist in the realisation of ambition and the support for aspiration, by the effective targeting of funding and support.

We suggest a Scottish Borders 'Community Cultural Challenge Fund' based on the model of Creative Scotland's *Creative Place* awards. For a pilot period of, say three years, SBC could each year designate, through open competition (perhaps managed by the Cultural Forum and the Support Unit), one town and one village as *Borders Cultural Communities*. There would be seed funding for one or more specific activities in each of the designated communities. This might be to hold a 'culture day' on the Forres model, to trial a new festival such as YES, to undertake a feasibility study about a venue (Jedburgh) or to fund a season of activities at an existing venue (Coldingham). It might be about developing the role of the local museum, or building stronger links with the neighbouring historic house. Funding would be supplemented by targeted advice and support from officers of SBC and partner agencies, and the choice of communities would be made by an independent jury.

5.3.2   The Ladder of Opportunity for Young People

As we've noted, there is clearly a lot of activity, across many different art forms, on offer for young people. While the SBC Culture Services teams' work with schools can ensure a measure of consistent delivery across the region, such consistency cannot be guaranteed outside the formal educational sector, where the bulk of delivery is by independent and voluntary organisations.

We recommend an **audit** of current activities and opportunities to reveal the gaps, demand and opportunities for young people's active engagement with culture: where can young people experience, or play, live contemporary music, where can they take part in dance or drama classes, where can they develop embryonic skills as artists or writers; what training is needed, or can be delivered by local bodies, and what links can be made beyond the region?

5.3.3   Access to Spaces

There is a pressing need for an **integrated approach** for access to spaces where cultural activities can happen and work can be made. There are good models to

build-on, such as the inclusion of exhibitions, and the work of artists and makers, in the Selkirk pop-up shop initiative; the multiple uses of the Haining during the Yes Festival; and the temporary spaces which the Borders Arts Trust have made use of, in Hawick, Eyemouth and elsewhere.

SBC has already played an important role in fostering such opportunities, through the activities of the CABN team, and through developing its own version of a 'Licence to Occupy' originally devised in England. Nonetheless, there is clear anecdotal evidence that groups still face obstacles, both from within the Council, and from private businesses, in trying to gain access to otherwise unoccupied or under-used spaces. Establishing the terms of reference for a more collaborative and imaginative approach to providing such access could deliver significant gains in the short term.

5.3.4 Exploring Borders and Borderlands

Though little known, the Battle of Carham was in its way as significant as Flodden for the future of Scotland, England and Great Britain, as it marked the establishment of what is considered the oldest national border in Europe (and hence, probably, in the world), The 1000th anniversary of Carham, which falls in 2016 or 2018, depending on different authorities, can therefore offer an opportunity to build on the **cross-border** achievements of Flodden 1513, and also to develop cross-disciplinary projects focusing on the ideas of **borders and borderlands**, and hence of the identity of the Scottish Borders as a region.

5.3.5 Cultural Funding Fair

SBC and the Bridge to collaborate with key national funding bodies—Creative Scotland; Museums Galleries Scotland; Historic Scotland; Heritage Lottery Fund; EventScotland; Visit Scotland—to hold a 'cultural funding fair' to raise awareness of the range of funding opportunities available to groups and individuals, especially with reference to the forthcoming Scottish Government 'theme' years.

5.3.6 Understanding and evaluating impact

Projects which receive public funding are required, or encouraged, to use tools, such as that developed by EventScotland, to measure and evaluate their social and economic impacts, and the SBC Events Officer provides support in the use of these tools. However, there is clearly a very large amount of amateur, voluntary and commercial cultural activity which does not come into this category. Such groups and businesses could be encouraged and supported to apply **evaluation tools** to their own activities, both to document evidence which they might find useful in supporting future developments, and so that there is a better and fuller understanding of the overall impact of the cultural sector throughout the region.

5.4   A Tool for Assessing Project Proposals

As well as understanding a project's impact, it's equally important that SBC, and other potential funders, have an effective means of evaluating proposals and new initiatives at an early stage in their planning and development, to apply scarce resources effectively, and to demonstrate that decisions are based on a fair, and as far as possible objective, process.

François Matarasso, a member of the Noble Openshaw team, has proposed a five point approach to evaluating the *quality* of participatory arts projects, in an essay published in the UNESCO Journal: http://web.education.unimelb.edu.au/UNESCO/ejournal/ejournal_vol3iss3.html. From this essay a simple framework can be drawn which would help to structure decisions as to which projects are worthy of support and development, along the following headings. These are not intended as a rigid 'pass/fail' system, but as a basis for dialogue and negotiation.

> *Quality in Conception*: is the idea coherent, based on evidence and good practice, and offering a clear articulation of how and why this specific cultural intervention is expected to deliver the projected outcomes?

> *Quality in Contracting:* How has the project been developed, and partnerships established? Can those who are supposed to benefit from the project participate in defining the criteria of its success?

> *Quality in Working:* it should be possible to identify the characteristics—the objective qualities—that need to be in place to ensure a good participatory cultural process, even though one cannot guarantee that the final performance, event or exhibition will be a success.

> *Quality in Creation:* What is the track record of those who will deliver the project? Is there evidence of independent assessment of the quality of their work, by funders, previous partners, or third parties such as critics?

> *Quality in Completion:* Are those who are planning the project capable of seeing it through to a satisfactory completion for all involved? Can they demonstrate that they have the requisite management skills? Can they ensure that they will be capable of evaluating and reporting on the project's outcomes and impact, and has appropriate consideration been given to future stages, or a project legacy?

External Benchmarks of Success for the Strategy

There are currently few region-wide benchmarks for growth in the cultural sector, beyond basic statistics on visitor numbers and ticket sales, and even these are not consistently collected across all venues and promoters. This makes it difficult to establish meaningful internal measures of growth and achievement. As the Vision for the Strategy is, however, about *external* recognition, external *measures* may be a suitable means of evaluating success, provided that such measures do not become an end in themselves, or the prime justification for a particular initiative. The following are examples of current external means of recognition which the Strategy may adopt.

6.1 Quality of Life

The *2012 Bank of Scotland Rural Areas Quality of Life Survey* placed the Scottish Borders fifth, after Aberdeenshire, Shetland, Orkney and East Lothian. That is a significant improvement on 2011, when the region was placed ninth. In 2009 the Scottish Borders was not even in the first ten. **The ambition of this Cultural Strategy is that the 2019 Survey will place the Scottish Borders first.**

6.2 Creative Places

As this Strategy was being finalised, for the first time a community in the Scottish Borders—Peebles—has won a *Creative Scotland 'Creative Place' Award*. Another ambition of this Strategy is that, if the Creative Place programme continues, then every year there should be a bid from a community in the Scottish Borders, and that there should be **at least one further winner and one other shortlisted bid from the region between 2014 and 2019.**

6.3. Creative Regeneration

As part of the overall SURF Awards, the *SURF Creative Regeneration Award* was launched in 2012 to highlight examples of success and innovation in the role of creativity and the arts in community regeneration processes. To date, the only winner of *any* SURF Regeneration Awards has been Heart of Hawick in 2007. It is the Ambition of this Strategy that **a project in the Scottish Borders should win a SURF Creative Regeneration Award by 2019.**

6.4 Cultural Tourism

The *Scottish Thistle Awards* are the tourism industry's annual Oscars. Although there is a specific award for Best Cultural Event of the year, many of the other Award categories are also relevant to cultural organisations and events. It is the ambition of this Strategy that a cultural venue or event in the Scottish Borders should **win a Thistle Award by 2019**.

Producing the Strategy

7.1   The Brief

In setting out its requirements for a cultural strategy, SBC identified three broad challenges to be addressed if the region's cultural services and organisations are to be capable of supporting the creative sector of the economy.

- The financial pressures affecting all parts of Scotland but especially acute in the Scottish Borders where the council maintains 26 cultural facilities which are aging, expensive and not fit to deliver 21st century expectations.
- The fragility of the cultural sector, marked by low levels of income, undercapitalised, lacking a support infrastructure, fragmented and with deficit in business and marketing skills and experience.
- The strong and increasing competition from other media for the time people can commit to leisure and learning, when funding to refresh and renew local cultural offerings is limited.

SBC emphasised the importance of developing a strategy for the Scottish Borders as a whole, not simply a plan which might help the Council deploy its resources. So it placed substantial weight on the importance of consultation in the development of the strategy: "extensive, robust, independent and professional consultation with practitioners, cultural organisations, creative businesses and individuals in the region...."

And in developing this conversation it looked to its chosen contractor to develop a map of the cultural sector. In this they described, not so much a geographical map of the Scottish Borders, but a way of documenting and describing "the local cultural ecology and revealing the distinctive DNA of the area..."

SBC sought a distinctive, independent view, from a contractor with experience, knowledge and understanding of the sector. Starting at the end of August 2013, it specified its requirements for a report which should include not only an assessment of the strategic context and a description of Scottish Borders culture, not only a strategy, but also a delivery model and action plan.

7.2   Methodology

Noble Openshaw tapped into a rich vein of cultural expertise to put together a team from Scotland and beyond in order to deliver SBC's requirements: a lead consultant with twenty years experience in cultural development; an internationally recognised specialist in socially engaged arts practice; a

professional in the tourism and hospitality industries, based in the Borders; and a specialist in managing change.

The initial plan was to apply a mixed methodology combining desktop research with a range of consultative techniques designed to maximise our reach into the cultural sector as well as provide opportunities to test public opinion both on current provision and future direction. We also envisaged the collection of data which could provide the basis for a literal map of the area's cultural activity.

However, we quickly agreed with SBCs team that, given the constraints on resources and the short timeframe, our primary focus should be on consultation – and engagement - across the sector. This meant that whilst we prepared on-line surveys which were available to all to complete, we set aside plans for "street" surveys at selected cultural events. We are conscious that this risks our findings being dominated by a supply perspective rather than a demand perspective and it may be that a future strand of the action plan could develop a more comprehensive evaluation of demand for cultural activity in the Scottish Borders.

We also explored the relative strengths of approaches to mapping the cultural sector in the context of our available resource. Here again, the importance and value of the consultative dialogue with the sector was seen as a priority. Work with the SBC team revealed the extensive range of organisations and events known, but also the extent to which information about them was incomplete, inaccurate and distributed among a number of sources. Particularly since an exercise concluding in December would offer only a snapshot of the sector, we agreed therefore that our focus in mapping should be on dialogue and qualitative data gathering rather than crude data processing. The result is presented in Unweaving the Tweed the opening essay in this document.

Nevertheless, particularly bearing in mind appeals for information expressed during the early consultation events, we have prepared the ground for continuous data mapping of the cultural sector aimed at providing a basis for interactive engagement both by participants and audience. We deal with this later in this section.

7.3   Research

Even before commencing the contract our team was well-informed on national and other regional developments in the cultural sector. From the early stages of the project we set to, digesting a wide range of local and other relevant written material, not only those underpinning SBCs policies and obligations but also those of importance to the third and private sectors. We have also been able to take account of the activity currently under way in the council's review of

Cultural Services. A full list of the documents we have considered and referenced is included in Appendix A.

This work has achieved three things. It has enabled us to take full account of the issues informing the three challenges identified in the Council's contract brief – the financial pressures on an aging built heritage, the fragility of the sector and the increasing competition for limited funding. It has enabled us to probe more carefully during conversation and it has raised more questions to pose as the contract has progressed. Finally, it has provided depth to the evidence emerging from the process of consultation.

7.4   Our conversation

We have sought to develop our engagement as a conversation, first engaging in dialogue with stakeholders, then those already engaged with SBC's Arts Development Team or CABN as well as those known to our own team as a result of their involvement in the sector. Our approach to these discussions has been structured, so we have made a point of speaking with a range of SBC teams, including Economic Development and Education, venues including Heart of Hawick, country houses, strategic partners and funders, the third sector and the private sector. We have extended our reach both nationally within Scotland and beyond the border to neighbouring Northumbria. Rather like the blether in the High Street, we have made our way from one set of conversations to another, all of these leading us to contact with others which has then led us on to still more.

Meetings, interviews and an on-line survey have formed the core of our consultation with and mapping of the cultural sector in the Scottish Borders: focus group meetings with key stakeholders and 1-1 meetings and interviews with stakeholders and sector participants, supplemented also by telephone interviews. In this way, we drew the beginnings of our map from 80 individuals from within 37 organisations.

In addition to this, we took the opportunity randomly to attend cultural events taking place during September and October and visited a number of venues and places of heritage.

In parallel, we launched a word-press site to act as a conduit to channel the results of press, email and word of mouth coverage and to facilitate the engagement of those we were not otherwise reaching through interview and meetings (**www.sbculturalstrategy.wordpress.com**). We posted links to our on-line surveys. As of 17.00 on December 4th, the site had received 2,097 views, with the maximum in any one day being 109 views on September 30th, followed

by 94 on November 20th, and again on the 21st coinciding with posts to the site and the publication of the first draft strategy.

Whilst many of our conversations were held in the early weeks of the contract, quite a few have been followed through as time has passed and word spread of our activity. The whole consultation process was hung on a framework of themed focus group sessions open to all, held in a series of three. Our purpose has been to conduct this work transparently and to maximise the involvement of as many sector participants as possible, so these public events have been designed to reflect the different stages of our work, to focus on key themes and to provide participants with the opportunity to input at each stage: inaugural consultation, themed consultation and validation. The dates were posted on-line and promoted through the press while direct invitations were sent to all those registered with CABN and the Arts Development Team (through What's On) and, for the validation events, to all previous consultees.

7.5   The consultation events

The inaugural events posed the question *What makes a place somewhere you want to be?*			
2nd October	2 x Inaugural Events	Placemaking	Hawick
The subsequent themed consultative events provided opportunities for participants with particular interest in a chosen theme to meet and contribute at venues across the region.			
21st October	Themed Consultation	Health & Wellbeing	Melrose
22nd October	Themed Consultation	Education	Peebles
23rd October	Themed Consultation	Tourism	Berwick

The validation seminars were designed to generate a dialogue around the proposed structure and content of the final report, emergent themes and potential recommendations. It thus formed part of the research process itself and created the possibility of genuine knowledge 'exchange' rather than a unidirectional process of knowledge 'transfer'.			
26th November	Validation	Stakeholders	Newtown St Boswells
	Validation	Sectoral Consultees	Hawick
27th November	Validation	SBC CABN advocates	Hawick

In all 69 people attended these events, representing some 45 organisations from public, private and third sectors.

7.6   The on-line surveys

In consultation with SBCs project team and drawing from our early research and interviews, we developed a survey programme to facilitate contributions from those who were unable to participate otherwise in the process of consultation. We devised these around six emerging themes (also described elsewhere): Visibility, Connectedness, Sustainability, Traditions, Ambition & Quality and Unity & Diversity.

> **Visibility** - The cultural sector needs to be more visible both within the Scottish Borders and beyond. There's lots going on, but its significance is not always understood either locally or nationally. The roles and contributions which SBC departments and staff make need to be more visible.
>
> **Connectedness** - There's a need for better-supported, more effective region-wide networks and forums which can connect and enfranchise, especially independents. Sustained connections will help reduce the risk that opportunities for collaboration or linkage between sectors are missed: linkages like arts and heritage with areas like tourism, and health and well-being?

Sustainability - Scottish Borders is a large, dispersed region where cultural organisations and resources are spread thin and the capacity to sustain and develop creativity is hard to keep going. It's also a region with permeable boundaries, where audiences can as easily travel from Brunton as they can to Berwick. So, finding the funding and resources which can be relied on to sustain cultural activity year on year is crucial.

Traditions - The Scottish Borders have strong heritage and traditions which offer opportunities for contemporary innovation, but they also create an illusion of continuity that masks change and militates against new initiatives... "It's aye been". Developments should capitalise on the traditions but grow anew.

Ambition and Quality - strong traditions and thinly spread co-ordination and resourcing can lead others to think of regions like the Borders as parochial and conservative, and this often leaves participants short of confidence and ambition. There's a need to consider current programming and challenge expectations of scope, scale and quality.

Unity and Diversity- All Borders communities are different, and often, for instance on the Ridings, fiercely competitive. A sparsely populated region, the Borders need to build critical mass to take advantage of economies of scale whenever possible. There's a need to combine the strengths of working together with the importance of recognising and building upon difference.

We decided that each of these themes were sufficiently important to warrant a number of questions and so devised a separate questionnaire for each theme. We invited contributors to answer a short overview questionnaire and then to select as many of the six others as they wished. We took the view that although this had the potential to discourage respondents it also offered a greater chance of more considered responses on critical issues.

The survey questionnaires were posted on-line using Survey Monkey and made available through our Word press blog. We also publicised their availability through local press and SBC's email databases. These questionnaires were not intended to produce statistically robust data, but only to offer another means by which views, ideas and comment could be contributed to the consultation process.

The survey was opened on 16th October and although remaining open, the last response was recorded on 25th November, the eve of publication of the first draft Cultural Strategy. Because of the nature of the survey, we are not in a position confidently to assess the extent to which individuals may have completed multiple surveys. However, we have grounds to believe that the majority of the 133 responses were unique.

In the first survey we asked respondents to consider each of the themes, first rank them and then offer their views about the relative importance of their top three and finally offer suggestions on other themes not identified.

The stacked bar chart below illustrates how our on-line respondents perceive the relative importance of the six themes. Rather like respondents in interview and during consultation events, the largest proportion selected visibility as the most important or second most important of the themes. Ambition & quality and Connectedness gathered significant votes for first priority and Sustainability slightly fewer but with lots of support as a second priority. Lowest priority was the theme of unity and diversity.

Please rank these themes in order of importance to the strategy:
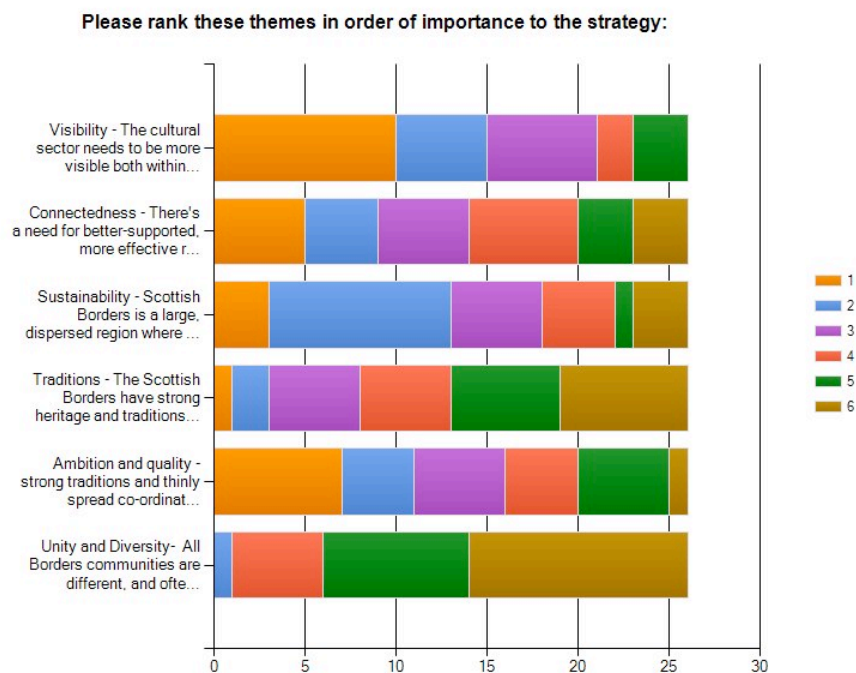
7.7 An interactive map of the cultural sector in the Scottish Borders

We have been much encouraged by the demand for greater availability of information about fellow artists and potential collaborations evident among participants in the consultation events. In view of this, we have focused our efforts with SBC on preparing the basis for a database of all cultural organisations in the Scottish Borders which can be capable of providing a genuinely interactive tool for both cultural providers and members of the public: thus a networking tool and an up-to-date online "What's On" guide.

We have consolidated existing SBC databases in their current state and created the facility to organise the data under a series of classifications. The classifications allow for simple analysis of registered individuals and organisations according to:

- The nature of business (e.g. actor, cabinet maker, film maker, orchestra etc)
- If a Venue, the type (e.g. library, showground, theatre etc)
- The nature of the organisation (e.g. amateur practitioner, micro business, professional etc)
- Which cultural sector (e.g. advertising, literature, TV and radio etc)

Full details of the classifications are set out in the Appendix.

The data held can be used to undertake an initial analysis of the registered cultural sector and to pilot the use of SBC's existing geo-mapping software. Preliminary indications are that the data available will provide an inadequate snapshot of the cultural sector and that the mapping software may be insufficiently flexible to meet long-term requirements, especially for use as an interactive tool, for instance to map "how many choreographers are there nearby?" enquiries. SBC is to pilot the use of the software with an updated sample of data from the consolidated database. Acquisition of more suitable software may be deemed appropriate.

We are aware of relevant information held on other databases, for instance those of Historic Scotland and The Bridge, and would anticipate that, subject to data protection principles and practice, work could be progressed in collaboration with them and others to formulate a mechanism for sharing data and data input to keep a consolidated database up-to-date.

Appendix A

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nature of business	If "Venue", type	nature of organisation	cultural sector
actor	N/A	amateur practitioner	advertising
amateur drama	archive	charity	craft
amateur opera	cinema	club or society	cultural heritage
archaeologist	community centre	community organisation	design
artist	country house	cooperative	fashion
bookshop	dance venue	limited company	film entertainment
brass band	historic site	micro business	literature
ceramics	library	professional [e.g. actor]	music
choir	multi-use arts venue	public sector	performing arts
choreographer	museum	social enterprise	photography
classical musician	music venue	student	textiles
collector	public hall		TV and radio
consultant	showground		visual arts
costume designer	studio and production space		
country dancing	theatre		
craft maker	village hall		
creative business advocate	visual arts and crafts venue		
dancer			
designer/maker			
festivals/fairs			
film maker			
framer			
furniture maker			
glass blower			
graphic designer			
illustrator			
jazz musician			
jewellery			
metal worker			
orchestra			
photographer			
pipe band			
projectionist			
publisher			
quilter			
restorer			
sculptor			
silver band			
silversmith			
storyteller			
theatre company			

traditional musician

venue

weaver

writer