

Joint news release from Scottish Borders Council and Live Borders: Monday 26 June 2023

Live Borders and Council seek views of communities to help shape future of services

Borderers of all ages are being asked for their views on how public sport, leisure and cultural services and facilities should be developed in their area over the next decade.

A programme of community engagement, including public and school pupil surveys and engagement events, is at the heart of a joint review of the sport, leisure and cultural services and facilities owned by Scottish Borders Council and operated by Live Borders. The focus is on the quality, quantity, accessibility, affordability and ongoing sustainability of these services.

The joint review will inform proposals for the sustainable future development and delivery of Live Borders services. Local people are urged to take this opportunity to influence the proposals and further decision-making by sharing what matters most to them. The public survey can be accessed via www.scotborders.gov.uk/jointreview

The review is being driven by a number of key factors, including decreasing public funding, changing needs and aspirations of communities, inflation and increasing energy costs. Against this backdrop, both organisations believe it is key that sport, leisure and cultural services and facilities are provided that deliver on what is most important to rural communities and towns in the Borders.

The Council and Live Borders, in partnership, are responsible for delivering a broad range of valued culture, sport and leisure and community services across the area.

Live Borders currently operates services from a total of 30 sport and leisure facilities, including six swimming pools, and 23 cultural facilities, including libraries and museums, in addition to providing 10 community centres and 12 town halls.

Timetable of engagement events:

- Coldstream Community Centre - Thursday 27 July
- Peebles Burgh Hall - Monday 31 July
- Jedburgh Town Hall - Tuesday 1 August
- Hawick Town Hall - Thursday 3 August
- Gala Volunteer Hall - Monday 7 August
- Eyemouth Community Centre - Tuesday 8 August
- Selkirk Victoria Hall - Monday 14 August
- Kelso Tait Hall - Tuesday 15 August
- Duns Southfield Community Centre - Thursday 17 August

Each event will include a drop-in session, open to all, from 2.30pm to 6pm, and a structured discussion from 7pm to 8.30pm which will include a short

presentation. The latter will be aimed at invited stakeholders, however places will be available to book for anyone else interested in attending. Further details of how to book will be available from the Council and Live Borders websites and social media channels in due course.

Alison Moore, Chair of Live Borders, said: "Getting feedback from local people, both those that use services and those that don't, is a key element of the joint review to enable balanced proposals to be developed.

"Fundamentally we cannot continue to operate as we do now – we must find different ways to do things to ensure continuity of services in the long term and we also need to understand where and how future investments should be made.

"There will be difficult discussions, questions and choices for communities, the Council and Live Borders over the coming months, but these are essential if services are to be maintained and improved.

"We want to make sure that future changes made as a result of the joint review reflect local people's priorities for leisure, sport and cultural services and therefore it is crucial that we get as much input as possible through the online public survey and the upcoming engagement events."

The review comes at a time of unprecedented financial pressures on all services in the region as well as across the entire leisure sector, a changing picture of service usage post pandemic, high inflation, vastly increased energy costs and the need to work towards Net Zero targets.

An ageing property estate which is becoming increasingly costly to maintain is also affecting service delivery and finances. Many of the Council-owned facilities are requiring significant investment or replacement if they are to continue to operate.

The review is expected to be complete by end of October this year and the outcome will result in a new joint agreement, replacing that put in place when Live Borders was established in 2016, and inform the 2024/25 service and budget planning process.

Leader of Scottish Borders Council, Councillor Euan Jardine, added: "Right across the country, leisure, sport and cultural service providers are facing incredible financial and operating challenges, which are prompting some extremely difficult decisions to be made. This is the case whether these services are delivered directly by local authorities or through partnership arrangements such as our own with Live Borders.

"Both the Council and Live Borders have a responsibility to ensure our local services are affordable, sustainable and meet the needs of local people, and that is why this joint review is so important and comes at such a key time.

"I would urge every Borderer who values their leisure, sport and culture services to take the opportunity to feed into the joint review and help both organisations to reach a balanced view on the priorities and develop financial and operating plans that protect and enhance key services.

“This is an opportunity for our communities and residents to shape the future of these services and help inform new plans and strategies, because as we move into the future we cannot remain static. That’s why it’s so important that those that make use of these services help us to shape how and where these are delivered to make it more sustainable into the future.”

Notes to editors

Live Borders is the leisure, sport, and cultural trust for the Scottish Borders. Live Borders is a charity. At the heart of Live Borders is a commitment to making its communities healthier, happier and stronger. Every penny spent in its venues is reinvested into supporting active, creative, and healthy communities in the Scottish Borders.

The Live Borders trust arrangements were originally established in 2003 with the formation of Borders Sports and Leisure Trust. The services delivered have been expanded over the years, including the addition of cultural and various community services in 2016 when Live Borders was set up.

Community sports provision at a number of new high school campuses and the addition of the Great Tapestry of Scotland in 2020 have also been added to the scope of Live Borders services in recent years.

www.liveborders.org.uk / [@LiveBorders](#) / [Facebook](#) / [Instagram](#)

For more information, contact the SBC Communications and Marketing team on 01835 826632 or communications@scotborders.gov.uk or Live Borders on 01896 661166 or marketing@liveborders.org.uk