

South of Scotland Enterprise Bill

Policy Memorandum

Introduction

1. As required under Rule 9.3.3 of the Parliament's Standing Orders, this Policy Memorandum is published to accompany the South of Scotland Enterprise Bill introduced in the Scottish Parliament on 24 October 2018.
2. The following other accompanying documents are published separately:
 - Explanatory Notes (SP Bill 41–EN);
 - a Financial Memorandum (SP Bill 41–FM);
 - statements on legislative competence by the Presiding Officer and the Scottish Government (SP 41–LC).
3. This Policy Memorandum has been prepared by the Scottish Government to set out the Government's policy behind the Bill. It does not form part of the Bill and has not been endorsed by the Parliament.

Background

4. The south of Scotland is a predominantly rural area which faces particular issues impacting on its economy including an ageing population, challenging physical and digital connectivity, low GDP per head with low productivity, sectors with traditionally low wages and few higher skilled jobs, and a business base dominated by micro and small business. The area also has many natural advantages which make it attractive for residents, businesses and visitors. It is strategically well placed. It has significant land assets and energy resources. It has active further and higher education sectors and innovative businesses.
5. The Scottish Government wants to drive the south of Scotland economy forward with an approach tailored to its circumstances, to achieve growth that creates opportunities for all, and where the benefits of increased prosperity are shared. With an economy shaped by the characteristics of the area's geography and population, this requires an approach that will provide flexibility and focus.

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6. The Scottish Government's central purpose is to create a more successful country with opportunities for all to flourish, through increased wellbeing, and sustainable and inclusive growth. Scotland's Economic Strategy focuses on four priorities: Investment, Innovation, Inclusive Growth and International Outlook, to deliver a more productive, cohesive and fairer Scotland. These four priorities are relevant in the south of Scotland and the Scottish Government wants to ensure that people across the area can enjoy the benefits of inclusive growth.

7. In May 2016, the First Minister announced an end-to-end review to ensure that Scotland's public agencies are delivering the joined-up enterprise and skills support that Scotland's young people, universities, colleges, businesses and workers need to increase sustainable economic growth. The findings of Phase 1 of the review¹, published in October 2016, recognised the unique challenges faced in the south of Scotland and the need to do things differently to improve the area's productivity and make a step-change in its growth. It recommended the creation of 'a new vehicle to meet the enterprise and skills needs of the region', and an undertaking that Phase 2 of the review would explore how best to create this new vehicle.

8. The Enterprise and Skills Review Phase 2 report², published in June 2017, set out the outcome of the second phase of the review which considered the recommendation for a new organisation for the south of Scotland and the form it should take. This was informed by understanding the economic context of the area, which is predominantly rural, with an ageing population, challenging physical and digital connectivity, fragile towns, low GDP per head with low productivity, and a business base dominated by micro and small business. It concluded that the best outcome to meet the enterprise and skills needs of the area was to create a new public body through primary legislation.

¹ <https://beta.gov.scot/policies/economic-growth/enterprise-and-skills-review/>

² [Enterprise and Skills Review Report on Phase 2: South of Scotland Enterprise Agency, 22 June 2017](#)

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Policy Objectives of the Bill

9. The highest level policy aim behind the bill is to establish a new public body to take a fresh approach to addressing the enterprise and skills needs of the south of Scotland and drive inclusive growth in the region.

10. The Scottish Government's ambitions are for the new body to help drive transformational inclusive growth, increase competitiveness, promote fair work and tackle inequality in an area of Scotland that has wide ranging and significant opportunities but an economy that faces particular challenges.

11. Recognising the distinctiveness of the region, the new body will deliver a tailored approach to support the Scottish Government's ambition for the south of Scotland. Set in the context of Scotland's Economic Strategy, this ambition is for a south of Scotland which has:

- Businesses with increased productivity, ambitious for the future, investing in innovation and offering good conditions of employment paying higher wages;
- A skilled workforce with both the skills needed now, and the ability to develop the skills needed for the future;
- More opportunities for young people so that they can see a future in the area, and to attract people who want to locate in the area;
- Communities better equipped to play a greater role in the economic, social and environmental success of their area;
- A clear commitment to inclusive growth, taking a holistic look at the barriers that are getting in the way and taking action to address them.

12. The Bill sets out the legal framework for a new enterprise body going forward to enable it to bring a fresh approach to deliver transformational inclusive growth. The detail of proposals for its structure, operations and activities will continue to develop in parallel and into the future. It is our intention to take a collaborative approach to delivery and work with stakeholders with an interest in the south of Scotland as the proposals develop.

13. With a clear focus on place, the provisions set out in the Bill recognise the need for the new body, informed by the economic context and recognising the different circumstances in the south of Scotland, to do

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more for the area to deliver the Scottish Government's ambitions. It will have powers to enable it to take forward a range of activities that deliver the overarching vision and aim to:

- Drive forward the economy - maximising the area's contribution to Scotland's inclusive growth and supporting a diverse and resilient economy;
- Sustain and grow communities - building and strengthening communities with joined up economic and community support;
- Harness the potential of people and resources – developing skills, promoting assets and resources and maximising the impact of investment in the area.

14. The new body will contribute towards the Scottish Government commitment to having thriving and innovative business with quality jobs and fair work for everyone. Fair work is a crucial ingredient in supporting the types of worker behaviours and attitudes that can create positive outcomes for individuals, employers and society. A culture of fair work is one in which employees feel valued, respected and fulfilled, and jobs are secure and well-paid. As well as encouraging and promoting fair work in businesses through its activities, fair work will also be mainstreamed into the body's own functions, structure and employment practices.

15. The body will also play a leading role in delivering ambitions for the area and supporting the rural economy. It will work closely with other national and local organisations to align activities behind an agreed economic vision. Transforming the economy in this way will ensure that the area reaches its potential.

16. The new organisation will complement other sources of existing investment and support in the south of Scotland. A range of sources of services and support which contribute to economic prosperity will of course continue in the area, delivered by relevant public, private and third sector organisations. Nor will there be any pause: commitments which will benefit the south of Scotland have been made across a range of policy areas including digital, transport, tourism and education. For example, the 2018/19 Programme for Government³ includes '£600m investment to

³ [Delivering Today Investing Tomorrow Governments Programme Scotland 2018-19](#)

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unlock superfast broadband for all homes and business in Scotland by the end of 2021’.

17. The Scottish Government is also committed to delivering a Rural Economy Action Plan as part of the wider Economic Action Plan. This will steer the transition to more sustainable and inclusive growth in rural areas; reducing the potential disruption of Brexit on rural and island life by supporting communities and business to flourish.

Consultation

18. As set out above, discussion and debate on the challenges and opportunities in the south of Scotland, and the need to create a new vehicle to meet the enterprise and skills needs of the region commenced during the Enterprise and Skills Review. This was informed through the expertise of those currently engaged in providing enterprise and skills support in agencies, local authorities and the wider public sector. Phase 1 involved a public call for evidence, while engagement with other stakeholders, including business and the education sector, through workshop sessions further informed the Phase 2 project.

19. A ‘Consultation on a new Enterprise Agency for the South of Scotland’⁴ was published on 15 March 2018, to help inform consideration of the shape and role of the new enterprise agency and the legislation establishing it. It ran for a 12-week period until 7 June 2018.

20. During the consultation period, the South of Scotland Economic Partnership led a series of engagement events (26 in total) to complement the written consultation and to ensure local stakeholders across the south of Scotland could feed into the consultation process. These were attended by over 500 people from communities, businesses, and individuals. The National Economic Forum held in Dumfries on 16 May 2018 also included a workshop discussion session on ‘Creating a new Enterprise Agency for the South of Scotland’.

21. The consultation sought views on ambitions for the south of Scotland and the new enterprise agency, the economic context, potential activities, boundaries, location and other issues including young people and equalities. A total of 268 responses to the consultation were received from

⁴ <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/consultation-new-enterprise-agency-south-scotland/>

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a range of individuals, business and business organisations, community organisations, local authorities and other public bodies. Copies of the responses (other than those where respondents asked for their comments to be kept confidential) can be accessed through the Scottish Government consultation hub⁵. The Scottish Government commissioned Rocket Science to undertake an independent analysis of the responses, including feedback from the engagement events. This report is published on the Scottish Government's website⁶.

22. A large majority of respondents to the consultation agreed with the outlined ambition for the south of Scotland and the creation of a new agency. Respondents highlighted the importance of inclusive growth and increased productivity, and good employment opportunities. They commented on the need for economic regeneration and investment, for the south of Scotland to be an attractive place to live, visit, work and invest, and for the profile of the area to be raised accordingly.

23. Responses outlined a range of challenges they would like to see the agency address, and suggested areas where it could help drive forward the economy, as well as economic strengths which could be built upon.

24. The consultation also explored the sort of activities the agency might take forward to drive the economy forward, to sustain and grow communities, and to capitalise on people and resources. There was broad support for this framework and positive suggestions made on the detail.

25. Accessibility and potential impact were considered to be important criteria in considering the location of the agency, with the headquarters and leadership clearly based in the south. It was vital that the agency was accessible to business and communities across a large and predominantly rural area, and in addition, the location should be cost effective. While digital delivery was desirable, the opportunity for face to face meetings was needed alongside this.

26. In respect of its constitution, consultation respondents highlighted the need for the agency to operate at arms-length, to be transparent and to be

⁵ [Consultation on a new Enterprise Agency for the South of Scotland - Scottish Government - Citizen Space](#)

⁶ <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/south-scotland-enterprise-agency-consultation-analysis-report/>

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held to account. Respondents were also of the view that the board of the agency should be made up of a diverse group of individuals with a range of knowledge, experience and skills.

27. Existing partnership working was also acknowledged in some consultation responses. However, many respondents suggested they would like to see a south of Scotland characterised by meaningful co-operation and joined up working to deliver a co-ordinated, integrated approach. Some also commented on the need to have a focus on sustainability, to tackle inequalities and to be inclusive.

28. The Scottish Government is grateful to all who contributed their time, input and assistance to the consultation process which helped inform the content of the Bill to establish the agency and will help shape its structure. Stakeholder engagement is integral to this work, and will continue throughout the forthcoming stages and into the operational phase of the new agency.

Bill Content: Specific Provisions to Meet Policy Aims

29. This section offers more details on the key policy areas addressed by the Bill.

Establishment

30. The Scottish Government believes the best way to do things differently in the south of Scotland is to create a new public body to meet the enterprise and skills needs of the area and bring a fresh, new approach to deliver the ambition for the south of Scotland.

31. The Bill will establish a new body, to be known as South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE). This will ensure the new organisation is autonomous with its own identity, putting it on the same footing as other agencies delivering enterprise support and able to drive the economy forward with growth that creates opportunities for all.

Aims and Powers

32. The policy aim is to confer on SOSE aims and powers necessary for it, as a modern public body, to achieve these aims, with the ability to be flexible and responsive. This will provide maximum ability for SOSE to operate as efficiently as possible, and take forward a range of activities to focus on the needs of the area, driving inclusive growth, supporting

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communities and harnessing potential. Such flexibility is important to enable a fresh approach, informed by the economic context, and for activities to evolve and change over time to respond to circumstance.

33. The Bill sets the strategic aims for SOSE as being to further the economic and social development, and to improve the amenity and environment, of the South of Scotland. Illustrations of activities to further the economic and social development include providing employment, enhancing skills and capacities, encouraging business start-up and entrepreneurship, and supporting community organisations. More specifically, to deliver this the Bill permits the body to, amongst other things, enter into contracts, provide grants or loans, and charge for the provision of services. In exercising its powers, SOSE will support inclusive growth and promote fair work.

Operational Matters

34. The policy aim is to have an enterprise body operating in the south of Scotland, for the south of Scotland. The provisions within the Bill define the South of Scotland as the local authority areas of Scottish Borders and Dumfries and Galloway. These boundaries reflect the economic context and similarity of challenges faced in those two areas.

35. To ensure that SOSE is clearly rooted in the south and led from the area in which it operates, the provisions in the Bill make it clear that a headquarters will be based within the South of Scotland. That place will be specified by the Scottish Ministers following further consultation. It is vital that the new organisation is accessible to businesses and communities across the south of Scotland, and this will be taken into consideration when decisions on location, operational structure and approaches to service delivery are being made. Co-location with other organisations will be considered to ensure cost-effective and joined up delivery which is visible and accessible to all stakeholders.

36. The policy aim is to enable SOSE to determine its own procedures, and this is contained within the Bill provisions. In support of this and to ensure appropriate governance, the body will have powers to establish committees, with sub-committees if necessary, to consider issues in connection with its functions. To ensure appropriate skills and expertise can be drawn upon as required, members of these committees need not be members of the body.

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Accountability and Ministerial Powers

37. The policy aim is to enable the Scottish Ministers to give directions to SOSE, which is a standard approach in founding legislation for a body of this type and ensures appropriate oversight and public accountability. The Bill provisions enable the Scottish Ministers to give the body general and specific directions to which it must have regard.

38. As with other public bodies, there will be a range of financial and operational planning cycles and reporting requirements, and the provisions for ministerial oversight will ensure that there is appropriate transparency and accountability. The Bill, for example, provides that SOSE must produce an action plan setting out how it plans to achieve its aims, prepare accounting records and produce an annual report. These will be important tools to provide a strategic and transparent approach and in delivering ministerial oversight. Keeping the action plan under review will also ensure that over time SOSE considers and reflects changing circumstances.

Transfer of Property and Liabilities

39. As SOSE will assume responsibility for regional-specific enterprise activity, the policy aim is to ensure that any property or liabilities currently controlled by Scottish Enterprise, relevant to the activities and the functions of the new body created by the Bill, can seamlessly transfer with no additional bureaucracy. Identification of any property or liabilities liable to transfer will be subject to consultation with the bodies concerned.

Members and Staff

40. The proposed establishment and governance are in line with modern practice and other examples of NDPBs, and to enable a transparent relationship with Government allowing for clear and accountable decision making based upon expertise and knowledge.

41. The Bill makes provision for Ministers to appoint a chair and members of SOSE. It may have between six and 11 members, including a chairing member. Members will be chosen to provide a balanced mix of relevant skills and expertise which reflect the business and communities of the south of Scotland and the responsibilities of the body, but the Bill does not specify a list of required areas of expertise.

42. All member appointments will be made after fair and open competition and regulated by the Commissioner for Ethical Standards in

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Public Life in Scotland, and the Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies in Scotland. Appointments will be subject to the terms and conditions determined by Scottish Ministers.

43. SOSE will be able to appoint its own staff on terms and conditions approved by the Scottish Ministers. With the exception of the first appointment, which will be made by the Scottish Ministers, SOSE will also appoint the chief executive, subject to the approval of Ministers.

44. To support the establishment of the new body, the chair, chief executive and members will be recruited as soon as possible, with the process ideally beginning after the Parliament has agreed to the general principles of the Bill at Stage 1, to permit early appointment once the Bill's provisions are commenced. This is to ensure that these persons are in place in advance of SOSE being established.

Implementation and Delivery

45. The Bill provides the legal framework to establish a new enterprise body for the south of Scotland and the Scottish Government is taking forward work to develop the detail of the structure, operations and activities of this new body using the overarching powers of the legislation (recognising that some of the detailed decision-making will rightly be for the new body).

46. This will be informed by ongoing effective engagement and the work of the South of Scotland Economic Partnership in helping prepare the ground for the new body. Subject to parliamentary approval, SOSE will be established at the beginning of financial year 2020/21.

47. Whilst the appointment of members has been set out in paragraphs 41 and 42, in respect of overall staffing requirements it is not yet appropriate at this stage to specify the size of the organisation. Estimates for the size and staffing structure of the new body have been based on Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), a body with a similar remit operating in a predominantly rural area. Using HIE as a comparator, adjusting to the different size and population of the area, a staffing complement of between 125 and 175 is estimated.

48. Some staff from existing organisations may transfer to the new body. While it is not possible at this stage to specify how many staff may transfer, the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations or

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the Cabinet Office Statement of Practice will apply to any transfers that take place. The Scottish Government will engage early with potential organisations impacted to establish what staff transfers (if any) will be required.

49. Scottish Enterprise will continue to have a presence in the south of Scotland, delivering national level programmes, but it is anticipated that the new body will assume operations for much of the regionally specific activity carried out by Scottish Enterprise in Dumfries and Galloway and the Scottish Borders.

50. The new body will take forward activities to deliver transformational inclusive growth: driving forward the economy, sustaining and growing communities and harnessing the potential of people and resources. While the provisions of the Bill will enable SOSE to deliver a wide range of support to deliver its aims, it is not our intention to set out in legislation further detail of activities which it will undertake. However, examples of potential activities which could be undertaken are given below:

- **Driving forward the economy** – joining up existing support for business, setting up business networks and clusters, growing the local supply chain, providing specific support tailored to small and micro business, working with business to build capacity and confidence, encouraging greater spend on research and development, developing rural business leaders, targeting support for under-represented groups, working with existing enterprise agencies and Scottish Development International;
- **Sustaining and growing communities** – supporting communities to grow their capacity and play a greater role in long-term development of the area, supporting growth and development of the social enterprise sector, supporting community-based business, working with local authorities and other partners supporting regeneration and place-based business and responding to the inclusive growth diagnostic;
- **Harnessing people and resources** – working with skills organisations and skills providers to support the development of skills, align skills needs with skills provision, work to increase economic opportunities for young people, work to ensure the workforce have the opportunity to develop their skills, access on-going training and make the most of future economic opportunities. In respect of promoting the area's assets, potential

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activities could include developing business space, supporting and enabling business structure, working to attract inward investment, developing a digital economy and fostering partnerships to promote the south of Scotland as a tourism destination.

51. It is also recognised that a range of public, private and third sector organisations already work actively in the south of Scotland to deliver services to businesses, learners and communities based in the south of Scotland. The new body will help foster collaboration with effective partnership working taking place as appropriate.

Alternative Approaches

52. The decision to create a new public body through primary legislation was made in the context of the Enterprise and Skills Review. A number of alternative options for the potential structure for the new organisation were identified during the Enterprise and Skills Review Phase 2 project. In considering these options, a series of guiding principles were established to help determine which would be most appropriate for effective delivery. These principles were:

- Things to be done differently in the south of Scotland to drive transformational change;
- Strong alignment to develop and deliver an agreed strategic vision for growth in the area;
- A focus on user needs to deliver streamlined and joined up services;
- Clear local leadership both from the public and private sectors;
- Transparent governance and accountability which fits with local and national governance;
- Clarity about resources;
- Clear commitment to a south of Scotland organisation and to partnership delivery;
- Working across geographic and organisational boundaries;
- Involvement of the private sector, further and higher education sectors and the third sector.

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53. Phase 2 of the Enterprise and Skills Review explored five potential options for the structure of the new body ranging from non-statutory partnership approaches to shared ownership of a new jointly-owned company. These options were considered and evaluated as part of the Phase 2 project⁷. The options considered were:

- A partnership with no statutory basis supported by a legally binding partnership agreement;
- A structure supported by local government legislation enabling public and private participation (a joint committee or a joint board);
- A new company owned by the public sector;
- Delivery under the auspices of an existing public body;
- A new public body established by legislation.

54. On balance, the Scottish Government concluded that the option that would deliver the best outcome for the south of Scotland would be for the organisation to be established as a new public body. This was the most ambitious option and demonstrated the Government's commitment to transformational change and inclusive growth. A new public body was favoured as it would ensure that the new organisation was autonomous, with its own identity, staff and budget and could act as a voice for the area. It would be able to support additional businesses, invest in business infrastructure, provide an increased local presence and deliver support for communities. The function of the new body would be clearly defined in law and its remit would include a social dimension. It would also enable engagement across the private, third and public sectors.

55. Recognising that taking legislation through the Scottish Parliament takes time, the Enterprise and Skills Phase 2 report also committed to putting in place interim arrangements to ensure that the south of Scotland benefited from a new approach as early as possible. On 13 September 2017, the Cabinet Secretary for the Economy, Jobs and Fair Work confirmed the establishment of an interim partnership to respond to the economic needs and opportunities of the south of Scotland in advance of the establishment of a new agency. The South of Scotland Economic Partnership (SOSEP) brings together the private, third and further and higher education sectors, as well as the seven key public sector

⁷ [Enterprise and Skills Review Report on Phase 2: South of Scotland Enterprise Agency, 22 June 2017](#)

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organisations supporting economic development in the south of Scotland. As well as taking forward a fresh approach and engaging with stakeholders, SOSEP has an important role in helping the Scottish Government in its design of the new body.

Effects on Equal Opportunities, Human Rights, Island Communities, Local Government, Sustainable Development etc.

Equal Opportunities

56. An equality impact assessment has been completed, and will be published on the Scottish Government website to coincide with the introduction of the Bill. Based on this assessment, the Scottish Government considers that the Bill's provisions will not negatively impact on protected groups. Rather there are several areas where it could have a positive impact - for example, growing the economy through inclusive growth and a commitment to fair work could increase employment and skills opportunities for all.

57. Once established, the body itself will be subject to public sector equality duty which requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out activities. The specific duties that underpin the public sector equality duty ensure equality is integrated into all the body's functions by including requirements to: report on mainstreaming the equality duty; assess and review policies and practices; publish equality outcomes and report progress; and collect and use employee data. In addition, the body will need to actively consider how it could reduce inequalities of outcome, caused by socio-economic disadvantage, to meet the Fairer Scotland Duty.

Human Rights

58. The Scottish Government is satisfied that the provisions within the Bill are compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights and do not give rise to any issues under it. The new body does not have an adjudicatory role or any powers to interfere with property rights or invade privacy.

59. The provisions in international human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights have been

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considered during the preparation of this Bill, and will continue to be taken into account in the implementation and operation of SOSE. For example, recognising the right to work in just and favourable conditions (Part III, Article 7 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) through mainstreaming fair work in its own practices, and encouraging and promoting it through business.

60. Human rights, including the rights of children, are central to the Scottish Government's commitment to fair work in Scotland which is defined as work that offers effective voice, opportunity, security, fulfilment and respect⁸. Human rights are indivisible, interrelated and interdependent, therefore fair work can contribute to the enjoyment of other economic, social and cultural rights. This will be intrinsic to the new body, given its aims to further both economic and social development, and support and grow communities.

61. Human rights principles derived from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights have also been considered. For example, events during the consultation provided the opportunity for rights-holders to participate and share their views. Such engagement will be ongoing, including with young people, and moving forward the new body will take a collaborative, integrated approach. The Bill also provides a clear framework of accountability for the new body and ensuring transparency through reporting and ministerial oversight.

Island Communities

62. The south of Scotland area, as defined by this Bill, has no inhabited islands. The only issues arising for island communities would be in circumstances if the body operates outside its geographical boundaries. Should the body have any future programme of work which includes island communities, it would work in partnership with HIE to ensure island communities are not negatively affected.

Local Government

63. The Bill does not direct any additional duties or incur costs on local authorities. The new body will, however, engage and work closely with the local authorities within the south of Scotland to align activities to maximise

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<http://www.fairworkconvention.scot/framework/FairWorkConventionFrameworkFull.pdf>

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impact and outcomes and deliver shared ambitions. Dumfries and Galloway Council and Scottish Borders Council are already actively engaged with the South of Scotland Economic Partnership and such collaboration is expected to continue going forward.

Sustainable Development

64. The potential environmental impact of the Bill has been considered within the terms of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. The view taken is that the Bill, which will provide the legislative framework and overarching powers for the new body, is likely to have no direct or indirect environmental effects and can therefore be considered exempt, as per section 7 of the 2005 Act. A pre-screening exemption notification has been submitted to the Consultation Authorities as per the requirements of the 2005 Act. Consequently there is no need for a full Strategic Environmental Assessment to be undertaken. As appropriate, future plans, programmes and strategies that develop from the creation of the public body would be considered for their own likely environmental effects.

65. Scotland's Economic Strategy highlights that, as well as being a desired characteristic of growth, sustainability is an important long-term driver of sustainable economic growth. The Scottish Government's focus on sustainability is explicit within the National Performance Framework, to ensure that sustainable development is embedded in all activity. SOSE will provide a new opportunity to drive sustainable and inclusive economic growth, and help contribute towards those National Outcomes.

66. Sustainability will be key to driving forward the south of Scotland economy, and will be integral to the work of the new body in: supporting a diverse and resilient economy which has thriving and innovative businesses offering fair work for everyone; sustaining and growing communities that are resilient and better equipped to play a greater role in the economic, social and environmental success of their area; ensuring people have the skills needed now and in the future; and tackling inequality at all levels to create opportunities for all across the south of Scotland.

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