

## FINANCE COMMITTEE

### DRAFT BUDGET 2014-15

#### SUBMISSION FROM SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

1. Scottish Borders Council welcomes the opportunity to input views on the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework.

2. A consistent set of Performance Indicators, monitored over the long term, is welcomed. It is helpful to see how Scotland is performing as a country and how this performance then translates into policy and spending priorities. Through the various Change Funds, there is indeed clear evidence that there is a link between performance information and spending priorities.

3. Economic Growth is an area where we are aware that the Scottish Government has committed significant resources, through Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Development International etc. Within the Scottish Borders, economic growth is also a key priority, given our relatively narrow industrial structure, low wages levels, low GVA etc. However, during the last few years we have seen a *significant* decrease in public spending on economic development in the Scottish Borders primarily because of Scottish Enterprise's focus on national priorities.

4. The main concern of the Scottish Borders Community Planning Partners (CPP) is in improving the quality of life for those within our communities and then how *our* performance contributes to overall national performance. It is extremely helpful when the national indicators in Scotland Performs can be disaggregated at Local Authority / Health Board level. This allows us to see where local performance compares favourably or unfavourably, which in turn allows us to establish our priorities. Where possible, it would be helpful if the data used to monitor *national performance* was consistent with the data that we can use at a local authority level. For example, there are differences in the way that we are asked to look at the life circumstances of children, and significant differences in the figures. For example:

5. The **Scotland Performs** indicator is "Reduce Children's deprivation", calculated using the percentage of children in combined material deprivation (based on a suite of questions in the Family Resources Survey) and low income (below 70% of UK median income)

6. However, the **Local Outcome** Indicator (from within the SOA menu) is "% of children living in poverty", calculated using the number of children living in families in receipt of Child Tax Credit (CTC) whose reported income is less than 60 per cent of the median UK income (before housing costs) or in receipt of Income Support (IS) or (Income-Based) Job Seekers Allowance (JSA), divided by the total number of children in the area (determined by Child Benefit data).

7. The figures are significantly different:  
Scotland Performs = 8.2% for 2011/12 (11.9% in 2010/11)  
SNS (from DWP) = 17% for 2010/11 (20% in 2009/10)

8. The DWP data is particularly useful for CPPs as it can be further broken down to data zone, allowing us to target resources locally. We have taken a very targeted approach in our new SOA, as we know that there are significant gaps between life circumstances in our most and our least deprived data zones, despite Borders wide performance that performs favourably nationally. This targeted approach has been welcomed by both the Scottish Government and the Improvement Service.

9. There are also differences in the way that child healthy weight is measured, again, leading to differences in the figures. As much consistency as possible between the national and local frameworks would be welcomed.

10. Many of the indicators within Scotland Performs require close partnership working with, in particular, NHS Boards. However, it stills feels as if NHS Boards' performance is measured using a completely different framework, and reported directly to the Minister for Health, in a way that makes it difficult for CPPs to construct meaningful performance frameworks locally and really see the link between performance information and local spending priorities. The recent Accounts Commissions report on CPPs highlights use of resources, aligned to priorities, as an improvement area, and common performance information is vital for this purpose if impact is to be measured.

11. Our Community Planning Partnership would welcome the opportunity to be consulted when national performance outcomes and indicators are being set. We believe that this is especially important for rural areas, when our needs are priorities can be quite different to the rest of Scotland.