

OUTCOMES FROM THE CONVENTION OF THE SOUTH OF SCOTLAND– 28 SEPTEMBER 2020

Outcome 1 - COVID-19 - Regional Economic Impacts and Supporting Recovery	Lead	Update
<p>The Convention welcomed and endorsed the paper on economic recovery, specifically highlighting that the priorities identified align to the Convention’s own view of the crucial areas of focus for economic recovery and the significant ambitions that members have for the South of Scotland.</p> <p>The Convention recognised the importance of having an approach to economic recovery that engages all local partners to set a strategic direction for the region that reflects the area’s particular strengths and challenges, operating in an agile and responsive way to ensure swift, targeted and sustainable interventions that reflect local need and fully engage local communities in their development.</p> <p>Members highlighted that there needs to be a further increased focus on the opportunities of greater digital capability and accessibility in the region, as a key route to supporting business, education and bolstering the quality of life that attracts people to the South of Scotland as a destination.</p> <p>A second area of particular focus was on the combined aims of accelerating the South of Scotland’s progress towards a net zero transition whilst leveraging the natural capital of the region to position it as a leader in renewable energy development and a centre for green jobs.</p> <p>There was agreement that significant challenges remain, across many sectors, including tourism but that there is also positivity about the opportunities that the South of Scotland has in forging a sustainable path to economic recovery through renewed partnership and use of the area’s natural assets.</p>	<p>Matthew Farrell / Kimberley Daly</p>	<p>Local Authority partners and SOSE are working together to commission a regional economic development strategy with funding support from Scottish Government. The strategy is being commissioned externally and will look to identify key opportunities for the economy of the south that will support and enable economic recovery and future resilience.</p> <p>The Scottish Government published its Climate Change Plan update on 16th December 2020 (Securing a Green Recovery on a Path to Net Zero: Climate Change Plan 2018–2032 - update - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)) which sets out the policies that will be introduced, boosted or accelerated to set us on a pathway to a just transition to net zero, and to support green recovery. This included announcements of new funding for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the launch of a £180 million Emerging Energy Technologies Fund (EETF), that, over the next 5 years, will support the development of Scottish hydrogen and Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) industries, and support the development of Negative Emissions Technologies (NETs) • additional funding of £120 million for zero emission buses to accelerate the decarbonisation of Scotland’s bus fleet and support the Scottish supply chain. • £50 million to support the creation of Active Freeways to provide sustainable transport links between our towns and cities • £50 million to transform vacant and derelict land, ensuring that this land is utilised for maximum environmental and community benefit.

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		<p>The other substantive items raised on digital, transport, and maximising the potential of natural capital are the subject of papers for the 8th February COSS and will be considered there.</p> <p>Borderlands Growth Deal Digital Connectivity - Includes a commitment for £16.2m to be available to improve the digital infrastructure of the south of Scotland. A strategy has been agreed and this will be implemented once the outcome of the Shared Rural Network is known.</p> <p>Natural Capital - £5m contribution towards developing a challenge fund for businesses and land managers to trial environmental pilots for natural capital that deliver social, economic and environmental outcomes.</p>
Workforce and Skills	Lead	Update
<p>South of Scotland Enterprise will lead work with SDS and other partners, including Developing the Young Workforce partnerships, to clearly articulate the scale and scope of opportunities within Food and Drink, Engineering and Textiles and other sectors important to the South of Scotland. Working closely with industry groups, we will identify the flexible support needed to drive these forward and explore how we can deliver the support required.</p> <p>The Regional Economic Partnership, supported by the Team SOS Senior Officer Group, as part of the work they are doing to drive forward the Regional Economic Strategy, should identify a package of measures to support people move into the area and retain young people in the region, involving partners (including the NHS) across the region. The Group could usefully draw on approaches elsewhere including: the Western Isles model; using Foundation Apprenticeships</p>	<p>Adam Reid/Carron Flockhart</p>	<p>SOSE and SDS have appointed Cambridge Policy Consultants to lead on research, to develop a robust evidence base that outlines current and future demand for work based learning (WBL) and apprenticeship opportunities, across these key sectors in the South of Scotland. It will also engage with industry groups and businesses to develop new, innovative models for WBL delivery in a rural context.</p> <p>The Regional Economic Partnership has agreed the role and remit for a new Education and Skills Strategic Co-ordination Group (ESSCG), which will address labour market challenges facing the South of Scotland, provide governance for the Regional Skills Investment Plan and help to shape</p>

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<p>as a pathway to careers in the local economy; and deploying group training models such as East Kilbride Group Training (engineering) to see how they could be adapted to fit the needs of the rural South of Scotland.</p>		<p>the labour market input to the emerging Regional Economic Strategy (RES).</p> <p>Borderlands Up to £7m will be available through the Borderlands Deal to support the South of Scotland Learning Network (SSLN). The SSLN is intended to enable the impact of Borderlands Investment by responding to the identified future skills and knowledge exchange needs of Borderlands projects and programmes. This approach will future proof the Deal by ensuring that there is a talent pipeline to facilitate productivity growth; growing the working age population through the attraction and retention of talent, and securing inclusive growth by aligning need and opportunity.</p>
<p>Tourism in the South of Scotland</p>	<p>Lead</p>	<p>Update</p>
<p>The Convention confirmed the importance of the tourism sector to the future of the region, and the devastating impact the Covid-19 crisis was having on tourism businesses. The Convention commissioned senior officers and the South of Scotland Destination Alliance to work collaboratively to consider how the recommendations from the national Scottish Tourism Task Force can complement existing or new activity in the south - through transport, digital capability, skills development and investment plans - to create new opportunities for sustainable recovery and longer term inclusive low carbon growth.</p> <p>Members agreed to work closely with national organisations on actions to stimulate demand through a targeted marketing campaign, to provide businesses with support to retain employees and build capacity to achieve longer term growth targets, to identify new low carbon projects and initiatives which showcase the South of Scotland's natural assets and strengths.</p>	<p>Bettina Sizeland / Fiona Cook</p>	<p>We have continued to consider issues facing the sector at a national level and focused on the need for immediate business support.</p> <p>Taskforce Recommendations were published in October and considered by Cabinet on 1st December. The Taskforce largely consists of national organisations but also includes regional representatives, including from the South of Scotland, to ensure a diverse representation of the sector.</p> <p>Scottish Government will have committed to additional immediate, business support and has since made £104.3m available for various businesses in the Tourism and Hospitality industry.</p> <p>Looking ahead, we will commission our Enterprise Agencies and VisitScotland to undertake work to develop a fully detailed</p>

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		<p>and costed five year recovery plan and investor plan for the sector to be considered by Cabinet. We will engage with regional groups on this where appropriate, including the South of Scotland Destination Alliance.</p> <p>As we move from response to recovery, we will work closer with our regional partners as we consider the unique regional challenges.</p> <p>The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy has continued to have good engagement with the sector, including the Scottish Tourism Alliance, which regularly raises points on behalf of Destinations Management Organisations, including the South of Scotland Destination Alliance.</p> <p>Marketing by VisitScotland has been on hold, or to a very limited audience, in line with travel restrictions. As we move beyond the current restrictions and the need for business support, VisitScotland will once again engage key markets based on the South of Scotland's strengths. This will build on the dedicated marketing campaign – See South Scotland – which ran 2018 to March 2020.</p> <p>Borderlands Growth Deal An investment of £31m delivered by three projects identified by local partners. The development of Stranraer Marina, the upgrading of some sections of 7stanes biking parks and creating the infrastructure for the Tweed Valley cycle and path network.</p>
Community Wealth Building	Lead	Update

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<p>The Convention discussed the opportunities community wealth building (CWB) presents for the region, particularly the offer from Scottish Government to work alongside local partners to produce a CWB action plan for the area.</p> <p>Noting the need to drive inclusive economic opportunity and grow the working age population, members recognised the growth opportunity presented by increased access to public and private sector contracts for the large SME base in the South of Scotland, and the associated supply chain development benefits. They also discussed the central commitment to Fair Work practice and the small family firms, independent business, and community energy which already exists in the region as being a good basis on which to build any CWB activity.</p> <p>Highlighting that seemingly small scale interventions can have a huge impact on outcomes experienced by communities, a number of options for how CWB could be taken forward in the region emerged: 1) doing more to identify and profile what is happening already (across 5 pillars) to scale that activity where possible; 2) embed 5 community wealth building principles across emerging plans for SOSE and its operations to shape the type of support offered and the nature of growth activity; 3) specifically work with a local council/s as anchor organisations and prioritise activity that could be delivered across the 5 pillars (akin to the North Ayrshire approach); and 4) explore taking a sectoral CWB approach via, for example, housing or education.</p> <p>Partners agreed outline ideas were a good basis on which to develop a CWB action plan for the area, and Scottish Government should now work with local partners to produce an action plan and report on delivery progress at next CoSS in 2021.</p>	<p>Geraldine Campbell / Neil McInroy</p>	<p>SG officials have been having ongoing engagement with SOSE and LA partners to further refine the outline CWB plan agreed at CoSS. Neil McInroy has presented CWB opportunity to the SOSE Board to the Regional Economic Partnership meeting and the Team South of Scotland approach to CWB activity has been underlined.</p> <p>Discussion with SOSE and LA partners identified the potential CWB role Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) could play as key 'anchor institutions' in the region and their direct link to building local supply chains. Work is now progressing on how to best to take this forward.</p> <p>Plans are being developed to get more detailed action plan process underway at start of January with a final draft by end March.</p>
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