

## CONVENTION OF THE SOUTH OF SCOTLAND (CoSS)

### OUTCOMES FROM PREVIOUS CONVENTION OF THE SOUTH OF SCOTLAND MEETINGS

(Paper 2)

### OUTCOMES FROM THE CONVENTION OF THE SOUTH OF SCOTLAND- 3 FEBRUARY 2020

Vision and ambition for CoSS	Policy Lead	Update <b>Last Updated January 2021</b>
<p>The Convention endorsed the ambition and vision for the Convention of the South of Scotland – with a particular emphasis on driving inclusive growth through engaging with, and listening to, local communities and local businesses.</p> <p>Convention members agreed the importance of shared ownership of the Convention agenda and action. The purpose of the Convention should be to address interconnected, and ‘wicked’ problems – and to work together to resolve them. The work of SOSEP has demonstrated to us that partnership and hearing from a wide range of voices is important to maximise the region’s economic potential. We must ensure that the voices of communities and the private sector are heard and heeded in the work that COSS takes forward.</p> <p>The critical areas that members agreed for consideration at the next Convention are:</p>	<p><b>Kimberley Daly</b></p>	<p>The Senior Officers Group has been established to support the delivery of COSS actions and facilitate joint working on its agreed themes and priorities. The SOG includes representation from all COSS member organisations and will drive forward agreed actions between meetings and support planning for all COSS sessions.</p> <p>The work of SOG will link with that of the Regional Economic Partnership to ensure strategic alignment and avoid duplication of effort.</p> <p>The REP has been meeting monthly since September 2020 and is progressing work on the first Regional Economic Strategy for the South of Scotland. The REP had a role in shaping the agenda for the February 2021 meeting of the Convention. Cllrs Rowley and Davidson will lead the first session, introducing the work of the REP and exploring how the Convention can support key issues.</p> <p>Plans to present papers on Net Zero and Skills to the September 2020 meeting of the Convention were altered to reflect the challenges introduced by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the need to focus on economic recovery, within which Net Zero is an important theme. As a result, the papers presented in September covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COVID 19 – Regional Economic Impacts And Supporting Recovery; and</li> <li>• Workforce and Skills - Responding To The Emerging Labour Market Crisis</li> </ul>

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<p>Ensuring the skills and education opportunities align with the current and future economic needs of the region and are delivered in flexible ways that maximise local people's ability to access training that enhances their economic prospects. A paper will follow which will include a review of mechanisms and approaches to achieve this.</p> <p>The opportunity around the national Net Zero ambition is huge for the region, and the work on this must intensify. We will identify the opportunities and challenges for the region in contributing to the Net Zero by 2045 target. A paper will follow to the next Convention.</p> <p>Work has already started to establish a Senior Officers' Group with representation from all members of the Convention. The Senior Officers' Group alongside Government officials will be commissioned to take forward work before the next meeting to progress these areas and report back in September</p>		<p>Net Zero and Skills remain important strategic priorities for the region and are being addressed through the Workforce and Skills and Natural Capital papers presented at the February 2021 COSS meeting, and are reflected in the ongoing work of the REP.</p>
<p><b>Transport and Regional Collaboration</b></p>	<p><b>Policy Lead</b></p>	<p><b>Update</b> <b>Last updated Jan 2021</b></p>
<p>The Convention recognised and endorsed the strong collaborative and joined up working to</p>	<p><b>Heather Cowan</b></p>	<p>Specifically on the opportunities for innovation within SOS Transport Scotland has supported both Dumfries and Galloway and Scottish Borders councils with feasibility studies through our Switched on Towns &amp; Cities Programme. These are intended to</p>

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<p>date, and agreed the importance of this going forward.</p> <p>The Convention recognised the need for alignment across digital and physical connectivity including alignment between transport, digital and energy.</p> <p>Acknowledging the Climate Change targets whilst also recognising rurality in transport decisions and in the context of the application of the hierarchies is important; members noted that there would continue to be the practical reality of reliance on vehicle movements within a rural setting.</p> <p>There are opportunities for innovation in the South of Scotland, and using demonstrator projects for both the development and application of new technology within transport to promote the economic opportunity for the SOS from the green agenda.</p>		<p>support Local Authorities in developing applications for the Programme’s capital fund which aims address perceived barriers to decarbonisation of transport and to facilitate a step change in the uptake of zero emission vehicles across Scotland’s towns and cities. There are clear opportunities for innovation and support for new technology as part of this capital fund. We anticipate opening a further application round during 2021</p> <p>The Convention will also be aware that the Parliament is currently scrutinising the Climate Change Plan update which includes a range of bold measures to reduce transport emissions and help Scotland meet its statutory net-zero targets, such as the policy outcome for a 20% reduction in car kilometres by 2030.</p>
<p><b>Demographics and Skills in the South of Scotland</b></p>	<p><b>Policy Lead</b></p>	<p><b>Update</b> <b>Last updated January 2021</b></p>
<p>The Convention reconfirmed the central importance of skills and education to the</p>	<p><b>Adam Reid</b></p>	<p>These outcomes were originally developed in a pre-COVID context although progress has been made since then. I can’t comment on the planning or spatial strategies as</p>

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<p>future of the region, particularly noting the crucial importance of growing the working age population.</p> <p>The three key elements included: developing economic opportunities, alignment with employers and local economic demand, and availability of supporting infrastructure such as housing. There is a need to ensure planning rules are appropriate to the rural context and consider whether there is sufficient incentives to support conversion or repurposing of properties.</p> <p>In order to consider these interrelated elements, the Convention commissioned the Senior Officers' Group to undertake work on repopulation (to support work described in Outcome 1 on education and skills) which would form an agenda item at the next Convention meeting. This should include how the community wealth building approach can be utilised within the region.</p> <p>The Convention particularly noted the importance of an educational offer within the region that both retained and attracted working age population. SDS, SFC, local authorities, FE and HE have a particular role</p>		<p>these would fall to the local authorities, but the development of economic opportunities will be covered by the new Regional Economic Strategy. The new W&amp;S paper refers to this and also inward investment to the region which will create jobs, training and education opportunities.</p> <p>SDS is still producing the COVID insights report and Regional Skills Assessments monthly so that is current. In terms of Community Wealth building and talent retention progress mentioned here is relevant, and again the Regional Economic Strategy and work of the new Education and Skills Strategic Coordination Group (mentioned in the W&amp;S paper) will consider these areas.</p> <p>The HE/FE offer is still current and SDS/SFC have run sessions with colleges and universities in the South to identify how provision may need to be re-directed to support vulnerable groups affected by COVID-19 into areas of labour market opportunity. This builds on the skills alignment work undertaken previously, and mentioned in the last outcomes update.</p> <p>The SOS Regional Education and Skills Programme Board has been renamed as the SOS Education and Skills Strategic Co-ordination Group.</p>
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<p>in developing a refreshed offer for the next meeting.</p> <p>This work should build on and support current activity, such as the Ministerial Task Force on Population, and SDS and SFC's work on skills alignment. It should also look to maximise the potential of greatly enhanced digital connectivity and existing physical assets.</p>		
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