



THIRD SECTOR DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY

REPORT OF MEETINGS

SOUTH OF SCOTLAND REGIONAL ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

18 September 2020
8 October 2020

THIRD SECTOR DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway (TSDG) represents the charities, social enterprises and other third sector organisations in the south west of Scotland on many bodies. The Regional Economic Partnership (REP) invited applications for third sector representatives in February 2020. The process was delayed due to Covid-19. The chief executive of TSDG applied and was appointed to the REP in August.

This note is her account of the first two meetings and focuses on the points most relevant to the third sector. It is not a formal minute of the meeting.

The REP covers the local authority areas of Dumfries and Galloway and Scottish Borders. It is one of several regional economic partnerships in Scotland. The REPs are linked to the regional and city inclusive growth deals.

<https://www.inclusivegrowth.scot/>

The REP aims to support the establishment of South of Scotland Enterprise by setting the strategic direction for the economy of the south of Scotland.

The REP comprises leading members of Scottish Borders Council, Dumfries and Galloway Council, South of Scotland Enterprise, together with appointed members from business, communities, social enterprise, registered social landlords, and representatives from colleges, universities and public bodies including the Scottish Funding Council, Skills Development Scotland, Scottish Enterprise, and VisitScotland. There is currently no representative from the third sector in the Scottish Borders on the REP.

The terms of reference for the REP are available at the end.

Meeting - 18th September 2020

The first meeting of the South of Scotland REP took place online on 18 September. The administration of the REP is currently the responsibility of South of Scotland Enterprise (SoSE). The REP is chaired by Cllr Rob Davidson from Dumfries and Galloway Council. A total of 43 was present at this online meeting, including observers and advisers.

The meeting opened with a discussion about the absence of young people on the REP. The REP agreed to create a young people's advisory group and its chair will sit on the REP. The TSDG chief executive advised the meeting about the Dumfries and Galloway Youth Council and the TSDG Children and Young People's Forum. She suggested that these be used as vehicles for encouraging young members of the advisory group. She emphasised the rich range of third sector organisations (TSOs) already working with young people in D&G and that they should be involved.

An update on the youth advisory group will be given at next meeting. There was broad consensus to use the 0-25 age range as the range for the defining 'children and young people'.

The TSDG chief executive asked why the third sector interfaces (TSIs) from Dumfries and Galloway and the Scottish Borders had not been had not been invited – like other agencies – to nominate representatives rather than having to go through an application process. The answer was that the

arrangements for the TSIs in the two areas are different and it was therefore not appropriate to invite representatives.

The REP'S primary responsibility in its early days is to develop the Regional Economic Strategy (RES). There was extensive discussion about the approach and timescale proposed. The RES should inform and align the other major strategies for space, transport, regional skills investment, and SOSE's action plans. It is to be a long-term ten-year strategy with a five-year action plan.

The TSDG chief executive and others raised a concern about the timescales proposed. The RES is to be in draft form by March 2021. She suggested that consultation might be pressured and offered the TSDG forums and networks to facilitate consultation with the third sector. She also flagged up the question of how the RES will relate to Covid recovery planning and the existing community planning frameworks. These issues will be addressed by the consultants who will be appointed to produce the strategy.

Meeting - 8th October 2020

MEETING 8 OCTOBER

The second meeting of the REP took place online on 8 October. There were two main discussions:

1. The links between the Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy and the emerging Regional Economic Strategy.
2. The process of producing the Regional Economic Strategy: the timescales, management of process, progress reporting and role of the REP.

Regional Spatial Strategy

The spatial strategy for the next 20 years will set out what infrastructure is needed to deliver the regional strategies such as the economic strategy, transport strategy, zero carbon targets and should link to the ambitions of the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal. It should identify issues and opportunities across South of Scotland. Landscape for the built environment, digital connectivity, the road and rail networks will all be considered.

The Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy (IRSS) was submitted in September. The first draft will be published in March 2021 and submitted to Scottish Government in April.

If the Regional Economic Strategy follows the proposed timetable it will be delivered at broadly the same time as the IRSS by May 2020.

The TSDG chief executive asked if community asset transfer could be considered in the final version of the strategy particularly in relation to the purchase and transfer of large land areas and the high cost of land values in D&G.

The housing representative also flagged up the importance of including housing in the Spatial Strategy.

Regional Economic Strategy

The TSDG chief executive raised her concerns about the timescale for delivering the final RES by next May.

Proposed timetable:

Key Milestone	Date
Go live in advertising ITT on PCS, with potential social media push to raise awareness of opportunity	12 Oct
End date for submissions	30 Oct
Completion of Evaluations	13 Nov
Award Contract	25 Nov
Initial Inception Meeting	01 Dec
Draft strategy and action plan	26 Mar
Final strategy and action plan	21 May

She suggested that this pace might not allow for a meaningful consultation period especially with digitally excluded or isolated groups. In addition, the impact of Brexit and Covid will create a level of uncertainty for many organisations, making future planning for a ten year strategy even more fragile. She suggested using the next six months to co-ordinate recovery plans across the partnership while at the same time conducting a fuller consultation and completing the strategy in twelve months rather than six.

After a full discussion, the REP agreed to continue with the timescales and approach outlined. The SoSE staff agreed to consider the changes suggested by the TSDG chief executive to the consultants' brief. These changes will allow a slightly longer time for preparation of bids. This may assist small consultancies in the South of Scotland to develop a consortium bid. The amended ITT will also allow consultants to set out what they feel is a realistic timescale for consultation.

The REP was reminded by SoSE staff that 'It is the function of the action plan linked to the RES which drives the strategy and keeps it relevant'. The action plan will be for five years, two year in detail and three years at high level. The action plan will realign the local recovery plans.

The senior officers agreed to take away the suggestion that REP members should be involved in a sub-group to promote oversight of process.

The next meeting of the REP will be on the 13th November 2020.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP TERMS OF REFERENCE

Remit:

The South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership's primary purpose is to secure and enable inclusive and sustainable economic growth across the South of Scotland, through:

- Setting the strategic direction for the regional economy in the South of Scotland by developing the Economic Strategy and Action Plan;
- Addressing the strategic economic issues of the South of Scotland through effective partnership work;
- Ensuring that collectively, partner capacities and resources are harnessed to maximum effect.
- Bringing together stakeholders from across the area under a common purpose to drive inclusive and sustainable economic growth in the South of Scotland; and
- Identifying barriers to inclusive and sustainable economic growth, particularly those that are specific to the South of Scotland, and exploring how those barriers could be addressed.

Membership:

Membership of the Partnership will be comprised as follows:

- Dumfries & Galloway Council (Four senior elected members – to be determined by the Council)
- Scottish Borders Council (Four senior elected members – to be determined by the Council)
- South of Scotland Enterprise (Chair of the Agency and three SOSE board members – to be determined by SOSE)
- Scottish Enterprise (One appropriate/regional lead to be determined by the organisation)
- Skills Development Scotland (One appropriate/regional lead to be determined by the organisation)
- Scottish Funding Council (One appropriate/regional lead to be determined by the organisation)
- Visit Scotland (One appropriate/regional lead to be determined by the organisation)
- Private Sector representatives – (Two each from the Scottish Borders and Dumfries & Galloway – to be selected via an application process)
- Social Enterprise representatives (One each from the Scottish Borders and Dumfries & Galloway – to be selected via an application process)
- Third Sector representatives (One each from the Scottish Borders and Dumfries & Galloway – to be selected via an application process)
- Registered Social Landlord representatives (One each from the Scottish Borders and Dumfries & Galloway – to be selected via an application process)
- Community Development Trust representatives (One each from the Scottish Borders and Dumfries & Galloway – to be selected via an application process)
- Borders College (Chair of the College)
- Dumfries & Galloway College (Chair of the College)
- Heriot Watt University (Chair of Court)
- Crichton Leadership Group (Chair)
- Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) (Chair)

Scottish Government officials will be invited to attend meetings as observers.

Senior officials from partner organisations, including Chief Executives and Principals, will be welcome to attend as required at each meeting.

Terms of Appointment:

- Members will be appointed for an initial period of 2 years
- Membership is on a voluntary, non-paid basis but travel and other reasonable expenses will be covered
- Members are expected to act in accordance with the [Model Code of Conduct for Members of Boards of Devolved Public Bodies](#), issued by the Standards Commission for Scotland by virtue of Part 1 of the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000.
- A declaration of interest must be completed following appointment
- Early release from your position must be in writing to the REP chair

Chair and Vice Chair:

- Senior Council Members will chair the meetings, with the chair rotating annually between Dumfries and Galloway and Scottish Borders.
- A vice chair will be appointed by the Chair from their own organisation.

Operating Principles:

- Partnership meetings will as a minimum take place every quarter (minimum four times a year)
- Partnership meetings will take place across the South of Scotland, in locations alternating between the Scottish Borders Council area and Dumfries and Galloway Council area, and/or virtually where necessary or beneficial to maximise attendance
- Partnership meetings will be no more than 3 hours long
- Papers for meetings will generally be circulated a week in advance
- Members should aim to attend each meeting. If members from public sector organisations are unable to attend they should ensure representation from a senior official of the organisation. Other members are not expected to send substitutes
- Meetings will be minuted, with a focus on capturing key decisions and action
- Members should, if approached by the media, contact the REP secretariat for clearance and support prior to commenting and report back on the content of coverage.
- Members with a social media presence are asked to make clear that all views are their own and do not reflect the formal view of the Partnership.

Secretariat:

The partnership will benefit from dedicated secretariat support, jointly and equally resourced by Dumfries and Galloway Council, Scottish Borders Council and South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE).

Relationship with the Convention for the South of Scotland:

As the REP structure matures it will shape and influence the future agendas of the Convention of the South of Scotland. It will report to the Convention, outlining the work done to deliver the Regional Economic Strategy, presenting the opportunity to raise and discuss issues which have been identified as limiting the delivery of the strategy.