



Collaborating to Deliver

Delivery Plan (2025 - 2027)

NOVEMBER 2024



REP

South of Scotland
Regional Economic Partnership

Members of the South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership



Communities representatives

Social Enterprise representatives

Private Sector representatives

Young People representatives

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Image: Bus transport, SWestrans.

Front cover images: Newtown St Boswells Campus, Borders College; St Abbs Harbour, VisitScotland;
Newtown St Boswells Campus, Borders College; Borders Buses; Leaderfoot Viaduct, VisitScotland;
Queensberry Square, Wheatley Homes South.

Opposite/Inside front cover: Leaderfoot Viaduct, VisitScotland.

Foreword

We, the South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership (REP), are delighted to present our second Regional Economic Strategy Delivery Plan. This plan explains what we will do over the next three years – 2025 to 2027 – to work toward our vision for the South of Scotland as the best place to live, work, visit, learn, invest, and do business.

Image: Kirroughtree forest, VisitScotland.

This plan sits alongside our Regional Economic Strategy (RES) which was launched in 2021. It is a document for our partners to use to align their activity and come together to tackle the big challenges facing our communities, businesses, and environment.

This Delivery Plan picks up from and builds on our first RES Delivery Plan. We are proud of what we have achieved together since 2021 – from launching our first South of Scotland Net Zero Investment Prospectus to spearheading our pioneering Regional Land Use Partnership - and we know there is more we must and can do to go further in the next three years.

In this plan we have challenged ourselves to focus on those issues that are most critical to creating wellbeing and opportunity for our communities, businesses and people in the South of Scotland: housing, transport, and skills. Our communities, businesses and people tell us that tackling these issues will open up opportunities across the region, in turn helping to grow our economy; eradicate child poverty and tackle the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis. This was also evident in the **engagement** and **evidence base** for our RES. In the next three years we will work together towards helping people in the South of Scotland access the homes they need, have good transport options and the skills and training they desire. These are the firm foundations from which we can unlock our huge regional potential and contribute to Scotland’s success.

Housing, transport, and skills are not just challenges – they present significant opportunities for the South of Scotland and support the vision and themes in the RES as well as national ambitions. The same is true of our strong focus on land, spearheaded by our pioneering work on our Regional Land Use Partnership and Framework.

Alongside the actions on housing, transport, and skills, we have a focussed set of nine additional actions that support our vision for the region, from creating Net Zero plans for key parts of our economy to supporting enterprising communities to meet their ambitions. We have a strong record of partnership working and collaboration in the South of Scotland and these actions build on that to bring organisations together and use our shared resources.

The plan is designed to be flexible where necessary, recognising that things can change over three years. We will empower those people who are responsible for actions in the plan to respond to new opportunities and go further where possible.

We look forward to working with our local communities, businesses, and people to deliver for the South of Scotland and we are excited about what we can achieve together over the next three years.





Images: Student and teacher, Borders College;
Houses at Hallmeadow, Annan.



Across 2025-2027 we will:

Number	Action
Priority Action 1	Collaborate to deliver more homes – and more choice of homes – by implementing the actions in our Housing Action Plan for the South of Scotland.
Priority Action 2	Investigate opportunities to enhance transport connectivity and sustainability in the South of Scotland.
Priority Action 3	Develop proposals to expand and adapt skills provision to meet the future skills opportunities and needs of the region.
Action 1	Put in place a stronger partnership model for delivering and promoting support for our enterprises.
Action 2	Create and implement a partnership Inward Investment plan.
Action 3	Create a spatial diagram for the South of Scotland to showcase key regional projects, connections, and investments.
Action 4	Support cultural strategy development and creative placemaking, expand mapping of the creative economy and enhance our film and screen offering.
Action 5	Champion the Natural Capital Innovation Zone through the delivery of the Borderlands Programme, the Regional Land Use Framework, and innovative partnerships.
Action 6	Create pathways for a Just Transition to Net Zero for key sectors and parts of our regional economy.
Action 7	Design, develop and implement a pilot to identify the best way of retrofitting homes across the region to meet Net Zero standards.
Action 8	Map expertise, advice and support available to enterprising communities and use this to create a structured and joined up ‘pathway’ to access support.
Action 9	Map our digital interventions, gaps and opportunities in the South and use this mapping to agree a core set of regional digital priorities.



Image: Galashiels interchange, REP.

2022 - 2024: Delivering for the South of Scotland

Our first RES [Delivery Plan](#) was published in 2021 after extensive engagement, discussion and debate – within and beyond the REP – about what was needed to achieve the ambitions in the RES. There were 47 actions in the plan which supported the strategy's six themes.

Our first RES Delivery Plan provided a powerful focus for partners. It brought the RES to life and helped us to coordinate and align what we were doing. Our relationships and partnerships within the REP and beyond are stronger now through working together to deliver on those actions.

We are proud of how far we have come and it is a testament to the commitment of our partners that we have made real progress against those actions. Key successes so far include:

- Going live with a new [Invest in South of Scotland](#) website to promote the region as a great place to do business.
- Launching our [Cycling Partnership Strategy](#) and successfully hosting UCI Cycling World Championship events, culminating in the South of Scotland being awarded the prestigious international UCI [Bike Region](#) Label.
- Spearheading pioneering projects such as the South of Scotland Regional Land Use Partnership, part of a Scottish Government pilot, that has developed and consulted on the first [Regional Land Use Framework](#) for the South of Scotland.
- Collaborating to launch a South of Scotland [Housing Action Plan](#) which sets out ten tangible actions that REP members will take together to create more homes and more choice of homes in the South of Scotland.
- Developing and launching the [South of Scotland Responsible Tourism Strategy](#), a ten-year plan to increase the visitor economy by £1 billion and support a further 6,000 jobs.

- Deepening our understanding of key regional sectors and opportunities such as our mapping of the vibrant creative industry sector in the South of Scotland with the findings brought together in our [South of Scotland Creative Economy Guide](#).
- Coming together to create and launch our first South of Scotland Net Zero investment prospectus, [A guide to investing in the Just Transition to Net Zero](#), which promotes some of the most compelling investment opportunities in the region.

We have launched a new [website](#) where people can find out more about what we – the REP as a collective partnership – have been doing and how they can get involved. Please visit the website or our [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#) pages to find out more.

We know we still have much to do to meet the ambition for the South of Scotland in the ten-year RES and need to act quickly. We continue our work with real momentum, even stronger partnerships, and greater clarity to focus on where we can make the biggest difference.

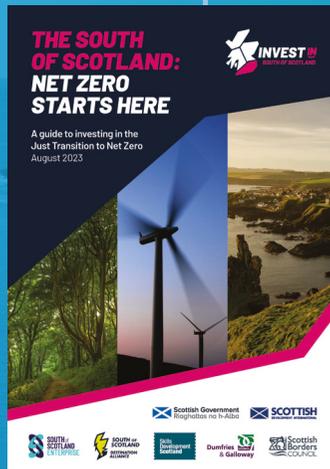


Image: Borders College.

Case Study #1

Net Zero Investment Guide

Members of the Regional Economic Partnership have come together in the Invest in South of Scotland Partnership to launch a Net Zero Investment Guide for the South of Scotland. The guide aims to help the South of Scotland become the UK's first Net Zero region - at the same time as building an economy for the future.



Inset image:
South of Scotland
Net Zero Investment
Guide.

Background image:
Eyemouth, VisitScotland.

The guide promotes some of the most compelling investment opportunities available in the region, focusing on three key strengths of the South of Scotland: renewable energy, natural capital, and our aspiration of enhancing our values-based and Fair Work economy.

South of Scotland Enterprise, Dumfries and Galloway Council, Scottish Borders Council, Skills Development Scotland, and South of Scotland Destination Alliance worked in partnership with Scottish Development International and Scottish Government to develop and launch the guide to demonstrate the opportunities in the South of Scotland. It was officially launched in August 2023 by Màiri McAllan MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Energy.

The guide highlights the rich natural resources of the area, alongside a strong research base and a supportive business environment. The South of Scotland hosts a thriving community of entrepreneurs, start-ups and well-established companies that are meeting the Net Zero challenge in innovative ways, and the guide provides good examples of these while outlining further opportunity. It showcases some of the businesses that are supporting the vision of a green, fair and flourishing region, and forms part of the invitation to Invest In South of Scotland.

2025 - 2027: Our Actions

Over the next three years we will concentrate on those issues that are most important to communities, businesses and people across the South of Scotland and where action will unlock our region's huge potential, help those already here to thrive, and attract a new generation to live, work, visit, learn and invest in the South of Scotland.

We have three priority actions that respond to what our communities, businesses and people tell us is most important and urgent:

- Creating a thriving **housing** market in the South of Scotland with homes where they are needed to attract and retain people, jobs, and investment in the region
- Enhancing **transport** options to help people to better access training, employment and services while meeting our Net Zero ambitions
- Making sure everyone has the **skills** and training they need to thrive throughout their lives and to support our future economy.

These are three significant areas of work with a lot already happening on housing, transport, and skills across the region and nationally. Our actions are designed to add impact and expertise to that existing work, as well as influencing what is happening nationally to make sure it supports the South of Scotland.

We also have **nine additional actions** that support other priorities in the RES and make the most of our strengths and opportunities in the South of Scotland. Some of these actions have evolved from our last RES Delivery Plan, while others are new to address gaps, new opportunities or where a fresh approach is needed.

Net Zero and a Nature Positive Future, Community Wealth Building, Placemaking and Attracting Investment are key aspects of these actions too, providing a thread and focus that underpins our activity throughout this plan.

We will also **continue to champion** several actions from our first Delivery Plan. These are actions which are still underway, either as originally set out in the last Delivery Plan or which have evolved, often with a focus now on delivery and implementation. These areas are important to the vision in the RES, have strong partnership commitments and our full support.

Our actions are mutually supportive and each action supports at least one of the six RES themes. In many cases an action supports several themes, as set out in the table in the Annex.

Image: Students, Borders College.



Priority Action 1

Collaborate to deliver more homes – and more choice of homes – by implementing the actions in our Housing Action Plan for the South of Scotland.

Creating more homes – of all types and tenures – is one of the key regional opportunities and challenges for the South of Scotland and has led to the launch of our Housing Action Plan. It is essential that people, including those of working age, can find the homes they need. Creating those homes also brings huge opportunities for our construction sector.

We will do this by:

- Implementing the ten actions in our Housing Action Plan including: growing our own construction and development sector; promoting the region as a place to build homes; increasing choice of home types and tenures; and creating an enabling planning environment.
- Sharing ideas, evidence and, where appropriate, joint projects with those working on similar issues such as the retrofit of homes to meet our Net Zero ambitions.
- Reviewing our Housing Action Plan ahead of the end of its initial two years to guide future work.

Co-ordinated by:

Strategic Action Group on Housing.

Key partners:

Colleges, Communities, Councils, Crichton Campus Leadership Group, NHS, Private Sector, Registered Social Landlords, Scottish Government, SOSE, South of Scotland Community Housing.

Priority Action 2

Investigate opportunities to enhance transport connectivity and sustainability in the South of Scotland.

Our region's transport connectivity is key to unlocking our economic, social, and environmental ambitions for the region. Our Strategic Action Group on Transport aims to identify opportunities to develop a more sustainable, inclusive, safe, accessible, and integrated transport network in the South.

We will do this by:

- Using a data led approach to strengthen the case for transport investment in the South.
- Speaking with one voice to advise and influence regional and national partners, including the Scottish and UK Governments, on the need for different approaches to address transport issues faced in the South.
- Exploring more strategic integration across regional transport partners and building connections with adjoining transport partnerships north and south of the border.

Co-ordinated by:

Strategic Action Group on Transport.

Key partners:

Councils, NHS, Private Sector, SEStran, SOSE, SWestrans, Third Sector, Transport Scotland.

Priority Action 3

Develop proposals to expand and adapt skills provision to meet the future skills opportunities and needs of the region.

Through our Education and Skills Strategic Coordination Group, we will support a range of future skills opportunities, particularly those that help our construction, energy, and land-based sectors. This builds on evidence gathered by “mapping and gapping” our regional skills needs, an action in our first Delivery Plan. We will also seize any opportunities presented through the reform of regional skills planning which enhances our responsiveness and impacts.

We will do this by:

- Developing proposals through a task and finish group to expand future skills provision and take up in the region, including articulating: what would be required to support a scaling up of provision; what barriers exist to support such a scaling up; and what support would be required from regional and national partners to turn such proposals into deliverable action.
- Overseeing delivery of agreed actions from these proposals.
- Engaging with the Scottish Government's programme of national skills reform.

Co-ordinated by:

Education and Skills Strategic Coordination Group.

Key partners:

ESSCG Partners, Private Sector, Scottish Government.

¹ Core membership of the ESSCG includes: Borders College, Crichton Campus Leadership Group, Dumfries and Galloway College, Dumfries and Galloway Council, Developing the Young Workforce (Dumfries & Galloway and Scottish Borders), Heriot Watt University, Open University, Scotland's Rural University College, Scottish Borders Council, Scottish Funding Council, Skills Development Scotland, South of Scotland Enterprise, Third Sector Interface Dumfries and Galloway, Borders Community Action, University of Glasgow, University of the West of Scotland.

2025 - 2027: Our Actions

Action 1

Put in place a stronger partnership model for delivering and promoting support for our enterprises.

Across the South of Scotland, a great network exists bringing together organisations that support businesses and social enterprises. Through the business support actions in our last Delivery Plan, we have built a deeper understanding of what support each organisation can provide and the gaps we now need to address to help our businesses to thrive.

We will do this by:

- Enhancing and coordinating the support available to enterprise to drive innovation, entrepreneurship, and growth, including among underrepresented groups.
- Tailoring our collective offer to our enterprises to best meet the particular needs of business in the South of Scotland, including our many micro, and small and medium-sized enterprises.
- Finding new ways to promote our support and get the message out about how we can help business.

Co-ordinated by:

Councils, SOSE.

Key partners:

Business Gateway, Business Organisations, VisitScotland, South of Scotland Destination Alliance.

Action 2

Create and implement a partnership Inward Investment plan.

We are raising the profile of the South of Scotland as a great place to do business, to attract and boost investment in the region. We have improved our inward investment proposition and now there is more we can do to promote the South of Scotland on a global platform and make sure our partnership provides a seamless experience for prospective investors.

We will do this by:

- Developing and implementing a partnership Inward Investment plan and protocol to guide our regional investment and coordination.
- Promoting and further developing the new **Invest in the South of Scotland** website.
- Finding and implementing new ways to showcase all the region has to offer, for example through targeted use of the GlobalScots Network to promote the South of Scotland internationally.

Co-ordinated by:

Invest in South of Scotland Partnership.

Key partners:

Councils, Department for Business and Trade, Scottish Development International, Skills Development Scotland, South of Scotland Destination Alliance, South of Scotland Enterprise.

Action 3

Create a spatial diagram for the South of Scotland to showcase key regional projects, connections, and investments.

Significant investment is coming into many of our places and communities in the South. We want to do more to tell the story about what is happening which will build confidence about the future of the region and generate further investment. Showcasing the major initiatives in an accessible and visual way will appeal to prospective investors and can be deployed across our work – from Housing and Inward Investment to Natural Capital and Net Zero.

We will do this by:

- Creating a comprehensive spatial diagram for the South of Scotland which shows key regional connections, developments, and investments.
- Using this diagram to look ahead and create a collective pipeline of the next generation of regionally significant projects.

Co-ordinated by:

REP Secretariat.

Key partners:

Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, Councils, Edinburgh City and South East Scotland City Region Partners, National Partners, REP Members, SOSE.

Action 4

Support cultural strategy development and creative placemaking, expand mapping of the creative economy and enhance our film and screen offering.

We have a strong and vibrant base of creative and cultural businesses, social enterprises and organisations who are growing in ambition. Building on the previous RES Delivery Plan, we want to enhance the scope and strength of the cultural offering of the South of Scotland and create opportunities for more innovation, investment, and competitiveness.

We will do this by:

- Supporting and championing cultural strategy development, creative placemaking activity and partnerships across both Council areas – this will coordinate and add to existing strategies and activity.
- Expanding our pioneering mapping of the creative economy in the South.
- Launching and implementing the South of Scotland Screen Strategy 2025-2030 to enhance our offering for film and screen in the region.

Co-ordinated by:

Councils, SOSE.

Key partners:

Colleges and Universities, Creative Scotland, Historic Environment Scotland (HES), National Partners, Private Sector, Scottish Government, Screen Scotland, Skills Development Scotland, South of Scotland Destination Alliance, Third Sector, VisitScotland.

Action 5

Champion the Natural Capital Innovation Zone through the delivery of the Borderlands Programme, the Regional Land Use Framework and innovative partnerships.

The creation of Scotland's first Natural Capital Innovation Zone (NCIZ) celebrates the wealth of natural and social capital across the South of Scotland and the significant opportunity for related new market opportunities including nature-based solutions. We will consolidate the establishment of the NCIZ by working with existing partnerships, such as the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere (GSAB) and Regional Land Use Partnership (RLUP) and enhance activity with the Scottish Government and national and regional partners.

We will do this by:

- Launching pilot projects through the Borderlands Natural Capital Programme to pioneer innovative land and marine management and build and strengthen partnerships with public, private and third sector organisations.
- Using data analysis and opportunity mapping to develop a Natural Capital responsible inward investment prospectus, building on our growing investment profile including the Invest in South of Scotland website and Net Zero Investment Guide.
- Deliver the Regional Land Use Framework through collaborative action.

Co-ordinated by:

Councils, SOSE.

Key partners:

Borders Forest Trust, Colleges and Universities, CONFOR, Crichton Carbon Centre, Crown Estates, Forestry and Land Scotland, GSAB, HES, NatureScot, NFUS, Private Sector, RLUP, Scottish Forestry, Scottish Land and Estates, Solway Firth Partnership, Third Sector, Tweed Forum.

Action 6

Create pathways for a Just Transition to Net Zero for key sectors and parts of our regional economy.

Our region has exciting and significant Net Zero opportunities which are essential to Scotland's Net Zero ambitions and a sustainable future. By developing and leveraging these opportunities, we will drive the change needed and attract investment to accelerate our, and Scotland's, Just Transition to a resilient and regenerative wellbeing economy. In the South of Scotland, we aim to lead the way, building on national Just Transition Plans and the evidence base to ensure we are focussed on those key regional sectors across which we can have the greatest impact.

We will do this by:

- Developing co-ordinated Net Zero plans with key parts of our economy in the South of Scotland, building on evidence from the recent regional emission baselines for our region and aligning with national Just Transition Plans and the national Climate Intelligence Service.
- Collaborating with partners in key sectors to begin implementing, accelerating and attracting investment in these pathways.
- Responding to opportunities arising from the Green Industrial Strategy.

Co-ordinated by:

Councils, SOSE.

Key partners:

To be identified through comprehensive stakeholder mapping.

2025 - 2027: Our Actions

Action 7

Design, develop and implement a pilot to identify the best way of retrofitting homes across the region to meet Net Zero standards.

CLES, working closely with six of the region's Registered Social Landlords, has recommended collective action to galvanise and facilitate delivery in retrofitting our homes to meet Net Zero standards. Co-ordination is needed to deliver this work, secure institutional buy-in at scale and create a pipeline of rural retrofit which delivers meaningful economic and social benefits for the South.

We will do this by:

- Designing, developing, and implementing a pilot to identify the most common archetypes in our social housing stock, assess baseline efficiency, retrofit the homes, and monitor benefits.
- Working with industry to identify and address skills gaps and tenant engagement as a key part of the pilot.
- Using learning from the pilot to inform wider rollout.

Co-ordinated by:

Registered Social Landlords, SOSE.

Key partners:

Colleges and Universities, Councils, Private Sector, Scottish Government.

Action 8

Map expertise, advice and support available to enterprising communities and use this to create a structured and joined up 'pathway' to access support.

Through Place Planning, we are empowering our communities to reach their full potential. A significant effort is underway to enhance the capacity of communities, Third Sector, social enterprises, and other stakeholders working alongside statutory partners and businesses to address community-led planning priorities and lead on community-based projects across the South of Scotland. Many organisations are providing invaluable expertise, knowledge, and experience, but there is more we want to do to address gaps, join up our offer and make it simpler for enterprising communities to get the help they need.

We will do this by:

- Mapping the expertise, advice and support available to enterprising communities across our organisations and beyond, including identifying key gaps.
- Enhancing our support to address key gaps identified through mapping, including attracting additional investment that communities can directly access.
- Creating and communicating a clear pathway so communities access the right support whichever organisation they approach.
- Promoting and building more awareness of our collective offer, opportunities and what is already happening.

Co-ordinated by:

Councils, SOSE, TSIs.

Key partners:

Key community anchor organisations, National Partners.

Action 9

Map our digital interventions, gaps and opportunities in the South and use this mapping to agree a core set of regional digital priorities.

Exciting programmes are underway to invest in digital connectivity across our region. In particular, the Borderlands Digital Infrastructure Programme, Project Gigabit and Innovative Regions have the potential to transform connectivity across our places, organisations, and communities. We want to get even smarter at coordinating across these different interventions to make sure we are getting the most out of investment and creating transformation.

We will do this by:

- Mapping our digital interventions, gaps, and opportunities in the South.
- Using our mapping to strengthen cross-organisation working and better coordinate across key digital programmes and opportunities.

Co-ordinated by:

Councils, SOSE.

Key partners:

Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, Private Sector, Scottish Government, Scotland 5G Centre, TSIs.

Case Study #2

South of Scotland Regional Land Use Partnership

The South of Scotland is one of the pilot regions for the Scottish Government's Regional Land Use Partnership initiative, designed to test governance structures that deliver a collaborative approach to land use change decision-making.



Inset image:
Criffel, VisitScotland.

Background image:
Stow, VisitScotland.

The aim is to deliver sustainable land use that addresses climate change and biodiversity loss and supports a wellbeing economy. The South of Scotland partnership has collaborated to create a [Regional Land Use Framework \(RLUF\)](#) to inform and help guide critical decision making around finite land resources. An innovative approach to governance has seen the REP, supported by an Advisory Group chaired by REP members and including representatives from communities, the land use sector and government bodies, oversee its development.

This regional collaboration has brought together a wide range of people from the public sector, landowners, communities and the third sector across the South of Scotland. Over 600 individuals participated in extensive engagement and a draft RLUF was published in 2023 which set out a concise vision and objectives for sustainable land use across the South. It recognised the need for inclusive engagement between those making decisions about land, and the wide range of people and interests affected by such decisions, and that the finite natural capital of the region needed to be able to deliver multiple benefits for our businesses, communities, and visitors.

The consultation on the draft RLUF concluded in February 2024, prior to submission to the Scottish Government. The RLUF was launched at the REP meeting on 30th September 2024. It includes a set of recommendations around governance and over 30 actions that will showcase the South of Scotland's position as the national [Natural Capital Innovation Zone](#).

Putting Our Plan into Action

Image: Union Bridge,
Scottish Borders Council.



This Delivery Plan captures and helps coordinate the important strategic actions – the bigger things we know we need to do together – making clear what activities will make the biggest contributions to getting us to where we want to be. Our principles and commitments are outlined below:

1



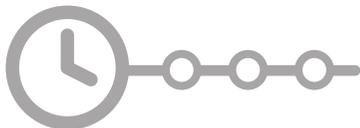
Specific actions in this Delivery Plan are the **sole or joint responsibility of those partner organisations** involved who are key to their delivery. This approach respects that individual partner organisations will have their own governance, monitoring, evaluation, and approvals processes in place. It also gives partners the flexibility they need to determine the most appropriate delivery approaches, include new opportunities as they emerge, and deploy their resources to have maximum effect as well as contribute to wider objectives they may have.

2



The REP will continue to have **strategic oversight**, as a forum which enables partners' efforts to be better aligned and co-ordinated, helping efforts to go further and more to be achieved for less. The REP will monitor progress against the actions on a quarterly basis.

3



The activity set out under each action in this plan is anticipated to be delivered within the **three-year lifetime** of the plan.

4



Alongside members' sole or joint evaluation of specific actions, there will be an overall **evaluation of the effectiveness of the plan in driving the regional collaboration and delivery** that it seeks to achieve. A wider Performance Measurement Framework is also being developed for the ten-year RES.

For further information on the RES, the REP or actions within the Plan, please visit southofscotlandrep.com or contact sosrep@sos.scot.

Case Study #3

South of Scotland Responsible Tourism Strategy

The South of Scotland's first RES Delivery Plan included a commitment to "Develop a South of Scotland Responsible Tourism Destination Development & Marketing Strategy".



Inset image:
River Nith, Dumfries,
VisitScotland.

Background image:
South of Scotland
Destination Alliance.

This recognised both the need to develop the visitor economy for our region post Covid and the importance of an agreed vision that translates Scotland Outlook 2030, our national shared vision for tourism, for the needs and opportunities of the South of Scotland, recognising that the visitor economy is a huge area of opportunity for our region.

The South of Scotland Responsible Tourism Strategy has been developed by five partners: SOSE, South of Scotland Destination Alliance, Scottish Borders Council, Dumfries and Galloway Council and VisitScotland. The strategy is a first for the South of Scotland and sets an ambitious ten-year vision for our visitor economy. Building on an inclusive, transparent, and far-reaching consultation process which included the REP, businesses, communities and key individuals, the new strategy has an ambitious vision that:

"We will make the South of Scotland a thriving, responsible, year-round destination; leveraging our unique geography, culture, history and landscape to create Scotland's fastest growing visitor economy, attracting international visitors, creating quality employment and powering community prosperity."

At the heart of the strategy is a 'Team South' approach with partnership and collaboration driving actions over the next ten years to increase our visitor economy by £1 billion, supporting a further 6,000 jobs across the region.

Case Study #4

South of Scotland Regional Skills Pathfinder

The South of Scotland is one of two pilot regions for the Scottish Funding Council's Regional Tertiary Pathfinder, created to understand how to make the education and skills system more responsive, integrated, and supportive of economic recovery and inclusive growth in each region.



Inset and background images: Students, Borders College.

Building on existing collaborative working, and rooted in local understanding of skills needs, the Pathfinder group in the South of Scotland prioritised projects which would have the most impact on securing simpler pathways and improved outcomes for learners; alignment of provision against societal and employer need; and enhanced coherence and sustainability across provision. Concluding in early 2024, the pathfinder activity focused on three key strands: digital skills, land-based learning, and degree pathways.

SRUC and Borders College have been working in partnership to develop a [Rural Skills joint prospectus](#), which was launched in June 2023, showcasing the complete range of learning pathways. Over the next two years, new jointly delivered land-based provision will also be put in place. The project appointed a Business Development Officer to act as an innovation broker to promote joint activity and help develop a place-based innovation scheme.

A partnership between Dumfries and Galloway College, the University of the West of Scotland and Dumfries and Galloway Council aimed to deliver a broader range of programmes and integrated pathways for learners from school through to degree level provision. The partnership developed two new integrated degree pathways (launched in academic year 2023-24): the BSc Cybersecurity and BA Business; and exploration of new opportunities in Health and Social Care are now being reviewed. To underpin efficient delivery an agreement is also in place between the institutions for a shared resource model.

The Digital Skills Pathfinder aimed to enhance regional competitiveness by improving digital opportunities for post-16 learners in the region. This led to changes to core curriculum and several highly successful "Meet the Learner" events which brought employers and learners together and promoted inclusivity and widened participation. A [Digital Skills Provision Map](#) of digital skills training for employers was also published in 2024, to simplify how best to access support and training.

Glossary

Business Gateway is a publicly funded service contributing to the economic wellbeing of Scotland by providing access to free business support services.

City region and growth deals are packages of funding and decision-making powers, agreed between the Scottish Government, the UK Government, and regional partners. They are designed to bring about long-term improvements to regional economies, attracting additional investment, creating new jobs, and accelerating inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

Community Wealth Building is an approach to economic development that changes the way that our economies function, retaining more wealth and opportunity for the benefit of local people. It has five principles: plural ownership of the economy; making financial power work for local places; fair employment and just labour markets; progressive procurement of goods and services; and socially productive use of land and property.

Creative economy is the interface between creativity, culture, economics, and technology. It has the potential to generate income, jobs, and exports while at the same time promoting social inclusion, cultural diversity, and human development.

Fair Work is work that offers all individuals an effective voice, opportunity, security, fulfilment, and respect. It balances the rights and responsibilities of employers and workers. It generates benefits for individuals, organisations, and society.

Just Transition is both the outcome and the process that must be undertaken in partnership with those impacted by the transition to Net Zero. It supports a Net Zero and climate resilient economy in a way that delivers fairness and tackles inequality and injustice.

Natural capital is a term for the habitats and ecosystems that provide social, environmental, and economic benefits, ensuring the wellbeing of those who live, work, and visit here.

Net Zero means that the amount of greenhouse gas emissions we put into the atmosphere and the amount we are able to take out will add up to zero. Not all emissions can be avoided. To get to Net Zero any emissions we create would be balanced by schemes that offset the same amount of greenhouse gases entering the atmosphere.

Place planning offers communities the opportunity to develop proposals for their local area, expressing their aspirations and ambitions for change. Local Place Plans were introduced by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, which contains a right for communities to produce their own plans.

Productivity is a measure of business or economic performance that shows how efficiently the business, region or country is producing goods or services.

Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) are independent landlords (including housing associations, housing cooperatives, Abbeyfield societies and co-ownership societies) registered with the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR), which own and manage houses on a not-for-profit basis.

SEStran is the **South East of Scotland Transport Partnership** which aims to lead the development of a transportation system for South East Scotland, enabling business to function effectively and provide everyone living in the region with improved access to healthcare, education, public services and employment opportunities.

SG, the **Scottish Government**, is the devolved government for Scotland and has a range of responsibilities that include: the economy, education, health, justice, rural affairs, housing, environment, equal opportunities, consumer advocacy and advice, transport and taxation.

Small and medium-sized enterprises are businesses with fewer than 250 employees.

SOSE, **South of Scotland Enterprise**, is the economic and community development agency for the South of Scotland. It aims to help businesses and enterprising communities throughout Dumfries and Galloway and Scottish Borders to thrive, grow, and fulfil their best potential.

Supply chain is an entire system of producing and delivering a product or service, from the very beginning stage of sourcing the raw materials to the final delivery of the product or service to the end user.

SWestrans, the **South West of Scotland Transport Partnership**, is one of seven Regional Transport Partnerships in Scotland and covers an area aligned with the boundaries of Dumfries and Galloway Council.

Third Sector includes charities; voluntary organisations; religious organisations; sporting organisations; community organisations; cooperatives; social enterprises; professional associations; chambers of commerce; development trusts and welfare organisations. The Third Sector delivers essential services, helps to improve people's wellbeing and contributes to economic growth. It plays a vital role in supporting communities at a local level.

Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs) are charitable organisations that perform four key functions in their communities: act as a source of local intelligence; enable local voices to be heard; provide leadership, vision and coordination; and build capacity and make connections.

Wellbeing economy is an economy designed to serve people and the planet, not the other way around. Rather than treating economic growth as an end in itself and pursuing it at all costs, a wellbeing economy puts human and planetary needs at the centre of its activities, ensuring that these needs are all equally met, by default.

Annex: Alignment of Our Actions and Priorities

Theme	Priority	Actions	KEY: P: Priority Action A: Action
1. Skilled and Ambitious People	<p>Enabling access to skills, training & employment</p> <p>Attracting & Retaining People with a Diversity of Skills, Ambition & Knowledge</p> <p>Preparing for the Future of Work</p> <p>Building Lifelong Learning & Opportunity</p>	<p>P1, P3, A4, A7, A9</p> <p>P1, P2, P3, A2, A3, A4, A5, A9</p> <p>P1, P2, P3, A1, A2, A4, A5, A6, A7, A9</p> <p>P1, P2, P3, A1, A2, A4, A5, A6, A7, A8, A9</p>	
2. Innovative and Enterprising	<p>Embracing Research & Innovation</p> <p>Enhancing Business Support Services</p> <p>Activating Networks & Business Interaction</p> <p>Creating Flexible & Accessible Workspaces</p>	<p>P1, P2, A2, A4, A5, A6, A7, A9</p> <p>P1, A1, A2, A6, A9</p> <p>P1, P3, A1, A7</p> <p>A1</p>	
3. Rewarding and Fair Work	<p>Growing & Diversifying Our Economy</p> <p>Attracting & Securing New Investment</p> <p>Improving Productivity & Competitiveness</p> <p>Securing and Improving Fair Working Conditions & Wages</p>	<p>P1, P2, P3, A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7, A8, A9</p> <p>P1, P2, P3, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7, A9</p> <p>P1, P2, P3, A1, A6, A7, A9</p> <p>P3, A2</p>	
4. Cultural and Creative Excellence	<p>Celebrating & Enabling Creativity</p> <p>Championing a New Regional Identity</p> <p>Investing in Visitor Economy Infrastructure</p> <p>Boosting Culture & Heritage Assets</p>	<p>A4</p> <p>P1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7</p> <p>P2, A2, A3, A5</p> <p>A3, A4, A5</p>	
5. Green and Sustainable Economy	<p>Harnessing & Enhancing Natural Capital</p> <p>Seizing the Economic Opportunity of a Just Transition to Net Zero</p> <p>Improving Efficiency of Homes & Buildings</p> <p>Supporting Community Wealth Building and Growing Regional Supply Chains</p>	<p>P3, A2, A5</p> <p>P1, P2, P3, A6, A7</p> <p>P1, P3, A2, A7</p> <p>P1, P3, A1, A2, A4, A5, A6, A7, A8, A9</p>	
6. Thriving and Distinct Communities	<p>Revitalising Towns and Rural Communities</p> <p>Creating and Sustaining High Quality, Affordable Homes</p> <p>Enhancing Digital & Transport Connections</p> <p>Activating & Empowering Communities, the Third Sector and Social Enterprise</p>	<p>P1, P2, A2, A3, A4, A5, A8, A9</p> <p>P1, P3, A3, A7</p> <p>P2, A3, A6, A9</p> <p>P1, P2, A1, A4, A5, A6, A7, A8</p>	



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