

SOUTH OF SCOTLAND ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP CONSULTATION SUMMARY REPORT

Outcome Report of 26 meetings across south Scotland
April – June 2018

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ENTERPRISE & SKILLS
SOUTH OF SCOTLAND
ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

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INTRODUCTION

BY PROFESSOR RUSSEL GRIGGS OBE

Phase 2 of the Enterprise and Skills Review, in Autumn 2017, concluded that the Scottish Government would establish a new Enterprise Agency (the Agency) for the South of Scotland as a public body through primary legislation. This legal process will not be completed before 2020 so, to maintain momentum, the Scottish Government has established an interim partnership: the South of Scotland Economic Partnership (SoSEP).

I have been appointed as Chair of this Partnership and, with my colleagues, I plan to concentrate on two main areas of work. Firstly, I want to help shape the new Agency so that it can deliver what local people and businesses really want it to deliver. Secondly, I would like to see SoSEP starting to make a difference now, before the Agency is formed. The Scottish Government is supporting us in this through the allocation of significant new funding and these funds are already starting to have an impact.

The 26 consultation events held between April and June 2018 were a vital part of the process whereby we develop our understanding of the views and priorities of communities, businesses and organisations operating in the South of Scotland. Importantly, the results will also inform those charged with developing the legislation to establish the new Agency.

I found the events to be both thought-provoking and encouraging. There is much to be proud of across south Scotland, and there is much agreement about what needs to be done. There are also issues which will be more difficult to address and which will require ongoing efforts from us all. I believe that the formation of SoSEP and the new Agency will make a significant difference in delivering a more successful, vibrant and enterprising future for our communities and businesses.

In this report, we have referred throughout to 'the Agency' except where there is a specific activity that can be accurately attributed to SoSEP where we have referred to 'SoSEP'.

Russel Griggs
Chair, South of Scotland Economic Partnership

“The idea of a ‘Voice of the South of Scotland’ is good - neither a suburb of the Central Belt nor a mirror of the Highlands and Islands - but a place with distinctive shape, culture, dynamic and set of values.”

Peebles Participant

SECTION 1

BACKGROUND

Between April and June 2018, South of Scotland Economic Partnership (SoSEP) scheduled 29 (14xSB, 15xDG) public consultations with 26* (12xSB, 14xDG) taking place across south Scotland from Stranrær to Eyemouth and Peebles to Annan. The events were promoted across a wide range of social media channels, local press and email networks. Consultations were scheduled for early mornings (7) and evenings (19) to attract and engage a wide range of stakeholders. The partnership sought views from residents, community organisations, local government and government agencies, NGO's, environmental groups, education, land managers, farmers, foresters, creative sector and a wide range of local businesses to determine how the new agency should be managed and what priorities it should set for the long and short term.

Across 26 venues SoSEP consulted with 536** participants which can be roughly categorised as follows:

201 (38%) local businesses, charities, trusts, member organisations, social enterprises, NGO'S, tourism providers and cultural/arts venues	108 (20%) individuals	88 (16%) government officers and agencies
70 (13%) education, environment, health, housing, renewables, skills development	69 (13%) community group members	

*See section 5.1 for meeting locations, number of participants and comments

**For further information see tables in section 5.2

The meetings covered three main topics: the South of Scotland Economic Partnership, the new Enterprise Agency and the Borderlands Growth Deal. The events highlighted a range of opportunities for the south including growing the economy, developing skills and breaking barriers to success for the south. Each of the meetings followed a three part structure of a general discussion to address any immediate questions; a short presentation and then group participation where the audience were requested to generate three key comments and three key questions from each of their groups. The questions and comments*** that were made were recorded along with any further points.

781 multi stranded comments and questions were recorded and subsequently categorised into 53 discussion topics which produced 1516 separate data entries.

340 (22%)
of these (predominantly questions) concerned the Agency, its partners and relations with the 3rd sector

1,176 (78%)
(predominantly comments) have been sub divided into 19 single or multi stranded categories

This report provides an analysis of the consultation responses across south Scotland as a whole and seeks to draw-out some more local themes, issues and ideas to help inform the partnership and the new Agency. It does not attempt to address any of the issues, points or recommendations raised.



*** Comments and questions by location can be found in section 5.3

SECTION 2

KEY AREAS OF FOCUS

The 781 recorded responses were analysed and broken down into 53 groupings and then condensed into 19 key areas of focus. Topics that received a large number of responses are listed as single subjects (e.g. Young people) whilst the remainder have been grouped into themes (e.g. land-use). These were ranked by number of comments and ensuing order will be followed throughout the document except in section 3.20. Here information from all 53 groups is used to draw out regional and local differences and commonalities by compiling the three most popular discussion threads at each consultation event.

TABLE: Key Areas and Number of Comments

KEY AREA OF FOCUS	NUMBER OF COMMENTS
Agency & Partners	340
Business, Enterprise Stimulation, Procurement, Business Premises, Planning, Low Carbon/Renewables and Creative Sector	168
Community, Capacity and Facilitation, Ownership, Town Centres & Windfarm Benefit	102
Land Use (Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Land Reform and Management, Natural Heritage and Environment, Coastal, National Parks, Landscape & Ecosystem)	89
Funding	77
Skills & Training	72
Broadband, Digital, Mobile & Connectivity	69
Infrastructure - Roads, Rail, Work Spaces	69
Tourism, Culture and Heritage & Festivals	63
Employment, Wages and Cost of Living & Childcare	54
Baseline Data	52
Regional South Scotland	49
Young People	47
Retain/Attract Skilled Workers	43
Education	41
Public Transport	41
People (Quality of Life and Leisure, Housing, Retired as Assets, Caring for Elderly)	41
Economy, Economic Development and Circular Economy	39
Government, Policy & Local Authorities	33
General Comments (Not included in key areas of focus)	27
Total	1516

19 KEY AREAS OF FOCUS

- Agency & Partners - Locally accessible, independent agency that works across all sectors to ensure that fairly distributed investment produces long term success and sustainability for the south with powers to lobby, affect policy change and streamline services to create cohesion of business, economic, education, community and infrastructure initiatives - see section 3.1
- Business (small and micro), Enterprise Stimulation, Local Procurement, Business Premises, Local Authority Planning, Low Carbon/Renewables and the Creative Sector – Support and enhance opportunities for existing businesses (micro, co-operatives, community, service, creative, culture, arts and crafts, industry and production), attract and create new (creative, scientific, elderly care) and exploit local production and expertise (smart textiles, agriculture and forestry, natural and built assets) to benefit the south. Provide training (digital connectivity, match funding), grants (relocation, skills development) and advice, foster entrepreneurs and local procurement, align education and training to business and industry advantage and ensure provision of rural workspaces, business premises and land for development. The need to integrate advice, funding and training for the full range of local businesses was agreed - see section 3.2
- Community, Capacity and Facilitation, Community Ownership, Town Centres & Windfarms – Professional input and continuity of funding required to devolve responsibility, provide sustainability and increase capacity to assist communities to grow assets or use existing (community benefit funds) to increase local opportunities in business generation, buying power, land acquisition, infrastructure and services. Communities remarked ‘there was a danger of losing all the initial energy created’ without professional assistance, resources, access to training and knowledge sharing – see section 3.3
- Land Use- Balance needs of environment with land based business and imagine new ways to harness landscape for benefit through diversification, integrated management and harnessing of natural resources (wind, wave, water). Add value to local products, promote buy local and manage regional supply trains (agriculture, forestry, fishing, etc.). Link communities of interest (agriculture, forestry, food production, industry, tourism, micro business, construction, arts and culture) and provide specialist training to create local operatives and increase business opportunities. Develop long term plan (+40 years) and vision for the south to include sensitive infrastructure and sustainable development that preserves natural beauty, supports community ownership and encourages new enterprise – see section 3.4
- Funding - Concerns over loss of European funding, lack of investment and cost of effecting change. £10M Fund: Simple, fair (industry, small business, arts/crafts, start-ups, seed funding), inclusive, transparent process, that favours revenue/benefits/ideas generation to unlock potential in the south. News of the funding being made available to the south was warmly welcomed – see section 3.5
- Skills & Training – Deficiency of skills (core and vocational), training opportunities for all age groups (renewables, textiles, technology, leadership, professional development, crafts, construction, forestry and agriculture, tourism, food and travel) and infrastructure to support (housing, transport and connectivity). Consider cross sector training and apprenticeships so people not limited to one specialisation and affect policy to allow apprenticeships to cross administrative boundaries. Upskill workforce and develop intellectual growth – see section 3.6
- Broadband, Digital, Mobile & Connectivity – Future proofed infrastructure and central information point on how to access it for all digital communications to support high skilled satellite workers, tourism, rural business, students and future tele health care needs of aging population. Many businesses don’t have access or even understanding of what is

available to them and would like help to understand the power and opportunities of the digital world - see section 3.7

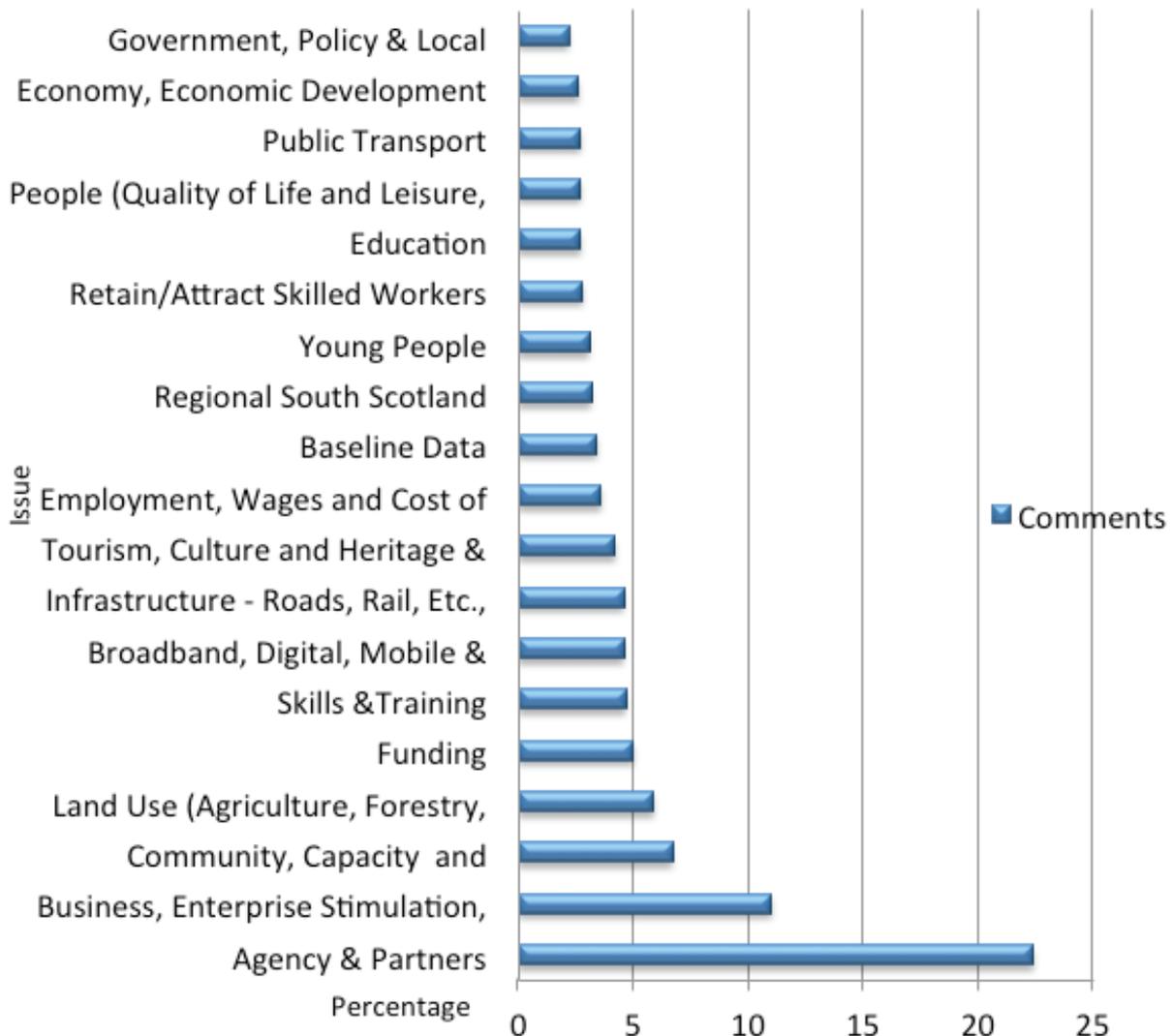
- Infrastructure (Roads, Rail, Work Spaces) - Need infrastructure that meets the needs of a growing population facilitates business, training and tourism opportunities and improves links to major conurbations. Suggestions include an A7 dual carriageway through to an airport at Carlisle, faster links through A68, A7 and A1 corridors, east – west communications, electric car facilities and infrastructure which would see an improvement of road, reintroduction of rail and high tech communications networks without impacting the region’s natural beauty. There were calls for investment in abattoirs, construction plants, sawmills, food production and textile facilities to increase manufacturing in south Scotland - see section 3.8
- Tourism, Culture and Heritage & Festivals –Many cited tourism as main opportunity for growth and requested a separate division for this within the agency as it supports a host of other industries and services. Need higher international profile, brand, destination and identity development, destination signage from major routes and ports, infrastructure to attract high end tourism and seed funding for a south Scotland forum. Encourage people to explore rather than pass through by developing coast to coast routes, tourism trails (cycling, walking equestrian) and natural and historic environment – see section 3.9
- Employment, Wages and Cost of Living & Childcare – Barriers to employment include availability of sustainable jobs, conditions and salaries (care workers), limited choice of higher value employment (draining area of specialist skills) and lack of nursery provision. Employers face issues of staff turnover, lack of essential operators (forestry), seasonal staff shortages and limited skilled specialist graduates (technology); necessary (GP’s, teachers, etc..) jobs not being filled. Need to address low wage economy and prevalence of multiple job culture – see section 3.10
- Baseline Data - Over-arching audit process to produce baseline data and development plan for south both locally and regionally which includes natural, built, community, creative, infrastructure, production and service assets to inform funding and growth decisions going forward – see section 3.11
- Regional South Scotland - Break down barriers, knit together and become one without loss of equity or identity from community to regional level. Maintain national, cross border and local relationships and initiatives whilst securing a cohesive, powerful voice for the south. Raise international profile, preserve unique Borderlands and promote and preserve the strong traditions of both regions – see section 3.12
- Young People - Concerns around young people leaving the area and the need to prioritise retention, skills development, work experience / apprenticeship / volunteering opportunities and help for underprivileged to enter routes to work and study. Suggestions included developing a free travel passport for modern apprentices and students, providing affordable accommodation options, increasing leisure facilities (4G sports pitches, night time culture) to make the area more vibrant and provide opportunities to upskill by creating projects and commissions to generate new prospects and creative outlets – see section 3.13
- Retain/Attract Skilled Workers - Encourage homecoming of graduates, attract main stream employment on a larger scale and support those who want to remain in the area with skills development, projects, educational opportunities, commissions and creative outlets. Entice young people, professionals and skilled workers from cities by selling the benefits of south Scotland life style and environment. Many felt the south of Scotland lifestyle, landscape and more affordable housing options were a key selling point but the aspects were not being successfully promoted to draw in new people or retaining existing residents – see section 3.14

- Education – Improvement and investment to be made in education from primary to university level by addressing the undersupply of lecturers, sustainability of colleges, limited choice of courses (especially for trainees and nursing students) and routes to higher learning. Suggestions for the south included linking private sector to education to increase opportunities for businesses and work force, building and connecting campuses across the south and learning lessons from highlands region by developing cultural profile to increase uptake at educational institutions – see section 3.15
- Public Transport – Low population, number of routes, lack of links and range of operators causes heavy reliance on personal transport. Community transport schemes could be copied by larger operators to reflect work and study patterns of population along with the introduction of rural park and ride infrastructure and a widening of the rail network – see section 3.16
- People (Quality of Life and Leisure, Housing, Retired as Assets, Caring for Elderly) – Require affordable housing, inexpensive accommodation (for young) and land for sustainable development. Reforming planning, iron out funding issues for communities, release disused land and address major land ownership. Sell environment and life style to attract new population and encourage homecoming of professionals, skilled and young. Generate innovative and creative jobs and industries for existing talent, harness knowledge, dying skills and experience of aging population and look to new generation to provide care for elderly – see section 3.17
- Economy, Economic Development and Circular Economy - To increase opportunities across the south, more importance should be given to non-standard indicators (micro business, community, digital, culture, energy, arts, crafts, connectivity, contribution to society, community and traditional skills) of economic growth. Provide infrastructure and opportunities to encourage ‘buy local’ initiatives in food, energy, services and products to ensure money stays in communities and is protected from external forces. Effect change in planning departments and other government agencies to make economic development a priority. Though it’s not just about economics: social and environmental impacts also need to be accounted for – see section 3.18
- Government/Policy - Need confidence that agency will have local accountability, longevity, political influence and support to provide a powerful, influential voice for the south in all government decisions to ensure national strategy reflects local policy thereby creating cohesion of initiatives and removes barriers to growth – see section 3.19

REGIONAL INFORMATION

- Regional Differences – this section steps away from the Key Areas of Focus to provide local and regional themes to assist the new agency - see section 3.20

CHART: Percentage of Comments by Category





SECTION 3

MAIN CONCERNS

Section 3 has been divided into 20 subheadings to examine the consultation comments and questions in further detail. Each section starts with a list of key messages taken from the following text. The number of comments for each discussion thread (53 threads) is shown in brackets throughout (-). Comments were also categorised into whether they concerned the past (backward looking, tending to be negative) or about the future (front facing and generally more positive and constructive). The large majority were of the latter type.



“Remit of Agency. Heartened to hear that all types of business will be supported going forward. Micro business, social enterprise and worker-owned cooperatives are contributors to economic growth, social cohesion and environmental viability. With greater business support they could reach their full potential and support communities to thrive on their own terms.”

Dumfries Breakfast Participant

3.1 AGENCY & PARTNERS

TABLE: Number of Comments per Question Group on the Structure and function of SoSEP and new Agency

Who is involved	19
Who will it report to	6
Who will work with it	51
What will it seek to do	67
What resources will it have	5
When will it be functional	1
When will spending decisions be made	11
Where will it be based	18
Where will it deliver services	5
Why is it needed	3
Will it adopt HIE model	8
How will it agree priorities	43
How will it measure success	8
How will it relate to planning, etc.,	5
Timelines /longevity	7
Data baseline	15
Other	21
Sub Total	275
SoSEP Partners	47
Other 3rd Sector Agencies	18
Total	340
Backward looking	31
Front facing	241

Key Messages:

- There was a call for the new body to work closely with the full range of other organisations working in the region.
- This breadth of potential “partners” was balanced by the view that the Agency would need to prioritise. It could not work with everyone on every issue.
- A key request was for the Agency to listen and then make decisions and work in ways that clearly relate to agreed priorities using mechanisms that are open and transparent and accountable.
- There were particular calls for the third sector to be included in the remit of the Agency. Social enterprise, volunteer groups, co-ops, etc. often played a vital role in supporting rural economies.
- There were a lot of questions about who would make decisions about priorities for SoSEP and the Agency. Who would the Agency report to?
- What power will the Agency have to influence other funding streams?
- There was strong support for the Agency to have a local presence.
- It was pointed out that HIE had been operating with a social remit for many years, and that it would take time for South Scotland to “catch-up”. How will a course be set and then stuck-to in such choppy political waters?
- Finally, what does success look like in 10, 15 or 20 years? How will the Agency report on its work and demonstrate progress?

People wanted to know who sat on the SoSEP Board. Was it as representative as it needed to be? How could or would the Board be influenced? Would it be under the control of politicians in which case would it become focussed on short-term impacts rather than long-term development?

Generally, the feeling was that representation needed to be broad. Specific Board representation was suggested for: the young, small business, the cultural and arts sectors, the farming and land-use sectors, the environment sector, the marginalised (eg those dependent on public transport), as well as the geographic far west (and east).

Several people called for “new blood” and for a fresh approach to be taken (perhaps based on the experience of HIE) that offered local support appropriate to the very wide range of issues and enterprise types.

There was also a call for the new body to work closely with the full range of other organisations working in the region. The following were mentioned at least once: neighbouring Local Authorities, key departments of Scottish Borders Council and Dumfries & Galloway Council, Scottish Enterprise, existing community development trusts and companies, the utilities, SEPA, Forestry Commission Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage, schools, the hospitality sector, textile sector and D&G Unlimited.

“How do you bring together such a disparate group of people? A designer would have a hard job creating a sensitive logo for such an entity”

Attendee at Castle Douglas event

This breadth of potential “partners” was balanced by the view that the Agency would need to prioritise. It could not work with everyone on every issue. Some agreed an action plan would be needed, and the feeling was that this needed to be developed with input from as many people as possible – so that the process was transparent. A “SWOT” analysis was suggested by several (i.e. an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats).

“... It feels like you’re trying to plug gaps and holes. It would be better to try to get back to the first principals of what is really needed”

Langholm participant

A key request was for the Agency to listen and then make decisions and work in ways that clearly relate to agreed priorities using mechanisms that are open, transparent and accountable

What influence would SoSEP and the Agency have on Government? Will there be opportunities to influence other Govt agencies (eg Scottish Water who may be reluctant to invest in necessary infrastructure)?

There were calls for clarity about the relationship between SoSEP and Borderlands. How will they be aligned?

Who would the Agency work with? Who would have the dominant role? Several points were made concerning the historic lack of coordination between local organisation (relating to infrastructure or planning decisions for example). Would the Agency be able to help overcome such conflicts by requiring a different approach? Would the roles played by existing partners be reviewed and even modified to facilitate progress?

There were particular calls for the third sector to be included in the remit of the Agency. Social enterprise, volunteer groups, co-ops etc., often played a vital role in supporting rural economies.

“Enterprise agencies want to do everything – resist this. How do you ensure you focus on the right things (only 3 or 4)? Doesn’t have to be unique but uniquely good! Could be tourism, food and drink, etc., to raise whole area.”

West Linton Participant

There were a lot of questions about who would make decisions about priorities for SoSEP and the Agency. Who would the Agency report to? Would it work with other agencies to deliver a joint programme? If so, which agencies and how would decisions be made? Which strategy would it deliver?

Several people asked about when the first decisions relating to the £10M fund would be made and when the “work plan” and “key strategies” would be agreed. What power will

the Agency have to influence other funding streams (LEADER and the Coastal Community Fund were mentioned). How will future budgets be set and how will priorities for investment be agreed? Is this new money or old money rebranded? Will this sort of budget be enough to make real difference? How does it compare to the HIE budget? Will the Agency budget be under local control or could it be influenced and “sub-divided” by central Government? What steps will be taken to check the Agency benefits the whole region? How will the agency ensure that the diversity that is found across the region is valued and not squeezed into a “one-size fits all” structure? While working to unify, can we also celebrate individuality and difference?

Will it be able to own assets itself?

It was suggested that there is a danger that local successes can be ignored in the rush to establish “the new”. “We need to build on the good as well as address weaknesses”. How will the agency maximise the value of local skills and knowledge (on which the current economy depends) while also attracting new businesses and investment into the area? What emphasis would be given to supporting traditional business/enterprise compared to developing the social remit that made HIE so different? What will influence this balance?

“You mention that everything will be new, innovative and exciting. Does it need to be? If something is tried and tested maybe it is a good way to continue. Look at the evolution of ideas – it’s all about the balance.” Hawick Breakfast participant

What scale of organisation would the Agency be? Would there be one HQ (based where?) or would there be a network of offices, bringing a presence to every corner of the region? The latter appeared to be the more popular model. There was strong support for the Agency to have a local presence. There were also questions about who would represent the Agency at a local level, how soon the structure would be up and running.

There were questions about why the plan was not just to adopt/extend the HIE model which seems to have been effective. How will the agency learn from experience elsewhere – especially from HIE?

Who would the Agency employ: would it be business advisors or would a wider range of skills be employed (community development workers, social enterprise facilitators, sustainability experts)? And would it seek to use local people and organisations rather than outside consultants?

What could be done to ensure the new body is fully accountable both to its staff and to its clients – the local people? What danger is there that the Agency just creates a new layer of bureaucracy and /or another talking-shop? What will be done to maximise local engagement in the work and priorities of the Agency?

It was felt that openness and transparency would be vital if trust was to be developed with local people and business. There was a plea not to make excessive use of external consultants. It was pointed out that HIE had been operating with a social remit for many years, and that it would take time for South Scotland to “catch-up”. How will a course be set and then stuck-to in such choppy political waters? Is there a danger that “new” funds will be used to replace local authority funding which is being so reduced?

“Have SOSEP carried out a SWOT analysis of the region, and does the agency recognise the value of the environment?”

Castle Douglas Participant

The importance of data (on existing assets, skill levels, community capacity, the state of the environment, etc.) was mentioned by many as a key part of demonstrating future success. The Land-use strategy pilot was offered as a potentially valuable tool for monitoring and the value of ecosystem services and natural capital were also offered as important considerations if development was to be truly sustainable.

Finally, what does success look like in 10, 15 or 20 years? How will the Agency report on its work and demonstrate progress?

3.2 BUSINESS, ENTERPRISE STIMULATION, LOCAL PROCUREMENT, BUSINESS PREMISES, PLANNING, LOW CARBON/RENEWABLES AND CREATIVE SECTOR

“You need to think outside the box. If the new agency is about actual inclusive opportunities for businesses in the South then it needs to remember the eclectic mix of businesses.”

Annan Participant

Key Messages:

- Agency may need new powers to over-rule some restrictive practices
- Lack of premises preventing business growth
- Micro and small business seen as vital
- Well paid, quality jobs and creative industries are needed
- Need to integrate advice, funding and training for businesses
- Attracting new business is a major requirement
- Assistance with local procurement to ensure money stays in the local economy
- Teaching entrepreneurial skills to students could increase future business opportunities
- Generating income schemes for community development
- The value of the culture, arts and creative sector to the local economy was stressed by many

“Land is available with access to trunk roads but not allowed to build on it – need to reform planning.”

West Linton Participant

Planning (11): There were concerns about how the Agency would work with Council Planners to address perceived barriers to business development. These included restrictive planning regulations but also access to development land and the provision of support infrastructure

(roads, broadband etc.). It was felt that unless there was alignment between agencies; the Agency might need new powers to over-rule some restrictive practices. The limited ownership of land was mentioned and this was seen as a barrier to innovation, to the provision of business premises (as well as to new housing).

“Need for accessible business land but also roads and infrastructure including IT to ensure businesses can run – there is a planning challenge.”

West Linton Participant

Business Premises (4): It was felt by some that there was a shortage of good quality business premises in the region (particularly in rural parts), and that this was preventing both business growth and new business from moving here. It was also pointed out that seasonal business needs access to accommodation for workers if it is to survive

“We have fantastic initiatives that we start but they then have a habit of running out of money. We need to invest for growth.”

Newton Stewart Participant

Business, Micro, SMEs etc., (104): The vital role of micro and very small business was stressed at several events. Questions related to how the new agency would inter-face to these. It was suggested that apparently healthy entrepreneurship could be a sign of desperation – signalling that there is no other opportunity for work in that location. Other felt that the variety of business models (including co-operatives, life-style businesses, sole-traders and social enterprises) was positive – and that all could play a vital role in local economies and therefore deserved support. The importance of well-paid and “quality” jobs was emphasised, as was the importance of the creative industries. There was strong call for a move away from concentrating support on big-business. The vital role played by High Streets in rural towns was stressed, as was their vulnerability to competition from larger national or international chains.

The need to integrate advice, funding and training for the full range of local business was agreed. These included assistance with provision of suitable facilities and also help with understanding what new technology could do for them. It was pointed out that securing match-funding was a real challenge for some businesses and this could create a barrier to progress.

There was some awareness of the value of the Interface scheme, where business challenges were shared with academic institutions with the aim of overcoming problems. It was felt this could be developed further in a local context – perhaps bringing local colleges and other local partners together to seek solutions or develop innovative ideas. Local business or enterprise “hubs” might help this approach and it was suggested that business groups could work together around particular themes (e.g. food processing, creative arts, tourism, etc.).

The need to attract new business (especially large scale manufacturing and scientific companies) to the region was raised; although this was also seen by some as risky as such businesses can leave as easily as they arrive. The economic “clout” of big business was seen as important if not vital for the local economy.

There was a question about what would happen to business currently getting support from Scottish Enterprise and also how Business Gateway would operate from now on. There were a number of points about the need to better link business needs with local skills development and training. Effective communication between the two sides is required to ensure the needs are fully understood.

“Will the new agency support a fairer way into public contracts and help improve the tender processes which restrict smaller businesses, favouring large business?”

Gatehouse of Fleet Participant

Local Procurement (4): Local companies struggle to win local contracts and it was felt that more could be done to help address this so that more of the value of these contracts remained in the local economy. Help to develop collaborative approaches might assist this.

“We have an opportunity to pitch south of Scotland as the home of the entrepreneur. Our eco system is better than anywhere else in the world. We need to raise and build perception of the south by promoting the successful businesses that are already here and let people know how good it is to set up a business in the area.”

Kelso Participant

Enterprise Stimulation (20): It was suggested that an agreed strategy for future business growth was needed so that appropriate support could be targeted. This should include new and existing enterprise, and it should take a medium-long term view as new ideas take time to get established.

The need to strengthen support for entrepreneurship generally but especially in schools and colleges was also stressed as this could lead directly to more young people setting-up businesses. Business ideas (e.g. smart textiles; agriculture; local products) could be shared and “tested” in schools and colleges and then supported in local “incubator” units (like university research “spin-offs”) in entrepreneurial hubs.

“The government has ambitious renewable energy targets. Will the new agency help renewable development, including training in renewable technologies?”

Castle Douglas Participant

Low Carbon/Renewables (10): Several people highlighted the opportunities to make more of local energy potential, and the scope to make the economy a “green” one that helped deliver current government targets for climate change as well as growing new businesses. The demand for skills in this area was certain to grow, and local colleges should be developing appropriate courses. Energy costs were increasing, so energy efficiency needed to be improved for business viability and living standards.

There could be a major role for communities in this and such schemes could generate income streams for ongoing community development as has happened in the North. Fuel poverty was a known problem in rural communities and addressing this would support jobs as well as improving quality of life.

“There is an opportunity to embrace solutions to infrastructure through the creativity being applied to the interface between the arts and social issues” Langholm Breakfast Participant Creative Sector (16): The value of the culture, arts and creative sector to the local economy was stressed by many. It was felt that more support for this sector would have a range of benefits including retaining existing businesses, attracting new ones and developing their potential to generate significant income. Working with Creative Scotland would be important in this regard.

The creative sector was also seen as a useful means of addressing some social issues and several people saw benefits from integrating the arts with environmental, social and economic partners.

3.3 COMMUNITY, CAPACITY AND FACILITATION, OWNERSHIP, TOWN CENTRES & WINDFARMS

“Need for grass-roots community organisations that are well-established and well-run to receive continuity of funding over several years - not annual uncertainly about their existence - to be effective and sustainable. Indeed, such stability would be transformational for the organisations and therefore the communities they serve.”

Peebles Participant

Key messages:

- Help is needed with skills training, capacity building and confidence building in remote communities to help overcome some of the issues they face as a result of being isolated from service provision.
- Could (the Agency) help raise capacity, provide training and actively encourage and facilitate collaborative community ownership
- It is recognised that this is a slow process and needs a long-term approach

Community (71): Some communities have access to significant wind farm funds, but not all are able to utilise these funds effectively. Some help for these communities would make it easier for them to use the funds more strategically, to ensure they are transformative. Help with skills training, capacity building and confidence building would increase the ability of the more remote communities to overcome some of the issues they face as a result of being isolated from service provision.

“Regarding funding: there are lots of community development companies throughout the Borders – many of which draw on the experience of the Highlands and Islands. The ongoing problem is core-funding; communities that have been energised are in danger of losing all the initial energy created without core funding support.”

Selkirk Participant

As above, with some help, they could learn from other communities in similar circumstances. The future role of Community Councils was questioned in comparison to local Community Development Companies or Development Trusts.

It was pointed out that a lot of people do not live as part of a physical community; therefore there can be invisible isolation, loneliness and rural deprivation.

“Support for Community Ownership is a significant element in the operation of Highlands and Islands Enterprise. Will this new organisation has a similar approach to it?” Dumfries Participant Ownership and Capacity (13): The benefits of community ownership – of renewable energy technology or other assets were well understood, but the take up has been very low in S Scotland compared to elsewhere. There were a number of questions about the potential role of the new agency in addressing this. Could it help raise capacity, provide training and actively encourage and facilitate collaborative community ownership? Can the Agency learn from HIE in this area?

Energy storage is a growing need, and this could be helped with community enterprises (such as smart grids). Renewable energy can also help homes become more affordable

Facilitation (13): There was general acceptance that communities are going to have to do more for themselves in future, and central Government is obviously encouraging this. For it to work, communities need to have capacity – the skills and resources required to enable them to take on responsibility and to develop projects. HIE has invested in “their” communities for years, and the benefits are showing. In the South this has not happened, so facilitation and support will be required. The question is: will the Agency be able to provide this? If they intend to, there needs to be good community representation on the Board.

It is recognised that it is a slow process and needs a long-term approach. Some local communities have been able to develop themselves, but some are now struggling to maintain momentum with no core support. Ongoing support is needed. Groups can learn from each other with some facilitation.

It was suggested that there was a need for a baseline against which progress on community resilience can be measured.

“BIDS: a good example of businesses getting together with communities and looking at the town centres.”

Galashiels Participant

Town Centres (3): There was concern about the state of town centres with the perception that large businesses are increasingly taking small companies' business. It was suggested that BIDS were a good example of businesses getting together with communities and looking at the future of town centres.

“Is wind farming a sustainable and efficient way to make money – not just for communities but overall?”

Dumfries Breakfast Participant

Windfarm (2): Windfarms are well established in S Scotland, but the benefits largely go elsewhere. There were questions about whether this could be addressed in some way – with more benefits held locally either financially or in terms of cheaper local energy or greater energy efficiency.

3.4 LAND USE (AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, FISHING, LAND REFORM AND MANAGEMENT, NATURAL HERITAGE AND ENVIRONMENT, COASTAL, NATIONAL PARKS, LANDSCAPE & ECOSYSTEM

“What is going to be done to encourage new enterprise/initiatives/diversity/new entrants into farming?”

Denholm Participant

Key messages:

- We need to adapt to the changing economic climate so that more value is added to what we produce..
- There needed to be more advice available to guide business decisions
- Concern that the current growth in forestry was not benefiting local people, with few jobs created, decline in landscape value and negative impacts on roads.
- Land was seen to be a significant asset to South Scotland and one we needed to make more sensible use of.

Farming and Agriculture (17): It was accepted that farmers would need to adapt to the changing economic climate so that more value was added to what they produced. It was suggested that there needed to be more advice available to guide business decisions.

“Why is there a gap in ideas for projects related to the land based sector when there are current developments, particularly in agriculture being worked on which with extra support could have a more strategic role and wider impact?”

Dumfries Breakfast Participant

There was concern about the difficulty of attracting young people into the industry. Concern was also expressed at the loss of agricultural land to forestry with a call for more thought to be given to land-use planning

“Forestry is a topical issue. It is swallowing up agricultural land. The perception is that this economy is not coming directly to this part of Scotland. It does not employ many locals, ruins roads and swallows up agriculture.”

Hawick Breakfast Participant

Forestry (18): There was concern that the current growth in forestry was not benefiting local people, with few jobs created, decline in landscape value and negative impacts on roads. It was felt that we should do more to add value to the timber rather than just exporting it from the region. This might generate new jobs. It was suggested that more training/apprenticeships should be available locally to help local people enter the sector.

“Value chain - add value to our farming/forestry products i.e. timber is shipped out whole.”

Denholm Participant

The long-term nature of forestry inevitably means care has to be taken to get it right. The role of forestry in tourism was high-lighted, with mountain biking being especially valuable but it was also pointed out that the current environment is what attracts people and we must be careful about changing it.

It was felt that the extension of the Waverly line could help get timber out without damaging the roads.

“Partnership does have the potential to link and focus communities of interest right across South of Scotland – e.g. fishing, ports, micro-businesses.”

Peebles Participant

Fishing (4): There were calls for the value of fishing to be remembered along with the wider potential of the marine sector to support tourism. Creating a link between fishing and coastal interests across the region was suggested.

“Farming has been mentioned, what about the fishing industry? Is marine tourism/ off shore wind farms/ fishing being considered? The wider marine environment is important to Eyemouth. Need more value added operations in the Borders. Partnership does have the potential to link and focus communities of interest right across South of Scotland - egg fishing, ports, micro-businesses.”

Eyemouth Participant

“How do we actively imagine land use going forward? Recommend agriculture, food and environment as vehicle for transformation.”

West Linton Participant

“There is no strategy for the use of derelict land. Land is one of our biggest assets and we hardly seem to know how to use it in any sensible or joined-up way.”

Langholm Breakfast Participant

Land Reform, Use and Management (17): There were calls for greater diversity of land-use as well as land-ownership, including more community ownership. Land was seen to be a significant asset to South Scotland and one we needed to make more sensible use of. Integration between land-use types was considered by some to be essential, i.e. moving away from traditional land-uses such as farming or forestry. Could derelict land be brought back into productive use?

“What is the future of land ownership? Particularly in an area like this when land is owned largely by one person.”

Sanquhar Participant

“Need greater emphasis on natural and cultural assets in sustainable development to get a balance between the needs of different businesses.”

Dumfries Breakfast Participant

Natural Heritage (17): This was also seen to be of significant value and calls were made to not take it for granted. It should not be “exploited”. The environment was seen by many as the reason that people lived and worked here, and more could be done to sell this quality to attract others. Rural tourism could be further developed to add value to this resource on land and sea. Wildlife watching was an obvious area for growth.

“How can we make the most of our distinct and unique heritage? Natural capital is one of the strengths of the South of Scotland”.

“Environment is key – how will you address environmental issues?”

Dumfries Breakfast Participant

Landscape and Environment (4): The Biosphere initiative was held up as a good example of promoting sustainable development based on the high-quality environment. Development needed to be appropriate to the environment and great care should be taken when developing the area (the impact of wind farms and pylons were specifically mentioned).

It was felt important that SoSEP should work with SNH, SEPA and HES and other environmental bodies to maximise environmental benefits.

Coastal (5): The value of the Coastal Communities Fund was flagged-up. Could the Agency extend this approach? As above, the coast offered potential for new enterprise (tourism, fishing, energy etc..)

National Park (5): The potential for new National Parks was suggested as a means of promoting awareness of the region to tourists. Too few people knew what we had here.

Ecosystem Services (2): The value of the environment as a provider of services was mentioned by several. Flood prevention, water supply, carbon sequestration, recreation space, biodiversity and spiritual health were all services the rural areas provided to the general population alongside the production of timber and food. This needed to be acknowledged and ideally paid-for.

“It’s good that different land management sectors are on the Board. However, we can’t assume that those land management sectors will still exist in 10/20/50 years’ time. How do we achieve integrated land management in Scotland?”

Sanquhar Participant

3.5 FUNDING

“How do we make the most of the investment in the region? I.e. no abattoirs, sawmills, food production or textile machinery being produced in South of Scotland.” Hawick Breakfast Participant

Key messages:

- There was much interest in the £10M and how this could be accessed.
- A more targeted and competitive approach would be needed, probably bringing other funding streams to bear in a coordinated way.
- The need to measure and demonstrate the benefit(s) of the funding was stressed.

Funding (77): A large proportion of this section was around the £10M and how this could be accessed, if it had been committed or would be available annually; many concerns over the time that would be needed on the application process and if help could be made available. There were a range of views as to the priority for the funds. Some felt it should be used to attract large businesses into the region, others that it should support existing small businesses, helping them to grow. Others felt that seed-funding could be usefully offered to enable new initiatives to get started (e.g. a regional tourism body).

“Are there any relocation grants available from this fund? I.e. to attract an industrialist from an urban area to come to an area such as ours?”

Sanquhar Participant

It was suggested that the fund should be divided and shared across the region so everyone gets some benefit. There was strong support for decisions to be "open and transparent", but conflicting views about the ease of access. Some felt it should be easy to access – and that risk should be accepted (although the LEADER model was seen as far too bureaucratic). Others felt the £10m was insufficient to bring about the required changes (especially with the pending loss of EU funding) and that a more targeted and competitive approach would be needed, probably bringing other funding streams to bear in a coordinated way. The need to measure and demonstrate the benefit(s) of the funding was stressed by some. The idea of taking a longer-term approach to funding was shared by several as it was felt that too often the traditional short-term "stop-start" funding streams were ineffective in bringing about lasting changes.

"Need to place value on nonstandard metrics of economic benefit, notably contribution to society, community and development of skills"

Dumfries Breakfast Participant

It was suggested that some funds should be allocated to facilitate links with academic institutions (e.g. the Interface model). Others suggested supporting local fund-raisers would generate additional benefits. The value of ongoing core-funding for (effective) organisations was also mentioned.

3.6 SKILLS & TRAINING

"Need investment in learning and digital skills and investment so people have an opportunity to use those skills – there is a lack of core skills."

Eyemouth Breakfast Participant

Key messages:

- Improving the skills of the local workforce would lead to higher quality, better paid jobs.
- People too often lacked "core" skills and that more effort was needed to address this.
- Closer dialogue between businesses and colleges might help.

Skills and Training (72): There were broadly two arguments on the skills issue. Some felt that improving the skills of the local workforce would lead to higher quality better paid jobs. The other view was that there was little point in providing training if there was not a local demand for the resulting skills. Developing the demand alongside the supply was tricky.

There was a view that people too often lacked "core" skills and that more effort was needed to address this.

There was discussion about how the need of existing businesses for particular skills was not well matched to the training being offered in local colleges. Closer dialogue between businesses and colleges might help. It was suggested that the likely future demand for some skills in the region might justify new specialist courses being developed locally – e.g. forestry, renewables and caring

“The ‘Borderlands’ initiative is interesting. The great need is connectivity for young people. However, the basic ‘capacity’ of support for this is really weak. In my business [forestry] I can’t recruit well, I can’t get essential operators and the turnover of people is enormous. A basic foundation for employment - transport, training, building a reservoir of skills, basic infrastructure for this kind of work - is hardly there”

Langholm Breakfast Participant

Apprenticeships can be good, but there have been issues with places requiring significant travel. Some thought apprenticeships needed to be broad so that people came out with skills that could be applied to a range of businesses rather than just one (e.g. land management rather than just forestry). It was suggested that there may be new opportunities if it was easier to work across the border into England. Borderlands was seen as a useful development in this regard.

It was suggested that there was a need for a South Scotland University mirroring UHI.

“The agency should address skills shortages in: plumbing, joinery, cleaning, take a way’s, taxi services and window cleaners”

Newcastleton Participant

The value of traditional skills was mentioned, as was the importance of keeping some of these alive.

It was felt by some that training could be offered to older people as well as the young, but that this would only make a difference if there were jobs for the trainees.

“Need to expand educational offer including wider choice of courses/careers so range of businesses can expand.”

Dumfries Breakfast Participant

Some felt that there was also a need to enhance the skills of business leaders to improve their performance and help their business.

“In the Highlands they have training establishments for crafts and woodwork. We need a college for young people so they don’t leave the area.”

Kelso Participant

3.7 BROADBAND, DIGITAL, MOBILE & CONNECTIVITY

“Digital connectivity and infrastructure – low cost, high skilled dispersed workforce. How do we support them to work from home?”

West Linton Participant

Key messages:

- The importance of good “superfast” broadband (and mobile phone coverage) was raised over and over again

Connectivity (40), Broadband, Digital and Mobile (29): The importance of good “superfast” broadband was raised over and over again. There was a lot of frustration at the slow rate of progress and the difficulty experienced when trying to find out what was being planned. It was felt by some that communities could and would do more to help improve the delivery of FTTP (e.g. by laying fibre themselves) if the system allowed it.

It was felt by many that a modern economy would need quality digital connectivity through improvement to mobile phone coverage, FTTP broadband etc. If these systems worked, modern businesses could function anywhere in the region. Without such services, the rural areas will increasingly become economic deserts.

The border was an issue for some – with services coming from England rather than Scotland.

“To do with the digital infrastructure – the agency should have a lobbying role to improve.”

Sanquhar Participant

Mobile phone coverage was also seen as vital, especially in remoter locations where visitors expected coverage, and where the lack of it was an increasing danger. The value of free wifi was also mentioned.

It was felt that a lot of small businesses don’t have access or even understanding of what was available to them. More needed to be done to help such businesses understand the power of the digital world.

3.8 Infrastructure – Roads, Rail and Work Space

“Would like to see A7 dual carriageway through to Carlisle and an airport at Carlisle.”

Hawick Participant

Key messages:

- Better roads, enhanced railway and suitable businesses premises were called for to make access to markets easier.
- The Agency would (need to) work with organisations with responsibility for infrastructure.

Infrastructure (56): There were a number of questions about how the Agency would work with organisations with responsibility for infrastructure (BT, Scottish Water, Planning Authorities, etc.). These bodies were often seen to be blocking local development and it was considered by some that they would need to be brought into alignment if progress was to be made.

Other issues raised included redevelopment of industrial sites and release of development land close to transport links.

“Need 100% mobile phone coverage, superfast broadband including farms and forests, Borderlands to be promoted as a destination and re open railway through Newcastleton.”

Newcastleton Participant

Rail (13): Strong interest in extending the Borders railway because of the benefits to Hawick and Newcastleton in particular, also reopening former stations on other mainlines (Reston, Beattock, Thornhill, etc.)

3.9 TOURISM, CULTURE AND HERITAGE & FESTIVALS

“Need a higher international profile: tourism is a big part of our economy (D&G have twice as many tourists) we need to increase significantly.”

Denholm Participant

Key messages:

- There was broad support for the idea that tourism was a key sector of the local economy and that it was not currently working as well as it could.
- Better marketing, branding and signage were all called-for
- Arts are seen as a vital part of the economy and one that has potential to grow
- Need to develop ways of adding value to these assets in ways that are sustainable.

Tourism (50): There was broad support for the idea that tourism was a key sector of the local economy and that it was not currently working as well as it could. Tourism also supports a wide range of other business. Collaboration is vital if tourism is to be effective, but at present such collaboration is poor. Better coordination is needed, and this has a cost.

There was some debate about the need for a stronger “brand” for the region, including a

suggestion that the region needs a different name. Some felt it needs a new high-profile attraction (along the lines of “the kelpies” or “angel of the north”. Others felt we have a very rich resource of attractions in the form of our natural and cultural assets (including 7 Stanes, dark sky park, forest parks, National Scenic Areas, Biosphere, Spring Fling, Savour the Flavour, etc.) that we do not yet make effective use of.

“Ensure investment is spent well, if investing in buildings such as Visitor Attractions; make sure you involve businesses in the discussion not purely through Public Sector. Ensure the capital is spent on the right things, that the Business case is correct.”

Hawick Breakfast Participant

There was agreement that to date we have failed to make people aware of why they might want to visit (apart perhaps from the mountain biking). Better marketing, branding and signage were all called-for and questions were asked about how the Agency could help.

A stronger local tourism forum was suggested. It was also felt that more effort was needed to attract young people into the sector to develop activities, innovation and new enterprise. There was a strong tie between the creative sector and local civic pride and cultural traditions, with the Sanquhar knitters offered as a good example.

“Need to make more of the Borders culture. It’s huge but understated, need to create a culture that in turn creates a demand from out with the region by enhancing the social activity and infrastructure (including but not exclusively pubs and clubs) e.g. Isle of Skye and its quality of Gaelic education”

Galashiels Breakfast Participant

Culture, Heritage (11) and Festivals (2): The value of cultural and natural heritage and local festivals was also raised. The arts are seen as a vital part of the economy, and one that has potential to grow. The links to tourism, local food and drink, sense of place and community pride are clear. We need to develop ways of adding value to these assets in ways that are sustainable.

3.10 EMPLOYMENT, WAGES AND COST OF LIVING & CHILDCARE

“Following the discussion about low wages, how can we pay the living wage? What can we do practically bearing in mind they are market driven?”

Galashiels Participant

Key messages:

- The shortage of quality well-paid jobs was widely acknowledged as something which needed to be addressed through better training and education.
- Action was also requested to reduce the relatively high cost of rural living.
- If more holiday care was available for nursery/school pupils it would also free up the workforce

“High levels of deprivation, there are high levels of employment but low wages or people with multiple jobs; it needs to be sustainable, better waged jobs.”

Eyemouth Breakfast Participant

Employment (36): The shortage of quality well-paid jobs was widely acknowledged. Some felt the answer was to seek to attract large-scale employers to move in. Other felt more support should be given to retaining existing employers (egg textiles, farmers) and helping them take on additional staff.

Again it was agreed that a skilled workforce along with housing, broadband and other services were required to attract new businesses and to retain those already here.

“What provision can be made to improve the conditions and salaries for the care sector to work in the area with an ageing population – can we train nurses locally (we used to do this, now it’s in Edinburgh and beyond)?”

Denholm Participant

Wages and Cost of Living (15): There was strong support for action to address the low-wage economy that currently dominates. There was a suggestion that tourism and care services needed to be seen as valuable business sectors, which could be improved with more local training. Action was also requested to reduce the relatively high cost of rural living. Transport and energy costs needed to be reduced.

“Low wages and high cost of living – make our cost of living cheaper. Look at workable system for solar PV on houses to reduce cost of living as locals spend huge amounts on fuel.”

Eyemouth Participant

Young people might be able to benefit more from volunteering or work experience opportunities if they had better access to transport

“Holiday care for nursery/school pupils to free up workforce – need holiday clubs, after school clubs and more nursery places, is this in you remit?”

Eyemouth Participant

Child Care (3): It was suggested that the provision of nursery hours is potentially allowing mothers to return to work (at least part-time) but there are currently few employment opportunities for such people. If more holiday care was available for nursery/school pupils it would also free up the workforce. It was suggested that more holiday clubs, after school clubs and more nursery places would help.

Some felt that it was not availability of training but rather a lack of opportunities for people of all ages to find work. More innovative, challenging and creative jobs are required and this needs to be supported by affordable housing, childcare, leisure activities, etc.,

3.11 BASELINE DATA

“Concerns around SBE/SSEF that there is never a benchmark to explain where we started, what we set out to do, nothing measured or discovered i.e. communications, transport, rural fuel poverty, etc., Need information – how will this be gathered?” Eyemouth Participant

Key messages:

- The need for baseline data against which to measure change was coupled to the need for research.
- Evaluation of our assets – built, natural, skills etc.,
- Progress in the past had been hampered by lack of data.

Baseline Data, Benchmarking, Research and Information (52): There was some agreement that this was an ambitious project and would only work if it was innovative and creative. There was not much hunger for more of what we had been getting in recent years.

The need for baseline data against which to measure change was mentioned by many and this was coupled to the need for research (and development based on this). Good quality data was seen as essential to inform decisions. Several people asked whether any recent analysis had been carried out.

“There’s a need for economic impact assessments, area by area.”

Stranrær Breakfast Participant

Some sort of “evaluation of assets” was suggested to include built and natural aspects. Others suggested this should include an audit of skills.

Such measures could then be used to inform decisions, and to demonstrate progress. It was felt by many that progress in the past had been hampered by lack of data. Such data needed to include social and environmental measures as well as economic ones. And the data needed to be shared so that everyone could see and reflect on it.

3.12 REGIONAL SOUTH SCOTLAND

“We need to raise the profile of the area and all it has to offer. The knock-on effect of this will lead to increase in tourism, population and new investment from business.” Stranraer Breakfast Participant

Key messages:

- The Agency would need to both unify the region, but also reflect and celebrate differences.
- There were doubts about brands – can the South have a single brand – or should sub-brands be supported?
- The need to a single Tourism body to drive tourism was voiced a number of times.
- The variety and character of the region’s towns was seen as a strength that could be better sold. Indeed it was felt by many that we had not yet managed to get the “story of the south” out there.

Regional, South Scotland (49): It was pointed out that businesses and projects regularly crossed boundaries. How would the Agency work across such lines? (into England, Lothians, Ayrshire, S Lanarkshire etc.). Borderlands Initiative was seen as helpful.

There was acceptance that there was commonality across the South, but also differences. The Agency would need to both unify the region, but also reflect and celebrate differences. Partnership was seen to be important, ideally everyone working to the same agenda.

“How will the agency help attract investment and talent to the South?”

Annan Participant

There were doubts about brands – can the South have a single brand – or should sub-brands be supported?

“Achieving parity – all areas need to have a say and input, listening matters, collaborative projects are needed across the areas.”

Eyemouth Breakfast Participant

The need to a single Tourism body to drive tourism was voiced a number of times. The variety and character of the region’s towns was seen as a strength that could be better sold. Indeed it was felt by many that we had not yet managed to get the “story of the south” out there. We were not selling ourselves and therefore were easy to ignore. Even by those who live so close by in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Carlisle, Newcastle and Belfast.

“Challenge of boundaries: some projects will have to cross borders into England or other regions of Scotland, how will this be managed?”

Denholm Participant

On the other hand, it was felt a lot of energy was wasted fighting amongst ourselves and resenting success. This negativity could be very destructive and needed to be addressed.

3.13 YOUNG PEOPLE

“It’s a credit to the area that we are producing young people who are confident enough to go out into the world. It should also be about attracting young people from other places. We have to opportunity to market our area for the way of life.” Sanquhar Participant

Key messages:

- Significant concern about the “loss” of young people from rural communities.
- More entrepreneurial support and broad-based apprenticeships (e.g. around textiles or land management) might encourage more young people to stay, but affordable housing and transport were essential to facilitate this.

Young People (47): There was much concern about the loss of young people from rural communities. It was felt by many that we should try to retain young people. Others accepted that they would tend to move away but that they could be attracted back if there were quality jobs and housing here for them. The success of UHI and the development of traditional music and culture in the North showed it was possible to make rural locations “cool”. Thought was needed as to what other facilities might keep young people in the region (4G pitches? Night clubs? Free public transport?)

“Transport challenge – government pay bus travel for OAP’s but poor people/youth have to pay. Need vocational training/ young blood particularly in agriculture. Can a travel passport be developed for young people?”

Eyemouth Participant

More entrepreneurial support and broad-based apprenticeships (egg around textiles or land management) might encourage more young people to stay, but affordable housing and transport were essential to facilitate this.

It was considered by many that the voice of the young needed to be heard more – and that the Agency should have a place on the Board for a youth representative.

Supporting mentoring between retired experienced people and younger folk was suggested as a valuable approach.

3.14 RETAIN/ATTRACT SKILLED WORKERS

“There needs to be targeted programmes to encourage homecoming of graduates, or young to stay.”

New Galloway Participant

Key messages:

- The region can offer a high-quality environment and a high degree of well-being and these should attract interest.
- More could be done to actively invite graduates back to the region
- We have not been successful in selling the quality of life that is available here.

Retaining and Attracting Young and Skilled Workers (43): It was suggested that some work is required to better understand why young people leave the region and what might encourage them to return. It was pointed out that “new” young people are as valuable as indigenous ones. The region can offer a high-quality environment and a high degree of well-being and these should attract interest.

Having more vocational training and apprenticeships would help as would better infrastructure and a more vibrant economy.

“Need to go to Edinburgh to attract specialist skilled graduates which means moving business to Edinburgh in order to expand-technology business.”

West Linton Participant

It was suggested that more could be done to actively invite graduates back to the region to share their experience. Traditional sectors will need fewer people to keep them going, but the “adding-value” sector will require high-tech posts. It was pointed out that Edinburgh is thriving. Could some workers be attracted south to enjoy the peace, space and environment we take for granted? “Same work but better environment”.

It was suggested by several participants that we have not been successful in selling the quality of life that is available here.

3.15 EDUCATION

“There needs to be an effective alignment between business and education.”

Galashiels Participant

Key messages:

- There was a feeling that schools were not doing enough to enthuse young people about the opportunities offered by the rural economy. It was also felt that more could be done to stimulate interest in entrepreneurship.

Education (41): There was some concern at the apparent reduction in breadth of the curriculum. There were questions about Research and Development, and how local business could be helped to innovate. Links to colleges and universities could be valuable (Melrose Rugby – Heriot Watt was cited as a good example). There was a feeling that schools were not doing enough to enthuse young people about the opportunities offered by the rural economy. It was also felt that more could be done to stimulate interest in entrepreneurship.

“Research and Development is needed – and partnerships with Further Education. Will there be access to Research and Development?”

Castle Douglas Breakfast Participant

3.16 PUBLIC TRANSPORT

“Local training, university courses and opportunities in new tech, particularly in smaller communities, are hampered by poor transport.”

Lockerbie Participant

Key messages:

- Transport systems are not adequate as services don’t align.
- The particular needs of the young were highlighted and contrasted with the elderly who had free passes.

“Transport systems are not adequate as services don’t align. Lots of great schemes for community transport, this could be developed further through councils and bus companies.”

Dumfries Breakfast Participant

Public Transport (41): There were a number of calls for improved public transport (more services, more integrated) to reduce need for car ownership and to improve access to work, training, public services, towns etc. There was also an acceptance that current demand is not high enough to sustain many services. Making use more attractive (egg cheaper or free) and easier to access (see carpark idea above) might help increase usage. The particular needs of the young were highlighted and contrasted with the elderly who had free passes. How could they be expected to get to college, work experience or apprenticeships if there was no transport?

On transport there were a number of ideas – such as car parking near to bus-stops to facilitate access to public transport; development of electric vehicles; improvement of trunk roads (especially better east-west routes but also better general maintenance), extension of the railway; public transport, links to sea and airports. The potential of the Waverly railway to carry freight out of the Borders was popular.

3.17 PEOPLE (QUALITY OF LIFE, LEISURE, HOUSING, RETIRED AS ASSETS, CARING FOR ELDERLY)

“How can we grow the pool of people who want to live and work in the region (money goes to young people, we need to train 50 and 60 year olds)?”

Hawick Participant

Key messages:

- There was broad agreement that we needed more affordable housing.
- More could be done to release land for development and some felt planning restrictions were too tight.
- Experienced skilled people could be encouraged to share their skills with younger folk.
- More could be done to acknowledge quality of life
- We have good schools, good services, a fantastic safe environment. More people would want to live and work here if they knew what it was like

“The construction industry: need to manage the supply train properly through providing local processing plants, training; servicing the housing providers etc.”

Selkirk Participant

“The obstacles here to building affordable housing are: excessive flood plain restrictions, existing land restrictions, funding restrictions. Landowners should not be able to sit unproductively on disused land.”

Langholm Breakfast Participant

Housing (10): There was broad agreement that we needed more affordable housing, at least in part because local wages tended to be low making property relatively expensive, especially for young people. Rural property is attractive to retired people which pushes-up prices.

“There is a lack of affordable accommodation particularly for young people.”

Castle Douglas Breakfast Participant

It was felt that more could be done to release land for development and some felt planning restrictions were too tight. Others felt that development needed to be “appropriate” so that it doesn’t damage the environment.

“This is a big opportunity, but a challenging task. Nice to be able to help shape rather than being presented with the finished product. All needs to connect up: for example digital connections need to assist with the tele-care and tele-health initiatives.”

Selkirk Participant

Caring for Elderly (8): The demand for care services is clearly growing but is currently hampered by low-wages. Demographic change will generate demand for a range of services and training will be needed to enable these to be met. On-line services will also be increasingly important. Are there opportunities here for new enterprises and people with appropriate training?

Retired as Assets (8): Retired people can be seen as a potential burden but also as a resource of skills and experience. Older people could be offered retraining to allow them to remain productive. Experienced skilled people could be encouraged to share their skills with younger folk. There is a growing interest in ongoing education such as U3A etc.,

Quality of life (15): Various points were made here about how poor we were at telling the outside World about how good quality of life here was. We have good schools, good services, a fantastic safe environment. More people would want to live and work here if they knew what it was like. Whose job is it to promote what we have?

3.18 ECONOMY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY

“New Agency needs to be able to pull together all public sector services to understand that all are part of economic development in the south of Scotland including: planning, building control, food hygiene/standards and tourism”

Kelso Participant

Key messages:

- There is a call for an agreed strategy for economic development that considers the strengths and weaknesses of each
- Ensure alignment between the Agency, Scottish Enterprise, Business Gateway and the Local Authorities
- It was not just about economics; social and environmental impacts also needed to be accounted for.

Economy and Economic Development (38): There is some overlap here with the section on business above. There is a call for an agreed strategy for economic development that considers the strengths and weaknesses of each area (egg Borders can benefit from proximity to Edinburgh- whereas D&G is more remote).

The need to ensure alignment between the Agency, Scottish Enterprise, Business Gateway and the Local Authorities was high-lighted. How will economic development be defined? What baseline is used? It was not just about economics; social and environmental impacts also needed to be accounted for. How do we measure such changes?

How do we maximise benefits to local people rather than remote shareholders? Urgent need to address the prevalent low-wage economy. It was felt that lessons could be learned from the HIE experience.

There were questions about how the Agency would be staffed and how it would work at a local level with businesses and communities. Also (as mentioned above) how it would ensure other key partners worked to support the strategy.

The importance of the land management sector was pointed out. Farming, forestry and fishing (primary production) were a major part of the rural economy and there was potential for the sector to deliver more.

“Would like to see flexibility from the new agency -we are too stringent with what we want from businesses before we can give them help, if they don’t tick all the boxes, they don’t get any. We need to move with the times. The process has to be easy, streamlined and flexible.”

Kelso Participant

Circular Economy (1): How can we use circular economy and decarbonisation to our advantage?

3.19 GOVERNMENT, POLICY & LOCAL AUTHORITIES

“Will there be any sort of guarantee that any investment/growth in the area will not be moved elsewhere? Will the agency have political support in 20 years’ time?”

Annan Participant

Key messages:

- How (would) the Agency deliver a strategy amongst several other approved strategies – which would take precedence?

“Does the new agency recognise that national strategic priorities don’t always match with local priorities?”

Castle Douglas Participant

“Role for partnership to create cohesion of initiatives – too much duplication, no central node, need to sort out who does what and needs have to be articulated.”

Denholm Participant

Points related to Government, Policies and Strategies (24) and Links to Neighbouring Authorities (9): There were many questions about how the Agency would work with Government and neighbouring Authorities which are covered above. There were a number of points about how the Agency would deliver a strategy amongst several other approved strategies – which would take precedence? How would this be managed?

3.20 REGIONAL DIFFERENCES/COMMONALITIES

REGIONAL AND LOCAL TOP 3’S

This section examines popular topics at each meeting to try to draw out local and regional differences and commonalities.

Generally, there was consensus across the whole of the south regarding the new agency, business, skills and training, baseline data, broadband, infrastructure, community, transport and funding. However, by drilling down into the data, some regional and local themes begin to appear.

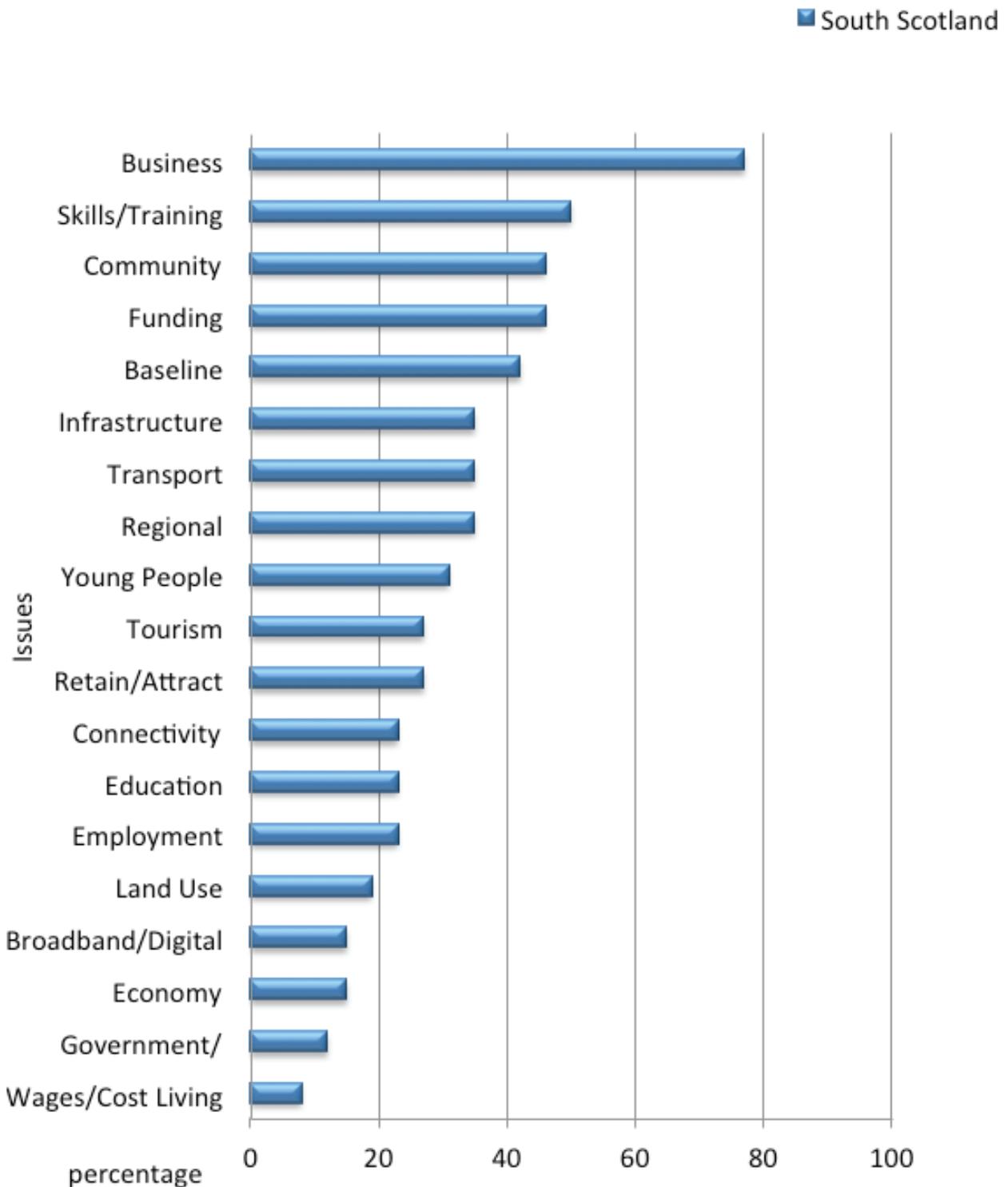
We took the top three most popular topics for each event and converted them to an average across the 26 events (i.e. if issue A was mentioned at ten events it averaged $10/26 = 38.5\%$). Issues were then ranked accordingly. NB the limit of three issues was used because for most events only 3 or 4 issues got more than a handful of comments.

To compare between Borders and D&G the totals were grouped and averaged separately; likewise to compare between towns, coast and rural.

Please note: As comments and questions regarding SoSEP and the New Agency were very popular discussion threads (accounting for 22% of all comments) these have not been included in the following regional and local data.

3.20.1 SOUTH SCOTLAND HOT TOPICS

The top three discussion threads from all 26 meetings provided the following South Scotland hot topics. The following chart shows the popularity of the various issues.



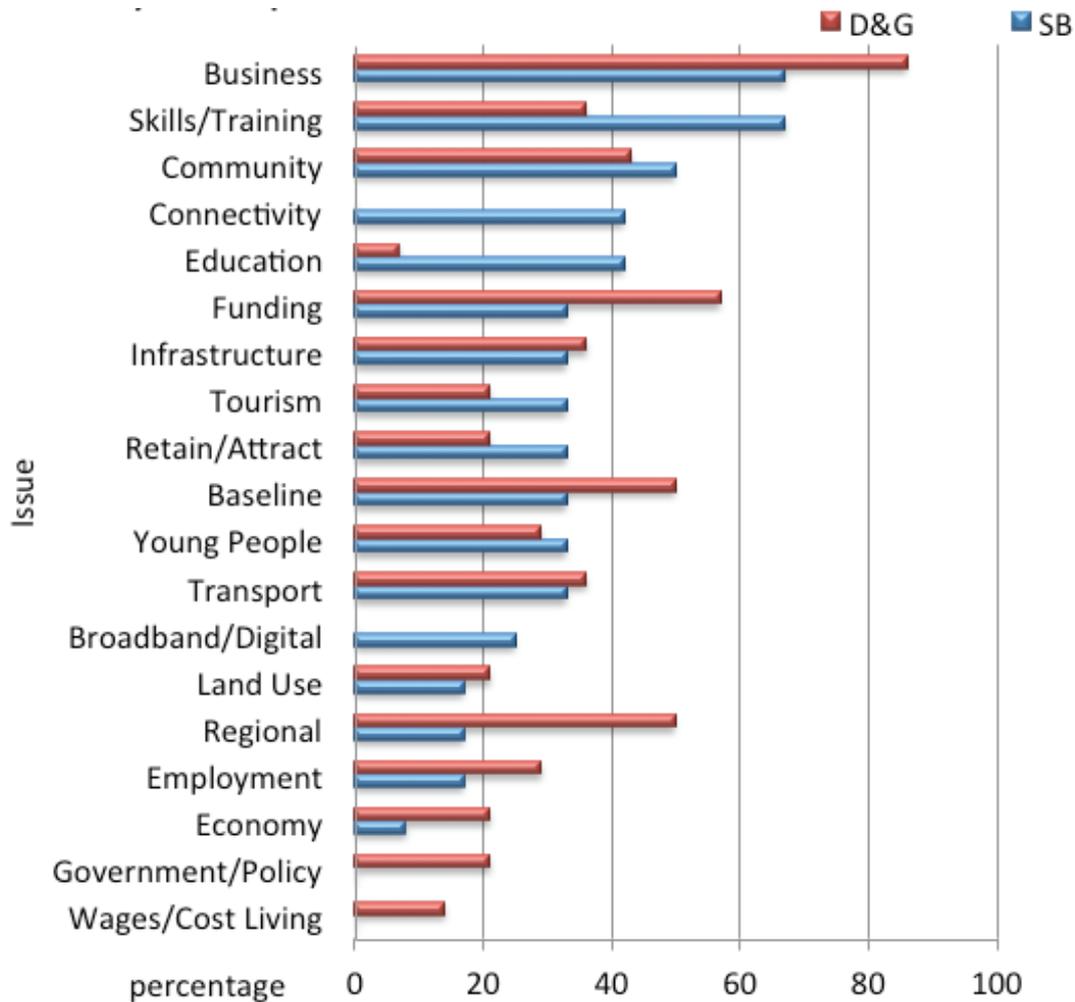
3.20.2 REGIONAL HOT TOPICS – SCOTTISH BORDERS AND DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY

All 53 topics were discussed at the 26 consultation events. The following data has been compiled by comparing the top three discussion threads at meetings in Scottish Borders with those in Dumfries and Galloway to compare priorities. It should be noted that an apparent lack of interest in a topic does not mean it was not raised, but rather that it was not in the top three topics discussed.

Both regions considered Business, Young People, Transport, Land Use and Infrastructure almost equally. In Scottish Borders Skills and Training, Tourism and Retain/Attract Young and Skilled were slightly more important to participants than to Dumfries and Galloway counterparts. Conversely Funding, Baseline Data and Regional Issues were more topical in D&G. The real differences regionally were: Education, Broadband/Digital and Connectivity scored high with SB participants but barely reached the top 3 in D&G, whereas Government/Policy, Wages, and Economy/Economic Development were high on the Dumfries and Galloway participants' priority list.

See chart: Priority Comparison SB and D&G – please note: topics that have only one colour mean that the topic didn't appear in the top three for the region that is blank.

CHART: Priority Comparison - Scottish Borders and Dumfries and Galloway



3.20.3 LOCAL HOT TOPICS -TOWNS, COASTAL AND RURAL

To look for any differences on a more local level the consultation venues were split geographically into 'rural', 'coastal' and 'towns' as follows:

Towns: Dumfries, Galashiels, Hawick and Stranrær.

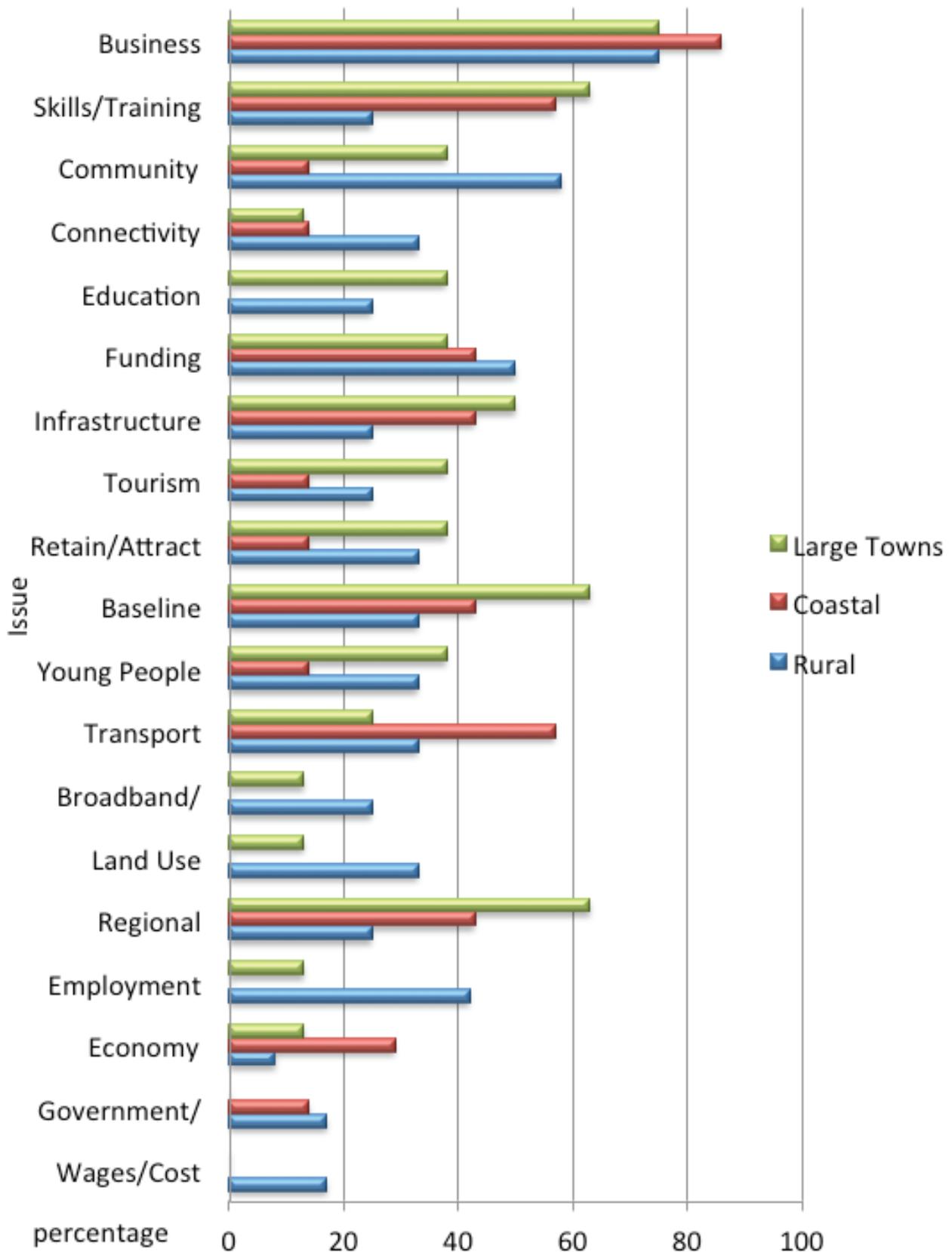
Coastal: Annan, Eyemouth, Gatehouse of Fleet, Stranrær (Castle Douglas evening meeting was also included in this category as participants were transferred from cancelled Kirkcudbright meeting to this venue).

Rural: Castle Douglas, Denholm, Kelso, Langholm, Lockerbie, Moffat, New Galloway, Newcastleton, Newton Stewart, Sanquhar, Selkirk and West Linton.

Popular discussions across all locations were Business and Funding. Rural communities prioritised Community, Connectivity, Broadband/Digital, Wages/Cost of Living, Employment and Land Use.

Coastal communities concentrated more on Government/Policy, Economy/Economic Development and Transport. Town dwellers and coastal residents appeared to be almost equally concerned by Baseline Data, Regional South Scotland, Infrastructure and Skills/Training. From this data, Retain/Attract Young/Skilled, Young People, Education and Tourism were not so topical with coastal communities.

CHART: Priority Comparison - Large Towns, Coast and Rural



SECTION 4

COMPILATION OF KEY MESSAGES AND IDEAS FOR SOUTH SCOTLAND

4.1 KEY MESSAGES

Agency

- There was a call for the new body to work closely with the full range of other organisations working in the region.
- This breadth of potential “partners” was balanced by the view that the Agency would need to prioritise. It could not work with everyone on every issue.
- A key request was for the Agency to listen and then make decisions and work in ways that clearly relate to agreed priorities using mechanisms that are open and transparent and accountable
- There were particular calls for the third sector to be included in the remit of the Agency. Social enterprise, volunteer groups, co-ops etc. often played a vital role in supporting rural economies.
- There were a lot of questions about who would make decisions about priorities for SoSEP and the Agency. Who would the Agency report to?
- What power will the Agency have to influence other funding streams?
- There was strong support for the Agency to have a local presence.
- It was pointed out that HIE had been operating with a social remit for many years, and that it would take time for South Scotland to “catch-up”. How will a course be set and then stuck-to in such choppy political waters?
- Finally, what does success look like in 10, 15 or 20 years? How will the Agency report on its work and demonstrate progress? Agency may need new powers to over-rule some restrictive practices

Business

- Lack of premises preventing business growth
- Micro and small business seen as vital
- Well paid, quality jobs and creative industries are needed
- Need to integrate advice, funding and training for businesses
- Attracting new business is a major requirement

- Assistance with local procurement to ensure money stays in the local economy
- Teaching entrepreneurial skills to students could increase future business opportunities
- Generating income schemes for community development
- The value of the culture, arts and creative sector to the local economy was stressed by many

Community

- Help is needed with skills training, capacity building and confidence building in remote communities to help overcome some of the issues they face as a result of being isolated from service provision.
- Could (the Agency) help raise capacity, provide training and actively encourage and facilitate collaborative community ownership
- It is recognised that this is a slow process and needs a long-term approach

Land Use

- We need to adapt to the changing economic climate so that more value is added to what we produce..
- There needed to be more advice available to guide business decisions
- Concern that the current growth in forestry was not benefiting local people, with few jobs created, decline in landscape value and negative impacts on roads.
- Land was seen to be a significant asset to South Scotland and one we needed to make more sensible use of.

Funding

- There was much interest in the £10M and how this could be accessed.
- A more targeted and competitive approach would be needed, probably bringing other funding streams to bear in a coordinated way.
- The need to measure and demonstrate the benefit(s) of the funding was stressed.

Skills and Training

- Improving the skills of the local workforce would lead to higher quality better paid jobs.
- People too often lacked “core” skills and that more effort was needed to address this.
- Closer dialogue between businesses and colleges might help.

Broadband, Mobile, Connectivity

- The importance of good “superfast” broadband (and mobile phone coverage) was raised over and over again

Infrastructure

- Better roads, enhanced railway and suitable businesses premises were called for to make access to markets easier.
- The Agency would (need to) work with organisations with responsibility for infrastructure

Tourism, Culture and Festivals

- There was broad support for the idea that tourism was a key sector of the local economy and that it was not currently working as well as it could.
- Better marketing, branding and signage were all called-for
- Arts are seen as a vital part of the economy and one that has potential to grow
- Need to develop ways of adding value to these assets in ways that are sustainable.

Employment, Wages, Cost of Living & Childcare

- The shortage of quality well-paid jobs was widely acknowledged as something which needed to be addressed through better training and education.
- Action was also requested to reduce the relatively high cost of rural living.
- If more holiday care was available for nursery/school pupils it would also free up the workforce

Baseline Data

- The need for baseline data against which to measure change was coupled to the need for research.
- Evaluation of assets – built and natural
- Progress in the past had been hampered by lack of data.

Regional south Scotland

- The Agency would need to both unify the region, but also reflect and celebrate differences.
- There were doubts about brands – can the South have a single brand – or should sub-brands be supported?
- The need to a single Tourism body to drive tourism was voiced a number of times.
- The variety and character of the region’s towns was seen as a strength that could be better sold. Indeed it was felt by many that we had not yet managed to get the “story of the south” out there.

Young People

- Significant concern about the “loss” of young people from rural communities.
- More entrepreneurial support and broad-based apprenticeships (egg around textiles or land management) might encourage more young people to stay, but affordable housing and transport were essential to facilitate this.

Retain/Attract Skilled Workers

- The region can offer a high-quality environment and a high degree of well-being and these should attract interest.
- More could be done to actively invite graduates back to the region
- We have not been successful in selling the quality of life that is available here.

Education

- There was a feeling that schools were not doing enough to enthuse young people about the opportunities offered by the rural economy. It was also felt that more could be done to stimulate interest in entrepreneurship.

Public Transport

- Transport systems are not adequate as services don't align.
- The particular needs of the young were highlighted and contrasted with the elderly who had free passes.

Economy/Economic Development

- There is a call for an agreed strategy for economic development that considers the strengths and weaknesses of each
- Ensure alignment between the Agency, Scottish Enterprise, Business Gateway and the Local Authorities
- It was not just about economics; social and environmental impacts also needed to be accounted for.

Government/Policy

- How (would) the Agency deliver a strategy amongst several other approved strategies – which would take precedence?

4.2 IDEAS

Interesting ideas taken from the 26 consultation events across south Scotland have been listed below.

“We want to bring community, social and business enterprise all together in one place to enable collaboration and co-production between the sectors - a one-stop-shop for support and advice.”

Moffat Participant

“Need an entrepreneurial map of Scotland, nothing down here though Tweed Horizons and Ettrick Riverside are ideally suited to be set up as incubator units. We need to create a hub for entrepreneurs, not just accommodation so people can access each other and services – this is a real challenge at present.”

Kelso Participant

“Lots of little, diverse communities: we need a structure to be able to operate as a whole whilst celebrating individuality. This requires continuous engagement, collaboration, structure and network to communicate. Don’t knit together, celebrate difference.”

Hawick Participant

“Issue is not availability of training; it’s having opportunities for people of all ages (many people 45+ unemployed) to find work. We need to generate innovative, challenging and creative jobs and industries for the talent here and look at the whole picture (affordable housing, childcare, leisure activities, etc.) to keep people in the area.”

Hawick Participant

“Training and apprenticeships: apprentices start out in Galashiels and have to go to Berwick (cross border). Can you challenge/persuade governments to allow the money to follow the trainee rather than the administrative boundary?”

Kelso Participant

“Digital – patchy broadband provision and a real lack of communication about where it’s available, how people get it, etc., too many bits of conflicting information and constant change in goalposts. Need information in one place from all providers, schemes, etc., so people can access it.”

Kelso Participant

“A railway is crucial to industry (the focus has been on passengers) i.e. a line from Kielder to Hawick (with a Borders Rail link going through Hawick to Carlisle) would allow local timber processing in Hawick and add value to our exports. We need to look at what we can grow here and make products from these. We can’t think in the short term like government, we need a vision and plan for 40 years plus.”

Hawick Participant

“We need to raise the profile of the area and all it has to offer. The knock-on effect of this will lead to increase in tourism, population and new investment from business.”

Stranraer Breakfast Participant

“The increase in nursery hours is freeing up mothers but no employment opportunities for mothers returning to workforce which is a new sector – can returning mothers be linked to jobs and employers?”

Eyemouth Participant

“Develop meaningful employment by supporting smaller businesses. Economic development focuses on big business potential, need to enhance opportunities for: micro business, community, digital, energy, arts, crafts, connectivity.”

Eyemouth Participant

“The South of Scotland is not an attractive place for 21-28 years to live. The facilities here do not match those of the central belt. We need to address their life outside of work too.”

Galashiels Breakfast Participant

“Role of Heriot Watt and the gap that graduates have nowhere to go afterwards. We need buy in from Heriot Watt to set things up for small business opportunities and routes to further education.”

Kelso Participant

“Need to make South of Scotland “cool” as per the lessons learnt from the Highlands and Islands. Creating cultural, music and art in Highlands and Islands has meant it’s a cool place to go to University – need to do the same for South of Scotland.”

Galashiels Breakfast Participant

“Transport links don’t work and nowhere to leave car for rural users of bus transport. We need car parking spaces on rural bus routes. Lots of old industrial properties – can these be converted to park and ride for rural bus routes?”

Eyemouth Participant

“Transport systems are not adequate as services don’t align. Lots of great schemes for community transport, this could be developed further through councils and bus companies.”

Dumfries Breakfast Participant

“Modern Apprentices/travel costs – young people are classed as adults so cannot access benefits to cover travel costs. There is a big commitment from businesses to support this aspect.”

Dumfries Breakfast Participant

“SoSEP needs to be able to pull together all public sector services together to understand that all are part of economic development in the south of Scotland including: planning, building control, food hygiene/standards and tourism.”

Kelso Participant

SECTION 2

APPENDICES

5.1 TABLE: Attendance and Comments by Location

DATE & TIME	VENUE	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	NUMBER OF COMMENTS
16 April pm	Denholm	20	44
17 April am	Hawick	25	24
17 Apr pm	New Galloway	16	32
18 Apr am	Stranraer	13	29
18 April pm	Dumfries	16	18
19 April am	Castle Douglas	23	28
24 April am	Dumfries Breakfast	43	46
26 Apr pm	Eyemouth	28	32
27 April am	Eyemouth Breakfast	20	29
30 April pm	Moffat	13	23
1 May pm	Sanquhar	25	33
2 May pm	West Linton	12	39
9 May pm	Peebles	19	27
10 May pm	Galashiels	20	33
11 May am	Galashiels Breakfast	29	39
14 May pm	Stranraer	16	25
15 May pm	Lockerbie	14	18
16 May pm	Newton Stewart/Creetown	22	32
21 May pm	Gatehouse	22	23
22 May pm	Newcastleton	28	44
23 May pm	Kelso	23	29
25 May am	Langholm breakfast	21	21
30 May pm	Castle Douglas	22	33
31 May pm	Hawick	13	29
5 June pm	Annan	11	20
7 June pm	Selkirk	22	31
19 x pm, 7 x am	26 (3 cancelled)	536	781

5.2 TABLE: Types of Attendee and Groups - All Meetings

TYPE	NUMBER	TYPE	NUMBER
Arts/Culture	14	Housing	7
Business	141	Membership Organisation	4
Business Gateway	6	NGO	7
Charity	9	Parish Council	1
Community	30	Personal	108
Community Company	2	Private Sector	2
Community Council	15	Public Affairs	2
Community Enterprise	3	Public Sector	2
Community Org	13	Renewables	3
Community Trust	6	Rural Action	2
Economy/Economic Development	6	Scottish Enterprise	12
Education	10	Skills Development	5
Environment	7	Social Enterprise	3
Farming	14	Social Justice	1
Forestry	6	SoSEP Board	8
Government	47	Tourism	16
Local Councillor	15	Trust	7
Health Care	2	Total	536

INDIVIDUAL	GOVERNMENT AND AGENCIES	COMMUNITY	BUSINESS/ CHARITY/TRUST/ MEMBER ORG/ NGO/TOURISM/ ARTS/SOCIAL ENT	OTHER = ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION, ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH, HOUSING, RENEWABLES, SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
108	6	30	141	6
	47	2	9	10
	15	15	4	7
	12	3	7	14
	8	13	7	6
		6	14	2
			16	7
			3	1
				2
				2
				2
				3
				2
				5
				1
108/20%	88/16%	69/13%	201/38%	70/13%
Total				536

5.3 ALL CONSULTATION COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS BY LOCATION

Annan

A concern that politicians may want to rein in creativity / innovation etc. due to political differences

Once you're established, what sort of influence are you going to have with government to hold to account other public bodies? – I.e. Scottish Water who have deterred business growth locally due to infrastructure

What are the plans to ensure that the “youth” voice is built into the development of the plans for the agency?

The logistics of travelling from one end of the region to the other are horrendous – What about access to the SoSEP? Where / how will business owners access the new agency?

Are there likely to be locality managers to ensure that staff has an understanding of local knowledge?

The word “enterprise” has negative connotations, prefer “economic development”
How will the agency help attract investment and talent to the South?

Thinking about housing – there is a need for the development of affordable housing
We understand you have partners at the moment but how will the agency intersect with agencies such as Utility agencies (SEPA etc.)?

What support mechanisms will be available to the third sector?

Will there be any sort of guarantee that any investment/growth in the area will not subsequently be moved elsewhere? Will the agency have political support in 20 years' time?

Will specific focus be given to micro-businesses? And at a local level?

Ensure less bureaucracy, remove the clutter, a one stop shop with a business focus, and make an agency that can work across agencies

Remember we have a diverse economy; the agency needs to understand the available resources

Needs to be responsive at a local level using a shared intelligence

The new agency should be locally accountable both with the people who work for it and for the way it can be approached

Support small and micro businesses by cutting red tape

You need to think outside the box. If the new agency is about actual inclusive opportunities for businesses in the South then it needs to remember the eclectic mix of businesses

We need to stop selling ourselves short just because we're in D&G

Is there any sort of assurance to the people from the agency that you won't spend 65% on consultants coming to tell us what to do?

Castle Douglas Breakfast

Community Ownership – how can local people have meaningful ownership of energy production in the face of international companies?

What is the economy here and across the South of Scotland? Is there an ambition to not just provide a low-wage economy?

The concern is that while there is a perception of small businesses as embodying entrepreneurship, they may actually just be 'desperate'. There is nothing else for them to do and no other way of living.

[In response to Russell's car analogy, describing what SOSEP is setting out to do]. This is well and good, but we need to have a clear idea what the tool kit is. Can we use it? What is the joined-up thinking?

Your suggested involvement with [building] planning is worrying. Where is the agency based?

Will that 'car' be powered by 'electricity', rather than 'petrol'? [Russell's answer was 'money'] Infrastructure is vital when you want to inaugurate conversation.

Fundamental to the South of Scotland are roads and connectivity.

In connectivity and tourism – how easy is it to use the roads.

Research and development is needed – and partnerships with Further Education. Will there be access to Research and Development?

A Company has problems around Seasonal Operation....How can it access accommodation?

How can it access training?

What is the strategy for growing business?

How will it develop a cohesive voice from east to west?

How, in this context, will regional 'brands' persist?

Do we need a picture of the South of Scotland?

Accessing advice is Key

How and where will SoSEP be accessed?

What Agencies will be available and how will they be accessed?

How do you form together such a disparate group of people? A designer would have a hard job creating a sensible logo for the entity.

Creating fair pay and sustainable jobs

How do we create sustainable, linked transport?

How do we present the distinctiveness of the cultural heritage?

How can the Economic Partnership break the cycle of unfair / sub-minimum wages in the area?

Can this Agency fill the gap left by the loss of European funding – for example that which specifically gives support for the coasts?

Will the agency help communities come together to improve training and skill sets?
What will the strategy be for growing business?

How will you establish a cohesive voice from west to east?

Are the regional brands going to exist? How will they not be lost?

Will you be building a picture of occupations?

How to access advice?

How to access funding agencies?

How to focus such a widespread group?

There is a persistence of complications around seasonal staff availability and transport issues

There is a lack of affordable accommodation particularly for young people

We need to grow our own managers and leaders

There is an undersupply of lecturing capacity at colleges

It is strange to join the Borders and Dumfries and Galloway. The Borders are now in the commuter belt for Edinburgh and have the flow of economic benefit from that.

Work experience/volunteering are not an option for young people due to lack of transport.

There is support for Agriculture, Forestry and Land management - it's not true there isn't support for them - see the Rural leadership programme and in the Regional Forest Industry group.

Castle Douglas

Agency needs to engage with land management bodies. Why is the Forestry Commission not represented on the board?

Local companies struggle to get local contracts. Bigger companies generally clean up.

How will SOSEP interface with Scottish Enterprise?

The government has ambitious renewable energy targets. Will the new group partner/help renewable development, including training in renewable technologies?

Will the new agency support existing businesses, not just new or innovative ones?

Will the new agency help grow existing businesses?

Will the new agency support retail, in the past there has been no help for retail?

Will the new agency help retailers work together?

Who will decide who gets the money?

Have SOSEP carried out a SWOT analysis of the region, and does the agency recognise the value of the environment?

Will the new agency recognise that many services are delivered by volunteers and will they support this work?

Does the new agency recognise that national strategic priorities don't always match with local priorities?

How can the agency help local people get more involved in local businesses so we have more control over business decisions?

How can local people have an input with regards to investment by the agency?

How will the agency guard against positive actions having mirrored negative impacts?

Will the agency improve infrastructure such as broadband, tourist facilities?

What help will there be with regards to business investment?

Will the agency support the environment and do so by working with existing bodies?

This is a rural economy that needs protecting from external influences, for example Brexit, how will this happen?

Previous business support was inflexible and not effective or good value for many businesses
Freestanding communities offer some down side and some opportunities

Local Initiatives need special support, especially in regards to fund raising

Transferrable skills are important and these need to be encouraged

Develop local procurement

Use money better than it has been in the past

Develop local businesses and create a legacy

The area has low wages and we need to develop skills, help young people stay in the area

The agency needs to encourage cross sector cooperation

The agency needs to support initiatives long-term to enable growth and allow projects to become fully established and therefore sustainable

After Foot and Mouth there was help, but the bureaucracy was such that for many it wasn't worth the effort. Small businesses were talked down and made to feel insignificant.

Make sure offices are spread across the region and they are accessible, not some large office in Dumfries

Provide support in areas such as fund-raising

Support culture and creativity, help build confidence, build stronger communities

Denholm

What kind of ideas has already been given?

What happens after EA is set up?

Assess value of existing assets - can funds be used to assess value of built and natural heritage, dark sky potential, etc.

Challenge of boundaries: some projects will have to cross borders into England or other regions of Scotland, how will this be managed?

We are forgotten in south Scotland, initiatives stop just below Edinburgh.

We need to secure significant funding - £10M needs to be increased to make a real difference.

Where are you on extending the railway?

Tourism supports a whole host of other industries – need better links (buses etc.) – with a small amount of investment we could overcome functional challenges.

Tourism needs its own division – major industry.

Need a higher international profile: tourism is a big part of our economy (D&G have twice as many tourists) we need to increase significantly.

Will part of the budget be used for tourism?

Tourism – no real infrastructure for high end tourism, can this be developed?

Are you having discussions with higher education to increase skills in the area and keep people here rather than going out of the area to study?

Role for partnership to create cohesion of initiatives – too much duplication, no central node, need to sort out who does what and needs have to be articulated.

What is the range of powers EA could have e.g. planning?

Will public and private sectors have to compete for funds and support?

How accessible will funding be? – need a simple process

Will there be accessibility of funds for small/community businesses? – Small business might lose out

What is going to be done to encourage new enterprise/initiatives/diversity/new entrants into farming?

Education- sustainability of local colleges, limited courses, people leaving area – any plans to improve on this?

Regional Tourism Agency - can seed funding be given to bring tourism businesses into a local/regional forum – change in structure of VS has left a gap?

What provision can be made to improve the conditions and salaries for the care sector to work in the area with an ageing population – can we train nurses locally (we used to do this, now it's in Edinburgh and beyond)?

How do we help our young people get more skills?

What is sustainability of colleges given small scale and limited course choice?

How do we attract new sectors (creative/scientific) to SOS?

Are you having discussions with higher education to increase skills in the area to stop people leaving?

Transport infrastructure needs to be improved to make opportunities viable – time tables don't match (railway/bus)/links not available/ heavy reliance on personal transport.

Improvement and investment needs to be made in education from early level (primary) to increase skills for population going forward.

Need new manufacturing or revitalise those already present – we used to be world leaders in knitwear.

Preserve the unique Borderlands to encourage people back (tourism).

We have to raise image of Borders/create a favourable image to attract people.

National park status.

Skills retention and training of young people

Need capital funding for civic sculpture on physical borders (like kelpies) to attract people in and widen our signage/promotion to A1, ferry ports, etc.

Difficult to find and keep skilled people in the area

Value chain - add value to our farming/forestry products i.e. timber is shipped out whole

Improve public infrastructure including transport, broadband

Targeted programme to encourage homecoming of graduates

Integrated approach - work with the private sector to link colleges to business/work force

Danger of current, big strategic players (SE/VS) dictating structures that they currently advocate

Training – issues around finding a skilled workforce, trainees have to go to Edinburgh (no reciprocal arrangement with England), no transport links

Greater improvement for better technology, whole area needs to be upgraded. Improvements needed from primary to college level

Support existing businesses /equal business rates for all

Look at what we have that is free – scenery, walking, etc.

Dumfries Breakfast

Is the £10M to spend or has it been committed?

Are you targeting farming/land management groups – is this reflected in the board?

What plans do you have for the economically excluded – how will you involve them?

We must have diversity in business models – need to include workers cooperatives, community so all people can be involved and looked after.

Environment is key – how will you address environmental issues?

What will the role of Scottish Enterprise be in this new landscape?

You need to consult with businesses already linked to Scottish Enterprise.

Arts in south Scotland – will SoSEP support the arts and will Creative Scotland still be involved?

Interface grant scheme – businesses don't meet the criteria for the grant. Could there be a fund from the £10M for this?

Modern Apprentices/travel costs – young people are classed as adults so cannot access benefits to cover travel costs. There is a big commitment from businesses to support this aspect.

Three regional economic agencies now in play. What does this mean for macro-economic planning?

We need to influence government to take note of the south in all government decisions

What are the processes/criteria to access the £10M fund?

We need to develop a different narrative and voice for the south to secure investment – how do you see this process working?

How do we align local and national economic strategy?

How do we retain people, especially skilled young people?

How do we prioritise outputs/wins?

Is funding for new projects or current existing projects?

Destination development – is there an opportunity to gain a long term commitment and funding?

How would community engagement (especially young people) be incorporated into strategies moving forward?

Small businesses are willing to offer training. Can this be funded and how do we get the message out?

How do we get a more efficient transport system?

Is wind farming a sustainable and efficient way to make money – not just for communities but overall?

What will happen to funding between the agencies? Will it be fairly and transparently redistributed? Funding for HIE came from Europe – what will replace this?

How do we ensure the definition and language we use will cover all people's views? I.e. definition of infrastructure

What is the USP of the south of Scotland? What makes us unique? Is it our natural environment?

Feel we should develop sustainable environmental landscape further – many opportunities within this.

Creation of new employment opportunities, support employers and new businesses to grow.
Need good salaries, training, etc.

Importance of place/focus on sense of place.

Need to create evidence based data for the south rather than being lumped into rest of Scotland.

Marketing for these events is not great (SoSEP) – needs to be better.

Enlist young people from each region to sit on the board and hear their views.
Issue of ageing population

Transport systems are not adequate as services don't align. Lots of great schemes for community transport, this could be developed further through councils and bus companies. Renewable energy policy not adequately thought out causing detriment to countryside and landscape.

Need greater emphasis on natural and cultural assets in sustainable development to get a balance between the needs of different businesses

Need to expand educational offer including wider choice of courses/careers so range of businesses can expand

Don't have good data – economic/socio/ environmental – need this for future decision making

How much European funding does the south receive?

How will growth be defined?

Why do people leave – why do they come back? Need data

Economic growth must benefit local communities more than distant shareholders (or at least as much as).

Economic growth should be inclusive particularly to offer benefits to people traditionally economically disadvantaged who face barriers to employment.

Need to place value on nonstandard metrics of economic benefit, notably contribution to society, community and development of skills.

Why there is a gap in ideas for projects related to the land based sector when there are current developments, particularly in agriculture being worked on which with extra support could have a more strategic role and wider impact?

Re: Remit of Agency. Heartened to hear that all types of business will be supported going forward. Micro business, social enterprise and worker owned cooperatives are contributors to economic growth, social cohesion and environmental viability. With greater business support they could reach their full potential and support communities to thrive on their own terms.

Dumfries

Why was this never done before – in D and G Enterprise for instance?

Will there be a cross-over with the work of D and G Enterprise?

There's a huge additional resource in young people with additional support needs. It is untapped. Will this develop it?

How will they hear about it?

How is this being funded? Is it merely existing money redistributed or is it new money?

How is it going to be measured? Can we in the tourist trade get together to discuss needs?

I'm involved with a large-scale project to restore the historic Rosefield Mills in Dumfries? How do we approach you? Can we have a conversation?

Support for Community Ownership is a significant element in the operation of Highlands and Islands Enterprise. Will this new organisation have a similar approach to it?

There are substantial differences between areas within the South of Scotland. Will you have an over-arching audit process to avoid dominance of any one area?

There needs to be a more joined-up approach in the access to all agencies

You need to identify and implement best practice - a Can-Do approach (the example of East Kilbride's approach to minimum response times to planning enquiries was given)

You must ensure that support is fully inclusive and accessible to fully unlock potential – core fund support for additional support needs.

What is the difference between SOSEP and Borderlands?

How will SOSEP mesh with existing organisations?

Will it be staffed by local people, not central belt types?

On the Training Theme: How do we make it (training) accessible to all?

Establish businesses: How will businesses be supported both in founding and developing?

Community Ownership: Could Community ownership keep people in the region?

Eyemouth Breakfast

Farming has been mentioned, what about the fishing industry?

Is there any strategy available for transport – Reston station has been talked about for 12 years?

Are you going to have hubs? H&I have done it successfully with the hubs managing regional growth.

Education, there are no opportunities in Berwickshire for further education, will you be an advocate for education?

High levels of deprivation, there are high levels of employment but low wages or people with multiple jobs; it needs to be sustainable, better waged jobs.

Is marine tourism/ off shore wind farms/ fishing being considered? The wider marine environment is important to Eyemouth.

Brand tourism – heritage and culture stories told well.

Eyemouth B The Scottish Borders have very different communities and economies. That needs to be considered, is the identity/ brand for the SB - D&G or the whole of SoSEP

The lack of EU monies is a huge disadvantage, the H&I expanded ERDF funding A68 + A7 corridor – no real link up causing a lack of talent – it all leaves the area

Lack of tourism/ hospitality pathways

There is a desire to grow the borders – can we create opportunities for young people?

How does everyone get fair representation?

When will you be announcing the key strategies?

Is the £10M allocated ready to be accessed and how can we bid?

How can the agency attract and keep young people?

Culture and the arts economy – how can the agency support a creative economic mode?

Is there an inward investment opportunity with the A1 nearby?

Education & Skills – need further education provision and transport

Tourism opportunities

Transport is key

Modern business spaces are needed – fairly priced and available

Achieving parity – all areas need to have a say and input, listening matters, collaborative projects are needed across the areas

Developing a brand identity – South of Scotland or Borderlands or both. Need to encourage people to explore not just pass through, what about developing a coast to coast route

There is ample North - South routes, need to improve the East – West

Need investment in learning and digital skills and investment so people have an opportunity to use those skills – there is a lack of core skills.

Eyemouth

What is the geographic boundary of SoSEP?

We are stranded and neglected by both countries – are you planning to speak with northern England and Lothian?

Will you be directly engaging with young people to get their feedback?

Concerns around SBE/SSEF that there is never a benchmark to explain where we started, what we set out to do, nothing measured or discovered i.e. communications, transport, rural fuel poverty, etc., Need information – how will this be gathered?

Interested in facts, not attitudes.

Transport challenge – government pay bus travel for OAP's but poor people/youth have to pay. Need vocational training/young blood particularly in agriculture. Can a travel passport be developed for young people?

Many opportunities for young people to get involved in care in the community – need to look at this.

What staffing levels will SoSEP have, what are their backgrounds – are they all economic development or will you involve community?

How will you ensure that local authorities are supportive of the initiative – especially planning departments i.e. permitted development? Are you going to bring local authorities with you?

Do you foresee situations where you are asked to support things the government should do i.e. transport, business, etc.? Is the government going to see you do this and just not bother anymore? Don't give them an easy way out.

Massive need for training. Eyemouth has a better reputation than Berwick so children come into here. Would Borderlands link Berwickshire and Eyemouth to enhance this?

The increase in nursery hours is freeing up mothers but no employment opportunities for mothers returning to workforce which is a new sector – can return mothers be linked to jobs and employers?

Holiday care for nursery/school pupils to free up workforce – need holiday clubs, after school clubs and more nursery places, is this in your remit?

Transport links don't work. Nowhere to leave car for rural users of bus transport. We need car parking spaces on rural bus routes. Lots of old industrial properties – can these be converted to park and ride for rural bus routes?

Money usually given to industry. Will there be provision for arts and crafts development?

How will SoSEP interface with Eyemouth Regeneration Group?

Skills/vocational skills. What is the baseline and resilience at a community level? It's about communities as well as business. No links or support – we need facilitation. How will communities be supported?

Develop meaningful employment by supporting smaller businesses. Economic development focuses on big business potential, need to enhance opportunities for: micro business, community, digital, energy, arts, crafts, connectivity.

Inclusivity, connectivity, breaking down barriers – be bold!

Low wages and high cost of living – make our cost of living cheaper. Look at workable system for solar PV on houses to reduce cost of living as locals spend huge amounts on fuel.

Training opportunities – speak to Northumberland – if we can work together, training will be stronger for the area.

Community development and community capacity building is key to innovation and creativity. Investment in space for arts and crafts businesses as focus is generally on technology and industry

Borderlands – collaborate with Berwick to enhance transport and training facilities

Wind farm money goes towards solar panel provision for rural communities to reduce energy costs

Local foods festival, digital training and facilitation, skills based economy – build a traditional skills network.

Tourism training for young people – food/travel

Community buying power –oil, gas and gas infrastructure

Benchmark – what is sustainable? Employment? Energy? Digital?

Network the way SoSEP is delivered through local hubs

Lack of connectivity – issue of scale and resilience at community level

Develop an arts/ecology economy – visibility and quality

Galashiels Breakfast

The LEADER budget is very under-spent – are there any ways that you can spend it?
It is good that the Public and Private Sector are getting together and trusting each other.
Young people want to return – we need more opportunities for them.

How do we incentivise mainstream employment on a larger scale, and attract more people to the area?

Need to find a self-sustaining element that is not dependent on EU funds.

The discussions around young people should not just be about education but also about training. How do we support those that want to remain in the area, which will make a massive difference but do not want to do this with further education?

The South of Scotland is not an attractive place for 21-28 years to live. The facilities here do not match those of the central belt. We need to address their life outside of work too.

Need to make South of Scotland “cool” as per the lessons learnt from the Highlands and Islands. Creating cultural, music and art in Highlands and Islands has meant it’s a cool place to go to University – need to do the same for South of Scotland

Need to look after the young professionals, those who are no longer in education but have made the commitment to work and live in SOS. Their voice needs to be heard.

One of biggest barriers is road infrastructure- need good road connections. We don’t sell ourselves as a region; we have a good work force and need to build an infrastructure to support it.

Need to take note of the future i.e.: electric cars and lorries

Need to consider the sole trader as well. The small businesses, the middle aged men – those too busy to attend these meetings.

Excited about this new agency – need to follow HIE, learning how they developed the connection between culture and the economy. Look at the creative industries.

There is a challenge with understanding the requirements of creative agencies as there is little data collected by the nature of their size.

Business rates are a hot topic and needs to be addressed.

How do we marry the strong traditions of SOS which are sometimes inward looking with aspirations to use them more positively?

Please make it a priority not to omit the younger working group from the discussion?

Education: why is it that Forestry industry have no people in management that have come from within the Borders? Why are management not represented by local people, how can we educate so that this can change?

How do we increase the breadth and quality of employment? Need to look at those providing the education, and the salaries of those educating.

Finance: how much will it cost to effect change? Do you have the resources to facilitate that?

How will this new agency work with existing agencies? You mention added value but need to avoid overlaps and to agree the “route of travel”.

How radical can we be? I.e. looking at electric car facilities; making SOS the Scottish Centre for Mountain Biking.

How can we see that the agency is making a difference? We need some quick easy wins that can get people on side.

Don't envy the agency in finding a balance between social requirements, the economy and the enterprises.

Need to find the USP: environment, culture or traditional profile. Why this area is so special, how it should be exported.

Need to create ambassadors that can promote SOS – so that when they are elsewhere they can rave about area rather than complain. In particular looking at how this affects the young. Inclusiveness: young, elderly and those with disabilities. Remember the breadth of knowledge they have.

Inclusivity.

The branding of the Scottish Borders: need to change name. By using the abbreviated version “the Borders” we are cutting the existing budget as we are promoting the region on both sides of the Border.

Need to make more of the Borders culture. It's huge but understated, need to create a culture that in turn creates a demand from out with the region. Enhancing the social activity and infrastructure (including but not exclusively pubs and clubs). E.g. Isle of Skye and its quality of Gaelic education.

There is a limited choice in higher value employment; some leave because they can't get better pay.

Unemployed young people need a voice as they do not have confidence.

Needs to be a better road structure going East to West, not just North to South.

Want to look at rebranding us (i.e. Scottish Borders not SOS): taking in the water, rivers, tweed “the Pearls”

Don't spread ourselves too thinly by trying to do everything at once. Start with some tangible, visible things.

Carry out joint initiatives – projects working together, combining resources. Remember the electric car.

Galashiels

One of the challenges is that young people in the Borders are going to University, mostly outside the Borders (excluding Heriot Watt). What are we going to do to entice them to return?

Education: Perhaps consider the Highland and Island Universities to spread across rural Scotland, rather than replicating them?

Hope that the Agency will be capable of giving attention to the trunk roads and the communication network

You refer to HES but not SNH – is there a reason?

In terms of delivery of skills development and given the mileage involved, what is the potential for using alternative community centres?

Melrose Rugby is initiating a partnership with Edinburgh Napier and this has opened the door between education and sport, adding value to the offering down in the Scottish Borders.

How are you going to regenerate all the high streets? The large businesses are taking the small companies business what can you do to help?

BIDS: a good example of businesses getting together with communities and looking at the town centres.

You talked about communities. Thinking about those with a higher level of deprivation and unemployment, how do you see this agency helping?

How do we bring our young people back to the Scottish Borders?

Will the agency own assets i.e. take over derelict land, old buildings etc.

Following the discussion about low wages, how can we pay the living wage? What can we do practically bearing in mind they are market driven?

How do we extend the length of stay for visitors? Suggest the joining up of the events programme as a key factor.

How can we attract the right people with the right skills for the industry we have at the moment?

How do we get appropriate business and account management support for SMES? SMES appear to be left out of the picture.

Where does Tourism fit?

Will you have flexibility in spending on the agreed priorities i.e. has funding to be spent in certain areas such as training?

Given the range of topics this evening how will you determine the focus for whatever budget you are allocated?

Is free Wi-Fi part of the discussion? Free for those who cannot afford the hardware or software.
Need more value-added operations in the Borders.

Need better roads, connection to WIFI, hub etc. The elderly need support to be digitally familiar.

Need to promote a vibrant land economy.

Require improved mobile coverage.

There is a clear request/requirement for there to be a social remit like HIE.

Require effective involvement of young people.

Require a consistency of standards of training: a national standard and the development of national professional development.

Please plant more trees.

The road infrastructure is getting a hammering.

Access to land and forests is important to tourism i.e. through mountain biking.

There needs to be an effective alignment between business and education.

Require clarity of roles between agencies. Should be business lead.

Should be building on our strengths (i.e. cycling tourism)

Need for strong digital infrastructure.

Gatehouse

How do we make it work?

There is too much paper work, how will you reduce bureaucracy

Will it be inclusive involving all sectors?

Training is important including older people who might want to re-train and

In Dumfries and Galloway we hide behind rules, will the new agency adopt a can do attitude
What is the relationship between SOSEP and the new Enterprise Body?

The old Enterprise body did not always promote the area and sometimes encouraged businesses to locate in the central belt

Local businesses struggle against a risk averse council

Funding strategy not maintained for long enough and as such initial investment ineffective
Connectivity needs improving

We need training that meets our needs, and in some cases can be provided in house in the tools and support given to businesses

We need to work from the ground up

Will the new agency support businesses that can't afford the basic infrastructure?

Small business needs help with capacity, how will the new agency do this

Will money go to large organisations and businesses?

How will the new agency help increase wage levels?

How can the National Trust get involved?

We have a voice in Dumfries and Galloway but we are not always heard

Successful businesses are short of time, will the new agency help meet this need, enabling them to access support and develop their business

Will the new agency support a fairer way into public contracts and help improve the tender processes which restrict smaller businesses, favouring large business?

Support small businesses with sustainability funding

Help small businesses fund things like energy reduction helping their sustainability

Businesses and numerous organisations don't have expertise when it comes to funding. They need help

Hawick Breakfast

You mention tackling poor productivity. What do you mean? Best use of people, make productivity our own word – make it what we want it to mean.

Forestry is a topical issue. It is swallowing up agricultural land. The perception is that this economy is not coming directly to this part of Scotland. It does not employ many locals, ruins roads and swallows up agriculture.

You mention that a high degree of graduates come back to the Borders. Is this across all age spectrums or just the retired? The perception is that graduates don't come back.

Young don't complete their degree, but return home early due to other circumstances. Need to take advantage of older generation, look at their existing talent and use these to develop things financially here.

Is it your intention that SoSEP take on responsibility for the Borderlands initiative? Will this agency become a one stop shop?

Ensure investment is spent well, if investing in buildings such as Visitor Attractions; make sure you involve businesses in the discussion not purely through Public Sector. Ensure the capital is spent on the right things, that the Business case is correct.

Would like to see advertising the local geography to its advantage. Advertise the area so that visitors do not bypass the region. Profile the area's key elements. Both tourism and business investments.

Young people are moving away. Require opportunities for graduates: vocational training (egg textiles). Looking at a University in South of Scotland; further education beyond school. Developing a skills support for local businesses and therefore keeping the young here.

Are you going to take all the comments and points that come out of this series of meetings seriously?

We will find the common themes. Are looking at providing a virtual place where discussions can keep going.

Where will the new agency be based?

How do we make the most of the investment in the region? I.e. no abattoirs, sawmills, food production or textile machinery being produced in South of Scotland.

Must focus on young people; train those who aren't skilled and lacking in motivation. Find out how we sell the South of Scotland to the younger generation. Textiles has an image based in the past, motivate them to get involved. Invite pupils to these consultation meetings. Make the SoSEP a pilot for other areas in UK.

High Schools are being engaged in large event with 250 in October. NB members of meeting prepared to facilitate at this meeting; Heart of Hawick success was contributed by pupils that brainstormed.

Will this agency provide leadership? Press have been known to set an agenda and this in turn creates a negative path.

There is a prevailing culture in the Borders which is characterised as "Aye been" it shows itself in complacency and fear of change. Good leadership in the business and public sector can change this.

Is part of your remit to offer Leadership training on: Behaviours that drive good performance, Managing performance – effective behaviours, Effective Challenge?

This is an attractive place to live, it's easy to get everywhere, and the communities have heritage, history and culture. There is much to celebrate but is very parochial. There should be the opportunity to produce links between towns, break down barriers and ensure best practice.

Need to build the skill base, create employment opportunities and higher paid jobs. Make a reduction in poverty.

Infrastructure is key: air, railway, buses and digital. This requires a major investment.

You mention that everything will be new, innovative and exciting. Does it need to be? If something is tried and tested may be it is a good way to continue. Look at the evolution of ideas – it's all about the balance.

How do we get communities to engage with this process? i.e. getting Tweeddale to work with Hawick. Communities working together not just the process. It should not be a separate process with young people; they should be part of this discussion.

Important question is how we involve growth.

Youth is the future.

Build mechanisms for local supply.

Tourism: Good quality accommodation needed

Destination Borders – marketing.

Hawick

Whilst on holiday on west coast I noted that HIE had spent an obscene amount of money, will we get the same?

What is consultation process for Borderlands? How does it fit with this process and in other areas?

Development in SB is struggling and it's slowing us down – roads and internet both poor, little mobile signal in many areas. People miss the area because of road and rail networks and we need to bring businesses and tourists in. Conversely, we don't want lots of people and traffic jams.

Not enough people to sustain bus services and no way to travel easily east to west across south Scotland.

Would like to see A7 dual carriageway through to Carlisle and an airport at Carlisle.

Better to bring teaching facilities to the Borders so young people less likely to leave.

A railway is crucial to industry (the focus has been on passengers) i.e. a line from Kielder to Hawick (with a Borders Rail link going through Hawick to Carlisle) would allow local timber processing in Hawick and add value to our exports. We need to look at what we can grow here and make products from these. We can't think in the short term like government, we need a vision and plan for 40 years plus.

We need to make the Borders economically active so we bring people back. However, appreciate there is a balance as people who don't go away can't see what we have here.

Issue is not availability of training; it's having opportunities for people of all ages (many people 45+ unemployed) to find work. We need to generate innovative, challenging and creative jobs and industries for the talent here and look at the whole picture (affordable housing, childcare, leisure activities, etc.) to keep people in the area.

We need university systems like those in place in HIE area.

What is relationship/difference between SoSEP and SoSEA? Why two titles?

Will the agency support small business if they want to stay small and stay in the area?

How can the agency support people to think of and start their own business?

How can we grow the pool of people who want to live and work in the region (money goes to young people, we need to train 50 and 60 year olds)?

How can we create the conditions for public and community engagement?

Can we learn the most effective means of communication to engage communities from HIE?

Do we know the SWOT for south of Scotland and Borderlands? Do we really know what we are good at? Do the SWOT to help shape the agency.

Micro business; does 'too many' hinder growth and employment? What opportunities do they offer to do new or innovative things?

How do we create conditions for public and community owned enterprise?

Lots of little, diverse communities. We need a structure to be able to operate as a whole whilst celebrating individuality. This requires continuous engagement, collaboration, structure and network to communicate. Don't knit together, celebrate difference.

Not all the money spent in the Borders stays in the Borders. Need to award contracts to people and businesses that live/operate in the area.

Is ownership too concentrated?

Renewable energy is a huge opportunity for community ownership and providing sustainable enterprises.

Cooperative ownership is a good way of ensuring succession and improving equality of ownership.

Local markets for as many goods as possible to keep money within communities which includes food, energy and services.

Reducing waste is key to improving standards of living in a sustainable way.

Public transport system that fits with people's work and study patterns and facilitates new work and study options is key.

Recruiting skilled people: examine breadth of training available in region; a great education system needs great teachers, what ambitions are schools instilling in young people?

Need people on the board from a cultural background as they are good at collaboration

Kelso

Resistance to new ideas. Scottish Enterprise only invested in consultations and consultants not ideas.

No 21/22 year olds being picked up in Borders – they leave. Young people not being engaged. Need more opportunities for young people: commissions, projects, creative outlets, etc., Will agency do this?

In the Highlands they have training establishments for crafts and woodwork. We need a college for young people so they don't leave the area.

Really exciting to have the opportunity to give the south of Scotland an identity and promote our distinctiveness – how will we tell that story?

Role of Heriot Watt and the gap that graduates have nowhere to go afterwards. Need buy in from Heriot Watt to set things up for small business opportunities and routes to further education.

This process goes hand in hand with Borderlands deal. Businesses don't recognise the border which is good.

Training and apprenticeships: apprentices start out in Galashiels and have to go to Berwick (cross border). Can you challenge/persuade governments to allow the money to follow the trainee rather than the administrative boundary?

Would like to see flexibility from the new agency. We are too stringent with what we want from businesses before we can give them help, if they don't tick all the boxes, they don't get any. We need to move with the times. The process has to be easy, streamlined and flexible.

Who represents arts sector in SoSEP? Who are the representatives and agencies – can't see any in the pamphlet.

This is a unique opportunity. We can do more of the same or be bold and shape the region for the future.

Opportunity to pitch south of Scotland as the home of the entrepreneur. Eco system better than anywhere else in the world. We need to raise and build perception of the south by promoting the successful businesses that are already here and let people know how good it is to set up a business in the area.

Let's use technology to bring people together.

Is there a plan for digital broadband?

Is there a process for accessing £10M?

How do we develop relationships out with south Scotland to add value?

How can we make the most of what is distinctive and unique?

Will the agency try to attract or grow businesses of scale for employment opportunities and their career structures for young people?

How will the agency ensure wide distribution of resources not just to the usual, well organised, suspects?

Will the agency upgrade or refresh old industrial estates?

How can we make the most of our distinct and unique heritage?

Youth training: build entrepreneurial community, link schools/FE with business and business requirements, highlight business opportunities to young people, influence education to business opportunities, ensure training is available locally or digitally local, consider shared dependency apprenticeships across sectors, encourage academia to collaborate and develop.

SoSEP needs to be able to pull together all public sector services together to understand that all are part of economic development in the south of Scotland including: planning, building control, food hygiene/standards and tourism.

Entrepreneurial map of Scotland, nothing down here though Tweed Horizons and Ettrick Riverside are ideally suited to be set up as incubator units. We need to create a hub for entrepreneurs, not just accommodation so people can access each other and services – this is a real challenge at present.

Digital – patchy broadband provision and a real lack of communication about where it's available, how people get it, etc., too many bits of conflicting information and constant change in goalposts. Need information in one place from all providers, schemes, etc., so people can access it.

Transport – cost and networks are a barrier to work and lifestyle.

Sustainable and vibrant communities – young people need things to do to keep them here like 4G sports pitches and night time culture

Need to look at depth and scope of educational courses.

Need creative, high tech, incubator growth hubs.

Improve east – west communications and infrastructure including road improvements, railway lines and high tech communications.

Langholm B

Some of what you say.... It feels like you're trying to plug gaps and holes. It would be better to try and get back to the first principals of what is really needed

You give the example of the Sanquhar knitting project – this is in the territory of small, quality craft funding. Business Gateway has been good in this territory. One needs to recognise the need for flexible, commercially-based enterprise support. Leader, for instance, is too bureaucratic and is not a model to follow. You need to be able to respond to circumstances and needs

The 'Borderlands' initiative is interesting. The great need is connectivity for young people. However, the basic 'capacity' of support for this is really weak. In my business [forestry] I can't recruit well, I can't get essential operators and the turnover of people is enormous. A basic foundation for employment - transport, training, building a reservoir of skills, basic infrastructure for this kind of work - is hardly there

There is no strategy for the use of derelict land. Land is one of our biggest assets and we hardly seem to know how to use it in any sensible or joined-up way.

Access: How will we make it possible for young people to work here?

There should be locally delivered training, Availing of digital technology, With a support infrastructure of accommodation and transport

How will you support creativity and tourism? We are the heart of the Borderlands. We need to: Address land ownership issues, Link up community groups and private business, Ensure more joined-up marketing

How will we work effectively across the Borders (Borders/ Cumbria and Northumbria)? The way forward lies in Arts and Leisure and Adventure

Innovation: How to support small scale, new ideas (e.g. smart textiles; agriculture; local products) marketed in step with social prescriptions.

The Agency must work to ensure land is made available for the development of housing to ensure the population is sustained

The Agency must break down barriers between local authorities and their departments. 'Build Logical Strategies'

The Agency must prioritise connectivity. This has hidden difficulties. Councils are just knackered for funding and those south of the Border are even more so.

How can the Agency help with the short-term needs of the community within the next 12 months?

What's the role of the Agency in solving Langholm's fall in jobs from 1,000 to 0?

How can the Agency help support the area's social infrastructure?

How will Business Gateway operate within the system as it emerges?

Will there be a new business support system?

Inheritance is important. The way Edinburgh Woollen Mill has been ruthlessly moved and to Carlisle and almost stripped is disastrous

The Quality of Life is Southern Scotland's USP – How do we encourage people to enjoy it?

What are the key lessons from HIE?

The obstacles here to building affordable housing [in response to the description of 'the Berwickshire model'] are: excessive flood plain restrictions, existing land restrictions, funding restrictions. Landowners should not be able to sit unproductively on disused land.

There is an opportunity to embrace solutions to infrastructure through the creativity being applied to the interface between the arts and social issues

Langholm has not wholly lost its textile industry. There is a small mill here, but it struggles to get employees, to train them and there is a worry around succession.

Lockerbie

How is the £10 million going to be spent? It is a slightly odd way of starting the project

People will want to tap into it...How?

'Funding in Year One...and then on'. Who are going to be the casualties? Duplication and the general lack of funding is going to see bodies fall by the wayside

The time is ripe to chop up weak non-performing bodies. This whole region has suffered from a lack of investment

Please don't undermine the opportunities for people

What size are the grants for?

The sooner there is clarity in the basic issues that people have been asking about here, the better

Sustainability and employment are the bottom-line important factors

Part of the engagement process must be with groups of young people – it's their future

Whatever comes out of the process must be simpler than it is now for customers/clients

Projects to be funded should have the factor of how they provide a return, of some kind - of the generation of revenue built in

If supporting the academic, you should be concerned with the academic / business interface (Demystifying 'the academic' is essential)

How do we support the social remit?

What can we learn from Highland and Island Enterprise?

Transport infrastructure – it really is challenging to get around for many different kinds of people – school children, students, the low paid, the elderly. How many Board members really know this? How many Board members attend meetings using public transport?

Local training, university courses and opportunities in new tech, particularly in smaller communities, are hampered by poor transport infrastructure

The new agency must be visible and accessible – and there are different challenges for different areas

We must promote Annandale, by getting people off the motorway to spend time in the smaller towns like Annan, Gretna, Lockerbie, Lochmaben and Moffat. These are also the gateway to the rest of the region. How do we get people to take time off and spend it here?

Moffat

Can you clarify the connection between SoSEP and Borderlands Growth Deal? Are they connected or are they separate?

There obviously needs to be collaboration with the (suggested) National Parks

Farming and forestry are being involved. you be talking to other “Land” stakeholders? Will you be considering land management economic development?

Is this just another layer of admin costs?

What will drive people and groups to engage with SoSEP?

What does success look like in 10 or 15 years?

Where will the agency be based?

Will the new agency speak and liaise with sector representative’s e.g. DG Unlimited?

We want to bring community, social and business enterprise all together in one place to enable collaboration and co-production between the sectors. One-stop-shop for support and advice

Demographics – we want to keep our youngsters in the region

We want to prevent this from becoming another talking shop or set up

To recognise the differences within and across the areas – different communities have different identifies and priorities

We need to overcome all of the infrastructure barriers that are hindering economic development and growth

Representation of creative arts sector. How will they be supported and not fall through the cracks?

How do you measure effectiveness of the agency and what is the definition of success going to be?

Prohibitive transport costs / accessibility need to be addressed

In what way are you answerable to us (the people or organisations) and do we have any say in who goes on the Board?

Arts and Culture don't appear to be very strongly represented on SoSEP yet they appear to be taking a leading role in regeneration in D&G

I feel a customer facing presence across the region is really important

Are you actively seeking sector representative's feedback?

Natural capital is one of the strengths of the South of Scotland. Are we going to be determined to sustain the natural capital? (Our history is one of degradation and loss) We have already advanced in relation to this in the Biosphere

Really important there is a balance between the environment, the economy, the social and the arts. As a region we need to come to some sort of understanding of how we value/assess them

New Galloway

What is the makeup of the Board and how does it tier down – seems little representation for the West?

What are the plans to spend the 10 million – can you outline the projects?

How will the partnership community engagement can influence the fund?

How will the partnership measure the funds to determine where the money can be spent?

There is now limited support available for small businesses from agencies and government, unlike 35 years ago when everyone was offering help.

It is really important to address the issue of marginalisation; will the partnership be able to help.

How much influence will the agency have on Scottish Government decisions, for example in relation to rural transport?

Why has nothing happened in the South West up till now that has resulted in this agency being created?

Has anyone asked Young's why they have pulled out?

Fuel poverty and distance to travel, also the Skills gap are equal here to the issues in the highlands and Islands, I welcome the agency and all it is trying to do.

Core productivity – what does that mean? it must be remembered small rural shops / businesses are still productive and give a lot to communities?

Cohesion, there has always been a lack of cohesion, if the agency succeeds in become a cohesive voice excellent, but how is a single agency going to achieve this when there is a real lack of cohesions across the region?

I have googled SOSEP, there is limited web coverage to say how grants can be accessed, and this will lead people to believe it is a closed book. Transparency is needed so people can see where the money is being spent?

Role for partnership to create cohesion of initiatives – too much duplication, no central node, need to sort out who does what and needs have to be articulated.

Can they broaden indicators to include well-being etc.?

Will the community have a strong voice?

Will the agency challenge policy?

How can we professionalise our communities so that they can deal with large amounts of windfarm money, then breed success by example and business mentoring?

How can we support multiple strands of businesses – large companies that offer jobs /work – i.e. relocating them?

How would you sell Southern Scotland and give it appeal to encourage people to come here to live and work

Flexibility of public agencies to support projects.

Help build capacity in communities, upskill

We need transparency of the agency from the start,

Public agencies to be more flexible with where money can be spent

Raise the profile of the area

Allow people to make quality of life decisions

Improve public infrastructure including transport, broadband

There needs to be targeted programmes to encourage homecoming of graduates, or young to stay.

There is a high percentage of over 65's in the region, they need to be looked at as an asset, and the agency needs to look at ways dying skills can be harnessed, expertise not lost

Will the agency have a physical presence in the region, where will the headquarters be?

Can you define community?

Don't forget the West.

Newcastleton

Presume you will base SoSEP in D&G or Galashiels, staffed by the usual suspects in council offices. The new enterprise needs new people with ideas – think out of the box for staff and location.

Young people are an asset but we are hindered by our rural location and can't keep them here because of accessibility, transport links, broadband, etc., Future planning has to focus on how we retain our young people.

We need to work with the skills we have: micro businesses, arts and crafts, etc., we have started a spring craft fair that brings people in for a week. Need to look at these kind of ideas to maximise opportunities.

People disagree about forestry in this area. Forestry doesn't bring any economic benefit it just destroys our roads and infrastructure. We are in the golden triangle of wood yet the nearest forestry school is at Barony. Why don't we have a forest technology school here?

I'm sceptical of how things will pan out with the new agency. Worried we will go with what there is that works rather than investing in a risk. We need to be ambitious.

Hope the railway will be extended to Hawick, Newcastleton and Carlisle. Is this a possibility?

Is there a long term investment risk? Will the new agency have long term vision and powers not affected by who's in power? Can we have confidence that it will keep growing and going forward?

Council needs a kick up the backside. They can put up what they like but are over strict with locals and local businesses if they want to change/build something.

Need broadband, rail, better roads and buses.

Who will be in charge of the new agency? Will it be councils? Who will decide strategy?

Is Newcastleton a land locked island? One size won't fit us all. Can you make the agency one that has arms and legs to reach every small, isolated community? Will the agency be capable of supporting us with social as well as business challenges?

Need more frequent public transport a railway and better roads?

How willing would SoSEP be in assisting us to lay fibre optic to the village?

How are you going to improve transport links?

How will you support small businesses in the area including micro and co-operatives? Need grants, training, support and advice.

How will £10M be allocated?

How much of the budget is being used on 19 (board) people's wages?

How will you measure the success of SoSEP?

How will the £10M be divided amongst eligible projects? How will you measure the success of the initial spend?

Need connectivity: railway including freight, fibre broadband and better roads.

Look south to bring them north and west to bring them east – we need people coming through the area rather than around it.

Make Newcastleton the centre of the Borderlands as it is the most historic place in Scotland. Be bold, be brave, we are the centre.

We should work closely with Carlisle.

Deliver the railway and the rest will follow.

You need to trust areas or communities to do what is best for them. In Newcastleton we need proper training and funding to develop tourism.

Let us be the leaders in looking south. We have great connections, tap into our knowledge. The community gets no benefit from all this forestry, tourism is growing and we should concentrate on this.

Invest in community empowerment i.e. 7 Stanes has no maintenance budget out here, make do and mend mentality and no promotion for this part of it. We as a community have plans to take it on and promote it – let us do it.

Surrounded by four counties and pulled in all directions. We need to join things up like connectivity, learning opportunities, etc., No one comes here to give us training we have to go out of the area.

Small businesses need funding, training, facilities, advice, access to closer courses, funding to attend training and start up grants.

Give access to further education for all age groups and make life easier for isolated communities by subsidising travel. Elderly are missing out on computer training, hospital is a long way (loss of ambulance) and we have no school mini bus or community transport.

No care homes for our elderly.

Community empowerment – devolving responsibilities to communities.

Forestry damages community and we get no benefit. Tourism delivers jobs and is growing.

We are in a conservation village and used to get grants to do things. Are there plans to bring this back?

Degree of mistrust between electorate and government departments. SoSEP needs to convince everyone of its independence and not run on crisis management but work on a long term view.

Half of our properties are classed as being in England and the other half, Scotland, when it comes to broadband provision. How can this be resolved? We are in a situation where no one will move because we straddle two countries.

Need 100% mobile phone coverage, superfast broadband including farms and forests, Borderlands to be promoted as a destination and re open railway through Newcastleton. We need to grow tourism to ensure future economic success.

Build on the beauty and unspoilt nature of our area.

The agency should address skills shortages in: plumbing, joinery, cleaning, take a way's, taxi services and window cleaners.

Prioritise mobile phone coverage, superfast broadband and transport links.

Address decreasing subsidies for farming to allow farmers to be able to afford staff.

Headquarters for SoSEP should be accessible to all parts of Borderlands i.e. satellite offices or agency staff working from home with a remit to visit businesses.

Newton Stewart

With the college project would you look to implement across the whole region?

Concerns about SoSEP trying to be all things to all people – what priorities will you focus on?

After the consultation exercise will there be a strategic plan developed?

Will there be a process for the legislation to be reviewed before it is finalised so that it encompasses everything that is needed?

How will you ensure the diversity and experience of the Board?

Will you get £10 million every year?

What other avenues are you using to consult with people?

Who are your partners?

You have arranged meetings in the mornings or the evenings – did you consider people in the hospitality industry?

Who picked the twelve businesses that are on the Board?

Will you be engaging with young people?

What do you see the role of the partnership being in order to encourage businesses to the area?

What do you think of the National Park idea?

How will you get people in the region to think outside the box and see that they are part of the bigger picture?

How is the organisation going to learn the lessons of past enterprise agencies such as HIE and Scottish Enterprise and many other?

The baseline data study – how do we make sure it's meaningful enough?

How will you ensure diverse sector support and not just the usual suspects?

What metric will be used to ensure equality of funding?

How do we ensure that fantastic initiatives such as 7 Stanes, Dark Sky Park, Savour the Flavours etc. have the funding secured to grow these initiatives?

We have to create an environment of growth for the private sector – how will the agency achieve this?

Tourism – a specific lead organisation for Dumfries & Galloway, over and above Visit Scotland. A forgotten corner of Scotland.

Without realising it – all businesses are dependent upon tourism either directly or indirectly.

Connectivity – physical infrastructure – roads in particular as hardly any public transport.

It's a great area to come back to later in life but not to remain.

Micro businesses have to be a priority.

Growth must protect our economy.

Concerns about displacement caused by support.

The geographical spread of the Board. Perceptions from the public. Vital to have geographical spread.

We need equity of funding to be used.

We have fantastic initiatives that we start but they then have a habit of running out of money.

We need to invest for growth.

The new agency should create an environment for the growth of the private sector.

Peebles

If you look at the age profile, in ten years' time it will be very unhappy due to the elderly demographic. We need to make the area attractive to young people in order to have a young workforce.

Forest Enterprise very excited by the talk of apprenticeships, having established our own apprenticeships in Forestry. There need to be other apprenticeships in other land-based activity, training young people so they can capitalise on what we have. Cross-section apprenticeships are required so that they are not tied to one sector.

As a relative newcomer to the area, I note that quality of life is something which is missing from the discussion, and is a great selling point for the area.

In the composition of the partnership - private sector tourism is not represented. Scottish Borders Tourism Partnership (?) should be represented on the board.

In reference to the success story of Sanquhar knitting, it is notable the number of small creative businesses that generate a lot of interest but actual sources of funding for the arts are very hard to find.

Re: not duplicating funding sources: Creative Scotland do not offer capital grants.

How will you measure success over the longer, bearing in mind the social remit? Economic indicators are straightforward but how will the aspects that are more difficult to quantify be measured?

What are the main factors needed to grow indigenous and new businesses?

To whom will the partnership ultimately be accountable - Holyrood or the local communities?

As there will be finite resources, what will the decision-making process look like?

How can the partnership help ensure that investment engenders long-term success and sustainability?

How do we improve training facilities across the board and keep those who are trained in the Borders?

How do we encourage a culture of training and improve the infrastructure?

Partnership does have the potential to link and focus communities of interest right across South of Scotland - egg fishing, ports, and micro-businesses

Structure of the partnership might inhibit community empowerment; taking away from communities themselves having an active engaged role, unless it ensures that communities can make their voices heard and can drive the agenda.

Important for communities to be represented on the board or have a clear route for that voice to be heard.

Importance of recognising that investment and support can cater for small and micro-businesses, as well as large (and the more obvious) projects.

Themes - a lot of small businesses in the South of Scotland are very small; a commonality around a theme could really help their voices to be heard.

Must avoid layering of bureaucracy

Quality of life: quality of life is very variable depending on where is the south.

Community: a lot of people do not live as part of a physical community; therefore there is a lot of isolation, loneliness and rural deprivation.

The social focus of the new partnership is vital.

Peebles is an example of somewhere that has a high proportion of incomers from the central belt, which has led to some regeneration. Could this be replicated elsewhere?

Need for grass-roots community organisations that are well-established and well-run to receive continuity of funding over several years - not annual uncertainty about their existence - to be effective and sustainable. Indeed, such stability would be transformational for the organisations and therefore the communities they serve.

Re: training and education: marketing of new facilities and the advantages of the area is really important.

The idea of a 'Voice of the South of Scotland' is good - neither a suburb of the Central Belt nor a mirror of the Highlands and Islands - but a place with distinctive shape, culture, dynamic and set of values.

Sanquhar

A great idea. Money isn't always a solution. How do we keep politics out of it? If this money is for the South of Scotland, how do we get some assurance that it won't affect other funding going forwards? There is no point giving us X amount in one place and then taking it away from another.

Are there any relocation grants available from this fund? I.e. to attract an industrialist from an urban area to come to an area such as ours?

Insularity can lead to stagnation – not looking outside ourselves. To what extent is the new agency going to try to tackle a lack of ambition and encourage looking outside the area for opportunities?

You talk about investing in people and places – Scottish Government are putting a big emphasis on Community Empowerment with Community Development Trusts popping up to work in partnership to regenerate communities but the third sector representation is a lot smaller than other sectors on the Board.

Is there a way for communities to see what has been happening in HIE – e.g. community capacity development examples?

One of the main reasons people want to be here is because of the natural environment. How will we balance the pressures from all of the different sectors (farmers, foresters, tourism)?

How does the Board get to find out the feeling on the ground? Are they going to draw on the resources that are already there? There is no point duplicating resource?

It's good that different land management sectors are on the Board. However, we can't assume that those land management sectors will still exist in 10/20/50 years' time. How do we achieve integrated land management in Scotland?

How are they going to improve Dumfries town centre?

How are they going to make the whole area more cohesive and feel as one?

How are they going to make Upper Nithsdale more attractive to industrialists?

How do we keep ahead of the game to upskill people and encourage people to create opportunities for themselves?

What is the future of land ownership? Particularly in an area like this when land is owned largely by one person.

Do we have the right infrastructure?

How can we make travel more affordable and better timed for younger people?

How do we encourage young people to come back to D&G with the knowledge they've learnt from other places to make it better around here?

How can we do community ownership and empowerment?

We want to enable local digital education and make sure it is used wisely and informatively
To do with the digital infrastructure – the agency should have a lobbying role to improve
Transport improvements should be integration – from a wider perspective, long term and
laying cable etc. all prepared for

Rural is more than agriculture.

Modernisation or mechanisation of traditional agricultural industries had led to fewer jobs and therefore outward migration

If we can't fill essential jobs (E.g. GPs, teachers) then we won't encourage people to want to live here.

Better infrastructure (e.g. broadband) needed

Keeping young people to stay in the area

Community ownership / empowerment

In Dumfries 8 large businesses turnover 1 billion. It takes a large number of small businesses to match that. We therefore can't underestimate the benefits that come with large businesses.

The infrastructure has to be there. The money itself isn't enough if the infrastructure isn't there to support the industry when it arrives.

Perception – if you’ve got big pylons that impact on tourism that’s the image we’re putting out of Dumfries and Galloway and impacts on tourist/public perception. We need long term solutions of how to get the infrastructure into place without negatively impacting on natural beauty.

D&G has a large proportion of land owned by a very small number of land owners, which impacts on potential development.

It’s a credit to the area that we are producing young people who are confident enough to go out into the world. It should also be about attracting young people from other places. We have to opportunity to market our area for the way of life.

In some of our more deprived areas we have a role to play to support young people entering the world of work.

If there is no partnership working then progress is slow. For this to be a success, everyone needs to come together and go in the same direction.

Selkirk

This is a big opportunity, but a challenging task. Nice to be able to help shape rather than being presented with the finished product. All needs to connect up: for example digital connections need to assist with the tele-care and tele-health initiatives.

How do we develop our intellectual growth?

It’s a premium to live in a rural area - we need to understand that we serve those living in these communities. How will the agency be sourced to facilitate this?

Will this new agency be more far sighted than previous agencies (with reference to an application that was turned down for a community wind farm application 20 years ago?)

How are you going to recognise and respond to the community voice? How will the man in the street be heard?

How do all the communities start to engage and make sure that they are included? How do we ensure it happens? How do we engage with you?

You’ve talked about the bids for funding this year – what is the process?

Are the boundaries of the agency fixed? Is it not helpful to include other similar rural communities?

You say that the consultancy comments are due back today – is there any flexibility?

What are the implications with growth deals – such as the National Park plans?

Regarding funding: there are lots of community development companies throughout the Borders – many of which draw on the experience of the Highlands and Islands. The ongoing problem is core-funding; communities that have been energised are in danger of losing all the initial energy created without core funding support.

With LEADER coming to an end and more projects still in development, could some of the £10M be used to cover the shortfall?

Concern over the funding cycles. Lots of time spent on the applying process.

Will the agency be able to knock heads together to clear blockages?

What will happen to the existing advisors in the present agencies?

How does the agency avoid doing too much resulting in that they do not do it well?

How do we explain to young people that they have to work harder to access the opportunities that peers in an urban environment can access more easily? However need to highlight that this initial hard work may be more productive and beneficial in the long term.

How can we make sure that we learn from success stories e.g. thriving communities and ensure that the existing information is made available?

Transportation issues: the corridor issue. How do we best improve and develop the existing road and rail network?

Energy issues: the generation (particularly hydro), the storage and the distribution. How can we benefit communities and assist with affordable housing without damaging the environment?

Need to establish core employment areas in the region. How can we resource this?

Sustainable, affordable housing is key for jobs, young people and for care (older people).

Require rural focus – those at the end of the valleys not just on the outside of villages.

Required for housing and businesses etc.

Must identify the knock backs to community projects and facilitate solutions. The stumbling blocks that well-meaning amateurs come across – professional input is required.

Young people: need to change perceptions, get them engaged, make the area more vibrant and produce apprenticeship opportunities. We're h emorrhaging talent.

Tourism: the lack of identity and brand. We need to be put on the map - making the Borders a place to be. Require an injection for infrastructure, accessibility and distribution to help businesses grow.

Capacity building needs to be local. Needs to be ambitious and make the support services more joined up.

Looking forward to better results from this latest enterprise.

The agency should aim to establish/enhance footfall in the Borders with tourism, especially accommodation.

A lack of coordinated processing i.e. local timber being sent outside the Borders, home grown lambs being sent to Wales.

The construction industry: need to manage the supply train properly through providing local processing plants, training; servicing the housing providers etc.

Stranrær Breakfast

How long have you got funding for?

Have you got aims next to objectives?

Can you define and describe the area that SOSEP will cover?

Do you expect us to be appreciative if one area is favoured more than another?

What is the common denominator for the South of Scotland? We have very little in common with the far east of the territory you suggest.

One of the worries for the west are the demographics – in 10 years-time, unless every child goes into caring, there will be no one to look after the elderly.

The demographics have been around for a long time; yet the first thing to get cut is transport.

It's all very well having the young trained – will there be the opportunities for them when they graduate from training?

There has to be a real focus on connectivity of all kinds – from transport to digital. This area feels the lack of this very strongly. Even a trip to Glasgow can turn out being a very long day indeed.

A lot of small businesses don't have access or even understanding of what is available to them, particularly in digital connectivity – they don't know what they never had.

Wigtownshire has a very strong scepticism about development initiatives from elsewhere. The only thing offered in one previous initiative was an improved road to Dumfries. The bets are on that the Borders will benefit first, then Dumfries.

Where will the headquarters be?

Would there be any benefit in ring-fencing money for geographical areas?

There's a need for economic impact assessments, area by area.

We have the largest seaport and the worst road infrastructure

We have lost so much – we need a manufacturing base and roads that can support it.

There is a disengage between here and the rest of Scotland.

We have a Mixed Economy and recognising it's needs is important

Using and working through Community Councils will be important

Stranrær, post-Brexit, may become one of the closest gateways to the rest of Europe

When can we have an Economic Assessment?

Will there be an Office in Stranrær?

Will it be staffed by local people, not Central Belt types?

We need to raise the profile of the area and all it has to offer. The knock-on effect of this will lead to increase in tourism, population and new investment from business.

Galloway Forest Park needs to be turned into a National Park. This would contribute to raising the profile and lead to increases in the above.

Wigtownshire is unique and needs to be recognised as such. In their isolation Stranrær and Wigtownshire look westwards [to Belfast, N Ireland and Ireland] and northwards [up the west coast] - not eastwards. This is contrary to what people in the rest of the region think.

Post-Brexit, Stranrær will be one of the closest gateways to Europe.

Stranrær

Is the agency for the Border area and D&G?

Are you a board and what is the makeup?

How are you going to distribute the 10 million and will the Galloway area benefit?

Any thoughts on how the agency will encourage businesses?

Retaining businesses in to the area.

Apprentices need to be developed that can support youngsters who want to stay here.

Having to match fund can be a barrier for small businesses, will money be available to alleviate this?

Are there plans to create entrepreneurial opportunities?

Is there anyway innovation can be rewarded through this fund?

Community Councils can be a mechanism to support and take on some responsibility of the fund.

Connections and proximity to power lines can stop investment and productivity.

Will the fund make it easier for people to have transformational projects – will the criteria be easier and auditing a simple process?

Please do not forget the importance of heritage projects and its vital role in society.

Where are the agency with transport and bringing trains back to the area?

What is the procedure and criteria for borderlands?

Will the agency continue to have community led development?

Will the agency have a remit around rural transport infrastructure?

Connectivity and broadband how do you make it work?

Will visit Scotland have a long-term commitment to destination development?

Ensure Stranrær and all outlying areas have a voice for all, work plans to be bottom up.

Reflect on what has been successful in the past – e.g. small-town initiatives!

No one region should take priority over the other.

SOSEP must be forward thinking.

Consideration should be given on how to attract youths back into the area.

Attracting professionals to the area need priority thinking

West Linton

Which model of good practice for rural development are you using? There are a number of smart specialisation models from Europe, not just HIE. Need south Scotland data.

What do you mean by we? Do you have a funded team in place for SoSEP?

Borderlands: is your access to the Edinburgh City Deal being minimised?

How do we actively imagine land use going forward? Recommend agriculture, food and environment as vehicle for transformation.

Need to go to Edinburgh to attract specialist skilled graduates which means moving business to Edinburgh in order to expand- technology business.

Rural development has connectivity issues. Get big players like Brendan Dick, BT involved in process.

Edinburgh College overheating needs to go further out. Build connections with campuses in SB/DG not just Galashiels.

Extreme lack of land or buildings for economic development in countryside. We have lost businesses as we couldn't provide premises.

Land is available with access to trunk roads but not allowed to build on it – need to reform planning.

Are HIE a statutory consultee on planning applications? Is this something we could have?

Peri-urban space – what we do is not unique – how do we retain talent?

Which models (economic /rural development) are we looking at? How are we learning? How will we put that into a structure?

How can we learn from others around the world?

What are you doing to encourage people to move or stay in the Borders? What is the people/manpower plan?

How can we use circular economy and decarbonisation to our advantage?

Can we have an integrated and business orientated development plan not just a land use plan? Surrounded by successful cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow. No need to compete with urban centres. Find the most efficient connectivity (communications, infrastucet, etc..) to make the most of what we have.

Enterprise agencies want to do everything – resist this. How do you ensure you focus on the right things (only 3 or 4)? Doesn't have to be unique but uniquely good. Could be tourism, food and drink, etc., to raise whole area.

Sell what we have to attract professionals to the area. Cheap housing, beautiful countryside, space, etc.

People and manpower. Difficult to attract professionals into and get young people to stay in south Scotland. Need inward migration. Perhaps more colleges though this is not whole answer as difficult for colleges to keep pace with industry. Need to reconfigure what we see as 'colleges'.

Need a business bridge/hub to cover geographic spread of small businesses– challenge of synergy and connectivity. Need to build links.

Need for accessible business land but also roads and infrastructure including IT to ensure businesses can run – there is a planning challenge.

What can we learn from enterprise zones?

What have we learned from 50 years of HIE?

What can we learn from our Nordic neighbours?

Why is there no community land ownership in south Scotland? Shouldn't there be some?

Whose job is it to advise family owned farms on diversification?

Can we be more upfront about the need for inward migration and repopulation? Some parts of south Scotland have less people than in 18th century.

Where does the whey go from the dairy industry?

Digital connectivity and infrastructure – low cost, high skilled dispersed workforce. How do we support them to work from home?

How do you work with the impact of feudalism?

How do you work with HIE?

We have to attract/draw out resources/skills from the overheating Edinburgh economy – same work but better environment.

Land use – the future? We have lots of it, what are we doing with it? Need localised rural workspaces.

Tourism/food/history infrastructure – build the tour!

Review and apply successful Peri-urban models.

City to rural connectivity – need infrastructure, facilities and broadband.

Specialise your focus – land/food cycle/tourism

Use existing networks – natural and global.

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