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**THIRD SECTOR DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY**

**REPORT OF MEETINGS**

**South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership**

**2<sup>nd</sup> September 2021**

**THIRD SECTOR DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY SUMMARY**

*Working together to put our sector first*  
Dumfries and Galloway's Third Sector Interface

## KEY POINTS

**PLEASE NOTE: THIS IS A PERSONAL RECORD BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF TSDG, NORMA AUSTIN HART. IT IS BASED ON MY OWN OBSERVATIONS. IT IS NOT A FORMAL MINUTE OF THE MEETING.**

1. The REP had a full discussion about the consultation- now concluded- about the final version of the Regional Economic Strategy (RES). The draft RES was positively received by the majority of those who engaged over the summer months.
2. Proposed refinements:
  - a. Greater and upfront emphasis on the importance of the Just Transition to Net Zero and the significance of the economic opportunities it gives rise to;
  - b. Acknowledgement of and explicit references included relating to nature loss and the need for nature restoration i.e. biodiversity as well as climate change emergency;
  - c. A change in emphasis from 'conserving' and 'managing' Natural Capital to instead one of 'harnessing' and 'enhancing' it;
  - d. Greater and upfront acknowledgement of the concept of Community Wealth Building;
  - e. Inclusion of references to travel being 'sustainable' travel with explicit reference to 'active travel' too which is important for the region;
  - f. Stronger and more consistent recognition that many elements of the RES apply equally to communities, organisations and the Third Sector beyond simply businesses;
  - g. Stronger acknowledgement of deprivation, poverty and the importance of wellbeing, all of which the RES can help to positively address;
  - h. More explicit acknowledgment of a number of opportunities particularly those for existing well-established key sectors within the region;
  - i. Increased emphasis on being outward facing and working towards increasing the region's global reputation;
  - j. The addition of a small number of challenges and clarification and simplification to existing ones;
  - k. Slight rewording of a small number of priorities to better convey and sharpen up their focus.
3. The REP agreed to the recommendations in the report and to endorse the refinements to finalise the strategy and to endorse the final steps to launch the strategy
4. The REP was asked to agree the three year action plan and to ensure it captures the right actions at the right level.
5. Actions should add value and build on the themes and priorities in the RES.
6. People are eager to see the what and how so the action plan will be welcomed.
7. This is still a work in progress and it will take another month to finalise.

8. We are not starting with a blank sheet: Borderlands, SoSE are underway along with other good projects in partner organisations.
9. The discussion about the action plan covered the following:
  - a. Language of the action plan needs to have less jargon and fewer acronyms.
  - b. Action plan needs to make links with workforce issues in NHS and social care.
  - c. We need a digital strategy not just a digital skills strategy.
  - d. All reference to 'businesses' should be followed by 'and social enterprises'.
  - e. We need actions that help us understand and remove barriers to innovation.
  - f. There are some areas which are in recruitment crisis and some urgent actions are needed.
  - g. Reference should be made to the ambition for a consultation on a national park in the south of Scotland.
  - h. Wind farms should also be referenced in relation to their role in the local economy and opportunities for energy self-sufficiency in the area.
  - i. More prominence for home energy efficiency.
  - j. Clarity about what is meant by community empowerment; top down versus bottom up.
10. Next version of action plan will be based on this discussion as well as Borderlands delivery plan. Final version for the REP should be ready by 1 October.
11. The South of Scotland Convention on 4 October.

