



Borders Sporting and Cultural Estate Review Report

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Executive Summary

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Executive Summary

Introduction and Context

Scottish Borders Council and Live Borders face significant financial and operational challenges in maintaining their extensive sporting, leisure, and cultural estate. Rising energy costs, ageing infrastructure, and declining participation levels necessitate a strategic transformation of leisure, cultural, and community assets.

This review sets out a long-term vision for a high-quality, modernised estate. The ambition is to create the right suite of facilities that are fit for the 21st century and beyond. These facilities should be attractive, affordable, accessible, and sustainable. They must also meet the evolving needs of residents, visitors, communities, and clubs across the Scottish Borders.

The review provides an evidence-based assessment of the current estate and identifies opportunities to rationalise assets, improve operational effectiveness, and develop a financially sustainable service model. It aligns with key national and local strategic priorities, including those set by sportscotland, Creative Scotland, and Scotland's Net Zero commitments, while continuing to support inclusive community access to vital health, wellbeing, and cultural services

The key objectives of this review are to:

- Assess the condition, utilisation, and financial performance of all sporting, cultural, and community assets managed by Live Borders.
- Identify rationalisation options, including facility closures, co-location opportunities, and community asset transfers (CATs).
- Develop costed proposals to deliver savings of between £2.5 million and £3 million per annum.
- Ensure alignment with national and local priorities for health, wellbeing, and cultural engagement.

Key Insights from the Current Estate Overview

Live Borders operates a diverse portfolio of 70 facilities, including swimming pools, leisure centres, libraries, museums, galleries, theatres, archives, town halls, and

community centres. Many of these assets are ageing, with high maintenance costs and low energy efficiency.

- **High Operating Costs** – The total expenditure in 2023/24 reached £12.57 million, an increase of 17% since 2019/20, largely due to energy costs and wage inflation.
- **Declining Participation** – Leisure venue usage remains 10% below pre-pandemic levels, particularly in swimming and fitness. Similarly, cultural venues and libraries are struggling with declining visitor numbers.
- **Uneven Facility Utilisation** – Several assets have low visitor numbers, contributing to financial inefficiencies. Libraries, community halls, and some cultural venues operate at very low occupancy rates.
- **Subsidy Dependence** – Live Borders receives an annual management fee from the Council, but this is no longer sustainable. Additional one-off financial support has increased reliance on public funding. Without significant change, Live Borders financial dependence on the Council will only increase over time. Live Borders are also forecasting an additional deficit of £210k for the current financial year which ends on the 31st of March.

Key Challenges and Opportunities

The current challenges facing Live Borders are rooted in a wider public sector financial climate, which has led to sustained underinvestment in planned and preventative maintenance, repair, refurbishment, and strategic planning. As a result, the condition and sustainability of the sporting, cultural, and community estate have been significantly compromised. This has created a pressing need to transform service delivery and asset management. The following key challenges have been identified:

Challenges

- **Financial Sustainability** – Live Borders faces an unsustainable deficit, requiring urgent action to reduce costs and increase revenues.
- **Estate Condition** – Many facilities require investment to remain operational, yet there is insufficient capital funding available.
- **Low Commercial Performance** – Several assets underperform in income generation, with pricing structures often failing to reflect market conditions.

- Workforce Inefficiencies – Staffing costs account for over 60% of expenditure, with opportunities to streamline administrative and operational roles.
- Energy Costs and Net Zero Compliance – Utility costs have nearly doubled in five years, requiring investment in sustainable energy solutions.
- Community Access and Engagement – Some rural areas face limited access to services, while usage trends indicate changing community needs.

Opportunities

- Estate Rationalisation – Closing underutilised facilities, co-locating services, and investing in high-impact, multi-use venues can deliver substantial and long-term savings. To be effective, this must be approached through bold and courageous decision-making, prioritising strategic outcomes. A shift towards fewer, bigger, and better facilities will ensure more efficient use of resources, improved service quality, and better alignment with modern community needs.
- Workforce and Shared Services Efficiencies – An FTE reduction of 52.63 posts and/or potential shared service agreements with the Council could generate over £1.7 million in annual savings.
- Strategic Pricing and Membership Growth – Increasing the average membership yield from £19.25 to £25-£30 per month and targeting latent demand of 4,315 members could generate up to £1 million in additional annual income.
- Commercialisation of Programmes – The Learn to Swim programme, gym memberships, and hall hire pricing adjustments could generate an additional £1.6 million per year.
- Gift Aid Income – Introducing opt-out donation models could generate between £178,635 and £250,089 annually.
- Investment in Energy Efficiency – Capital investment in energy efficiency measures could reduce operational costs and support Net Zero targets.
- Maximising Use of the School Estate – Increasing community and club access to the school estate, particularly for sport and physical activity, offers an opportunity to reduce pressure on ageing standalone facilities and unlock wider savings across the estate.

Summary of Options and Financial Implications

The review identifies several options for transforming the sporting and cultural estate while balancing financial sustainability with community needs. The proposed measures are summarised below. It should be noted that a number of these options are interlinked and therefore should not be viewed as a cumulative total.

| Category | Potential Savings / Income |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Workforce Alignment | £1.62m |
| Shared Services | £0.41m |
| Staff/Demand Analysis | £0.20m |
| Pricing | £0.40m |
| Commercialisation | £0.29m |
| Gift Aid Income | £0.18m |
| Rationalisation/Consolidation | £1.18m |
| Business Cases – Specific Facilities | £1.07m |

Key Rationalisation Proposals:

- Close underutilised venues such as Queens Leisure Centre, certain libraries, and some town halls.
- Transform key leisure assets, including:
 - Teviotdale Leisure Centre – Redevelop to reduce deficit from £547,000 to £17,000.
 - Gytes Leisure Centre – Convert the sports hall into a gym, turning a £91,000 deficit into a £214,000 surplus.
 - Tweedbank Bowling Hall – Repurpose into a fitness facility, moving from a £45,000 deficit to a £247,000 surplus.
- Co-locate services to increase utilisation and improve cost efficiency.
- Community Asset Transfer: consider a number of assets for community asset transfer including community centres and some hall facilities.

Conclusion and Next Steps

The findings of this review make it clear that significant change is required to ensure the sustainability of Live Borders' services. The current operating model is financially unsustainable, and without intervention, the Council will face increasing financial pressures.

The transformation programme will be implemented in a phased approach over 36 months, ensuring controlled transition, minimal service disruption, and stakeholder engagement.

Immediate Priorities (0–6 months)

- Recruit a permanent chief Executive Officer and Senior Leadership team to lead and implement Live Borders Transformation.
- Begin workforce realignment and shared service integration.
- Implement revised pricing models for leisure memberships and cultural venues.
- Engage with communities on rationalisation proposals.
- Develop detailed business cases for facility investments and redevelopments.

Medium-Term Priorities (6–24 months)

- Proceed with the closure and consolidation of underutilised venues.
- Expand the Learn to Swim programme and fitness memberships.
- Implement energy efficiency projects to reduce long-term costs.

Long-Term Goals (24–36 months)

- Deliver full redevelopment of Teviotdale, Gytes, and Tweedbank facilities.
- Achieve full integration of digital and AI-driven efficiencies.
- Reach financial sustainability targets and reduce reliance on Council funding.

By implementing the recommendations outlined in this report, Live Borders can create a financially sustainable, modern, and community-focused sporting and cultural estate that continues to serve the people of the Scottish Borders effectively for years to come.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Report

This report has been prepared to support Scottish Borders Council and Live Borders in addressing critical financial and operational challenges across their extensive sporting and cultural estate. The primary objective of the consultancy is to conduct a comprehensive review, identify opportunities for rationalisation, and develop costed proposals that will contribute to achieving substantial annual savings in the range of £2.5 to £3 million.

The scope of this review includes:

- Conducting a detailed assessment of all sporting, cultural, and community assets managed by Live Borders.
- Evaluating the condition, utilisation, and financial performance of each facility.
- Identifying potential rationalisation options, such as facility closures, co-location opportunities, and community asset transfers (CAT).
- Ensuring alignment with national and local strategies, including sportscotland's review of the national sporting estate and Creative Scotland's cultural priorities.
- Achieving these objectives is essential to ensure the long-term sustainability of Live Borders' services and to help the Council meet the growing financial pressures while continuing to deliver valuable community services.

Strategic Importance for the Council and Live Borders

This review is of significant strategic importance for both Scottish Borders Council and Live Borders. It provides an opportunity to:

- Address the increasing financial challenges caused by reductions in public funding, rising energy costs, and growing operational expenses.
- Modernise the sporting and cultural estate to better serve the evolving needs of local communities.

- Align the estate with broader policy ambitions, including the Net Zero agenda, the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, and strategies to promote physical and mental wellbeing.
- Enhance collaboration with national bodies such as sportscotland and Creative Scotland to attract additional external funding and resources.

In particular, the need for financial savings makes this review timely and essential. The Council is aiming for transformative changes that will not only improve service delivery but also secure the financial viability of these assets for the future. This effort comes against a backdrop of severe and sustained financial pressures within the public sector at both national and local levels, necessitating bold transformation to achieve a more sustainable position for the future.

1.2 Context

Overview of Live Borders and Its Remit

Live Borders is a charitable trust responsible for managing a diverse portfolio of cultural, sporting, and community facilities across the Scottish Borders region. Its remit includes the delivery of high-quality services in areas such as sport, fitness, heritage, arts, and libraries. As a key partner of the Council, Live Borders plays a vital role in improving the health, wellbeing, and cultural life of local residents.

The organisation manages an extensive range of facilities, including swimming pools, leisure centres, libraries, museums, and theatres, providing opportunities for physical activity, cultural engagement, and lifelong learning. Live Borders' services reach a broad demographic, catering to individuals of all ages and backgrounds.

Key National and Local Challenges

Several external and internal factors have posed significant challenges for Live Borders and Scottish Borders Council in recent years:

- **Pandemic Recovery:** The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted facility operations, leading to a decline in revenue and significant changes in user behaviour. Recovery efforts have focused on rebuilding user confidence, adapting services to meet evolving needs, and addressing the financial impact of prolonged closures.
- **Cost-of-Living Crisis:** The rising cost of living has affected both operational costs and user affordability. Energy costs, in particular, have increased

sharply, placing additional pressure on budgets. Staff costs have also risen due to wage inflation and national living wage increases, further exacerbating financial pressures.

- **Net Zero Agenda:** Scottish Borders Council has committed to ambitious Net Zero targets, which require significant investment in energy efficiency measures across the estate, such as upgrading heating systems, improving insulation, and exploring renewable energy options.
- **High Number of Assets and Poor Condition:** The estate comprises a large number of facilities, many of which are ageing and in poor condition. A significant portion requires urgent investment to ensure compliance with modern standards and to maintain safe and welcoming environments for users.
- **Low Levels of Utilisation:** Several facilities suffer from low utilisation rates, making it challenging to justify their ongoing operational costs. Maximising the use of core facilities and exploring opportunities for co-location can improve efficiency and increase community impact.
- **Public Sector financial pressures across Scotland:** Local government investment has reduced by over 20% in real terms between 2010/11 and 2022/23. Latest forecasts indicate that Scottish Borders Council faces an estimated funding gap of 50 million pounds over the next 10 years. The Accounts Commission's Transformation of Councils report highlights the urgency for change, recommending exploring alternative funding sources, improving cost efficiency and developing sustainable spending models. Scottish Borders Council were praised by the Accounts Commission in a recent report for the refreshed approach being taken to how services will be delivered moving forward.

National and Local Strategies and Policies

National Context

The Borders Sporting and Cultural Estate Review aligns with key national policies and strategies that shape the delivery of sport, physical activity, culture, and health services across Scotland. These include:

National Performance Framework

The Scottish Government's National Performance Framework provides a vision for a successful and sustainable Scotland.

It sets national outcomes that guide public service delivery, including improving health and wellbeing, reducing inequalities, supporting inclusive economic growth, and enhancing environmental sustainability. This review contributes to these outcomes by ensuring efficient and accessible leisure and cultural services that promote active lifestyles and community engagement.

National Physical Activity for Health Framework

This framework, developed by the Scottish Government, aims to increase physical activity participation to improve public health outcomes. It sets out priorities for increasing active lifestyles, reducing health inequalities, and integrating physical activity into healthcare and community settings. The framework is particularly relevant to the role of Live Borders in promoting health and wellbeing through its leisure and sporting facilities.

sportscotland's National Strategy for Sport

This strategy focuses on creating inclusive, accessible, and modern facilities that promote participation and performance at all levels. It highlights the importance of sustainable facility management and co-location of services to optimise resources and community impact.

Creative Scotland's Cultural Strategy

The national cultural strategy prioritises enhancing Scotland's cultural infrastructure, ensuring accessibility, and fostering vibrant, sustainable cultural communities. It promotes the integration of cultural services with broader wellbeing and economic development strategies, a key consideration in Live Borders' future service model.

Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) Strategy

The **Public Library Strategy for Scotland 2021-2025** sets out a vision for modern, accessible, and sustainable library services. Key themes include digital transformation, lifelong learning, and libraries as community hubs. The strategy supports the co-location of services and highlights the role of libraries in tackling social isolation, improving literacy, and providing access to digital resources.

Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS) Strategy

MGS's **Strategic Framework 2023-2030** aims to ensure Scotland's museums and galleries are sustainable, inclusive, and innovative.

Key priorities include improving digital engagement, supporting the sector's financial resilience, and enhancing community impact. The strategy aligns with the review's objectives to modernise cultural services and integrate them into wider community hubs.

Net Zero Strategy

The Scottish Government's Net Zero Strategy outlines commitments to reducing carbon emissions across public services. This aligns with the review's focus on improving the energy efficiency of leisure and cultural facilities, exploring renewable energy sources, and ensuring environmental sustainability.

Local Context

The review is shaped by Scottish Borders Council's strategic priorities, as outlined in several key plans and policies:

Scottish Borders Council Plan 2025-2026

The Council's Corporate Plan sets out priorities for achieving financial sustainability, improving health and wellbeing, and enhancing community resilience. The rationalisation and modernisation of the sporting and cultural estate are central to achieving these aims.

Joint Transformation Programme and Asset Review

Scottish Borders Council and Live Borders are engaged in a Joint Transformation Programme, which includes a comprehensive Asset Review aimed at improving the efficiency and sustainability of public services. This review forms a key component of that programme, contributing to:

- Strategic asset rationalisation, ensuring facilities are fit for purpose and financially viable.
- Co-location opportunities, maximising the use of shared spaces and integrating services for greater community impact.
- Investment prioritisation, directing resources to modern, high-performing facilities while managing underused assets more effectively.
- Governance and operational improvements, ensuring streamlined decision-making and accountability across services.

Live Borders Business Plan (2024/25)

This plan outlines a one-year transitional strategy designed to stabilise the organisation's financial position while preparing for a longer-term transformation programme. The plan emphasises co-location, rationalisation, and asset optimisation while maintaining community access and enhancing health and wellbeing outcomes.

Sport and Physical Activity Strategy (2025-2030)

The Council's new draft Sport and Physical Activity Strategy aims to increase participation in sport and physical activity, reduce health inequalities, and provide modern, high-quality facilities. The review directly contributes to these objectives by optimising facility provision and ensuring financial sustainability. The strategy highlights:

- The importance of co-located and multi-use facilities to enhance access and efficiency.
- The need for stronger integration with health services, recognising the role of sport and leisure in preventative healthcare.
- A focus on increasing participation in underrepresented groups, particularly through affordable and targeted programming.
- Opportunities to modernise and rationalise the estate to ensure long-term sustainability.

Cultural Strategy

The aim of developing a new culture and arts strategy for the Scottish Borders (due spring 2025) is to support the enhancement of the quality, variety and accessibility of cultural experiences across the region. This aligns with national objectives to empower, transform and sustain the cultural sector, with leadership in targeted action to support the array of grassroots initiatives across the region.

Your Community Plan (LOIP)

The Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) focuses on reducing inequalities and improving community wellbeing. The review supports this by ensuring leisure and cultural services are accessible, sustainable, and aligned with local needs.

NHS Borders and Health and Social Care Partnership (H&SCP)

The review must align with NHS Borders and the Scottish Borders Health and Social Care Partnership's Strategic Framework 2023-2026, which emphasises:

- **Prevention and Early Intervention:** Increasing physical activity and cultural engagement as part of preventative healthcare.
- **Tackling Health Inequalities:** Ensuring leisure and cultural services support vulnerable groups and those at risk of poor health outcomes.
- **Integrated Care Models:** Strengthening collaboration between leisure, culture, and health services to provide holistic community wellbeing solutions.
- **Sustainable Services:** Aligning facility investment and rationalisation with broader health and social care infrastructure plans.

By ensuring the sporting and cultural estate supports NHS and HSCP priorities, Live Borders can strengthen its role in preventative health and social care integration.

The **Tourism Strategy Delivery Plan** identifies the role of cultural and sporting attractions in driving economic growth. The review contributes to this strategy by ensuring that key venues remain viable, attractive, and capable of supporting the region's tourism ambitions.

Cross-Cutting Themes

The review identifies several cross-cutting themes that underpin the strategic transformation of the estate:

Financial Sustainability: Addressing budgetary pressures by optimising facility use, reducing inefficiencies, and enhancing revenue generation.

Service Modernisation: Creating contemporary, multi-use hubs that reflect changing community needs and preferences.

Community Access and Inclusion: Ensuring services are accessible to all, particularly marginalised and underserved groups.

Technology and Digital Transformation: Leveraging digital tools to enhance service delivery for residents and visitors, engagement, and operational efficiency.

Partnership Working: Strengthening collaboration between Live Borders, the Council, NHS Borders, wider partners and third-sector organisations to deliver integrated services.

Sustainability and Net Zero: Improving environmental sustainability through energy efficiency, renewable technologies, and eco-friendly facility management.

Furthermore, the Council faces severe financial pressures. Budget pressures are compounded by rising energy costs, increasing staff costs, and the high maintenance needs of its extensive estate. Many of the facilities are aging, with significant portions requiring immediate investment to ensure they remain functional and safe for users. Low utilisation rates in several key facilities add to the challenge, demanding a more focused approach to optimise the asset base.

These local and national strategies provide a crucial framework for the review, ensuring that recommendations are aligned with broader policy objectives and deliver meaningful outcomes for local communities.

1.3 Structure of the Report

This report is structured to provide a comprehensive analysis of the key issues and opportunities within the Live Borders estate. Following this introduction and context, the report is divided into the following sections:

- **Section 2: Methodology** – Outlines the approach and methodology used in conducting the review, including data collection, stakeholder engagement, and analysis techniques.
- **Section 3: Current Estate Overview** – Provides an assessment of the existing estate, highlighting its condition, usage patterns, and financial performance.
- **Section 4: Key Challenges and Opportunities** – Identifies the major challenges facing the estate and explores opportunities for improvement and optimisation.
- **Section 5: Options Appraisal and Costed Proposals** – Details the options for rationalisation, investment, and co-location, supported by financial analysis.
- **Section 6: Recommendations and Implementation Plan** – Presents a set of actionable recommendations along with a phased implementation strategy.

- **Section 7: Stakeholder Engagement Summary** – Summarises the consultation process, capturing feedback from key stakeholders and community representatives.

Each section builds upon the previous one, ensuring a logical and cohesive flow of information that supports evidence-based decision-making.

2. Methodology

Overview of the Approach

The methodology employed for this review was designed to provide a comprehensive assessment of the sporting, cultural, and community estate managed by Live Borders on behalf of Scottish Borders Council. The approach combined robust data analysis, stakeholder engagement, site visits, and financial modelling to develop informed and evidence-based recommendations.

This multi-phased methodology ensured that the review was grounded in a thorough understanding of the current estate, its operational context, and the financial challenges faced by both Live Borders and Scottish Borders Council.

Key Phases of the Review

The project methodology was delivered in the following key phases:

2.1 Phase 1: Project Inception and Planning

The first phase involved establishing the project framework and ensuring clarity on objectives, timelines, and deliverables. Key activities included:

- **Inception Meeting:** Conducted with key stakeholders from Scottish Borders Council and Live Borders to confirm the scope, approach, and expectations.
- **Document Review:** Reviewed strategic documents, previous reports, financial data, and relevant policies to understand the context and strategic alignment.
- **Development of Project Plan:** Created a detailed project plan outlining milestones, responsibilities, and key engagement points.

2.2 Phase 2: Data Collection and Analysis

This phase focused on gathering quantitative and qualitative data to build a comprehensive picture of the estate's current performance. Activities included:

- **Asset Condition and Utilisation Assessment:** Collated and analysed data on asset condition, utilisation rates, income and expenditure, and operational efficiency.

- **Financial Analysis:** Reviewed budgets, maintenance costs, and financial projections to assess the financial performance of individual facilities and the estate as a whole.
- **Policy and Strategy Alignment:** Ensured that the review aligned with key national and local strategies, including sportscotland's national strategy, Creative Scotland priorities, and the Council's corporate plans.

2.3 Phase 3: Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement was a critical component of the review, providing valuable insights into the current operational model and community needs. Key activities included:

- **Consultation with Key Stakeholders:** Engaged with senior managers from Scottish Borders Council, Live Borders, and relevant national bodies such as sportscotland and Creative Scotland.
- **Service and Venue Manager Interviews:** Conducted interviews with frontline managers to gain insights into operational challenges, user feedback, and opportunities for service improvement.
- **Workshops and Focus Groups:** Held workshops with key stakeholders to validate findings, discuss potential rationalisation options, and gather feedback on preliminary recommendations.

2.4 Phase 4: Site Visits

Site visits were conducted to enhance our understanding of the scale, quality, and scope of services being delivered across the estate. These visits provided first-hand insights into the operational model and the physical condition of the facilities. Key aspects of the site visits included:

- **Condition Assessment:** Observed the physical state of facilities to identify maintenance and investment requirements.
- **Service Delivery Review:** Assessed the range and quality of services being delivered at each facility.
- **Operational Efficiency:** Identified areas for improvement in the day-to-day management and operations.

2.5 Phase 5: Options Appraisal and Financial Modelling

This phase involved evaluating a range of options for rationalisation, co-location, and investment to ensure the long-term sustainability of the estate. Key activities included:

- **Development of Options:** Identified and appraised various options, including facility closures, co-location opportunities, and community asset transfers. This was to include Laidlaw Memorial Pool.
- **Cost-Benefit Analysis:** Conducted financial modelling to assess the cost implications and potential savings of each option.
- **Impact Assessment:** Considered the social, economic, and service delivery impacts of the proposed options.

2.6 Phase 6: Formulation of Recommendations and Implementation Plan

The final phase focused on developing practical recommendations and a phased implementation plan to guide the transformation of the estate. Activities included:

- **Drafting the Final Report:** Presented findings, options, and recommendations in a structured report.
- **Phased Implementation Plan:** Developed a detailed implementation plan with timelines, resource requirements, and key milestones.
- **Validation and Final Consultation:** Engaged with key stakeholders to validate the recommendations and ensure alignment with strategic priorities.

2.7 Methodological Considerations

Throughout the review, several key considerations were taken into account to ensure a robust and comprehensive approach:

- **Evidence-Based Decision-Making:** Recommendations were grounded in quantitative and qualitative data.
- **Stakeholder Involvement:** Active engagement with a broad range of stakeholders ensured that the review reflected diverse perspectives and local priorities.

- **Strategic Alignment:** Ensured that all proposals were aligned with national and local strategies to maximise funding opportunities and policy compliance.
- **Sustainability Focus:** Emphasised the importance of financial sustainability and the Council's Net Zero ambitions in the development of options and recommendations.

3. Current Estate Overview

3.1 Estate Composition

The Live Borders Trust arrangements were originally established in 2003 with the formation of Borders Sports and Leisure Trust. Over the years, the remit of Live Borders has expanded significantly, incorporating cultural and community services in 2016, the addition of The Great Tapestry of Scotland in 2020 and the management of community access to sporting facilities at high schools (Peebles, Kelso, Jedburgh) and management of a growing number of synthetic 2G/3G pitches - including those on school campuses (i.e.) pitches at Netherdale, Melrose, Hawick and Selkirk. While Live Borders has previously managed Active Schools and Sports Development Services, these have recently returned to be managed directly by Scottish Borders Council.

Live Borders remains the culture, sport, and leisure charity trust for the Scottish Borders, committed to making communities healthier, happier, and stronger. It operates and manages a wide range of facilities across the region, including:

- Archives
- Arts & Creativity
- Community Access to School Facilities
- Concerts & Live Events
- Community Centres
- Leisure Centres & Gyms
- Visitor Attractions (including The Great Tapestry of Scotland)
- Museums & Galleries
- School Holiday Programmes
- Swimming Pools
- Synthetic Pitches
- Town Halls
- Libraries

Additionally, it is important to note that two swimming pool facilities in the Scottish Borders are operated by independent community organisations: Duns Swimming Pool and Laidlaw Memorial Pool. Laidlaw Memorial Pool has recently closed due to ongoing and significant financial difficulties.

Under contract from Scottish Borders Council (SBC), Live Borders has management and operational responsibility for 65 facilities, all owned by SBC. In addition to these 65 facilities, there are:

- 5 Library Contact Centres (service delivered by SBC staff, buildings owned by SBC)

- A fleet of mobile libraries managed and operated by Live Borders
- 1 Tri-Fitness gym in Galashiels (leased building – service managed and operated by Live Borders)
- 1 Live Borders headquarters building (owned by Live Borders and leased to Cornerstone for their Learning Disability service)

Locality Analysis

The distribution of facilities across the five localities in the Scottish Borders is shown in the **Table 3-1** below. This analysis highlights the diversity of the estate and the significant concentration of facilities in Eildon, the most populous locality:

Table 3-1 Locality Summary

| Locality | Pool | Leisure Centre | Studio | School-Sports | Pitch Location | Library | Library Contact Ctr | Museum | Town Hall | Visitor Attraction | Comm. Centre | Other | Total |
|---------------------|----------|----------------|----------|---------------|----------------|----------|---------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------------|--------------|----------|-----------|
| Berwickshire | 1 | | 1 | | | 1 | 2 | 1 | | 1 | 2 | | 9 |
| Cheviot | 1 | | | 2 | | | 2 | 2 | 2 | | 1 | | 10 |
| Eildon | 2 | 2 | | | 3 | 4 | | 3 | 7 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 30 |
| Teviot & Liddesdale | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 10 |
| Tweeddale | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | | 11 |
| Total | 6 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 11 | 13 | 3 | 10 | 3 | 70 |

Note: The category "Other" includes unique facilities such as indoor bowling centres and caravan parks.

Eildon hosts the largest number and broadest range of facilities, reflecting its status as the most populous locality. The other four localities each have a similar number of facilities, ranging between 9 and 15. This distribution highlights the geographical spread and diversity of the services provided by Live Borders, which aim to meet the distinct needs of each community.

In addition to the fixed estate, Live Borders operates a fleet of mobile libraries that deliver vital services to more remote areas, ensuring access to library resources for communities with limited transport options.

National Context Comparison

When benchmarked against other rural and urban areas across Scotland, the size and scope of the Live Borders estate is notably large relative to the population it serves. Few other local authority areas operate such a wide-ranging and geographically dispersed portfolio of leisure, cultural, and community facilities. This

expansive footprint presents both opportunities and significant challenges in terms of operational efficiency, financial sustainability, and service modernisation.

3.2 Financial Overview

Live Borders' financial profile has evolved significantly over the past four years, influenced by broader economic pressures, pandemic-related disruptions, and shifts in service demand. This section presents a snapshot of the organisation's key income and expenditure trends, highlighting where revenue streams have grown, where costs have intensified, and how financial support from the Council has become increasingly important. By examining these patterns, it becomes evident that Live Borders must take strategic action to address rising operational costs, declining participation in certain service areas, and a growing reliance on external funding. The subsequent subsections look at core income sources, expenditure drivers, and Council contributions, offering a clearer picture of the organisation's financial challenges and opportunities for achieving greater sustainability.

Table 3-2 provides a snapshot of Live Borders' financial performance across four selected financial years, intentionally excluding 2020/21 due to the pandemic's extraordinary impact. The data illustrates the interplay between reduced income (excluding the Council Management Fee) and rising expenditure, ultimately highlighting a growing operating deficit that underscores the need for strategic financial interventions.

- **Notable Decline in Income**

Between 2019/20 and 2023/24, total income (which excludes the Council Management Fee) dropped from £5.09 million to £4.81 million – a 5.4% decrease overall. The figure hit a low of £3.98 million in 2021/22, indicating that some services had not fully rebounded post-pandemic.
- **Substantial Increase in Expenditure**

Expenditure rose significantly, from £10.76 million in 2019/20 to £12.57 million in 2023/24 – a 16.8% increase. This is likely driven by staffing, utilities, and maintenance costs.
- **Widening Operating Deficit**

As a consequence of lower income and higher costs, the total operating deficit expanded from £5.67 million in 2019/20 to £7.76 million in 2023/24 – a 37% increase. This underscores growing financial pressures and highlights the urgency of introducing cost-saving and revenue-enhancing measures.

- **Exclusion of Council Management Fee**

The income figures above do not include the Management Fee provided by the Council. Even so, the trend of rising costs outpacing revenue remains clear, necessitating a more sustainable financial model moving forward.

- **2024-25 Forecast**

Live Borders are also forecasting an additional deficit of £210k for the current financial year which ends on the 31st of March.

Table 3-2 Financial Overview

| Cost Centre | 2019-20 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 |
|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Income | -£5,087,235 | -£3,976,883 | -£5,273,222 | -£4,810,867 |
| Expenditure | £10,757,183 | £9,382,912 | £11,343,528 | £12,566,553 |
| Total | £5,669,947 | £5,406,029 | £6,070,307 | £7,755,686 |

3.2.1 Income

Income Distribution by Service Area

Table 3-3 highlights the percentage of total income generated by each service area within Live Borders, excluding the Council Management Fee.

- **Sport and Leisure** dominates income generation, accounting for 68% of the total income. This reflects the significant role that sports facilities, fitness programmes, and leisure activities play in Live Borders' revenue model.
- **Culture** contributes 30.97% of the total income, driven by income from cultural assets, events, and activities such as museums and heritage sites. This proportion demonstrates the importance of culture to the overall financial performance.
- **Head Office** operations provide a minimal 0.65% of income, indicating that this is primarily an administrative cost centre rather than a revenue-generating function.
- **Libraries** contribute just 0.37%, reflecting their core focus on public service delivery and community engagement rather than income generation.

This distribution confirms the strategic importance of sport and leisure as the primary revenue stream for Live Borders. Cultural services also play a crucial role, while

income from head office and libraries remains comparatively small, consistent with their operational focus.

Table 3-3 Income by Service Area

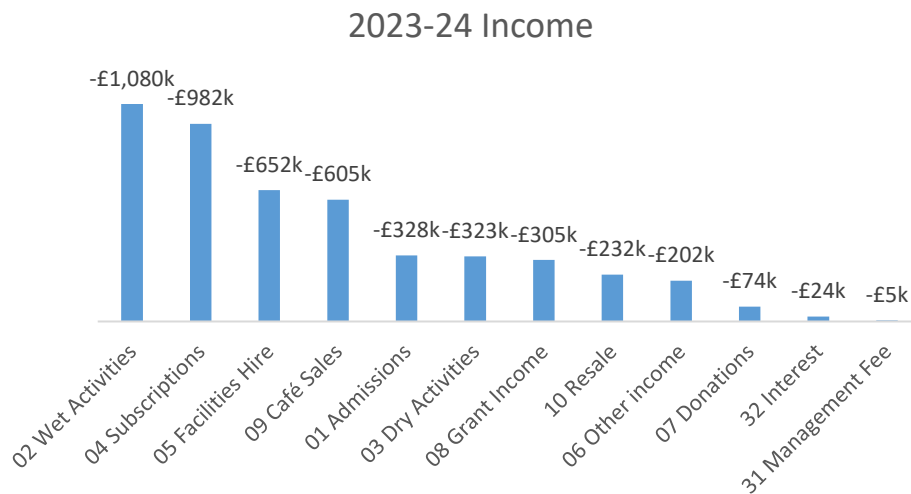
| Service Area | % of Total Income |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Sport and Leisure | 68.00% |
| Culture | 30.97% |
| Head Office | 0.65% |
| Libraries | 0.37% |

Key Sources of Income

Live Borders derives income from multiple revenue streams, with the most significant contributions from:

- **Wet Activities (e.g., swimming lessons, pool hire)** – A critical income generator closely tied to community and school engagement.
- **Membership and Subscriptions** – The largest source of income, accounting for a considerable portion of total revenues across the reporting period.
- **Dry Activities (e.g., fitness classes, gym PAYG, personal training)** – Includes a mix of recreational services and fitness programmes.
- **Facilities Hire** – Income from hiring 3G pitches, sports halls, and rooms.
- **Café and Retail Sales** – Café services and resale of gifts, merchandise, and books provide a supplementary income stream.
- **Grant Income** – Contributes significantly to certain years, supporting project-based activities.

Figure 3-1 2023-24 Income by Activity



Income Trends and Key Movements (2019/20 to 2023/24)

The data reflects a challenging income landscape, with fluctuations driven by external economic conditions, recovery from the pandemic, and operational shifts.

Key patterns are:

- **Membership and Subscriptions**
 - Membership income is the largest income stream, ranging from -£1.37m in 2019/20 to -£980k in 2023/24.
 - This steady decline, particularly after 2020/21, suggests reduced participation, reflecting the impact of the pandemic and shifting consumer behaviour.
- **Wet Activities**
 - Total income from wet activities dropped from -£1.18m in 2019/20 to -£1.08m in 2023/24, with swimming lessons contributing the largest portion.
 - Swimming lesson income declined from -£679k in 2019/20 to -£625k in 2023/24, reflecting ongoing challenges in rebuilding customer numbers.
 - General swimming income also decreased over the period, falling to -£315k in 2023/24, signalling reduced utilisation of pool facilities.
- **Dry Activities**

- Income from dry activities fluctuated, with total income decreasing from -£379k in 2019/20 to -£322k in 2023/24.
- Gym pay-as-you-go (PAYG) and fitness classes saw slight improvements in 2022/23 but dropped again in 2023/24.
- Event and soft play income experienced variability, reflecting changing demand patterns.
- **Facilities Hire**
 - Income from facility hire remained relatively stable but saw some reductions in 2023/24:
 - 3G pitch hire remained strong at -£267k, indicating continued demand for outdoor sports.
 - Room hire and sports hall hire decreased, reflecting a possible reduction in community and event bookings.
- **Café Sales and Resale**
 - Café sales were highly volatile, dropping to -£197k in 2021/22 before rebounding to -£604k in 2023/24.
 - This recovery highlights a positive return of footfall and improved on-site service offerings.
 - Retail sales (resale) declined over time, with total income from this stream at -£231k in 2023/24 compared to -£175k in 2019/20.
- **Grant Income**
 - Grant income varied significantly, peaking at -£394k in 2021/22 and falling to -£305k in 2023/24, reflecting the availability of project-based funding.

Summary of Trends

- **Areas of Growth:**
 - Café sales experienced strong growth in 2023/24, indicating a rebound in customer engagement.
 - 3G pitch hire and outdoor sports facilities continued to perform well, highlighting stable demand for these services.
- **Areas of Decline:**

- Membership and subscription income showed a steady decline, requiring a focus on retention and recruitment strategies.
- Wet activities, particularly swimming lessons and general swimming, remain below pre-pandemic levels, signalling a need for targeted marketing and programming to attract users.

Conclusion

The overall trend indicates recovery in certain areas like café services and 3G pitch hire. However, key income sources such as membership subscriptions and wet activities have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels. Addressing these declines while building on areas of growth will be essential for achieving long-term financial sustainability.

3.2.2 Expenditure

Expenditure Distribution by Service Area

The table summarises the percentage breakdown of total expenditure across key service areas within Live Borders. It is important to note that these figures exclude some property-related costs for cultural services, which are covered directly by the Council. Additionally, the figures incorporate expenditure from Live Borders' trading subsidiary.

- **Sport and Leisure** represents 49% of total expenditure, indicating that this is the largest cost area, consistent with its significant operational scope and range of services provided.
- **Culture** accounts for 29% of total expenditure, reflecting the extensive programme of cultural activities, management of multiple cultural venues (including community centres), and delivery of related services.
- **Head Office** expenditure amounts to 15%, covering central functions such as governance, finance, marketing, and operational support for the wider organisation.
- **Libraries** represent 7% of total expenditure, which is relatively modest but reflects the service's focus on community support and educational resources.

This expenditure profile highlights Sport and Leisure as the primary cost driver, aligning with its dominant role in service delivery. The substantial share allocated to

Culture reflects the operational complexity and breadth of services in this sector. Head Office costs are proportionately higher due to the need for centralised support across multiple service areas, while Libraries remain a smaller but important part of the expenditure mix.

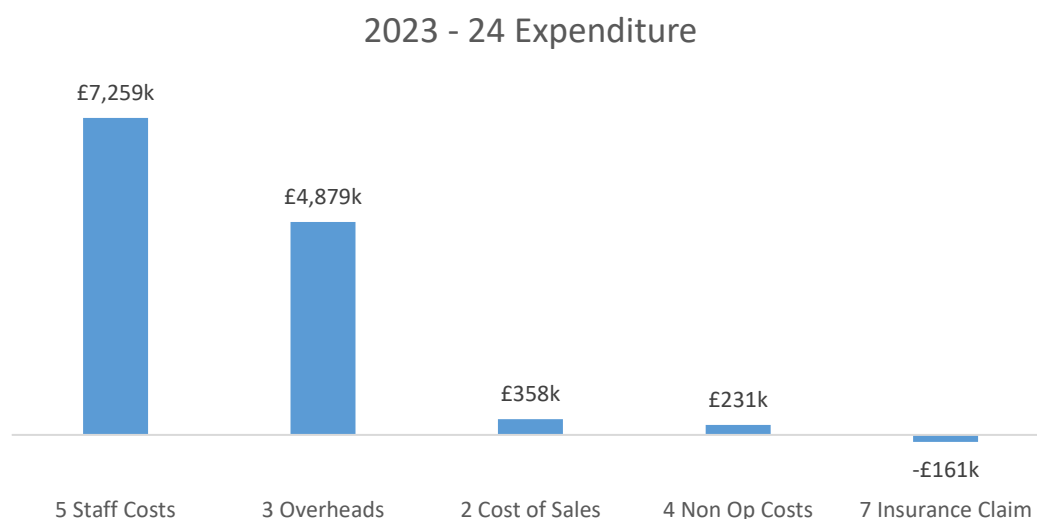
Table 3-4 Expenditure by Service Area

| Service Area | % of Total Expenditure |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| Sport and Leisure | 49% |
| Culture | 29% |
| Head Office | 15% |
| Libraries | 7% |

Key Sources of Expenditure

Total expenditure for Live Borders increased significantly over the period, rising from £10.76m in 2019/20 to £12.57m in 2023/24. This increase reflects a combination of rising operating costs, external cost pressures, and expanded service delivery in some areas. Key expenditure categories include Staff Costs, Utilities, and Repairs & Maintenance (Overheads), which together account for the bulk of total costs.

Figure 3-2 2023-24 Expenditure By Category



Expenditure Trends and Key Movements (2019/20 to 2023/24)

Staff Costs

- Staff costs represent the largest proportion of total expenditure, increasing from £6.68m in 2019/20 to £7.26m (8.7%) in 2023/24.
- Growth in staff expenditure was driven by:
 - Basic wages rising from £4.45m to £5.27m (18.4%), reflecting increases in staffing levels and wage adjustments.
 - Wages for casual staff and overtime costs also showed notable increases due to operational demands and potential coverage for staff shortages.
 - National Insurance and pension contributions increased consistently in line with wage growth.

Utilities

- Utility costs surged significantly, rising from £1.05m in 2019/20 to nearly £1.96m (87%) in 2023/24.
 - The most substantial increase was in electricity and gas, reflecting the impact of rising energy prices.
 - Electricity costs rose from £519k to over £1m.
 - Gas costs nearly doubled, from £322k to £597k.
 - Water rates also showed a steady increase, reflecting broader inflationary pressures on service costs.

Repairs & Maintenance

- Repairs and maintenance costs grew from £224k in 2019/20 to £546k in 2023/24.
- The increase was particularly driven by plumbing and heating system maintenance (Teviotdale Leisure Centre temporary boiler costs) and ventilation repairs, likely related to aging infrastructure and increased focus on facility upkeep.
 - Plumbing repairs rose from £42k to £126k, indicating significant investment in water systems and infrastructure.
 - Heating system maintenance increased to £63k in 2023/24.

Marketing and Promotion

- Marketing expenditure varied, with a peak of £221k in 2019/20, followed by a decline and then a slight recovery to £152k in 2023/24.
 - The focus was on advertising and digital media, reflecting a shift to more modern promotional strategies.
 - Expenditure on design, web development, and media advertising remained key components, supporting membership growth and event promotion.

Cleaning

- Cleaning costs increased steadily, growing from £103k in 2019/20 to £173k in 2023/24.
 - This reflects higher standards for hygiene and cleaning protocols, especially post-pandemic, with increased spending on hygiene supplies and contracted cleaning services.

Equipment Costs

- Equipment costs showed fluctuations, peaking at £378k in 2021/22 and then stabilising at £368k in 2023/24.
 - Gym and pool equipment hire and maintenance were major contributors, highlighting investment in fitness facilities and aquatic services.

Consultancy and Other Overhead Costs

- Consultancy fees ranged from £95k to £194k, reflecting the use of external expertise for strategic and operational improvements.
- Other staff costs, including volunteer expenses and pre-employment screening, remained relatively stable but increased slightly in 2023/24, reflecting recruitment efforts.

Depreciation and Capital Grants

- Depreciation costs remained relatively stable over the years, with property-related depreciation accounting for around £336k annually.
- Capital grants, listed as a negative figure, partially offset capital expenditures, providing a recurring source of support.

Non-Operational Costs

- Bank charges and contingencies were the primary non-operational costs, fluctuating over the years but peaking at £40k in 2023/24.

Summary of Trends

- **Rising Staff and Utility Costs:** These are the dominant areas driving overall expenditure growth, primarily due to wage inflation, energy price increases, and the broader cost-of-living crisis.
- **Significant Investment in Repairs and Maintenance:** Reflects an ongoing need to maintain and upgrade aging facilities.
- **Marketing Focus Shift:** A move toward more digital advertising and media promotion to reach wider audiences.
- **Increased Cleaning Costs:** Driven by enhanced post-pandemic hygiene standards and expanded service contracts.

Conclusion

The expenditure trends for Live Borders highlight key financial pressures driven by rising staff costs, increased utility expenses, and significant investment in facility maintenance and repair. Staff costs remain the most substantial component, reflecting the organisation's labour-intensive operations, while utility costs nearly doubling over the review period underscore the impact of rising energy prices. Investments in repairs and maintenance, particularly for critical infrastructure such as heating and plumbing, are necessary to ensure continued service delivery.

Despite efforts to manage costs, growing operational demands and external cost pressures will require a strategic focus on efficiency, energy management, and cost containment. Balancing these financial pressures with maintaining service quality will be crucial to Live Borders' long-term sustainability. Enhanced resource management, targeted cost reductions, and improved financial oversight will be essential for addressing these challenges in the coming years.

3.2.3 Council Support

The financial support provided to Live Borders by the Council between 2019/20 and 2024/25 highlights the organisation's heavy and growing reliance on external funding. This dependency has significantly increased due to the challenging economic environment, with additional pressures arising from the Covid-19

pandemic, the energy crisis, and rising operational costs. The financial support is detailed as follows:

Table 3-5 Summary of Council Support to Live Borders

| Year | Live Borders Management Fee (£'000) | Additional Financial Support (£'000) | Final Draw Down of £1.5m (£'000) | Sport Scotland (£'000) | Real Living Wage | Additional year end pressure | Total (£'000) |
|---------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------------------|---------------|
| 2019/20 | 5,378 | - | - | 316 | | | 5,694 |
| 2020/21 | 5,194 | - | - | 320 | | | 5,514 |
| 2021/22 | 5,033 | - | - | 310 | | | 5,343 |
| 2022/23 | 4,783 | 1,033 | - | 308 | | | 6,124 |
| 2023/24 | 4,803 | 1,000 | - | 323 | | | 6,126 |
| 2024/25 | 4,803 | 1,000 | 500 | *329 | 600 | 650 | 7,882 |

*The full £329k active schools sportscotland grant was not received in 2024/25. It was reduced as a result of AS returning to SBC from October 2024.

- **Core Management Fee:**

This represents the primary annual financial support from the Council. It declined slightly from £5.38m in 2019/20 to £5.03m in 2021/22 before stabilising at £4.8m in subsequent years. The reduction reflects early efficiency efforts, but it remains the largest source of funding for Live Borders.

- **Additional Financial Support:**

Introduced in 2022/23 (£1.03m) and continued in 2023/24 and 2024/25 at £1.0m annually, this one-off funding was essential to help Live Borders manage increased staff payroll costs, energy costs and other inflationary pressures as it emerged from the Covid-19 and cost of living crisis. This support highlights the volatility and unpredictability of operating costs in recent years.

- **Sport Scotland Funding:**

The £308k to £329k annually provided by Sport Scotland supports the Active Schools Programme. This funding remains consistent and vital for sustaining sports development initiatives in the region.

- **Real Living Wage Support (2024/25):**

In 2024/25, £600k was allocated to ensure Live Borders could meet the increased costs associated with implementing the Real Living Wage. This reflects the organisation's commitment to fair pay but also illustrates the financial strain such policies place on the operating budget.

- **Additional Year-End Pressure (2024/25):**

To address a forecast year-end deficit, the Council plans to provide £650k in additional support. This intervention is indicative of ongoing financial challenges and the need for urgent corrective measures.

Key Observations and Trends

- **Rising Dependency on Council Support:**

The total support from the Council increased from £5.69m in 2019/20 to a forecasted £7.88m in 2024/25. This trend underscores the growing financial vulnerability of Live Borders and its increasing reliance on external assistance.

- **Sustainability Concerns:**

Without significant transformation, Live Borders' financial model will become unsustainable. The current trajectory suggests further increases in support may be necessary unless costs are reduced, and income generation is substantially improved.

- **Future Adjustments:**

It is essential to note that some **in-year adjustments in 2024/25** will affect these figures. For example, the transfer of **Sports Development and Active Schools services back to the Council** will impact both expenditure and the overall funding structure.

3.3 Usage and Utilisation

3.3.1 Sport & Leisure Usage

Table 3-6 provides a high-level overview of annual usage at Live Borders sports and leisure venues over six years, reflecting both the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent recovery trends. Total annual usage decreased from 876,579 in 2019/20 to 518,827 in 2021/22 during the height of Covid restrictions but has since rebounded to 778,846 in 2023/24, representing a 90% recovery compared to pre-Covid levels.

Table 3-6 Sport and Leisure Usage Summary

| Name | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
|--------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Eyemouth Leisure Centre | 85,877 | 81,063 | 42,103 | 68,670 | 50,372 |
| Galashiels Swimming Pool | 92,730 | 84,090 | 52,658 | 88,734 | 90,973 |
| Gytes Leisure Centre | 42,697 | 42,035 | 5,122 | 52,118 | 55,155 |

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Hawick 2G_3G | 13,928 | 15,443 | 12,455 | 8,025 | 12,742 |
| Jedburgh Community Campus | | | 9,997 | 17,268 | 16,265 |
| Kelso High School | 6,595 | 26,838 | 23,076 | 19,639 | 16,619 |
| Kelso Swimming Pool | 88,816 | 91,098 | 47,178 | 72,188 | 97,636 |
| Melrose 3G | | | 6,310 | 20,719 | 18,274 |
| Netherdale 3G | 63,736 | 38,081 | 32,565 | 32,667 | 24,875 |
| Peebles High School | 14,341 | 13,447 | 12,844 | 16,011 | 21,764 |
| Peebles Swimming Pool | 82,517 | 88,985 | 35,736 | 14,698 | 57,844 |
| Queens Leisure Centre | 15,385 | 12,579 | 5,359 | 14,720 | 13,063 |
| Selkirk 2G | 3,067 | 1,822 | 2,772 | 3,147 | 2,437 |
| Selkirk Leisure Centre | 50,773 | 47,735 | 21,872 | 39,676 | 44,003 |
| Teviotdale Leisure Centre | 146,212 | 160,331 | 84,603 | 115,812 | 113,409 |
| Trifitness | 91,154 | 104,266 | 76,114 | 101,235 | 100,760 |
| Tweedbank Sports Centre/Bowling | 66,353 | 68,766 | 48,063 | 46,075 | 42,655 |
| Total | 864,181 | 876,579 | 518,827 | 731,402 | 778,846 |

Key Insights:

- **Top-Performing Venues:**

- Teviotdale Leisure Centre consistently ranks as the most heavily used facility, with 113,409 visits in 2023/24, despite a 29% drop from its peak in 2019/20.
- Kelso Swimming Pool has shown significant growth, recovering strongly with 97,636 visits in 2023/24, a 110% increase from pre-Covid levels.
- Trifitness also stands out, reaching 100,760 visits in 2023/24, achieving a 111% recovery.

- **Venues with the Highest Recovery Rates:**

- Kelso High School usage surged to 16,619 in 2023/24, a 252% increase compared to pre-Covid figures.
- Gytes Leisure Centre saw its usage grow by 129%, reflecting its increasing role in the local community's sports provision.
- Peebles High School also experienced strong growth, with 21,764 visits in 2023/24, representing a 152% increase.

- **Facilities with Moderate Recovery:**

- Galashiels Swimming Pool reached 90,973 visits in 2023/24, showing 98% recovery.

- Eyemouth Leisure Centre achieved a 59% recovery, indicating that while demand is returning, it has not yet reached pre-pandemic levels.
- **Notable Declines:**
 - Netherdale 3G usage dropped by 39% compared to 2018/19, from 63,736 to 24,875 visits.
 - Tweedbank Sports Centre/Bowling has experienced a steady decline over the years, with a 64% recovery compared to its pre-pandemic usage.

Overall Usage Trend:

The data indicates that Live Borders sports and leisure venues have seen a recovery post-Covid, with total usage increasing by 50% from 2021/22 to 2023/24 but remain 10% less than levels in 2019/20. However, the variation across individual facilities suggests differing levels of community engagement and recovery speed. Continued focus on understanding user demand and adapting facility offerings will be key to driving further growth.

Key Activities

The analysis of usage data across Live Borders' sport and physical activity facilities provides critical insights into participation trends and service demand (**Table 3-7** below). The findings highlight the most popular activities, reinforcing the strategic need for targeted investment and service enhancements to align with user demand.

Key Insights from Usage Data

- **Swimming-related activities dominate usage:** Nearly 50% of total usage is attributed to swimming-related activities, with 29.83% of participation in general pool use and an additional 18.28% in swimming lessons. This underscores the centrality of aquatic provision within Live Borders, reaffirming the need for sustainable and high-quality swimming facilities.
- **Strong demand for fitness activities:** Combined, fitness classes (14.95%) and fitness suite use (11.56%) account for approximately 30% of total usage. This demonstrates a substantial reliance on fitness services, reflecting broader health and wellbeing trends and the increasing role of structured group exercise and gym-based training.

- **Pitch-based activities remain significant:** With 14.32% of total usage, pitch-based activities—including football, rugby, and other field sports—continue to play a key role in overall participation levels.
- **Diverse participation within the 'Other' category:** Representing 11.05% of total usage, the "Other" category includes sports hall activities, indoor bowling, play programmes, holiday camps, and other small-scale activities. While individually these may not constitute a dominant portion of participation, their collective contribution underscores the need for a varied activity portfolio catering to different demographics and interests.

Table 3-7 Usage Summary by Activity Area

| Product | % of Total Usage |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| Pool | 29.83% |
| Swimming Lessons | 18.28% |
| Fitness Classes (dry) | 14.95% |
| Pitch | 14.32% |
| Fitness Suite | 11.56% |
| Other | 11.05% |
| Total | 100.00% |

Strategic Implications

- **Sustaining and modernising aquatic provision:** Given the high proportion of swimming-related usage, investment in swimming pools must remain a priority. However, modernisation efforts should focus on operational efficiency, energy reduction, and revenue enhancement to mitigate high running costs.
- **Expanding fitness services:** With nearly a third of participation derived from fitness activities, there is significant potential for revenue growth through expanded gym facilities, additional fitness class offerings, and targeted membership promotions.
- **Maximising multi-use space efficiency:** Sports hall activities, indoor bowling, and other programmes provide broad participation opportunities, but space utilisation must be optimised to ensure financial sustainability and alignment with demand trends. A key opportunity lies in maximising the use of school sports halls, where the majority of such facilities are located. This requires a shift in the operating model to facilitate concurrent daytime use by both schools and the wider community, ensuring these assets are fully

utilised throughout the day and not limited to evening and weekend availability.

- **Facility rationalisation and investment decisions:** The data reinforces the necessity of aligning asset investment with actual usage patterns. Facilities that cater to high-demand activities, particularly swimming and fitness, must be prioritised in future planning, while underperforming or inefficient venues should be considered for repurposing or rationalisation.

3.3.2 Library Usage

The data Table on annual usage for Live Borders libraries reveals a significant decline in overall visits compared to pre-COVID levels. Total library usage across all venues fell from 268,376 in 2018-19 to 49,380 in 2021-22, representing an 82% reduction. While there has been some recovery since 2021-22, usage in 2023-24 remains 48% lower than pre-pandemic levels at 139,703. It should be noted that during this period there has been a reduction in library opening hours which may be a contributing factor to the decline in numbers.

Key Trends and Observations:

- **Pre-COVID Trends:**
Usage in 2018-19 and 2019-20 was relatively stable across most library venues, with total visits declining by only 8% between these two years. This stability highlights that the sharp decline in subsequent years was largely pandemic-related.
- **Post-COVID Recovery and Variations:**
 - **Mobile Library Service:** A standout success story, the mobile service has seen a substantial rise in usage, from 6,792 visits in 2021-22 to 28,191 in 2023-24, indicating its growing importance in providing access to rural communities. This represents a 315% increase over the last two years.
 - **Galashiels, Hawick, and Peebles Libraries:** These remain key library hubs, with Galashiels at 24,496 visits and Hawick at 22,116 in 2023-24. Although still below pre-COVID levels, these venues show strong signs of recovery. Peebles remains a heavily used library with 22,606 visits, despite a decline compared to pre-pandemic years.

- Kelso Library: Usage has also improved significantly in recent years, with visits rising from 1,813 in 2021-22 to 12,745 in 2023-24. This reflects an effective recovery strategy.

Venues with Persistent Low Usage:

Some libraries continue to show very low and stagnant usage levels:

- **Jedburgh Library**, with only 1,093 visits in 2023-24, remains well below pre-pandemic levels.
- **Earlston Library** recorded just 483 visits in 2023-24, a minimal increase from 299 in 2022-23.
- **Coldstream Library**, despite modest growth, remains under 2,500 annual visits.
- **Innerleithen Library**, with only 2,175 visits in 2023-24, remains well below pre-pandemic levels.

Table 3-8 Library Usage Summary

| Library | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 |
|--------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| Selkirk | 9,198 | 9,326 | 1,480 | 3,149 | 3,499 |
| Peebles | 49,464 | 51,363 | 10,511 | 24,281 | 22,606 |
| Mobile | 19,311 | 16,714 | 6,792 | 18,759 | 28,191 |
| Melrose | 16,584 | 15,828 | 2,907 | 6,248 | 7,718 |
| Kelso | 23,456 | 21,482 | 1,813 | 11,309 | 12,745 |
| Jedburgh | 14,011 | 12,939 | 283 | 693 | 1,093 |
| Innerleithen | 6,564 | 5,971 | 116 | 1,493 | 2,175 |
| Hawick | 41,008 | 39,115 | 8,974 | 17,704 | 22,116 |
| Galashiels | 41,932 | 37,995 | 10,792 | 20,500 | 24,496 |
| Eyemouth | 10,949 | 8,928 | 2,168 | 4,785 | 4,103 |
| Earlston | 10,945 | 5,558 | 156 | 299 | 483 |
| Duns | 19,877 | 18,171 | 2,274 | 8,005 | 7,983 |
| Coldstream | 5,077 | 4,196 | 1,114 | 2,311 | 2,495 |
| Total | 268,376 | 247,586 | 49,380 | 119,536 | 139,703 |

Conclusion and Strategic Considerations

The data highlights varying levels of recovery and ongoing challenges across Live Borders library venues. While some libraries, such as Galashiels, Hawick, Kelso, and Peebles, show encouraging trends and sustained demand, others like Jedburgh, Earlston, Innerleithen and Coldstream continue to record significantly lower usage.

This suggests that a more flexible and responsive approach to service delivery may be required.

The Council and Live Borders may need to consider alternative ways of delivering library services, including co-location within other Council or Live Borders venues to maximise efficiency and reduce operational costs. Better utilisation of school libraries could also enhance access to library services, particularly for younger users, while expansion of the mobile library service could provide an effective solution for rural communities.

Prioritising high-performing libraries, promoting collaboration with schools, and adopting flexible service models will help ensure that library services remain accessible and sustainable for all communities across the region.

3.3.3 Cultural Venue Usage

Museums/Galleries/Visitor Attractions

The analysis of annual usage for Live Borders Museums, Galleries, and Visitor Attractions reveals notable fluctuations in visitor numbers, reflecting both growth in certain venues and ongoing recovery efforts from the pandemic closures. The majority of the museums have seasonal opening, with the bulk of them closed late Autumn -> Spring. Data from 2018–19, 2019–20, 2022–23, and 2023–24 provides a comprehensive view of pre- and post-COVID trends while also highlighting the evolving visitor landscape.

Key Insights and Trends:

- Overall Usage Recovery: Total visitor numbers increased from 123,146 in 2022–23 to 131,225 in 2023–24, demonstrating a gradual recovery, though figures have not yet reached the pre-COVID peak of 138,867 in 2019–20.
- Top-Performing Venues:
 - Mary Queen of Scots' Visitor Centre consistently leads in visitor numbers, with 29,600 visitors in 2023–24, representing an increase from 26,288 in 2022–23, though still below its peak of 34,830 in 2019–20.
 - Jedburgh Castle Jail and Museum is another key attraction, showing a steady increase to 23,427 in 2023–24, following recovery from 22,307 in 2022–23.

- The Great Tapestry of Scotland, which opened in 2021–22, is emerging as a significant attraction with 22,115 visitors in 2023–24, maintaining strong performance.

Mixed Performance and Declines:

- Jim Clark Motorsport Museum saw growth from 8,860 in 2022–23 to 9,593 in 2023–24, but its numbers remain lower than the 12,197 in 2019–20.
- Heart of Hawick and Hawick Museum show consistent increases, indicating successful recovery efforts.
- St Ronan's Wells Visitor Centre, however, reflects a sharp decline in usage, with only 209 visitors in 2023–24, compared to 5,419 in 2019–20. It should be noted that this venue has restricted opening hours.
- Old Gala House and Halliwell's House Museum also show lower usage, with 1,505 and 2,455 visitors, respectively, in 2023–24, raising concerns about long-term sustainability.

Table 3-9 Cultural Venues Usage Summary

| Museum/Gallery/Visitor Attraction | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| Mary Queen of Scots' Visitor Centre | 31,220 | 34,830 | | 26,288 | 29,600 |
| Jedburgh Castle Jail and Museum | 24,207 | 25,675 | | 22,307 | 23,427 |
| The Great Tapestry of Scotland | | | 12,386 | 22,303 | 22,115 |
| Jim Clark Motorsport Museum | 1,689 | 12,197 | | 8,860 | 9,593 |
| Hawick Museum | 12,675 | 11,550 | | 8,682 | 9,460 |
| Heart of Hawick | 11,701 | 11,524 | 4,343 | 8,398 | 8,988 |
| Borders Textile Towerhouse | 11,086 | 12,537 | | 7,270 | 8,027 |
| Peebles Library, Museum and Gallery (Chambers Institution) | 9,781 | 9,761 | | 5,001 | 6,251 |
| Coldstream Museum | 4,263 | 3,777 | | 3,373 | 3,914 |
| Sir Walter Scott's Courtroom | 2,716 | 4,298 | | 3,940 | 3,883 |
| Halliwell's House Museum | 3,319 | 4,034 | | 3,226 | 2,455 |
| Heritage Hub | | | | 1,683 | 1,798 |
| Old Gala House | 3,631 | 3,265 | | 1,102 | 1,505 |
| St Ronan's Wells Visitor Centre | 5,776 | 5,419 | | 713 | 209 |
| Total | 122,064 | 138,867 | 16,729 | 123,146 | 131,225 |

The data highlights encouraging growth in key attractions, with several venues demonstrating strong recovery and new facilities like The Great Tapestry of Scotland emerging as significant visitor destinations. Mary Queen of Scots' Visitor Centre and Jedburgh Castle Jail and Museum continue to attract substantial visitor numbers, while The Great Tapestry of Scotland maintains impressive performance since opening in 2021–22.

However, the variation in recovery rates across venues reveals areas of concern. St Ronan's Wells Visitor Centre, Old Gala House, and Halliwell's House Museum exhibit significantly lower footfall in recent years, suggesting challenges in maintaining sustainable levels of visitation. These trends raise important questions about the long-term viability of certain venues.

In this context, the Council and Live Borders may need to consider rationalisation options, including closure or consolidation of venues with consistently low and unsustainable visitor numbers. Exploring opportunities for shared spaces or co-location with other services could help reduce costs while preserving access to cultural and historical resources. Targeted investment in high-performing venues, combined with a more flexible and efficient service model, will be essential in ensuring a resilient and vibrant museum and gallery network across the Scottish Borders.

Halls

Table 3-10 provides insight into the usage trends across various town hall venues in the Live Borders portfolio between 2019/20, 2022/23, and 2023/24, revealing notable variations in booking patterns.

Overall Trends:

- Total booked hours increased from 8,560 hours in 2019/20 to a peak of 11,315 hours in 2022/23, before slightly decreasing to 10,728 hours in 2023/24.
- This represents an overall 25% increase in booked hours between 2019/20 and 2023/24.
- 2022/23 marked the highest level of bookings, likely reflecting a recovery period post-COVID, followed by a stabilisation in 2023/24.

Venue-Specific Analysis:

- **High-Usage Venues:**

- Galashiels Volunteer Hall: Increased from 1,010 hours (2019/20) to 1,889 hours (2023/24) (+87%), making it one of the most heavily booked venues. Frequently used for concerts, theatrical productions, and large community events.
- Old Gala House: Increased from 1,077 hours (2019/20) to 1,193 hours (2023/24) (+11%), predominantly booked for meetings, training sessions, and community events.
- Selkirk Victoria Halls: Grew from 926 hours (2019/20) to 1,331 hours (2023/24) (+44%), largely due to high bookings for weddings and exams.
- **Moderate-Usage Venues:**
 - Kelso Tait Hall: Showed strong growth in 2022/23 (1,663 hours) but slightly declined to 1,259 hours (2023/24). Notable events include blood donations, exams, and local performances.
 - Peebles Burgh Hall: Increased from 663 hours (2019/20) to 1,378 hours (2022/23) before dropping to 956 hours (2023/24). Regularly used for meetings, craft fairs, and wedding receptions.
 - Jedburgh Town Hall: Recorded a 9% increase overall, with hours rising from 528 (2019/20) to 578 (2023/24). Primary use includes concerts, community meetings, and public consultations.
- **Low Usage Venues**
 - West Linton Graham Institute: Initially low at 295 hours (2019/20), dropping to 60 hours (2022/23) before rebounding to 503 hours (2023/24). Primary usage includes private functions and community gatherings.
 - Stow Town Hall: Remained stable with minor fluctuations between 443 hours (2019/20) and 396 hours (2023/24) (-11%). Primarily used for meetings and small-scale social events.
- **Significant Increases:**
 - Lauder Public Hall: Increased from 246 hours (2019/20) to 712 hours (2022/23), before settling at 500 hours (2023/24) (+103%). Frequently booked for community celebrations and local events.
 - Innerleithen Memorial Hall: Rose from 376 hours (2019/20) to 718 hours (2022/23), stabilising at 438 hours (2023/24) (+16%). Primarily used for public meetings and social functions.

Table 3-10 Halls Summary of Booking Hours

| Hall Name | 2019/20 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| Galashiels Volunteer Hall | 1,010 | 1,770 | 1,889 |
| Hawick Town Hall | 1,256 | 1,316 | 817 |
| Innerleithen Memorial Hall | 376 | 718 | 438 |
| Jedburgh Town Hall | 528 | 743 | 578 |
| Kelso Town Hall | 856 | 1,663 | 1,259 |
| Lauder Public Hall | 246 | 712 | 500 |
| Melrose Corn Exchange / Ormiston Institute | 884 | 584 | 868 |
| Old Gala House | 1,077 | 875 | 1,193 |
| Peebles Burgh Hall | 663 | 1,378 | 956 |
| Selkirk Victoria Halls | 926 | 1,127 | 1,331 |
| Stow Town Hall | 443 | 369 | 396 |
| West Linton Graham Institute | 295 | 60 | 503 |
| Total | 8,560 | 11,315 | 10,728 |

Conclusion

The analysis of annual booked hours for Live Borders town hall venues highlights growth in some locations and declining or inconsistent use in others. Several venues, such as Galashiels Volunteer Hall and Selkirk Victoria Halls, have seen sustained increases in use, confirming their role as thriving community hubs. Galashiels Volunteer Hall remains the most used venue, with bookings increasing substantially since 2019/20. Old Gala House and Lauder Public Hall have also demonstrated notable growth, highlighting their strengthening role in community and cultural events.

However, some venues are experiencing declining or inconsistent use. Hawick Town Hall, for example, shows a marked decrease in bookings, raising concerns about its long-term sustainability. Stow Town Hall has shown a slight decline, suggesting a need for targeted intervention to boost engagement.

Given the varied performance across the estate, there is an opportunity to assess alternative operating models for venues with persistently low usage. Options could include community asset transfers (CAT), where local groups take over management to revitalise these spaces. Where a viable model cannot be identified, closure may need to be considered.

At the same time, there is potential to operate the busier and more commercially viable halls on a commercial basis, maximising income from weddings, concerts, and corporate events. Increasing marketing efforts, bundling venue packages for corporate clients, and improving the online booking process could help expand event

offerings and generate additional revenue to support the financial sustainability of Live Borders.

3.3.4 Accessibility

Swimming Pools

In **Table 3-11** the analysis of accessibility to swimming pools across the Scottish Borders shows significant variations in coverage depending on Council wards and driving time. Overall, 60.1% of the population can access a swimming pool within a 10-minute drive, increasing to 77.3% within 15 minutes, 90.1% within 20 minutes (Moray Council benchmark compares well at 98%), and almost universal coverage (98%) within a 30-minute drive. It should be noted that this model assumed that Laidlaw Memorial Pool would be open.

Highest Levels of Accessibility

Wards such as Hawick and Denholm and East Berwickshire show excellent access to swimming pools, with 80.3% and 49.1% of the population, respectively, being within a 10-minute drive. By extending the drive time to 20 minutes, these figures increase to 99.5% and 89.8%. Notably, within 30 minutes, both wards reach full or near-full coverage.

Lowest Levels of Accessibility

Leaderdale and Melrose and Mid Berwickshire have lower accessibility at shorter drive times. In Leaderdale and Melrose, 20.3% of the population is within 10 minutes of a swimming pool. This increases significantly to 51.3% within 15 minutes and 70.4% within 20 minutes, reaching 95% coverage at 30 minutes. Mid Berwickshire similarly starts with lower accessibility at 37.1% within 10 minutes but rapidly improves, reaching 100% coverage at 30 minutes.

Trends by Drive Time

As expected, accessibility improves significantly with longer drive times across all wards:

- At 10 minutes, almost two-thirds of the population has access to a pool (60.1%).
- At 15 minutes, access improves substantially to 77.3%.
- At 20 minutes, most wards achieve almost universal accessibility levels, with an average of 90.1% coverage.

- Within a 30-minute drive, nearly all wards reach over 95% accessibility, ensuring almost full coverage across the region.

Table 3-11 Swimming Pool Accessibility

| Council Ward | 10 Minutes driving | 15 Minutes driving | 20 Minutes driving | 30 Minutes driving |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| East Berwickshire | 49.1% | 76.1% | 89.8% | 100.0% |
| Galashiels and District | 81.6% | 89.9% | 94.9% | 98.5% |
| Hawick and Denholm | 80.3% | 95.6% | 99.5% | 100.0% |
| Hawick and Hermitage | 80.4% | 83.9% | 85.8% | 87.0% |
| Jedburgh and District | 65.7% | 94.0% | 99.4% | 99.9% |
| Kelso and District | 78.5% | 85.3% | 97.9% | 99.6% |
| Leaderdale and Melrose | 20.3% | 51.3% | 70.4% | 95.0% |
| Mid Berwickshire | 37.1% | 56.0% | 95.0% | 100.0% |
| Selkirkshire | 61.8% | 73.9% | 96.5% | 98.8% |
| Tweeddale East | 56.0% | 89.4% | 99.0% | 99.8% |
| Tweeddale West | 52.2% | 55.8% | 63.4% | 97.3% |
| Total | 60.1% | 77.3% | 90.1% | 98.0% |

The closure of Laidlaw Memorial Pool has had a local impact on accessibility to swimming facilities. For residents of Jedburgh and District, 10-minute drive-time accessibility drops from 65.7% to just 3.0%, with limited recovery at 15 and 20 minutes, where accessibility remains at 7.3% and 36.4%, respectively. This highlights the role Laidlaw Memorial Pool played in providing convenient local access. On a broader scale, the impact is much less, with 10-minute access across the Scottish Borders falling from 60.1% to 55.2%, while 15-minute and 20-minute accessibility drop from 77.3% to 69.9% and 90.1% to 85.0%, respectively.

Conclusion

In summary, the analysis of swimming pool accessibility across the Scottish Borders shows anticipated differences between wards, particularly at shorter drive times. While areas such as Hawick and Denholm and Kelso and District enjoy high levels of access within a 10-minute drive, other more rural wards, including Leaderdale and Melrose and Mid Berwickshire, show less local coverage. As expected, accessibility improves substantially at longer drive times, with near-universal access achieved within 30 minutes. The closure of Laidlaw Memorial Pool has reduced local access for the Jedburgh area and contributes to a small overall decline in regional accessibility, with 10-minute access dropping from 60.1% to 55.2%.

If the Council and Live Borders are considering pool rationalisation as part of their long-term planning, consideration should be given to prioritising facilities that minimise the impact on overall accessibility. Rationalisation decisions should focus

on maintaining access in areas with limited current provision while ensuring that any closures have the least possible effect on regional coverage and proximity to swimming facilities.

Sportshalls

This analysis assesses the accessibility of sports hall facilities across the Scottish Borders, providing an overview of current provision by council ward and driving time. The focus is on identifying geographical disparities in access and highlighting areas where provision is strong, as well as those requiring strategic improvement. The analysis excludes sports halls in primary schools and concentrates on publicly accessible facilities operated by Live Borders and the Council.

Access to sports hall facilities is vital for promoting sport, physical activity and well-being within communities. By examining drive times of 10, 15, 20, and 30 minutes, this report offers a comprehensive understanding of how accessible these facilities are to the population in each council ward. This approach enables the identification of wards with high accessibility and those where gaps in provision exist, helping to inform future strategic planning and investment decisions.

The key findings outlined below will help the Council and Live Borders assess the current network of sports halls and consider potential areas for improvement or expansion. The findings also provide a foundation for broader discussions on promoting sport, active lifestyles and enhancing local access to fitness and recreational activities.

Key Findings:

- **Overall Accessibility:**
 - 65.6% of the population can access a sports hall within a 10-minute drive.
 - This increases to 83.5% within 15 minutes, and 92.6% at 20 minutes.
 - By 30 minutes, almost universal coverage is achieved at 98.4%.
- **Highest Levels of Accessibility:**
 - Galashiels and District, Hawick and Denholm, and Leaderdale and Melrose have the most accessible sports halls.
 - Galashiels and District: 89.6% within 10 minutes and 95.0% within 20 minutes.

- Leaderdale and Melrose: 93.7% within 15 minutes and 99.5% at 20 minutes.
- Hawick and Denholm achieves 98.7% accessibility within 20 minutes, reaching 100% at 30 minutes.
- **Lowest Levels of Accessibility:**
 - Mid Berwickshire and Tweeddale West have the lowest access at shorter drive times.
 - Mid Berwickshire: Only 41.7% of the population can access a sports hall within 10 minutes, though this improves to 97.6% at 20 minutes.
 - Tweeddale West: 49.9% at 10 minutes and only 60% at 20 minutes, reflecting limited provision in this area.

Trends by Driving Time:

- **10-Minute Drive:** Fewer than two-thirds (65.6%) of the population has access.
- **15-Minute Drive:** Access jumps to 83.5%, offering significant improvement.
- **20-Minute Drive:** Most wards achieve high coverage (92.6%), ensuring broad access across the region.
- **30-Minute Drive:** Nearly full regional coverage at 98.4%.

Table 3-12 Sportshall Accessibility Summary

| Council Ward | 10 Minutes driving | 15 Minutes driving | 20 Minutes driving | 30 Minutes driving |
|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| East Berwickshire | 48.1% | 76.9% | 89.6% | 99.9% |
| Galashiels and District | 89.6% | 90.9% | 95.0% | 99.3% |
| Hawick and Denholm | 78.0% | 91.1% | 98.7% | 100.0% |
| Hawick and Hermitage | 82.8% | 85.6% | 86.7% | 87.5% |
| Jedburgh and District | 52.6% | 93.8% | 99.4% | 99.8% |
| Kelso and District | 77.2% | 83.2% | 95.0% | 99.6% |
| Leaderdale and Melrose | 63.8% | 93.7% | 99.5% | 99.8% |
| Mid Berwickshire | 41.7% | 65.3% | 97.6% | 100.0% |
| Selkirkshire | 77.2% | 92.0% | 96.6% | 98.8% |
| Tweeddale East | 55.2% | 89.6% | 98.8% | 99.8% |
| Tweeddale West | 49.9% | 55.8% | 60.0% | 95.2% |
| Total | 65.6% | 83.5% | 92.6% | 98.4% |

The analysis highlights the importance of improving access to sports halls, especially in Mid Berwickshire and Tweeddale West. Investment and strategic planning should

prioritise these areas to ensure equitable access for all communities. Enhanced access to primary schools and collaboration with community organisations and targeted investment could help bridge gaps in service provision and promote increased participation in physical activity across the region.

Any future decisions around the rationalisation or repurposing of sports halls should carefully consider the need to maintain high levels of accessibility to protect opportunities for participation and the development of sports and other active wellbeing activities. Ensuring the availability of these spaces is critical for supporting community health, encouraging active lifestyles, and contributing to the broader

Fitness

This analysis provides an overview of accessibility to fitness facilities, defined as fitness gyms and/or group fitness studio spaces, across the Scottish Borders council wards. It is important to note that the analysis excludes private sector provision and does not include fitness facilities within Laidlaw Memorial Pool, which is currently closed.

Overall Accessibility

Overall, 59.4% of the population across the Scottish Borders has access to a fitness facility within a 10-minute drive. This increases to 73.6% within a 15-minute drive, 85.8% within 20 minutes, and nearly full coverage (97.6%) at 30 minutes.

Wards with High Accessibility

Several wards show strong accessibility at shorter drive times:

- **Galashiels and District** stands out with high accessibility—86.5% of its population can access fitness facilities within 10 minutes, rising to 89.6% at 15 minutes and maintaining high levels at longer drive times.
- **Hawick and Denholm** also shows excellent accessibility, with 80.0% of the population within a 10-minute drive and near-universal coverage at 20 minutes (99.1%) and 30 minutes (100.0%).
- **Kelso and District** and **Selkirkshire** have solid accessibility, with 78.9% and 71.5% of their populations within a 10-minute drive, improving significantly at longer drive times.

Wards with Low Accessibility

In contrast, some wards experience significant gaps in access:

- **Mid Berwickshire** stands out as having notably low accessibility at shorter distances, with only 0.5% of the population within a 10-minute drive and just 7.0% at 15 minutes. Even at 20 minutes, accessibility reaches only 44.2%, although it improves substantially to 95.2% at 30 minutes.
- **Tweeddale West** also shows low coverage within a 10-minute drive (49.9%), and accessibility remains below average until the 30-minute range, where it reaches 95.2%.
- **Leaderdale and Melrose** has moderate access, with 50.7% of the population within 10 minutes, improving steadily to 99.7% at 30 minutes.

Trends by Drive Time

As expected, accessibility improves significantly with longer drive times:

- At **10 minutes**, only about 59.4% of the population has access to fitness facilities, highlighting gaps in local provision.
- At **15 minutes**, accessibility rises to 73.6%, with several wards showing major improvements.
- By **20 minutes**, most wards achieve high coverage, with average accessibility at 85.8%.
- At **30 minutes**, nearly all wards reach close to full coverage, ensuring regional access at a broader level.

Table 3-13 Fitness Accessibility Summary

| Council Ward | 10 Minutes driving | 15 Minutes driving | 20 Minutes driving | 30 Minutes driving |
|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| East Berwickshire | 48.5% | 57.4% | 82.0% | 99.9% |
| Galashiels and District | 86.5% | 89.6% | 90.5% | 97.0% |
| Hawick and Denholm | 80.0% | 92.0% | 99.1% | 100.0% |
| Hawick and Hermitage | 80.4% | 83.8% | 85.8% | 87.0% |
| Jedburgh and District | 53.4% | 92.8% | 99.4% | 99.8% |
| Kelso and District | 78.9% | 85.0% | 97.8% | 99.6% |
| Leaderdale and Melrose | 50.7% | 70.5% | 91.9% | 99.7% |
| Mid Berwickshire | 0.5% | 7.0% | 44.2% | 95.2% |
| Selkirkshire | 71.5% | 90.0% | 96.5% | 98.8% |
| Tweeddale East | 51.0% | 88.7% | 98.7% | 99.8% |
| Tweeddale West | 49.9% | 55.8% | 60.0% | 95.2% |
| Total | 59.4% | 73.6% | 85.8% | 97.6% |

Conclusion

Access to fitness facilities, including gyms and group fitness studio spaces, is critical to supporting the health and wellbeing of communities across the Scottish Borders. Encouraging physical activity and promoting active wellbeing aligns with the Scottish Government's wider prevention agenda, aimed at reducing health inequalities and improving long-term health outcomes. Collaborative working with health and social care partners will be essential in delivering on this agenda, ensuring that fitness and active wellbeing services contribute meaningfully to preventative health measures.

The analysis highlights significant variations in accessibility, with some areas well-served and others facing gaps, particularly at shorter drive times. These gaps present both challenges and growth opportunities. For Live Borders, there is clear potential to increase participation and income through targeted investment in fitness infrastructure. Enhancing and expanding facilities in areas of high demand, combined with strategic marketing and community engagement, could significantly improve service reach and financial sustainability.

By fostering partnerships with health and social care providers and prioritising investment in fitness facilities, Live Borders can play a pivotal role in promoting healthier lifestyles while supporting the wider public health agenda and improving community wellbeing across the region.

Libraries

The accessibility analysis of library services (excluding mobile libraries and including library contact centres) reveals notable variations across different council wards in the Scottish Borders, depending on driving time. Overall, 75.2% of the population has access to a library within a 10-minute drive, increasing to 87.5% within 15 minutes, 93.5% at 20 minutes, and reaching almost universal access (98.6%) within 30 minutes. This illustrates strong regional coverage but highlights some disparities between wards at shorter drive times.

Wards with the Highest Levels of Accessibility:

Tweeddale East stands out with the highest accessibility, with 94.1% of its population within a 10-minute drive and nearly full coverage (99.5%) at 15 minutes. Galashiels and District and Hawick and Denholm also show excellent access, exceeding 80% within 10 minutes and reaching near-universal access within 30 minutes.

Wards with the Lowest Levels of Accessibility:

In contrast, Tweeddale West and East Berwickshire show more limited access at shorter drive times. Only 52.2% of the population in Tweeddale West can access a library within 10 minutes, increasing to 55.8% at 15 minutes and 63.0% at 20 minutes. East Berwickshire similarly starts at 48.9% for 10-minute access, only improving significantly at 20 and 30 minutes.

Trends by Drive Time:

- At 10 minutes, just over three-quarters of the population (75.2%) can access a library.
- At 15 minutes, accessibility increases substantially to 87.5%.
- By 20 minutes, most wards achieve high coverage, with 93.5% of the population having access.
- Within 30 minutes, almost all wards exceed 95% accessibility, ensuring widespread regional access.

Table 3-14 Library Accessibility Summary

| Council Ward | 10 Minutes driving | 15 Minutes driving | 20 Minutes driving | 30 Minutes driving |
|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| East Berwickshire | 48.9% | 76.5% | 91.1% | 100.0% |
| Galashiels and District | 89.4% | 89.8% | 94.9% | 99.9% |
| Hawick and Denholm | 84.9% | 95.0% | 99.5% | 100.0% |
| Hawick and Hermitage | 81.8% | 84.1% | 86.2% | 87.1% |
| Jedburgh and District | 72.5% | 96.3% | 99.4% | 99.8% |
| Kelso and District | 78.9% | 87.3% | 98.1% | 99.6% |
| Leaderdale and Melrose | 74.2% | 93.4% | 99.2% | 99.8% |
| Mid Berwickshire | 64.4% | 90.6% | 99.0% | 100.0% |
| Selkirkshire | 83.5% | 94.1% | 96.9% | 98.6% |
| Tweeddale East | 94.1% | 99.5% | 99.7% | 99.8% |
| Tweeddale West | 52.2% | 55.8% | 63.0% | 97.6% |
| Total | 75.2% | 87.5% | 93.5% | 98.6% |

The analysis of library accessibility across the Scottish Borders highlights strong overall coverage, with 75.2% of the population having access to a library within a 10-minute drive, rising to 87.5% at 15 minutes and nearly full coverage (98.6%) within 30 minutes. However, there are significant variations between wards, particularly at shorter drive times. While wards like Tweeddale East and Galashiels and District show excellent access, others, such as Tweeddale West and East Berwickshire, experience more limited access within 10 to 15 minutes.

Given these disparities, the Council and Live Borders may need to consider alternative ways of delivering library services to improve access and efficiency. Co-locating libraries within other Council or Live Borders venues could help maximise efficiency and reduce operational costs. Additionally, better utilisation of school libraries, especially for younger users, could offer expanded service options in certain communities. Expanding the mobile library service could also be a highly effective solution for rural areas, ensuring that remote communities are not left without vital services.

By prioritising high-performing libraries, promoting collaboration with schools, and adopting flexible service models, the Council can ensure library services remain accessible and sustainable for all communities across the region.

3.3.5 Membership

Membership numbers

Live Borders' membership data provides insight into the distribution of members across various venues and subscription types. Understanding these patterns is crucial for identifying high-performing facilities, assessing demand, and determining areas for potential growth or rationalisation. The membership data also highlights key service areas, such as swimming lessons and fitness memberships, which form the core of Live Borders' income streams. Below is a detailed breakdown of memberships by venue and subscription type.

Memberships by Venue

The membership data by venue highlights the following trends:

- Tri-Fitness Gym (1,276 members) and Teviotdale Leisure Centre (1,057 members) are the two most subscribed venues, suggesting that fitness-related services remain a major driver of participation.
- Galashiels Swimming Pool (1,032 members), Kelso Swimming Pool (854 members), and Peebles Swimming Pool (660 members) also have strong memberships, reinforcing the importance of swimming facilities.
- Eyemouth Leisure Centre (601 members) and Selkirk Leisure Centre (559 members) also maintain a reasonable membership base but are significantly lower than the leading venues.

- Queens Leisure Centre (197 members), Tweedbank Sports Centre (137 members), and Tweedbank Bowling Club (120 members) have much lower membership counts, indicating limited engagement at these venues.
- Several venues, including Jedburgh Grammar Campus (69 members), Holiday Programmes (27 members), and Kelso High School (9 members), have minimal membership uptake, raising questions about their viability and the potential need for alternative usage models.
- The lowest membership venues include 3G Arena Netherdale (2 members) and Borders Tennis Centre (1 member, currently closed), suggesting these services may need a reassessment or re-categorising.

Memberships by Subscription Type

The breakdown of subscription types shows the primary revenue drivers for Live Borders:

- Swimming lessons dominate the membership base, with the "L2 D D" (Learn to Swim) category having 2,565 members. This highlights the programme's importance and potential for expansion.
- Fitness-related memberships make up a substantial portion of overall subscriptions, with multiple contract types such as:
 - L A A C Membership (635 members)
 - One Club Rolling Contract (634 members)
 - T.R.I Plus (587 members)
 - One Club 12-Month Contract (443 members)
 - Tri Fitness Non-Committed (404 members)
- Gymnastics has a dedicated base of 262 members across various subcategories, showing a moderate but steady demand.
- Bowling Club membership remains relatively niche, with 97 members.
- Smaller subscription categories, such as "Swimming Club Free Swim" (95 members), "Mini Gymnastics" (40 members), and "Tri Fitness Committed" (51 members), show limited uptake but could have growth potential.
- A large number of niche membership types exist, many with single-digit membership counts, indicating potential for consolidation or revision of the membership structure.

Membership Penetration

Fitness membership penetration is a critical metric for assessing the engagement of residents in structured physical activity and identifying growth opportunities. The data presented highlights the proportion of the population in each Scottish Borders council ward that holds a Live Borders fitness membership. The overall penetration rate across the region is 2.71%, which is significantly below the national benchmark of 6.5%, indicating a substantial untapped market. Understanding these trends and the latent demand in each area is essential for guiding investment and marketing strategies to increase participation in fitness and wellbeing activities.

Membership Penetration by Council Ward

The current fitness membership levels vary significantly across council wards:

- **Highest penetration rates:**
 - Galashiels and District (4.73%) has the highest penetration, though still below the 6.5% benchmark.
 - Leaderdale and Melrose (4.24%) follows closely, suggesting relatively strong engagement with fitness services in these areas.
 - Selkirkshire (3.35%) and Tweeddale East (3.13%) also have above-average penetration rates, but there is still room for growth.
- **Lowest penetration rates:**
 - Mid Berwickshire (0.54%) has the lowest penetration rate, with only 57 members against an expected 688 members based on national benchmarks, indicating 631 potential members in latent demand. (This would likely be higher if Duns Swimming Pool were included in the figures but this venue is operated by another organisation)
 - Jedburgh and District (1.68%) and Kelso and District (1.87%) also have notably low penetration, representing 432 and 462 potential members, respectively. (This would likely be higher if Laidlaw Memorial Pool were open and included in the figures but this venue was operated by another organisation)
- **Latent demand and growth potential:**
 - Across all council wards, the total latent demand is 4,315 members, meaning that with the right strategies and investment, Live Borders could more than double its fitness membership base.

- The largest latent demand is in Mid Berwickshire (631 members), Kelso and District (462 members), and Jedburgh and District (432 members), all of which have penetration rates under 2%, highlighting major growth potential.

Conclusion

The current penetration rate for Live Borders fitness memberships is well below the national benchmark, indicating a significant opportunity to grow participation and revenue. Given that latent demand stands at over 4,300 members, Live Borders has a substantial opportunity to expand its fitness services, improve marketing strategies, and enhance facility offerings to increase membership uptake. Addressing this gap could significantly contribute to the financial sustainability and community impact of Live Borders' services.

Membership Latent Demand

Latent demand refers to the unmet potential for participation in activities or services due to factors such as limited awareness, accessibility, affordability, or quality of current facility offerings. In the context of the Live Borders future opportunities, latent demand represents the additional number of community fitness members who could become active users or members of the services if these barriers were addressed.

Identifying and understanding this latent demand is crucial for the Live Borders growth, as it represents an opportunity to expand the membership base by addressing these unmet needs. When assessing latent demand for this project, local competition was analysed as the presence of alternative facilities can influence potential members' choices and has been factored into the calculations.

The analysis of fitness membership penetration highlights a significant latent demand of 4,315 potential members across the Scottish Borders. This represents a major opportunity for Live Borders to expand its health and fitness offer and drive substantial revenue growth.

With an average membership yield of £19.25 per month, successfully converting this latent demand into active memberships could generate an additional £1 million per annum in income. This reinforces the need for targeted investment in fitness facilities, improved marketing strategies, and service enhancements to capitalise on this untapped market. By addressing barriers to participation and enhancing the quality and accessibility of fitness services, Live Borders has the potential to significantly increase membership numbers and strengthen financial sustainability.

3.3.6 Utilisation

Live Borders currently deliver a programme of classes across Learn to Swim, Health & Fitness and Gymnastics. This section looks at analysis of class utilisation with a view to identify opportunities for improvement.

Learn to Swim

The Learn to Swim programme operates across all swimming pools and currently has 2,805 participants. Giving an average utilisation rate of 85% with a high of 93% at Galashiels and a low of 69% at Eyemouth. This is generally in line with industry norms in terms of overall utilisation but the uptake level at Eyemouth would suggest a need for a review of the current programme to improve uptake.

Table 3-15 Learn To Swim Programme Occupancy

| Year | Venue | Capacity | Occupants | LTS Occupancy |
|------|-------------------|----------|-----------|---------------|
| 2025 | Eyemouth | 333 | 228 | 68.47% |
| | Galashiels | 744 | 690 | 92.74% |
| | Kelso | 605 | 555 | 91.74% |
| | Peebles | 562 | 499 | 88.79% |
| | Selkirk | 383 | 311 | 81.20% |
| | Teviotdale | 640 | 522 | 81.56% |
| | Total | 3267 | 2805 | 85.86% |

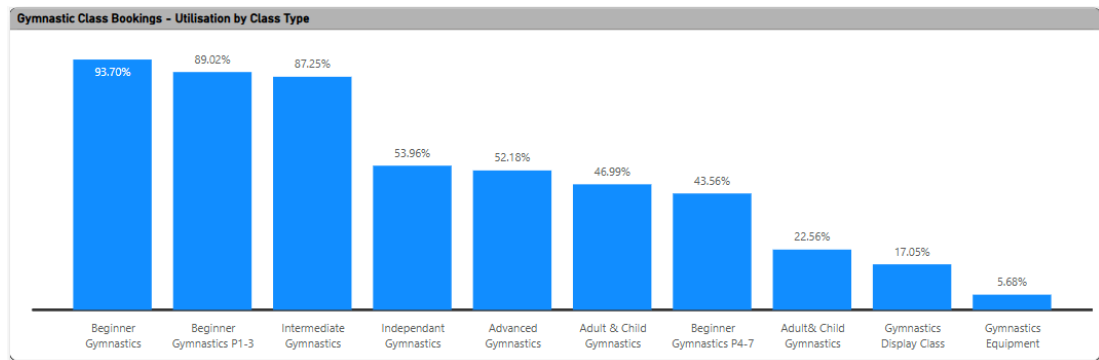
Health & Fitness

Currently group health and fitness classes are delivered across 7 facilities throughout the region with a total usage of 19,323. Across the programme there is an average attendance of 6.6 users per class. This equates to an average occupancy of 44% (based on class capacity of 15). The maximum average attendance recorded was 14 at the Gytes Leisure Centre.

80% of users are existing members which is positive and also shows the value that group fitness brings to the membership package. Therefore there is opportunity for current group fitness programmes to accommodate increased demand from membership growth.

Gymnastics

Gymnastics classes are delivered across 3 sites. Currently beginner and intermediate classes are well supported with high occupancy levels as shown in the diagram below.



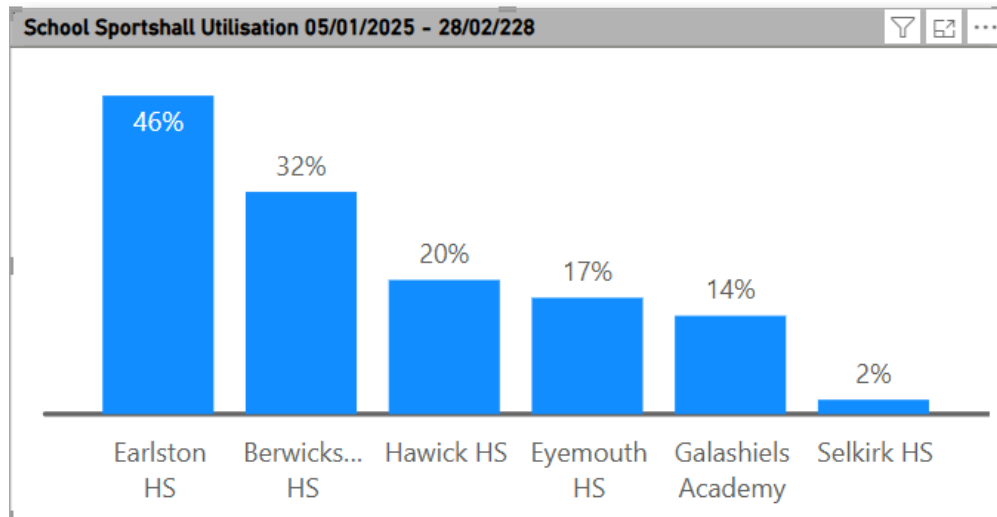
However advanced levels are less well attended with occupancy ranging from 17% to 54%. This suggests a stronger focus should be given to retaining gymnasts coming through the beginner and intermediate levels into the higher grade classes.

High School Sports Halls

There are currently 9 high schools that have sports halls available for bookings out with the school day. 3 of those are currently managed by Live Borders and the remaining under SBC. Of the SBC run schools, currently average utilisation levels are low with an average of 21% with the most booked being Earlston High School at 46% and the lowest being Selkirk High School at 2%.

This shows that there is a significant opportunity to increase usage and accommodate bookings to allow potential re-development of other buildings such as Queens Leisure Centre as outlined in section 5.8.3.

Table 3-16 High School Sportshall Utilisation



3.4 Pricing

3.4.1 Current Position

Live Borders operates a diverse portfolio of leisure, cultural, and sporting facilities, using a combination of membership, pay-as-you-go (PAYG), and event-based pricing structures. However, the pricing model is under increasing pressure due to:

- Rising operational costs, impacting financial sustainability.
- Declining participation in certain areas, requiring a refreshed engagement approach.
- Competition from independent operators, affecting market share and pricing competitiveness.
- Gaps in pricing strategy, particularly for memberships, facility hire, and cultural venues.

3.4.2 Key Financial & Participation Challenges - Leisure memberships

- Current yield per member: £19.25 – significantly below industry benchmarks.
- Latent demand: 4,315 potential members presenting a key growth opportunity.
- Market positioning: Need to differentiate between budget gyms (e.g., PureGym) and mid-market leisure facilities.

- The Learn to Swim programme and gymnastics memberships offer no concession pricing therefore accessibility and affordability is an issue for some families.

3.4.3 Soft Play Facilities

- Current usage is predominantly pay as you go. Improving family focused packages could boost revenue and secondary spend (e.g., café, events).
- Pricing structures vary across competitors, presenting opportunities to refine PAYG and membership models.

3.4.4 Sports Halls & Pitches

- The benchmarking review process has recently been completed by Live Borders and Scottish Borders Council introducing pricing adjustments required to improve competitiveness and sustainability as well as improve alignment between the two organisations.
- Regional pricing models vary, presenting further opportunities for structured increases in the future.

3.4.5 Libraries, Archives, Cultural Venues & Museums

- Historically operated on a voluntary donation model, limiting revenue potential.
- Live Borders attractions underperform on revenue per visitor compared to similar heritage sites.
- Libraries and archives operate a non-charging model other than for services such as research services, room hire, inter library loans and photocopying/laminating. There is limited scope for extensive income growth given the nature of the service.

3.4.6 Community Halls & Event Spaces

- Highly fragmented competition from village halls and community-run spaces.
- Opportunities exist to improve hall hire and bar pricing, ensuring competitiveness while maximising bookings.

- Halls are well placed to host commercial, junior and adult sports coaching activities

3.4.7 Community Centres

- Community Centres are operated by local Management Committees, with a pricing model in place with minimum charges set out by Live Borders.

3.4.8 Competitor Analysis

A clear understanding of the competitive landscape is essential for Live Borders to position its services effectively and drive sustainable growth. With increasing competition from budget gyms, independent fitness providers, college and university provision, private event spaces, and heritage attractions, Live Borders must ensure its pricing, service quality, and customer experience remain competitive while staying aligned with its charitable objectives. This competitor analysis included a full review of all private and community-operated gyms and studios, fitness class providers, sports clubs in line with the scope of the project, community centres, community halls and spaces, soft play facilities, and museums. This included key neighbouring areas/towns out with Scottish Borders. It provided insights into how similar organisations structure their pricing, memberships, and service offerings, identifying key opportunities to refine Live Borders' approach. By benchmarking against industry trends and best practices, Live Borders can work towards enhancing its commercial strategy while maintaining accessibility for local communities

Leisure Facilities

Live Borders competes in the local fitness market with:

- Budget gyms (e.g., PureGym, Sparta Gym) – Low-cost, 24/7 access models.
- Mid-market leisure centres (e.g., Berwick Sport & Leisure Centre, MacDonald Cardrona Hotel) – Memberships of £35-£50 per month.
- Boutique & specialist fitness centres (e.g., CrossFit Tweedbank, KD Fitness) – Targeting niche audiences.
- Hotel-based premium clubs (e.g., Stobo Castle, Peebles Hydro) – High-end wellness offerings.

Soft Play Facilities

Local competition includes:

- Cheeky Panda's Soft Play (Galashiels) – Two large play frames with sensory areas.
- Laughing Ducks Soft Play (Coldstream) – Multi-level play area with structured pricing.
- Burnfoot Hub (Hawick) – Community-run soft play and café model.
- Berwick Sport & Leisure Centre – Multi-level soft play within a large centre.

Community Halls, Community Centres & Event Spaces

Key competition includes:

- Borders Events Centre (Kelso) – Large-scale venue hire.
- MacArts (Galashiels) – Music and arts programming with commercial hire.
- Numerous community halls across the Borders with varied pricing structures.

Museums & Cultural Attractions

Examples of local competition and offerings include:

- Trimontium Museum (Melrose) – Interactive exhibits and guided experiences.
- John Buchan Story Museum (Peebles) – Operates on donations.
- Jedburgh Abbey – Structured admission model with variable pricing.
- Abbotsford (Home of Sir Walter Scott) – Structured admission model

3.4.9 Conclusion

This analysis highlights the critical need for Live Borders to adapt its pricing strategy, membership structures, and facility usage policies to remain competitive and financially sustainable. The findings suggest that a more dynamic and commercially focused approach is required, balancing revenue generation with community impact. To take this forward, Live Borders should:

- Refine Pricing Structures – Implement competitive, tiered pricing models across leisure, soft play, museums, and hall hire, ensuring value differentiation between community and commercial users.
- Maximise Membership Growth – Simplify membership categories, introduce means-tested pricing for accessibility, and develop a strong brand identity to enhance customer retention.
- Leverage Strategic Partnerships – Strengthen collaborations with local businesses, NHS/HSCP, and cultural organisations to drive footfall and enhance service offerings.
- Improve Facility Utilisation – Optimise space usage through consolidation, flexible programming, and a more efficient approach to hall and event bookings.
- Develop a Sustainable Revenue Model – Introduce structured admission charges for non-residents at museums while maintaining donations and free local access to balance inclusivity and income generation.

By implementing these strategic actions, Live Borders can improve its market positioning, strengthen financial resilience, and continue delivering high-quality services that support local communities.

3.5 Condition of Assets

Overview of Asset Condition

The asset portfolio within Live Borders comprises a large number of facilities across sport, leisure, culture, and libraries. While some assets remain in reasonable condition, there are significant concerns about the overall state of the estate. The condition scoring data indicates that the majority of assets have been rated as "B" (satisfactory), suggesting they are performing adequately but showing signs of deterioration. A detailed list of venues and conditions is contained within the [appendix](#). However, this general assessment may not fully reflect the functional condition of many sites, particularly in terms of their ability to meet modern user expectations and energy efficiency requirements.

Notable exceptions include St Ronan's Wells Visitor Centre and Queens Leisure Centre, which have received lower scores in key areas, indicating major defects and a heightened risk of failure. Other facilities, such as Heart of Hawick and Hawick Town Hall, require targeted improvements to sustain operational efficiency.

Investment Challenges and Requirements

- **Increasing Maintenance Costs:** Many assets require ongoing investment to maintain service levels. This is particularly evident in ageing facilities where structural and mechanical systems are nearing the end of their lifecycle.
- **Energy Efficiency and Carbon Reduction:** The portfolio includes several older buildings with inefficient heating and ventilation systems, contributing to high carbon emissions and running costs. Addressing these inefficiencies is critical for aligning with the Council's and Scottish Government's zero-carbon objectives.
- **Future-Proofing and Adaptation:** Many sites require adaptation to meet evolving community needs. Facilities that no longer align with modern expectations for accessibility, sustainability, and operational efficiency will need investment or rationalisation.

Strategic Implications To achieve a more sustainable and cost-effective estate, there is a pressing need to:

- Prioritise investment in key assets that are well-utilised and strategically significant.
- Consider rationalisation of facilities that are underperforming or costly to maintain.
- Improve energy efficiency and align asset management with sustainability targets.
- Ensure a strategic approach to refurbishment, ensuring assets remain fit for purpose in the long term.
- Condition survey data gaps to be addressed with the transfer of maintenance and repairs responsibilities from Live Borders back to the Council in order to inform decisions on rationalisation, consolidation, and future capital investment requirements.

3.5.1 Energy efficiency and Net Zero considerations

The Live Borders estate comprises a large number of ageing assets, many of which require increasing levels of investment to remain operational. These facilities are inefficient in terms of energy consumption, leading to high carbon emissions and rising operational costs. Aligning with the Council's zero-carbon strategy

necessitates reducing the number of facilities, consolidating services into fewer, more efficient, and better-utilised buildings.

Significant Increases in Energy Costs

- Total utility costs have increased from £1.3 million in 2019-20 to £2.49 million in 2023-24, nearly doubling over five years. See Table xxx below.
- The most significant cost increases occurred between 2021-22 and 2023-24, reflecting rising energy prices and inefficiencies within the estate.
- Sport and leisure facilities account for the highest expenditure, rising from £727,085 in 2019-20 to £1,327,248 in 2023-24, an 82.6% increase.
- Cultural venues also saw a significant rise, from £420,813 in 2019-20 to £842,260 in 2023-24, a 100% increase.
- Library energy costs have almost doubled from £57,619 in 2019-20 to £103,389 in 2023-24, despite lower overall energy demand compared to sport and leisure.

Table 3-17 Energy Cost Summary by Service Area

| Section | 2019-2020 | 2020-2021 | 2021-2022 | 2022-2023 | 2023-2024 |
|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Sport and Leisure | £727,085 | £377,855 | £687,485 | £995,429 | £1,327,248 |
| Culture | £420,813 | £298,073 | £463,737 | £650,886 | £842,260 |
| Libraries | £57,619 | £55,950 | £58,817 | £79,329 | £103,389 |
| Total | £1,300,541 | £779,987 | £1,313,298 | £1,879,981 | £2,487,103 |

Highest-Cost Venues

- Teviotdale Leisure Centre (£394,543 in 2023-24) has the highest utility costs, followed by Galashiels Swimming Pool (£178,161) and Eyemouth Leisure Centre (£135,707).
- Heart of Hawick (£102,693) and The Great Tapestry of Scotland (£134,917) are among the most expensive cultural venues.
- Duns Library Contact Centre (£37,191) and Hawick Library (£20,412) are the most energy-intensive libraries.

Implications and Strategic Considerations

- Rising costs reinforce the urgent need for estate rationalisation to reduce energy inefficiencies and financial pressures.

- Investment in modern, energy-efficient facilities would lower operating costs and align with carbon reduction targets.
- Consolidating assets into fewer, strategically located venues will enhance operational sustainability and improve service delivery efficiency.

A targeted approach to asset reduction and modernisation will be critical in addressing the financial and environmental challenges posed by the current estate.

4. Key Challenges and Opportunities

Live Borders operates in a challenging and evolving environment, facing multiple pressures that require strategic intervention. The organisation must address significant financial difficulties, operational inefficiencies, governance challenges, and service accessibility issues while simultaneously identifying opportunities for growth, commercialisation, and service improvement. This section provides an in-depth analysis of the key challenges confronting Live Borders and explores the opportunities available to enhance financial sustainability, improve service delivery, and strengthen its strategic direction.

4.1 Key Challenges

4.1.1 Financial Sustainability and Rising Costs

Live Borders is grappling with a structural financial deficit, which has been exacerbated by increasing operational costs, limited revenue growth, and heightened reliance on external funding from Scottish Borders Council (SBC). The persistent budget pressures are driven by rising staff wages, inflationary adjustments, and escalating energy costs, making the current financial model unsustainable. Financial pressures pre and post covid have eroded any cash reserves held by Live Borders. Without a clear strategy to increase revenue and control expenses, Live Borders is not financially sustainable.

- Live Borders faces persistent financial difficulties, with a growing deficit driven by rising operational costs, including staff wages, energy prices, and inflationary pressures.
- The financial support from Scottish Borders Council (SBC) has increased significantly, demonstrating Live Borders' heavy reliance on external funding, which is unsustainable in the long term.
- There is limited income growth, with some facilities underperforming and struggling to return to pre-COVID revenue levels.
- Staffing costs have continued to increase, particularly due to wage inflation and national living wage adjustments, further straining budgets.
- The absence of financial accountability and commercial acumen is restricting Live Borders from maximising its revenue potential.

- The absence of any usable cash reserves means that Live Borders has no funds to support investment in facilities, digital transformation etc. and is reliant on the management fee, earned income and other Council funding.

4.1.2 Estate Condition and Operational Inefficiencies

The organisation operates a large, ageing estate, with many facilities requiring substantial investment to remain viable. Energy inefficiency, coupled with rising maintenance and repair costs, is further straining financial resources. Low utilisation rates in some venues result in high operational costs relative to income, making them increasingly difficult to sustain. Moreover, overstaffing in certain locations relative to demand has created inefficiencies, necessitating a realignment of workforce deployment to optimise service delivery.

- Live Borders operates a large number of ageing facilities, many of which are in poor condition and energy inefficient, requiring significant investment.
- Many venues are underutilised, meaning that operational costs are disproportionately high compared to the footfall and income generated.
- Energy costs have nearly doubled over the last five years, significantly increasing the operational burden.
- Some venues are overstaffed relative to income and usage levels, leading to operational inefficiencies and a need for workforce realignment.

4.1.3 Service Accessibility and Inequities

Service provision across the Scottish Borders is geographically inconsistent, with rural communities facing significant barriers to accessing swimming pools, fitness facilities, and cultural venues. Additionally, some libraries and sports halls experience extremely low usage, raising concerns about long-term viability and the need for alternative delivery models.

- There are disparities in access to services across the Scottish Borders, particularly in rural areas, where access to pools, fitness facilities, and cultural venues is more limited.
- Sports halls and fitness facilities are unevenly distributed, with some areas having little to no local provision.
- Some library services have extremely low usage, raising questions about future viability.

4.1.4 Leadership, Governance, and Performance Culture

A lack of strong leadership and governance has impeded strategic decision-making and hindered organisational effectiveness. The absence of a senior leadership team has led to unclear strategic direction, limited accountability, and weak oversight of financial and operational performance. Additionally, poor data utilisation and a lack of performance-driven culture have resulted in inefficient resource allocation and suboptimal service planning. Strengthening governance and embedding a culture of accountability are essential for future success.

- Lack of a senior leadership team contributes to a lack of direction, weakens the link between strategic decisions and operational execution, and undermines overall performance.
- The absence of a senior leadership team exacerbates operational inefficiencies, limits strategic oversight, and reduces overall organisational effectiveness, making it unsustainable moving forward.
- There is an absence of a strong performance culture and accountability, which has hindered decision-making and the ability to drive improvements.
- Poor use of data and analytics has led to inefficient resource allocation and a lack of evidence-based decision-making.
- There is limited commercial and financial expertise at board, senior and middle management levels, impacting Live Borders' ability to operate efficiently.

4.1.5 Declining Utilisation and Participation Trends

Participation in sports, fitness, and cultural services remains below pre-pandemic levels, with declining membership figures and stagnant participation rates in key areas. The Learn to Swim programme and other coaching activities have capacity for higher utilisation, but inefficiencies in scheduling and service delivery prevent growth. Similarly, cultural venues and libraries are struggling with footfall, necessitating a re-evaluation of service offerings and promotional strategies.

- Overall participation rates remain below pre-pandemic levels, particularly in swimming, fitness, and cultural venues.
- Membership numbers and subscriptions have declined, particularly in fitness services, indicating a need for new strategies to attract and retain customers.

- Learn to Swim and other coaching programmes have capacity for higher utilisation, but inefficiencies in scheduling and service delivery prevent growth.
- Cultural venues and libraries face stagnating or declining footfall, raising sustainability concerns.

4.2 Key Opportunities

4.2.1 Cost Efficiencies

Achieving cost efficiencies is a fundamental component of ensuring Live Borders' long-term sustainability. Given the financial constraints and operational inefficiencies, strategic cost-saving measures must be implemented without compromising service quality. This includes:

- **Reducing full-time equivalent (FTE) staffing** based on benchmarking against comparable organisations, ensuring a leaner and more financially sustainable workforce.
- **Aligning business operations with realistic income and usage levels**, ensuring that facilities and programmes reflect actual demand.
- **Restructuring staffing levels** to ensure alignment with service demand and venue utilisation, avoiding overstaffing in underutilised venues.
- **Reassessing operational staffing needs and opening hours** to optimise efficiency, ensuring that facilities operate when demand is highest while reducing unnecessary costs.
- **Digital transformation**, investing in technologies for further cost efficiencies - For example, access controls and the use of AI for back office functions.

4.2.2 Revenue Growth and Commercialisation

There are significant opportunities to increase revenue and commercialise services by expanding high-demand offerings, such as fitness services and Learn to Swim programmes. Investments in modernised fitness facilities, improved customer experience, and targeted marketing campaigns can drive membership growth and higher participation rates. Additionally, Live Borders' charitable status can be

leveraged to attract donations and external funding, while optimising pricing models ensures financial viability.

- Fitness services represent a significant growth opportunity, with latent demand that could be capitalised upon through investment in facilities, targeted marketing, and improved customer experience.
- Expanding Learn to Swim and other coaching programmes could increase participation and revenue.
- Leveraging Live Borders' charitable status could enhance donation streams and access to external funding. If the value proposition is packaged correctly in terms of reinvestment into local communities/wider social value compared to competitors, that should also support member recruitment and retention strategies.
- Pricing models need to be reviewed and optimised to ensure services are competitive and financially viable.
- There is substantial latent demand for health and fitness services, and with the right investment in modernised facilities, Live Borders could significantly increase membership and income.

4.2.3 Energy Efficiency and Cost Reduction

Investment in renewable energy solutions and energy-efficient building improvements can significantly reduce operational costs and contribute to Scottish Borders Council's Net Zero commitments.

- Investing in energy-efficient solutions and renewable technologies could significantly reduce operating costs and align with Scottish Borders Council's Net Zero commitments.

4.2.4 Strategic Estate Optimisation and Co-Location

By rationalising and consolidating underperforming venues, Live Borders can reduce operational costs while improving service delivery. Co-locating libraries, cultural venues, and sports facilities within shared community hubs can enhance efficiency, maintain accessibility, and create synergies across services. Additionally, Community Asset Transfers (CATs) for low-usage venues present an opportunity to reduce financial burdens while ensuring continued local benefit. Where there is no community interest, venue closures may be required.

- There is an opportunity to rationalise and consolidate underperforming venues, reducing costs while improving service delivery.
- Co-location of libraries, cultural venues, and sports facilities within shared hubs could improve efficiency and enhance community access.
- Exploring Community Asset Transfers (CATs) for low-usage venues could reduce financial burdens while maintaining community access.

4.2.5 Enhancing Governance and Leadership

Implementing a more robust governance model, with greater financial accountability and commercial expertise, will enhance strategic oversight and decision-making. Strengthening leadership capacity through the appointment of experienced executives in business development, finance, and operations can drive transformation. Furthermore, embedding a strong performance culture and data-driven decision-making framework will help improve organisational efficiency and effectiveness.

- A new governance model should be implemented to ensure greater financial accountability, commercial expertise, and strategic oversight.
- Strengthening leadership capability through the appointment of experienced executives in business development, finance, and operations could drive transformation.
- Improved data analytics and performance monitoring systems would enable evidence-based decision-making.
- Embedding a strong performance culture and establishing clear accountability structures will be critical for future success

4.2.6 Partnership Development and Community Engagement

Live Borders can enhance service delivery through stronger collaboration with health and social care partners, aligning with Scotland's preventative health agenda. Engagement with sportscotland, Creative Scotland, Visit Scotland/SSDA/SOSE and other funding bodies can unlock investment in facility improvements and programming. Additionally, schools and community venues can be leveraged more effectively to expand access to sports, libraries, and cultural activities.

- Strengthening collaboration with the health and social care sector could position Live Borders as a key delivery partner in the Scottish Government's preventative health agenda.
- Working more closely with sportscotland, Creative Scotland, and funding bodies could unlock new investment in facility improvements and programming.
- Schools and community facilities could be better leveraged to provide enhanced access to sport, libraries, and cultural activities.

4.3 Conclusion

Live Borders faces a complex landscape of financial, operational, and governance challenges. However, by embracing strategic estate rationalisation, commercialisation, governance reform, and partnerships, the organisation can reposition itself for long-term sustainability and growth. Investing in fitness services, improving data-driven decision-making, and enhancing collaboration with external partners offer substantial opportunities to drive revenue and increase community engagement. Additionally, a focus on energy efficiency and workforce realignment will be essential in achieving financial stability. The strategic choices made in response to these challenges and opportunities will define the future success of Live Borders, ensuring it continues to serve the Scottish Borders community effectively and sustainably.

5. Options and Costed Proposals

As Live Borders and the Council navigate a challenging financial and operational landscape, this **Options Appraisal and Costed Proposals** section provides a structured framework for achieving financial sustainability, operational efficiency, and improved service delivery. The options presented have been developed following a comprehensive review of workforce structures, service models, pricing strategies, commercialisation opportunities, and facility rationalisation. These proposals are not isolated solutions but interconnected measures that, when strategically implemented, will enable Live Borders to transition towards a more resilient and sustainable operating model.

The financial landscape underscores the urgency for transformation, with increasing operational costs, declining participation in some service areas, and a growing reliance on Council subsidies. The proposed options aim to address these challenges by realigning the workforce to match current demand, leveraging shared services for cost efficiency, optimising pricing and commercial strategies, and unlocking latent demand in the health and fitness sector. Furthermore, the rationalisation and redevelopment of facilities offer a pathway to modernised and fit-for-purpose services that better meet community needs while reducing financial burdens.

Crucially, this section does not suggest a simple sum of cost savings and income generation figures. Instead, it acknowledges the **interdependencies** between options—many proposals are interconnected, and their success relies on a coordinated implementation strategy. The options outlined provide a roadmap for Live Borders and the Council to adopt a proactive and forward-thinking approach to service provision, ensuring that resources are allocated efficiently while maintaining and enhancing community access to leisure, cultural, and sporting opportunities.

Table 5-1 Options Summary

| Category | Efficiency/Growth Opportunity | Notes |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Workforce Alignment | £1.62m | |
| Shared Services | £0.41m | |
| Staff/Demand Analysis | £0.20m | |
| Pricing | £0.40m | |
| Commercialisation | £0.29m | |
| Gift Aid Income | £0.18m | Based on 50% |

| | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Rationalisation/Consolidation | £1.18m | Excludes venues for development – Business cases |
| Business Cases – Specific Facilities – Includes Latent Demand | £1.07m | Teviotdale Leisure Centre, Gytes Leisure Centre and TriFitness/Tweedbank Bowling Centre |

5.1 Workforce Alignment

5.1.1 Context and Rationale

Live Borders is facing significant financial and operational challenges that require decisive action to ensure long-term sustainability. A combination of declining participation levels across sport, cultural, and library services, reduced income, increasing operational costs, and growing financial dependency on the Council has created an urgent need for structural reform. This is compounded by the fact that several key services, including Sports Development, Active Schools, and Property Services, have either returned to or are set to return to the Council, further reducing Live Borders' scope of responsibility and ability to reduce costs.

Given these challenges, a targeted reduction in Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) staffing is a necessary step to align the organisation's workforce with its new, more streamlined operational structure. This is not simply a cost-cutting measure; rather, it is a strategic realignment to create a leaner, more efficient, and sustainable Live Borders. This transformation aims to ensure the organisation is fit for purpose, financially viable, and capable of delivering high-quality services in the long term.

A detailed workforce analysis has identified a potential efficiency saving of **£1.62 million**, equating to a reduction of approximately **52.63 FTE** across various service areas. The proposed changes are aligned with Live Borders' strategic priorities, focusing on modernisation, operational effectiveness, and financial sustainability. More details of specific posts are contained within the appendices.. More details of specific posts are contained within the [appendices](#). It should be noted that there will be costs associated with any programme of voluntary redundancies which will need to factored in to the assessment of each post. It has not been agreed whether Live Borders or the Council will meet the costs associated with any voluntary redundancies.

5.1.2 Key Findings from Workforce Analysis

Reduced Scope of Responsibility

- **Sports Development and Active Schools:** These services have returned to the Council, removing the need for Live Borders to employ associated staff.
- **Property Services:** The planned transfer of property management responsibilities to the Council from 01/04/2025 means that roles within this function should be phased out.
- **Business and Financial Services:** With a leaner organisation, administrative overheads can be reduced. Finance and HR functions will see reductions in FTE, with a potential future option to transfer these responsibilities to the Council. In the first instance, reductions in these functions will be achieved through greater efficiency, process automation, and the use of AI-driven solutions in for example Finance, HR, Marketing and Customer Services.

Participation and Demand Trends

- Significant contraction in business operations due to declining participation levels in sport, library, and cultural services has created surplus staffing in certain areas.
- Data from Live Borders usage analysis highlights that almost 50% of participation is from swimming pool-related activities, with nearly 30% from fitness activities, while some areas such as cultural and library services are experiencing lower demand.
- Inconsistent staffing models across venues have resulted in inefficiencies that should be addressed.

Financial Pressures and Inefficiencies

- Annual funding from the Council is under strain, and Live Borders must take steps to reduce its financial reliance.
- Hourly staffing analysis (detailed in the appendices) identifies substantial inefficiencies in staffing levels relative to demand, particularly in duty manager cover, leisure assistant shifts, and administrative support roles.
- Duplication of roles across different sites and functions suggests opportunities to consolidate positions.

- Technology, automation, and AI present significant opportunities to streamline processes, reduce manual tasks, and improve customer experience across Finance, HR, And Customer Service Functions.

5.1.3 Proposed Workforce Reduction Strategy

The identified reductions focus on areas where operational efficiencies can be gained without significantly compromising service delivery.

Streamlining Core Operations

- Administrative roles, including Business Support Assistants, Governance and Projects Officers, and Finance Assistants, will be consolidated to remove duplication and leverage digital solutions for increased efficiency.
- Frontline service roles, such as Caretakers, Visitor Officers, Library & Information Assistants, and Retail/Front of House Assistants, will be reduced where demand no longer justifies current staffing levels.
- Cultural and educational support roles, including Creative and Cultural Development Officers, Education Officers, and Learning & Engagement Officers, will be rationalised in line with participation trends.
- Technology and automation will be leveraged to improve operational efficiency, particularly in customer interactions, scheduling, payment processing, and administrative functions. Gladstone Go (upgrade) and introduction of Digitickets (Both February / March 2025) is part of this.
- Finance and HR roles will be reduced in the first instance, but not fully transferred to the Council at this stage. Increased automation and AI-driven solutions will be explored to enhance efficiency in these areas.

Adjusting Non-Core Functions

- Property services roles will be phased out as these functions transfer to the Council.

Rightsizing Cultural and Library Services

- A review of library and cultural staffing levels will be undertaken to align with current participation trends and financial realities.

- Unlike sports and leisure services, detailed usage analysis has not been possible for cultural and library venues due to data quality issues, making it difficult to justify existing staffing levels.
- Further assessment is required to explore new operating models for these services, such as greater community involvement or volunteer support.

5.1.4 Implementation Considerations

While the proposed workforce reduction presents clear financial and operational benefits, it must be managed carefully to mitigate potential risks and service disruptions:

- **Senior Leadership Team:** It is important to note that currently Live Borders is operating without a permanent Chief Executive and has no senior managers with responsibilities for key areas of the business. These posts need to be clearly defined and recruited as a matter of priority with the costs being met within the existing Live Borders budget envelope.
- **Health and Safety Compliance:** Ensuring that staffing reductions do not compromise essential safety standards, particularly in swimming pools and sports facilities.
- **Employee Support and Redeployment:** Exploring opportunities for redeployment within Live Borders and the Council where appropriate to retain talent and minimise redundancies.
- **Service Continuity:** Implementing phased reductions to allow for operational adjustments and public communication regarding any service changes.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Engaging with elected members, staff, trade unions, and the public to ensure transparency and gain support for these necessary changes.
- **Maximising the use of digital and automated solutions** to ensure efficiency improvements support workforce reductions while maintaining service quality. For example more use of customer self service kiosks and secure access barrier systems.

5.1.5 Conclusion and Next Steps

The proposed workforce reduction represents a necessary and responsible approach to securing the long-term sustainability of Live Borders. By addressing inefficiencies, streamlining operations, and aligning staffing levels with demand and financial capacity, this strategy will enable the organisation to continue delivering valued services to the community while reducing financial pressures on both Live Borders and the Council.

Next steps include:

- Finalising a phased implementation plan with clear timelines for reductions.
- Engaging with affected staff and stakeholders to ensure a smooth transition.
- Developing alternative service delivery models for libraries and cultural venues.
- Monitoring and reporting on impacts to ensure the effectiveness of the strategy.
- Exploring further technology-driven efficiencies that can contribute to service improvements and cost reductions.

By taking decisive action now, Live Borders can emerge as a more efficient, financially sustainable organisation, better positioned to serve the needs of the Scottish Borders community in the years ahead.

5.2 Shared Services

One potential efficiency measure for Live Borders is the adoption of a shared services model with the Council. Under this arrangement, core business functions such as Finance, HR, and Payroll would no longer be delivered internally by Live Borders but instead provided through the Council's existing service teams. This approach could generate significant financial savings while allowing Live Borders to focus more on its core purpose of delivering high-quality leisure, sport, cultural, and library services to the community. Furthermore, this change aligns with broader organisational transformation efforts aimed at creating a more financially resilient and strategically focused Live Borders.

Potential Financial Savings

The estimated annual savings from implementing a shared services arrangement amount to approximately **£410k per annum**, comprising:

- **£380k** in direct staff salary savings (equivalent to **10.12 FTE**) across Finance, HR, and Payroll.
- **An estimated £30k** in additional supplies and service costs, recognising that these costs are not separately allocated within Live Borders' financial reporting.

However, it is important to note that the full £410k efficiency would only be realised if the Council can take on these additional services within existing resources and provides these services at no charge to Live Borders. If the Council required additional resources and were to charge for these services, the net efficiency savings would be lower depending on the agreed service level agreement (SLA).

Benefits of a Shared Services Model

- **Financial Savings:** The transfer of HR, Finance, and Payroll functions to the Council would remove significant fixed costs, allowing Live Borders to redirect resources towards frontline services.
- **Operational Focus:** Live Borders would be able to concentrate on its core mission of enhancing sports, leisure, cultural, and library services without being burdened by the management of corporate functions.
- **Leveraging Council Expertise:** The Council already has well-established Finance, HR, and Payroll departments with greater capacity, infrastructure, and expertise, potentially improving efficiency and compliance.
- **Streamlined Processes:** A shared services model could reduce duplication of effort and align processes with best practices within local government structures.
- **Consistency and Integration:** As Live Borders is largely funded by the Council, integrating back-office functions could strengthen alignment in financial management and workforce planning.
- **Enhanced Use of Technology:** The Council's established systems and digital transformation initiatives could enable greater automation and efficiency in administrative processes, reducing manual workloads and improving service delivery.

Disadvantages and Considerations

- **Loss of Autonomy:** Live Borders would have reduced direct control over HR and financial operations, potentially leading to service delivery concerns if responsiveness or priorities do not align fully.
- **Potential Impact on Staff:** The transition to a shared services model would lead to workforce reductions within Live Borders, affecting current employees and requiring careful workforce planning and consultation.
- **Service-Level Risks:** The effectiveness of this approach would be contingent on a robust SLA with clearly defined service standards to ensure that Live Borders' requirements are met.
- **Dependency on Council Resources:** Any future changes in Council priorities, budgets, or service models could impact Live Borders' ability to secure dedicated support for its functions.
- **Potential Costs if Charged:** If the Council were to apply a charge for providing these services, the financial efficiency for Live Borders would be lower than the estimated £410k per annum.

Conclusion

The adoption of a shared services arrangement presents a compelling financial case, with potential savings of up to £410k per annum. This would align with broader transformation efforts to ensure the financial sustainability of Live Borders while enabling it to focus more effectively on service delivery. However, careful consideration must be given to the terms of any agreement with the Council, ensuring that service standards, responsiveness, and long-term stability are maintained. If implemented effectively, this approach could be a key pillar in achieving greater efficiency, enabling better use of technology, and strengthening the financial resilience of Live Borders.

5.3 Staff to Demand Analysis

A detailed hour-by-hour analysis of staffing levels across Live Borders' sports and leisure venues has identified significant variations in staffing levels relative to demand. The findings indicate opportunities to streamline operations and implement a more consistent approach to staffing, aligning with the project's key objectives of financial sustainability, operational efficiency, and service quality. However, it is important to note that a similar level of analysis was not possible for cultural and library venues due to the poor quality and availability of data.

5.3.1 Key Findings and Identified Efficiencies

- **Significant Cost Savings Identified:** The analysis highlights potential total efficiencies of approximately £205,367.14, including employer costs. These savings are primarily achieved by aligning staffing levels with actual demand trends at each venue.
- **Duty Manager Cover Adjustments:** Reductions in Duty Manager shifts at Eyemouth Leisure Centre are projected to generate savings exceeding £10,000 per year, as multiple managers were often on shift concurrently when demand did not justify this level of coverage.
- **Optimising Leisure Assistant Coverage:** At Galashiels Swimming Pool, reducing crossover hours for leisure assistants is estimated to save over £20,000 annually while maintaining adequate service levels.
- **Right-Sizing Staffing at Smaller Facilities:** Gytes Leisure Centre, Tweedbank Sports Centre, and Trifitness have been identified as venues where operational staffing levels can be reduced during low-demand periods without impacting service delivery.
- **Aquatics Staffing Adjustments:** At Kelso Swimming Pool and Peebles Swimming Pool, swim teachers currently provide supervision during lessons, reducing the need for additional leisure attendants. Adjusting these staffing levels accordingly will deliver further efficiencies.
- **Facility-Specific Rationalisation:** Teviotdale Leisure Centre's staffing model is being adjusted to maintain an establishment of six staff members, ensuring sustainable operations while achieving annual savings.

5.3.2 Strategic Considerations

While these efficiency measures represent a substantial opportunity for cost reduction, implementation must be carefully managed to maintain service quality, ensure compliance with health and safety regulations, and align with operational needs. The following factors should be considered:

- **Health and Safety Compliance:** All staffing adjustments must undergo rigorous assessment to ensure compliance with health and safety standards, particularly in venues requiring supervision, such as swimming pools.

- **Operational Feasibility:** Staffing reductions should be balanced with maintaining service quality, ensuring that peak periods and programmed activities are sufficiently staffed.
- **Implementation and Monitoring:** Changes should be introduced gradually, with ongoing monitoring to evaluate their impact on customer experience, staff workload, and overall service delivery.
- **Flexibility in Staffing Models:** A more dynamic approach to staffing—utilising flexible, demand-based rostering—will enable more responsive service provision while maintaining financial sustainability.

By implementing these staffing efficiencies, Live Borders can achieve substantial cost reductions while maintaining high service standards, ensuring that venues remain sustainable and aligned with community needs. The detailed staffing efficiency analysis is provided in the [appendices](#) for further reference.

5.4 Pricing (including Cultural venues)

To ensure long-term financial sustainability, service accessibility, and competitive positioning, Live Borders should adopt a strategic approach to pricing, memberships, and facility utilisation. The following strategic options provide a structured pathway for growth, balancing revenue generation with community value. These options focus on optimising pricing, alongside expanding membership offerings, improving facility use, and leveraging partnerships, all while maintaining affordability and enhancing customer experience. Initial projections indicate that these strategies could generate an additional £0.4 million in income, with further work required to identify and realise additional revenue opportunities.

Financial Opportunity Summary

The financial impact of implementing key pricing strategies is significant and could generate **£0.4 million in additional annual income** as highlighted below:

| Pricing Category | Additional income |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Revised Health and Fitness Membership | £155,582 |
| New Museums admission charges (non residents) | £260,000 |

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Halls day charge for commercial events | £7,407 |
| Total | £422,989 |
| Less reduction in pay as you go income | £23,000 |
| Total | £399,989 |

Work is required to realise further price increases including pay as you go health and fitness to encourage upselling to memberships, bar profit share/charges in halls and cultural venue pricing, dovetailing with pricing strategies within The Great Tapestry of Scotland.

5.4.1 Strategic Actions & Opportunities

Health and Fitness Memberships

To drive sustainable growth, increasing membership income and yield is a key priority. This can be achieved by simplifying membership categories for clearer marketing and easier customer engagement, creating a unified Live Borders health and fitness brand across all facilities to deliver a consistent, high-quality experience, and enhancing member benefits to support retention. Additionally, a refined membership strategy will ensure Live Borders remains competitive in the local market while reinforcing its charitable values. To support inclusivity, adopting a means-tested approach to membership pricing will ensure affordability for those in lower-income brackets, particularly as approximately 20% of the population currently falls within SIMD 1 and 2. This will enable Live Borders to balance financial sustainability with its commitment to community accessibility and wellbeing.

- Develop the TriFitness brand and associated offering across all facilities to elevate market positioning and increase the average yield.
- Adjust pricing to align with competitors while maintaining a strong value proposition.
- Introduce corporate and family membership packages to attract new members.
- Increase full price pay as you go prices for swimming, fitness classes and gym to drive customers towards membership.
- Implement a new pricing structure for the Learn to Swim programme as highlighted in the commercialisation options, maximising both income and improving accessibility.

Table 5-2 Future Leisure Membership Model

| Membership Category | Number of Subscriptions | Monthly Fee | Annual Income |
|---------------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Adult | 2002 | £29.99 | £720,336 |
| Adult Concession | 672 | £19.99 | £161,199 |
| Family | 343 | £49.99 | £205,879 |
| Under 18 | 229 | £15.99 | £43,902 |
| Total | 3,246 | | £1,131,316 |

Assumptions:

- 20% of the current membership qualify for concession pricing
- 60% of Junior Members become part of a family membership
- Average family membership includes 3 family members

This example of a future membership model highlighted above would bring an increased membership revenue of **£155,582 per year**. Applying the average yield figure of £20.66 to the latent demand of 4315, this would bring in an additional £1.06 million per year. Membership inclusions and benefits are detailed in the [appendices](#).

Sports Halls & Pitches

To build on the benchmarking alignment process between Scottish Borders Council (SBC) and Live Borders, future strategic options for sports hall and pitch pricing should focus on ensuring long-term sustainability, equity, and competitiveness. Following the phased price alignment scheduled for completion by April 2026, it will be important to continuously assess user demand and financial impact. Future price adjustments should be guided by market trends, cost recovery analysis, and user feedback. Additionally, consideration should be given to dynamic pricing models that allow for peak and off-peak pricing structures, ensuring facilities are accessible while maximising revenue potential. Regular benchmarking against similar local authorities should continue, ensuring pricing remains competitive yet reflective of operational costs.

Cultural Venues & Museums

To enhance financial sustainability and align with industry practices, it's recommended that admission charges are introduced for non-residents of the Scottish Borders area while maximising income from voluntary donations, particularly from local visitors who will continue to receive free entry. Recent UK-

wide research conducted by The Association of Independent Museums, alongside partners including Museums Galleries Scotland, indicates that 51% of surveyed museums now charge for general admissions, up from 42% in 2016. Although local authority operated museums are less likely to charge for admissions, this reflects a sector-wide shift towards paid entry. Benchmarking against similar institutions, where the median adult admission fee is £7.60, can help guide pricing decisions while ensuring fees are perceived as fair and value-driven.

Developing clear communication and a compelling case on how charges support the museum's vision will aid public acceptance, and to maintain accessibility, options such as concessions, free entry periods, and membership schemes should be considered. This approach balances revenue generation with inclusivity, ensuring that museums remain welcoming to all visitors while securing essential funding for operations and development.

- Implement structured non-resident charges, maintaining free access for Scottish Borders Residents.
- Introduce annual friends of Live Borders Museums membership at a modest annual fee to improve visitor loyalty and include other additional membership benefits.
- Create a Live Borders Museums day ticket including The Great Tapestry of Scotland and Jim Clark Motorsport Museum and consider bundling museum and other wider Live Borders attraction tickets, maximising the visitor experience and secondary spend.
- Enhance visitor experiences through VR, guided tours, and interactive exhibits.

Table 5-3 Future Cultural Venues Charging Model

| Admission type | No of visitors 23-24 | Admissions Income 23-24 | Average yield | No of visitors/members future model | Income - future model | Average Yield |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| Museums visits exc The Great Tapestry of Scotland/Jim Clark Motorsport Museum | 99,517 | n/a | n/a | 104,000 | £260,000 | £5.00 |
| The Great Tapestry of | 22,115 | £161,224 | £7.29 | 24,904 | £211,684 | £8.50 |

| | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------|---------|-------|--------|---------|-------|
| Scotland visits | | | | | | |
| Jim Clark Motorsport Museum visits | 9,563 | £43,025 | £4.45 | 10,000 | £50,000 | £5.00 |

Assumptions

- Future income calculated on a modest 50% of visitors bring from out with Scottish Borders area (charges maintained for all visitors of Jim Clark Motorsport Museum and The Great Tapestry of Scotland).
- £5 average museums admission charge for non-Scottish borders residents (excluding The Great Tapestry of Scotland)

This example of a future charging model highlighted above would bring in revenue of £317,000+ per year.

Soft Play Facilities

Following further investment in the two soft play facilities, the revised leisure membership model will integrate soft play as a core benefit within the new junior and family all-inclusive memberships. This approach aligns with Live Borders' strategic shift towards providing greater value for families while driving long-term membership growth. The current softplay membership across the two sites is only 14 children paying £15.50 per month.

The new family and junior memberships will include unlimited access to soft play, positioning Live Borders as a comprehensive, high-value leisure provider. This membership model not only encourages retention but also shifts customer behaviour from pay-as-you-go to subscription-based engagement, ensuring a steady and predictable revenue stream.

Additionally, premium soft play experiences, such as sensory play, structured sessions, and bespoke birthday packages, can be offered as add-ons, enhancing the overall appeal of the facilities. The integration of exclusive café discounts for members further incentivises uptake and secondary spend.

This revised model strengthens Live Borders' market positioning, making soft play more accessible for families while ensuring financial sustainability through increased membership yield and reduced reliance on one-off admissions.

Community Halls & Event Spaces

A refined pricing strategy is essential to ensure that Live Borders' facility hire model in the halls reflects both community value and commercial potential. Adjusting the structure of community and commercial bookings, alongside more effective revenue models for bar income and high-value events, will help maximise financial returns while supporting local access.

For major ticketed events in large halls, a £550 full-day commercial hire rate would account for the setup and takedown time required, ensuring venues are not underutilised between bookings. Additionally, a revised approach to bar operations could be implemented, given it's not standard practice across Scotland to allow hirers to run their own bars in town halls. Moving forward, a profit-share or higher fixed bar hire fee model, as highlighted in the commercialisation section of the report would ensure that Live Borders retains a fair proportion of bar income, whether the service is delivered in-house or by an external provider.

Implementing strategic pricing adjustments, such as full-day rates for major ticketed events and profit-sharing for bar services, as highlighted in the commercialisation section of the report, will ensure fairer contributions from all user groups and optimise facility utilisation.

5.5 Commercialisation

Live Borders operates on what is seen as a standard delivery model with a programming and pricing policy that looks to keep prices low with a view to using this to increase inclusion and accessibility. Through analysis of current usage and customer demographics it shows that most users are not coming from areas of deprivation. Therefore, based on the current financial challenges being faced by the organisation it should be considered to identify products that could be more commercially viable to improve income generation. This in practice will mean an increase in charges for those who can afford to allow for increased reductions for those who require the most support.

Commercialisation of Learn to Swim

The following approach requires a more commercialised approach and adjustment of pricing policy and ratios accordingly. Profits could then be used on the delivery of a more targeted intervention programmes to reach priority target groups.

As outlined in section 3.3.6 of this report LTS operates at an average occupancy of 85% across the pools. Whilst focus could be given to increasing overall occupancy levels up to 95%, the return on this is minimal with an income growth potential being £75,000 per annum. However, when looking at the demographic profile of those attending swimming lessons, we can see that the majority come from SIMD quintiles 3-5 as shown in the diagram below. Therefore, our proposal looks at maximising the price point to those that come from the higher quintiles and reducing the charge from those from lower quintiles.

Table 5-4 Learn to Swim Customer SIMD Quintile Profile

| Home Site | Invalid Postcode | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q5 | Total |
|---------------------------|------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| Eyemouth Leisure Centre | 18 | 63 | 113 | 22 | 0 | 0 | 216 |
| Galashiels Swimming Pool | 36 | 25 | 95 | 228 | 154 | 74 | 635 |
| Kelso Swimming Pool | 51 | 43 | 163 | 212 | 34 | 0 | 503 |
| Peebles Swimming Pool | 43 | 39 | 105 | 144 | 124 | 0 | 456 |
| Selkirk Leisure Centre | 12 | 32 | 136 | 12 | 8 | 1 | 291 |
| Teviotdale Leisure Centre | 36 | 88 | 76 | 118 | 133 | 4 | 455 |
| Total | 196 | 290 | 688 | 736 | 453 | 79 | 2556 |

This allows a maximisation of income generation whilst still maintaining equality and accessibility for all. The data model provides an interactive tool to model this.

However, based on comparisons with commercial providers of swimming lessons, who charge the equivalent of £52/month we have summarised the opportunity in the table below. This proposal reduces the financial burden on those from SIMD 1& 2 Quintiles by creating a £10 per month DD and increasing income by up to £416,460 per annum based on a £45 per month DD. If the DD level is set to £40 per month the growth is £2591,240 and at £35 per month further reduces to £166,020.

Table 5-5 Proposed Learn to Swim Model

| | Live Borders Current DD | Option 1 | Option 2 | Option 3 |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Price | £25 | £10/£45 | £10/£40 | £10/£35 |
| Potential Income SIMD 1-2 | £140,700 | £56,280 | £56,280 | £56,280 |
| Potential Income SIMD 3-5 | £626,100 | £1,126,980 | £1,001,760 | £876,540 |
| Total Income | £766,800 | £1,183,260 | £1,058,040 | £932,820 |
| Income Growth | | £416,460 | £291,240 | £166,020 |

Hall Bookings

Live Borders manage a variety of Halls across the area. Whilst there is a variety of levels of performance, as outlined in section 3.3.3 consideration should be given to a more commercialised approach to certain bookings and programming. A more nuanced approach to management and charging of bookings should be adopted to reflect the value of the activity being undertaken. For example, a differentiation should be made from local community events compared to commercial concerts.

Whilst there are various pricing structure including a commercial rate currently charges are based on the hrs used and do not always take into account the fact that venues are unable to be sold due to set up requirements etc. Therefore it would be beneficial to look at major commercial bookings being charged at a day rate regardless of the actual show length.

The other area that requires review is the approach to bar income. Currently there is an option for bookers to pay a flat £100 and deliver the bar service themselves and retain all profits or have no charge for a bar service that is delivered by Live Borders who then receive all profits. We would suggest a move towards there being a charge for the bar regardless of who delivers the service and a higher rate or profit share arrangement if the booker is providing their own bar service. Again, a nuanced approach that differentiates between genuine community bookings and major commercial bookings can be considered.

5.6 Latent Demand

Latent demand refers to the unmet potential for participation in fitness activities due to factors such as accessibility, affordability, awareness, or facility quality. In the case of Live Borders, a significant latent demand of 4,315 potential fitness members has been identified, highlighting a substantial opportunity for business growth. By addressing these barriers and implementing targeted strategies, Live Borders can enhance its financial sustainability while expanding access to health and fitness services for the community.

Current Market and Latent Demand Analysis

The current fitness membership base at Live Borders stands at 3,092 members, with a penetration rate of 2.71% in the local population. Analysis of the regional fitness market, including local competition and demographic trends, has identified an additional 4,315 individuals who represent latent demand. These individuals could

potentially be converted into active members if the right investments and interventions are implemented.

Financial Opportunity

The financial impact of tapping into this latent demand is significant. With an average membership yield of **£19.25 per month**, successfully converting the full latent demand into active memberships could generate nearly **£1 million in additional annual income**:

- **Latent Demand:** 4,315 potential members
- **Average Yield per Member:** £19.25 per month
- **Potential Additional Income:** £1 million per annum
- This level of income growth would provide a substantial financial boost to Live Borders, helping offset operational costs, reinvest in service improvements, and enhance overall organisational resilience.

Strategic Actions to Unlock Growth

To capitalise on this opportunity, Live Borders should focus on the following strategic actions:

- **Facility Investment and Enhancement**
 - Expand and modernise fitness spaces, particularly at key venues for instance, Tri-Fitness (relocated to Tweedbank Bowling Hall), Teviotdale Leisure Centre and Gytes Leisure Centre (repurposing the current sports hall)
 - Improve gym equipment, group fitness offerings, and studio spaces.
 - Ensure facilities are attractive, welcoming, and aligned with user expectations.
- **Targeted Marketing and Outreach**
 - Develop tailored marketing campaigns to engage inactive individuals.
 - Strengthen digital marketing strategies, leveraging social media and online engagement.
 - Introduce referral incentives and promotions to drive conversions.
- **Membership Offer Optimisation**

- Offer flexible membership options, including off-peak, corporate, and family packages.
- Implement structured engagement programmes to retain members.
- Provide introductory offers or trial periods to encourage sign-ups.
- **Community and Partnership Engagement**
 - Collaborate with healthcare providers, schools, and workplaces to promote fitness.
 - Develop outreach initiatives targeting underrepresented groups.
 - Strengthen partnerships with local authorities to align with health and wellbeing objectives.

Conclusion

The presence of a substantial latent demand for fitness memberships presents a transformative growth opportunity for Live Borders. By strategically investing in facility improvements, refining marketing approaches, optimising membership structures, and fostering community partnerships, Live Borders can capitalise on this demand to drive membership growth and financial sustainability. The projected additional income of £1 million per annum underscores the financial viability of this approach, positioning Live Borders as a leading provider of health and fitness services in the region.

5.7 Development of Gift Aid income

As part of a wider funding strategy, we believe there is an opportunity to generate significant income that would be eligible for gift aid through an innovative approach to pricing. By creating a donation element to pricing the charity would be able to claim gift aid on the donations. These funds can then be used to target the charitable activities that Live Borders deliver in terms of supporting target groups and improved wellbeing. The donation element would have to be optional, but our suggestion would be that it is approached as an opt out rather than opt in process. This approach has yet to be fully tested but there are examples such as Edinburgh Zoo where prices have an optional 10% donation element.

To maximise the uptake this would need to be backed with a compelling narrative that explains what the donations are being used for and why it is important for members/users to support. This can also be a positive differentiator against your competitors e.g. ***did you know that by being a member of Live Borders you have***

supported x young people to have heavily subsidised access to swimming lessons.

The proposal would be based on creating a pricing structure that has a core charge for the service or activity and then a charitable donation. So, for example, from a PAYG perspective if you were charging the customer £6.50 for a swim, then £5.50 would be core charge and £1 would be a donation. From a membership perspective there would be an additional £1 donation included into the monthly membership fee so if the membership category was £29 per month the new price would be £30 with £1 per month being the donation element.

The analysis takes into account that not everybody will agree to the donation and therefore we have profiled the total opportunity but also what that looks like based on 50%, 60% and 70% uptake. This is summarised in the **Table** below showing the potential income that could be generated with the detailed breakdown included in the appendixes.

Table 5-6 Gift Aid Model Summary

| Gift Aid Income | Donations | Gift Aid | TOTAL | 50% | 60% | 70% |
|------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| PAYG | £ 93,870 | £ 18,774 | £ 112,644 | £56,322 | £67,586 | £78,851 |
| Memberships | £ 39,564 | £ 7,913 | £ 47,477 | £23,738 | £28,486 | £33,234 |
| Sports Classes | £ 33,096 | £ 6,619 | £ 39,715 | £19,858 | £23,829 | £27,801 |
| Cultural Visitor fees | £131,195 | £26,239 | £ 157,434 | £78,717 | £94,460 | £110,204 |
| Total | £297,725 | £59,545 | £357,270 | £178,635 | £214,362 | £250,089 |

5.8 Rationalisation/Consolidation/Development Options

Introduction

The rationalisation, consolidation, and development of community assets across the Scottish Borders have been assessed to enhance financial sustainability, improve service delivery, and ensure continued access to essential facilities. This analysis considers each locality's unique context, evaluating venues based on financial performance, usage trends, accessibility, and strategic alignment with broader service delivery models.

The recommendations outlined in this section aim to streamline operations, reduce inefficiencies, and optimise community benefit through consolidation or alternative delivery models such as Community Asset Transfers (CATs). While some facilities are recommended for retention with operational improvements, others present opportunities for closure or repurposing to better align with demand and financial constraints.

This section provides a detailed analysis of each locality, considering financial savings, strategic priorities, and potential challenges associated with asset rationalisation. A structured approach to community engagement and alternative service provision will be essential to implementing these recommendations successfully.

5.8.1 Berwickshire

The Berwickshire Locality has been assessed for opportunities to rationalise, consolidate, or invest in various community assets. This analysis evaluates each venue based on financial performance, demand levels, accessibility considerations, and strategic priorities. Recommendations are designed to enhance service efficiency while maintaining key provisions for the local community.

Venue-by-Venue Analysis

Eyemouth Library

- **Proposal:** Consolidate into a Community Centre or transfer to community ownership (CAT). Alternatively, close and expand the mobile library service.
- **Rationale:** Library usage has declined by over 50% since pre-COVID, with only 4,103 visits in 2023/24.

- **Financial Impact:** Potential savings of £29,706 per annum.
- **Challenges:** If retained, operational costs must be justified against declining usage. Community appetite for CAT must be explored.
- **Recommendation:** Pursue consolidation or CAT, ensuring alternative library provision through an expanded mobile service if required.

Eyemouth Studio

- **Proposal:** Maximise commercial use or consider closure and transfer of activities to the High School.
- **Rationale:** Demand remains insufficient to sustain an independent facility, with 7,499 visits in 2023/24.
- **Financial Impact:** Closing would result in modest savings of **£5,208 per annum, which are limited to overhead costs.**
- **Challenges:** Limited commercial viability due to reliance on Eyemouth Leisure Centre's operational model.
- **Recommendation:** Increase efforts to commercialise the space. If unfeasible, assess transfer options to the High School.

Eyemouth Leisure Centre

- **Proposal:** Retain and improve efficiency through operational adjustments (staffing, temperature control, revised opening hours).
- **Rationale:** Despite a 38% decline in usage since pre-COVID, it remains a critical facility with 43,000 visits annually.
- **Financial Impact:** No direct financial savings identified, but efficiency improvements are possible.
- **Challenges:** Long-term sustainability depends on investment in fabric, M&E, and energy efficiency.
- **Recommendation:** Maintain operations with strategic efficiency measures.

Duns Library Contact Centre

- **Proposal:** Consolidate into the Southfield Community Centre and pursue a CAT.
- **Rationale:** Declining usage (7,983 visits, over 50% drop) makes independent operation inefficient.

- **Financial Impact:** Modest savings of £1,494 per annum.
- **Challenges:** Low financial gain from closure may not justify operational disruption.
- **Recommendation:** Pursue consolidation or CAT while maintaining local library access.

Duns Swimming Pool

- **Proposal:** Retain and continue funding the independent trust that operates the venue.
- **Rationale:** Ensuring long-term sustainability through governance and investment improvements is critical.
- **Financial Impact:** No direct efficiency savings but necessary to prevent further financial instability.
- **Challenges:** Long-term investment in fabric, M&E, and energy efficiency is required.
- **Recommendation:** Work with the trust to ensure financial sustainability and governance reforms.

Coldstream Library Contact Centre

- **Proposal:** Close and expand the mobile library service or partner with Coldstream Community Centre which is not a Live Borders managed venue.
- **Rationale:** Very low usage (2,495 visits, over 50% decline) makes independent operation unsustainable.
- **Financial Impact:** No direct savings identified for Live Borders.
- **Challenges:** Partnering with the Coldstream Community Centre is dependent on community interest.
- **Recommendation:** Close and expand mobile library services, subject to consultation.

Coldstream Museum

- **Proposal:** Close and transfer to a CAT or relocate into the existing Contact Centre building.
- **Rationale:** Very low visitation (3,914 visits) and lack of strategic value.
- **Financial Impact:** Closure would save £5,428 per annum.

- **Challenges:** Community interest in CAT must be assessed.
- **Recommendation:** Close and explore CAT or alternative relocation options.

Eyemouth Community Centre

- **Proposal:** Close or pursue CAT.
- **Rationale:** The centre has no strategic value for Live Borders and should either be community-run or closed.
- **Financial Impact:** Significant savings of £55,499 per annum.
- **Challenges:** Viability of community-led management must be explored.
- **Recommendation:** Proceed with closure or transfer to the community if interest exists.

Southfield Community Centre

- **Proposal:** Close or pursue CAT.
- **Rationale:** Similar to Eyemouth Community Centre, the facility holds no value for Live Borders.
- **Financial Impact:** Savings of £44,466 per annum.
- **Challenges:** Ensuring community access to alternative spaces.
- **Recommendation:** Close or transfer to the community if viable.

Jim Clark Motorsport Museum

- **Proposal:** Retain
- **Rationale:** one of the busier cultural venues. See to implement price increases and staffing efficiencies.
- **Financial Impact:** na
- **Challenges:** na
- **Recommendation:** Retain and look for efficiency opportunities.

Conclusion

The Berwickshire Locality presents multiple opportunities for venue rationalisation, consolidation, and efficiency improvements. The most significant financial savings lie in the closure or CAT of community centres (Eyemouth and Southfield) and the rationalisation of underutilised libraries and museums. Eyemouth Leisure Centre remains strategically important but must improve efficiency, while Duns Swimming Pool requires governance and financial sustainability measures. A structured approach to community engagement and alternative service provision will be critical to ensuring that necessary changes maintain access to essential services while achieving financial sustainability.

5.8.2 Cheviot

The Cheviot Locality has been assessed for opportunities to rationalise, consolidate, or invest in various community assets. This analysis evaluates each venue based on financial performance, demand levels, accessibility considerations, and strategic priorities. Recommendations are designed to enhance service efficiency while maintaining key provisions for the local community.

Venue-by-Venue Analysis

Kelso High School

- **Proposal:** Retain facilities.
- **Rationale:** The facility remains an important community and educational asset.
- **Financial Impact:** No direct efficiency savings identified.
- **Challenges:** There is an opportunity to increase utilisation through concurrent community access during school hours.
- **Recommendation:** Explore shared use models to maximise community benefits.

Kelso Swimming Pool

- **Proposal:** Retain and optimise efficiency (staffing, plant operations, and energy management).
- **Rationale:** Pool usage has increased by 7% compared to pre-COVID, with 97,636 visits in 2023/24, indicating strong demand.

- **Financial Impact:** Potential savings through operational efficiencies but no direct closure savings.
- **Challenges:** Long-term sustainability requires capital investment in fabric, M&E, and energy efficiency.
- **Recommendation:** Maintain operations while implementing efficiency improvements. Also potential to change the spin area to small gym area.

Kelso Library/Contact Centre

- **Proposal:** Retain.
- **Rationale:** Despite a 40% decline in visits since pre-COVID (12,745 visits), the facility remains an essential community service.
- **Financial Impact:** No significant efficiency gains from closure.
- **Challenges:** Need to enhance community engagement and digital access services.
- **Recommendation:** Retain with a focus on modernisation and service adaptation.

Kelso Tait Hall

- **Proposal:** Retain and review pricing and programming.
- **Rationale:** Community demand for events and activities remains steady.
- **Financial Impact:** No direct savings from closure, but increased revenue potential through enhanced pricing models.
- **Challenges:** Need for improved marketing and programming to drive increased bookings (1,259 bookings in 2023/24).
- **Recommendation:** Retain while optimising pricing and event offerings.

Abbey Row Community Centre

- **Proposal:** Close or transfer to a community asset (CAT). Consolidate activities into Kelso Tait Hall.
- **Rationale:** The venue lacks strategic value for Live Borders, and activities can be relocated.
- **Financial Impact:** Savings of £40,996 per annum.

- **Challenges:** Requires community buy-in for CAT and relocation of existing activities.
- **Recommendation:** Pursue closure or CAT transfer while ensuring continuity of community programmes.

Jedburgh Community Campus and Contact Centre

- **Proposal:** Retain.
- **Rationale:** A critical facility for education and community engagement.
- **Financial Impact:** No identified savings.
- **Challenges:** Potential to enhance usage and align with wider community service delivery models.
- **Recommendation:** Retain and assess opportunities for additional community programming.

Mary Queen of Scots' Visitor Centre and Jedburgh Castle Jail and Museum

- **Proposal:** Retain and introduce visitor charges while enhancing the site's role in the "Borders Tour".
- **Rationale:** A key cultural asset with revenue-generation potential (29,600 and 23,427 visits in 2023/24).
- **Financial Impact:** Income potential from entrance fees and strategic marketing.
- **Challenges:** Visitor experience enhancements and marketing investment required.
- **Recommendation:** Retain and develop as a revenue-generating cultural site.

Jedburgh Town Hall

- **Proposal:** Close and migrate activities to the school campus or retain with income-maximisation strategies.
- **Rationale:** Very low usage (578 booking hours in 2023/24) makes independent operation inefficient.
- **Financial Impact:** Savings of £3,857 per annum, with potential long-term maintenance cost reductions.

- **Challenges:** Identifying alternative venues for displaced users; potential CAT interest.
- **Recommendation:** Explore closure or transfer, ensuring community activity relocation plans.

Laidlaw Memorial Pool

- **Proposal:** Do not reopen due to financial and operational constraints.
- **Rationale:**
 - Chronic financial instability with ongoing deficits.
 - Very low visitor numbers (23,000 annually, significantly lower than other pools).
 - Extensive capital investment required for roof, internal refurbishment, and outdated pool plant.
- **Financial Impact:** Reopening would require substantial ongoing subsidy and capital investment.
- **Challenges:**
 - Low catchment population and participation levels.
 - Live Borders' existing transformation plans make additional venue acquisition unfeasible.
- **Recommendation:** Maintain closure unless significant external investment and a sustainable operational model can be identified.

Conclusion

The Cheviot Locality presents multiple opportunities for venue rationalisation, consolidation, and efficiency improvements. Key actions include:

- Retaining and optimising Kelso Swimming Pool and Kelso Tait Hall to ensure long-term viability.
- Exploring the closure or CAT of Abbey Row Community Centre and Jedburgh Town Hall to improve financial sustainability.
- Retaining and enhancing key cultural and educational sites such as the Mary Queen of Scots' Visitor Centre and Jedburgh Castle Jail and Museum to generate income.

- Maintaining the closure of Laidlaw Memorial Pool unless substantial investment can be secured.

A structured approach to **community engagement and alternative service provision** will be critical to ensuring necessary changes maintain public access while achieving financial sustainability.

5.8.3 Eildon

The Eildon Locality has been assessed for opportunities to rationalise, consolidate, or invest in various community assets. This analysis evaluates each venue based on financial performance, demand levels, accessibility considerations, and strategic priorities. Recommendations are designed to enhance service efficiency while maintaining key provisions for the local community.

Venue-by-Venue Analysis

Halls

Stow Town Hall

- **Proposal:** Close or transfer to community ownership (CAT).
- **Rationale:** Limited bookings (396 booking hours in 2023/24) suggest low demand.
- **Financial Impact:** Potential savings of £18,498 per annum.
- **Challenges:** Community appetite for CAT must be explored.
- **Recommendation:** Proceed with closure or CAT, ensuring alternative access for users.

Lauder Public Hall

- **Proposal:** Close or transfer to community ownership (CAT).
- **Rationale:** Low bookings (500 booking hours in 2023/24) indicate underutilisation.
- **Financial Impact:** Savings of £13,034 per annum.
- **Challenges:** Ensuring alternative provision for displaced activities.
- **Recommendation:** Proceed with closure or CAT based on community interest.

Melrose Corn Exchange/Ormiston Institute

- **Proposal:** Retain and maximise income, pricing, and programme.
- **Rationale:** Trimontium Museum is located within the building, offering cultural value.
- **Financial Impact:** Not quantified but can improve through optimised pricing and programme.
- **Challenges:** Revenue generation must be increased to justify retention.
- **Recommendation:** Retain with increased commercialisation strategies or partnership could explored including CAT of the Melrose Corn Exchange/Ormiston Institute building to Trimontium Museum.

Galashiels Volunteer Hall

- **Proposal:** Retain and enhance income streams.
- **Rationale:** Important venue with potential for increased community use.
- **Financial Impact:** Not quantified but can improve through optimised pricing and programme.
- **Challenges:** Requires investment in marketing and programme development.
- **Recommendation:** Retain and implement income-maximisation measures.

Selkirk Victoria Halls

- **Proposal:** Retain and enhance income streams; consider for CAT.
- **Rationale:** Moderate level of bookings (1,331 booking hours in 2023/24), suggesting continued community need.
- **Financial Impact:** Not quantified, but increased revenue opportunities exist.
- **Challenges:** Requires programming enhancements to maximise utilisation.
- **Recommendation:** Retain and consider CAT if community interest exists.

Community Centres

Newtown Community Wing

- **Proposal:** Close or transfer to CAT.
- **Rationale:** No strategic value for Live Borders; usage data not available.

- **Financial Impact:** Savings of £12,651 per annum.
- **Challenges:** Community-led solutions must be explored.
- **Recommendation:** Close or pursue CAT where viable.

Langlee Community Centre

- **Proposal:** Close and transfer activities to Galashiels Volunteer Hall and new High School.
- **Rationale:** No strategic value for Live Borders; usage data not available.
- **Financial Impact:** Savings of £98,231 per annum.
- **Challenges:** Transitioning activities without disruption to users.
- **Recommendation:** Proceed with closure and activity transfer.

Focus Centre

- **Proposal:** Close and transfer activities to Galashiels Volunteer Hall and new High School.
- **Rationale:** No strategic value for Live Borders; usage data not available.
- **Financial Impact:** Savings of £37,078 per annum.
- **Challenges:** Community impacts must be managed.
- **Recommendation:** Close or pursue CAT where viable.

Tweedbank Community Centre

- **Proposal:** Close or transfer to CAT.
- **Rationale:** No strategic value for Live Borders; usage data not available.
- **Financial Impact:** Savings of £25,675 per annum.
- **Challenges:** Ensuring continued community service provision.
- **Recommendation:** Close or pursue CAT where viable.

Argus Community Centre

- **Proposal:** Close or transfer to CAT.
- **Rationale:** No strategic value for Live Borders; usage data not available.
- **Financial Impact:** Savings of £47,987 per annum.

- **Challenges:** Identifying community-led operational models.
- **Recommendation:** Close or transfer to community ownership.

Libraries

Earlston Library

- **Proposal:** Close and enhance mobile library provision.
- **Rationale:** Significant decline in visits (96% drop since pre-COVID, now at 483 visits).
- **Financial Impact:** Savings of £8,465 per annum.
- **Challenges:** Ensuring sufficient mobile library coverage.
- **Recommendation:** Close and expand mobile library services.

Galashiels Library

- **Proposal:** Retain.
- **Rationale:** Still a key community resource with 24,496 visits, despite a 36% decline since pre-COVID.
- **Financial Impact:** No efficiency identified.
- **Challenges:** Encouraging increased usage to justify retention.
- **Recommendation:** Retain and develop initiatives to boost engagement.

Selkirk Library

- **Proposal:** Retain; explore consolidation with Sir Walter Scott's Courtroom.
- **Rationale:** Declining usage (3,499 visits, more than 60% reduction since pre-COVID).
- **Financial Impact:** No efficiency savings identified.
- **Challenges:** Ensuring sustainability through increased footfall.
- **Recommendation:** Retain and explore alternative service models.

Melrose Library

- **Proposal:** Retain

- **Rationale:** One of the busier libraries but still declining usage (3,499 visits, more than 50% reduction since pre-COVID).
- **Financial Impact:** No efficiency savings identified.
- **Challenges:** Ensuring sustainability through increased footfall.
- **Recommendation:** Retain and explore alternative service models.

Leisure and Sport Facilities

Galashiels Swimming Pool

- **Proposal:** Retain, ensuring daytime access to new High School pool.
- **Rationale:** Important facility with 90,973 visits (8% increase since pre-COVID).
- **Financial Impact:** No efficiency savings identified.
- **Challenges:** Ensuring continued accessibility post-new pool development.
- **Recommendation:** Retain with operational improvements.

Queens Leisure Centre

- **Proposal:** Close and migrate bookings to new High School; sell land.
- **Rationale:** Only 13,063 visits (4% increase from pre-COVID); facility redundancy due to new school pool.
- **Financial Impact:** Savings of £76,488 per annum.
- **Challenges:** Managing transition for affected users.
- **Recommendation:** Proceed with closure.

Selkirk Leisure Centre

- **Proposal:** Consider closure and redistribute access to Galashiels Swimming Pool.
- **Rationale:** Ageing facility requiring significant investment; 44,003 visits (8% decrease from pre-COVID).
- **Financial Impact:** Savings of £191,836 per annum, assuming income redistribution to other pools.
- **Challenges:** Accessibility impacts for Selkirk residents.

- **Recommendation:** Consider closure, subject to investment review.

Selkirk Caravan Park

- **Proposal:** Dispose of or CAT
- **Rationale:** not core to Live Borders operation
- **Financial Impact:** Savings of £5,888 per annum
- **Challenges:** Assessing interest in CAT opportunity.
- **Recommendation:** Consider closure, subject to investment review.

Tweedbank Sports Club and Bowling Hall

- **Proposal:** Retain and repurpose the bowling hall to a state of the are fitness centre, replacing the Tri-Fitness Centre.
- **Rationale:** the bowling hall is underutilised space and accommodates only 100 bowling member who use the venue for 6 months of the year. These members could make use of indoor bowling at Teviotdale Centre.
- **Financial Impact:** detailed later in the report
- **Challenges:** capital investment required and sensitivity around removal of indoor bowling centre.
- **Recommendation:** Retain and repurpose the bowling hall to a state of the are fitness centre, replacing the Tri-Fitness Centre.

Tri Fitness

- **Proposal:** Dispose of and migrate to the repurposed Tweedbank Bowling Hall to a state of the are fitness centre, replacing the Tri-Fitness Centre.
- **Rationale:** TriFitness is a commercially leased asset with no capacity to grow and limited car parking. The bowling hall is underutilised space and accommodates only 100 bowling member who use the venue for 6 months of the year. These members could make use of indoor bowling at Teviotdale Centre.
- **Financial Impact:** detailed later in the report
- **Challenges:** Capital investment required and sensitivity around removal of indoor bowling centre. Managing relationships and expectations with College and Herriot Watt University stakeholders.

- **Recommendation:** Retain and repurpose the bowling hall to a state of the art fitness centre, replacing the Tri-Fitness Centre.

Culture and Museums

Old Gala House

- **Proposal:** Close due to low footfall.
- **Rationale:** Only 1,505 visits.
- **Financial Impact:** Savings of £40,616 per annum.
- **Challenges:** Ensuring preservation of cultural assets.
- **Recommendation:** Proceed with closure.

Sir Walter Scott's Courtroom

- **Proposal:** Close or integrate with library.
- **Rationale:** Low visitation (3,883 visits, 11% drop from pre-COVID).
- **Financial Impact:** Savings of £18,500 per annum.
- **Challenges:** Ensuring continued access to heritage materials.
- **Recommendation:** Close or consolidate with Selkirk Library.

St Mary's Mill

- **Proposal:** Retain.
- **Rationale:** Merge all archive functions at St Mary's Mill in Selkirk
- **Financial Impact:** not known
- **Challenges:** The venue will require investment.
- **Recommendation:** Retain and Merge all archive functions.

The Great Tapestry of Scotland

- **Proposal:** Retain.
- **Rationale:** Retain as important cultural attraction **(22,100 visits)**

- **Financial Impact:** Financial efficiencies identified from staff to demand analysis.
- **Challenges:** The venue will require ongoing long term revenue support.
- **Recommendation:** Retain and better integrate with other Live Borders, cultural assets and offer.

Halliwell's House Museum

- **Proposal:** Close.
- **Rationale:** Low visitation (2,455 visits, 40% drop from pre-COVID).
- **Financial Impact:** Savings of £16,500 per annum.
- **Challenges:** Ensuring continued access to heritage materials.
- **Recommendation:** Close

Conclusion

The Eildon Locality presents multiple opportunities for venue rationalisation and efficiency improvements. The most significant financial savings lie in the closure or CAT of underutilised community centres and halls and rationalisation of cultural assets. Pools and libraries remain strategically important, but improvements in efficiency, consolidation, and alternative service models are needed to sustain long-term viability. A structured approach to community engagement and service transformation will be essential to achieving financial sustainability while preserving essential services.

5.8.4 Teviotdale & Liddesdale

The Teviotdale & Liddesdale Locality has been assessed for opportunities to rationalise, consolidate, or invest in community assets. This analysis evaluates each venue based on financial performance, demand levels, accessibility considerations, and strategic priorities. The recommendations are designed to enhance service efficiency while maintaining key provisions for the local community.

Venue-by-Venue Analysis

Wilton Primary Swimming Pool

- **Proposal:** Close and migrate lessons to Teviotdale Leisure Centre.

- **Rationale:** The Service Level Agreement (SLA) funding of £21,600 per annum does not meet operating costs, and full payments were not received in recent years.
- **Financial Impact:** Closure would contribute to overall operational savings.
- **Challenges:** Transitioning swimming lessons and public usage to Teviotdale Leisure Centre without impacting accessibility.
- **Recommendation:** Proceed with closure while ensuring a seamless transition of swimming provision.

Teviotdale Leisure Centre

- **Proposal:** Retain and redevelop or rebuild.
- **Rationale:** Despite a 30% decline in usage compared to pre-COVID, the centre remains strategically important.
- **Financial Impact:** Potential savings of £564,754 per annum, factoring in redevelopment and latent demand.
- **Challenges:** Significant investment is required for modernisation.
- **Recommendation:** Retain and implement a phased redevelopment strategy.

Borders Textile Towerhouse

- **Proposal:** Close and consolidate into Heart of Hawick.
- **Rationale:** A 22% decline in footfall has reduced its sustainability as a standalone venue.
- **Financial Impact:** Efficiencies would be realised through integration with Heart of Hawick.
- **Challenges:** Ensuring heritage and cultural offerings remain accessible.
- **Recommendation:** Proceed with consolidation while preserving key exhibitions and collections.

Hawick Library

- **Proposal:** Consolidate with Teviotdale Leisure Centre.
- **Rationale:** Declining usage (44% reduction since pre-COVID) suggests a need for a more sustainable model.

- **Financial Impact:** £32,000 per annum in savings from reduced utilities and staffing efficiencies.
- **Challenges:** Maintaining adequate library services in the locality.
- **Recommendation:** Implement consolidation with Teviotdale Leisure Centre, ensuring digital and mobile library enhancements.

Heritage Hub

- **Proposal:** Merge all archive functions at St Mary's Mill in Selkirk and repurpose the building for business use.
- **Rationale:** Consolidation would create a more efficient archive system while allowing the current site to generate rental income.
- **Financial Impact:** Combined efficiency savings within Heart of Hawick.
- **Challenges:** Investment required to modernise archive storage facilities.
- **Recommendation:** Proceed with consolidation while securing necessary capital investment.

Hawick Museum

- **Proposal:** Retain but seek further operational efficiencies and increased voluntary support.
- **Rationale:** No suitable co-location option without significant investment.
- **Financial Impact:** Efficiency improvements will reduce operating deficit.
- **Challenges:** Increasing usage and efficiency due to location.
- **Recommendation:** Maintain existing seasonal opening with increased focus on driving usage and visiting chargeable exhibitions and events.

Heart of Hawick

- **Proposal:** Integrate Borders Textile Towerhouse through while repurposing existing office space.
- **Rationale:** Co-location would improve efficiency while maintaining cultural and business functions.
- **Financial Impact:** £126,650 per annum in savings.

- **Challenges:** Managing transition without disruption to existing tenants.
- **Recommendation:** Proceed with integration and commercial space repurposing.

Hawick Town Hall

- **Proposal:** Retain with efficiency measures or consider CAT.
- **Rationale:** Low current usage (817 booking hours) requires improved operational performance.
- **Financial Impact:** Efficiency improvements could increase income generation.
- **Challenges:** Identifying sustainable operational models.
- **Recommendation:** Review programming and pricing models while considering community asset transfer.

Newcastleton No. 8 Club

- **Proposal:** Close or pursue CAT.
- **Rationale:** The venue holds no strategic value for Live Borders and has community interest in a CAT.
- **Financial Impact:** Savings of £8,166 per annum.
- **Challenges:** Ensuring alternative provision if a CAT is unsuccessful.
- **Recommendation:** Proceed with closure or CAT, ensuring a community-led transition.

Conclusion

The Teviotdale & Liddesdale Locality presents significant opportunities for rationalisation and efficiency improvements. The most substantial financial savings are associated with the redevelopment of Teviotdale Leisure Centre, consolidation of cultural venues, and the closure or CAT of underutilised assets. Heritage services should be consolidated to improve sustainability, while leisure and community facilities must focus on improving efficiency and financial resilience. A structured community engagement strategy will be essential to ensuring the successful implementation of these recommendations while maintaining access to key services.

5.8.5 Tweeddale

The Tweeddale Locality has been assessed for opportunities to rationalise, consolidate, or invest in various community assets. This analysis evaluates each venue based on financial performance, demand levels, accessibility considerations, and strategic priorities. Recommendations are designed to enhance service efficiency while maintaining key provisions for the local community.

Venue-by-Venue Analysis

West Linton Graham Institute

- **Proposal:** Close or consider for a Community Asset Transfer (CAT).
- **Rationale:** Low utilisation, with only 503 booking hours in 2023/24.
- **Financial Impact:** Potential savings of £7,922 per annum.
- **Challenges:** Assessing community appetite for CAT.
- **Recommendation:** Engage with the community to explore CAT interest; if none, proceed with closure.

Peebles Drill Hall

- **Proposal:** Close or pursue a CAT.
- **Rationale:** No strategic value for Live Borders, and no usage data available.
- **Financial Impact:** Savings of £35,076 per annum.
- **Challenges:** Uncertainty regarding alternative community provision.
- **Recommendation:** Proceed with closure or transfer if viable.

Peebles Swimming Pool

- **Proposal:** Retain, maximise efficiency, and establish long-term investment.
- **Rationale:** Remains a key facility despite a 35% decline in usage (57,844 visits in 2023/24).
- **Financial Impact:** Some staffing efficiencies identified.
- **Challenges:** Requires fabric, M&E, and energy efficiency investment.
- **Recommendation:** Maintain operations with efficiency measures and targeted investment.

Peebles High School

- **Proposal:** Retain.
- **Rationale:** A critical facility for education and community engagement.
- **Financial Impact:** No identified savings.
- **Challenges:** Potential to enhance usage and align with wider community service delivery models and facilitate concurrent day time community access.
- **Recommendation:** Retain and assess opportunities for additional community programming

Gytes Leisure Centre

- **Proposal:** Retain and repurpose the sports hall into a fitness gym and studio while relocating sports hall bookings to Peebles High School and Drill Hall.
- **Rationale:** Improved financial sustainability through diversification.
- **Financial Impact:** Additional £300,000 per annum income projected from fitness conversion and latent demand.
- **Challenges:** Managing transition for existing sports hall users.
- **Recommendation:** Implement repurposing plan to maximise financial return and improve service offering.

Peebles Burgh Hall

- **Proposal:** Retain with efficiency measures or consider CAT.
- **Rationale:** Low current usage (956 booking hours) requires improved operational performance.
- **Financial Impact:** Efficiency improvements could increase income generation.
- **Challenges:** Identifying sustainable operational models.
- **Recommendation:** Review programming and pricing models while considering community asset transfer.

Peebles Library, Museum and Gallery (Chambers Institution)

- **Proposal:** Retain and maximise staff efficiency and operating hours.
- **Rationale:** Strategic cultural asset requiring operational efficiency improvements.
- **Financial Impact:** No direct savings identified.
- **Challenges:** Ensuring sustainable staffing levels.
- **Recommendation:** Continue operations with efficiency improvements.

Innerleithen Memorial Hall

- **Proposal:** Close or CAT.
- **Rationale:** Low demand with only 438 booking hours in 2023/24.
- **Financial Impact:** Savings of £3,314 per annum.
- **Challenges:** Limited alternative provision in the locality.
- **Recommendation:** Engage with the community to assess CAT potential; otherwise, proceed with closure.

St Ronan's Wells Visitor Centre

- **Proposal:** Close due to low usage or consider CAT. Maintain gardens and relocate displays to the library.
- **Rationale:** Very low footfall (209 visits in 2023/24).
- **Financial Impact:** Savings of £11,731 per annum.
- **Challenges:** Ensuring continued access to historical displays.
- **Recommendation:** Close or transfer to community ownership; integrate displays into the library.

Innerleithen Library/Contact Centre

- **Proposal:** Retain as alternative solutions would be more costly.
- **Rationale:** Despite a 64% decline in visits, alternative service provision would be financially inefficient.
- **Financial Impact:** No savings identified.

- **Challenges:** Low engagement levels post-COVID.
- **Recommendation:** Retain and explore strategies to increase usage.

Conclusion

The Tweeddale Locality presents various rationalisation opportunities, primarily within halls and underutilised cultural assets. The Gytes Leisure Centre redevelopment offers a significant revenue-generation opportunity, while Peebles Swimming Pool remains a core facility requiring operational efficiencies. Libraries and museums require restructuring to maintain community access while optimising operational costs. Community engagement will be essential for ensuring that closures or transfers align with local needs while achieving financial sustainability.

5.8.6 Summary

The rationalisation and consolidation of community assets across the Scottish Borders present significant opportunities to improve financial sustainability while maintaining essential services. Key themes emerging from this analysis include:

- **Optimisation of Leisure and Sport Facilities:** Several pools and leisure centres require investment in efficiency measures, while others are recommended for closure due to declining usage and high operational costs.
- **Closure or Community Asset Transfer (CAT) of Underutilised Halls and Community Centres:** A number of venues are no longer strategically necessary for Live Borders and should either be transferred to community management or closed to achieve financial savings.
- **Enhancing Cultural and Library Services:** Rationalisation of museums, archives, and libraries is essential to improving operational sustainability, with a focus on consolidating services into fewer, more efficient locations.
- **Investing in High-Usage Facilities:** Facilities with sustained or increasing demand should be retained and modernised to maximise their long-term viability and ensure they continue serving their communities effectively.

A structured and transparent approach to community engagement will be critical to ensuring that these changes meet public needs while delivering financial efficiencies. The successful implementation of these recommendations will require collaboration with stakeholders, investment in alternative service models, and ongoing performance monitoring to optimise resource allocation and community impact.

5.9 Business Cases for Specific Facilities

As part of the wider Borders leisure transformation strategy, a number of key facilities have been identified for redevelopment, repurposing, or operational restructuring. These business cases focus on sites where investment can significantly enhance financial sustainability, service provision, and community impact. Each facility under review faces challenges in its current form, whether due to high operational deficits, underutilisation, or outdated infrastructure. The proposed redevelopments align with modern leisure trends and community needs, offering financially viable solutions that ensure long-term sustainability while enhancing health and wellbeing opportunities for local residents.

Each business case considers current financial performance, the indicative future financial model post-development, strategic benefits, and operational efficiencies. The proposed interventions aim to eliminate inefficient use of resources, enhance revenue generation, and provide a modernised service that meets changing consumer demands. By doing so, these redevelopments will not only secure the long-term viability of leisure services in the Borders but also contribute to the wider public health and wellbeing agenda.

5.9.1 Teviotdale Leisure Centre

Teviotdale Leisure Centre is a key community asset; however, its current operational model is financially unsustainable. The facility operates at a significant deficit, with a net expenditure of **£547,434 in 2023/24**. A redevelopment or rebuild presents an opportunity to modernise the facility, improve service offerings, and significantly enhance operational efficiency.

Current Financial Performance vs Future Budget Model

A comparison between the existing financial performance and the indicative budget for a redeveloped facility highlights the potential financial benefits:

Table 5-7 Teviotdale Development Option Summary

| Category | Current Facility (2023/24) | Redeveloped Facility (Indicative) |
|------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Income | -£575,415 | -£933,136 |
| Expenditure | £1,122,849 | £940,772 |
| Net Expenditure | £547,434 | £7,637 |

The redevelopment model shows the potential for a dramatic reduction in net expenditure, moving from a £547,434 deficit to near break-even at £7,637. This is driven by increased income potential and optimised operational efficiency. It is important to note that these financial estimates do not include lifecycle costs or the costs of any borrowing should this be required.

Key Facility Changes & Strategic Benefits

The proposed redevelopment aligns the facility with modern leisure trends and community needs while reducing financial losses. The following key changes contribute to the improved financial and operational model:

Facility Adjustments

- **Retention of the 25m swimming pool** while removing inefficient leisure water features, focusing on lane swimming and aquatic programming.
- **Potential removal or reduce the scale of the indoor bowls hall**, which is poorly utilised, freeing up space for more profitable activities.
- **Expansion of the gym and group fitness spaces** to meet growing demand for fitness and wellbeing services.
- **Expansion of soft play facilities** to increase revenue generation from family-friendly activities.
- **Improvement of the café offering**, enhancing secondary spend opportunities.
- **Potential co-location of additional community services** such as a library, early years provision, to increase footfall and multi-use opportunities.

Operational Efficiencies & Financial Sustainability

- A streamlined operational model reduces fixed costs, particularly through energy savings and staffing efficiencies.
- Increased revenue generation through an improved fitness offer, better café provision, and expanded family activities.
- Enhanced programming and targeted membership growth strategies will drive greater utilisation.

Conclusion

The redevelopment of Teviotdale Leisure Centre could present a strategic opportunity to transition from an outdated, financially unsustainable model to a contemporary, efficient, and community-focused facility. The indicative financial model suggests a near break-even position, a substantial improvement from the current £547,434 deficit. By realigning the facility mix to meet modern demand, enhancing revenue-generating areas, and optimising operational efficiencies, the redevelopment would deliver long-term financial sustainability while significantly improving service provision for the local community.

Please see 5423 - Teviotdale - Initial Proposals for indicative design options and high level capital cost estimates.

5.9.2 Gytes Leisure Centre

The proposed redevelopment of Gytes Leisure Centre aims to transform the existing sports hall into a modern, large-scale fitness gym and group fitness space, catering to significant latent demand for health and fitness activities. The redevelopment will enhance financial sustainability by increasing income generation while maintaining expenditure at current levels. The projected post-development financial model indicates a turnaround from an annual deficit of £91,791 in 2023/24 to a surplus of £214,139, demonstrating the financial viability and strategic importance of this investment.

Current Facility Overview and Limitations

Gytes Leisure Centre currently offers the following facilities:

- Main Sports Hall (4 Badminton Courts)
- Viewing Balcony
- Tumbilboo Soft Play
- Vending & Café Area
- 8 External Changing Rooms
- Lift Access to 2nd Floor
- Family Changing
- Wet & Dry Changing Facilities
- Fitness Gym
- Weight & Stretching Area
- Studio
- Space for Commercial Hire

The Redevelopment Proposal

The proposal involves:

- Repurposing the sports hall into a modern fitness gym and group exercise space to align with market demand.
- Relocating existing sports hall bookings to Peebles High School, ensuring continued access to sports hall activities.
- Enhancing the facility mix to cater to growing interest in structured fitness activities.
- Implementing operational efficiencies to improve service delivery and user experience.

Financial Comparison: Current vs. Post-Development

Table 5-8 Gytes Leisure Centre Options Summary

| Category | Current Facility (2023/24) | Redeveloped Facility (Indicative) |
|--------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Expenditure | £262,062 | £262,062 |
| Income | -£170,271 | -£418,191 |
| Total | £91,791 | -£156,129(surplus) |

Indicative Capital Costs

From projects completed elsewhere by our partners Alliance Leisure, an indicative capital cost for the conversion of 4 court sports hall with some additional cosmetic improvements to changing rooms and reception would be circa £2m.

Key Financial Insights

- The transformation will maintain expenditure at £262,062 while significantly increasing income to £476,201.
- This represents an additional £305,930 in income, generated primarily from increased fitness memberships, group exercise participation, and additional secondary spend (e.g., vending, soft play, and rentals).
- The net impact is a shift from a £91,791 annual deficit to a £214,139 surplus, vastly improving the financial sustainability of the facility.
- The payback on capital costs (excluding the interest on any borrowing) would be around 8 years.

Justification: Meeting Latent Demand

The success of this redevelopment is underpinned by a clear, evidence-based demand analysis. Health and fitness activities remain the fastest-growing sector in leisure participation, with post-pandemic recovery trends confirming their long-term viability. A detailed latent demand analysis has revealed a significant unmet need for high-quality gym and group fitness provision in the local area.

Comparable redevelopments in other regions have demonstrated substantial income uplifts following similar conversions, confirming the market opportunity. User trends also indicate a fundamental shift in preferences, with increasing demand for structured exercise classes, personal training, and gym-based fitness rather than traditional hall-based sports. By realigning the facility to reflect these changing preferences, this redevelopment will maximise revenue potential and secure a long-term sustainable future for Gytes Leisure Centre.

Strategic Benefits

- **Financial Sustainability**

This redevelopment offers a sustainable financial model, eliminating the current deficit and ensuring long-term viability. The increased revenue from fitness and group exercise aligns with industry best practices and significantly reduces reliance on subsidy support. This will enable surplus funds to be reinvested in other priority areas, ensuring a balanced and resilient service model.

- **Operational Efficiency**

The project optimises space usage by repurposing underutilised areas and streamlining staffing and operational costs. The facility transformation will allow for a more effective and profitable service delivery model without increasing overall expenditure. These efficiency gains will also enhance user satisfaction and service provision.

- **Community and Health Impact**

Beyond financial and operational benefits, this redevelopment will have a profound positive impact on community health and wellbeing. The improved facilities will expand access to high-quality health and fitness opportunities, encouraging greater participation in structured exercise programmes. This

aligns with public health priorities, supporting local efforts to promote physical activity and overall wellbeing.

Conclusion

The proposed redevelopment of Gytes Leisure Centre represents a transformational opportunity to improve financial sustainability, enhance community health outcomes, and optimise operational efficiency. The project capitalises on proven demand for health and fitness services, ensuring a robust revenue stream while maintaining expenditure levels.

Given the strong financial case, clear strategic benefits, and alignment with sector trends, it is recommended that this redevelopment proceeds as a priority investment. The projected £154,129 annual surplus post-development confirms that this is a commercially viable and socially impactful intervention for the future of leisure provision in the area.

5.9.3 Tri Fitness at Tweedbank Bowling Centre

The proposed redevelopment of Tweedbank Bowling Hall and Sports Centre seeks to transform the underutilised indoor bowling hall into a state-of-the-art fitness facility. This will be achieved by relocating the existing Tri Fitness facility from Galashiels to Tweedbank and repurposing the bowling hall to accommodate modern fitness provision. The redevelopment will improve financial sustainability by significantly increasing income while reducing operational costs through the relinquishment of the commercial lease at the current Tri Fitness site. Post-development financial projections indicate a shift from a £45,535 deficit in 2023/24 to a surplus of £247,053, demonstrating the strong financial case for this investment.

Current Facility Overview and Limitations

Existing Facilities - Tri Fitness (Galashiels)

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| • Main Gym Area | • Group Exercise Studio |
| • Functional Zone | • Consultation Room |
| • Open-plan Functional Studio | • Male, Female & Disabled Changing Facilities |
| • Dedicated Free Weights Zone | • Floodlit parking |
| • Immersive Group Cycle Studio | • |

Tweedbank Sports Centre & Bowling Hall

- 400m, 8-lane synthetic running track
- 2G full-size pitch
- Indoor Bowling Green (6 rinks)
- Small fitness gym
- Long Jump Pit & High Jump Area
- Reception, Offices, Café (currently out of use)
- Male/Female Changing Rooms & Toilets
-

Key Challenges

- The bowling hall is significantly underutilised, with only 100 members using it for just six months per year.
- The current Tri Fitness lease incurs costs that can be avoided by relocating to Tweedbank. Currently the exiting the lease discussions are being progressed by Live Borders. The current break point is 3rd October 2025 but this requires 6-months' notice. Approach has been made to the Landlord (ASM) to discuss options
- The small fitness gym at Tweedbank is inadequate to meet growing demand for high-quality fitness provision.

The Redevelopment Proposal

The proposed transformation involves:

- Repurposing the Bowling Hall into a cutting-edge fitness facility with a full gym, group fitness studios, and a dedicated free weights area.
- Relocating all existing Tri Fitness services to Tweedbank to consolidate fitness provision. Requires discussion with Heriot Watt and Borders College re TriFitness (tri-partite agreement).
- Closing the small fitness gym at Tweedbank Sports Centre and converting the space into additional changing and support facilities.
- Retaining the Sports Centre as a hub for outdoor sports, providing changing accommodation for track and field activities.
- Surrendering the commercial lease for Tri Fitness in Galashiels, delivering operational cost savings.

Financial Comparison

Table 5-9 Tri Fitness at Tweedbank Bowling Centre Development Options Summary

| Category | Current Facilities combined (2023/24) | Redeveloped Facility (Indicative) |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Expenditure | £619,278 | £565,278 |
| Income | -£573,743 | -£812,331 |
| Total | £45,535 (Deficit) | -£247,053 (Surplus) |

Indicative Capital Costs

From projects completed elsewhere by our partners Alliance Leisure, an indicative capital cost for the conversion of bowling hall with some additional cosmetic improvements to changing rooms and reception would be circa £2.5m.

Key Financial Insights

- Expenditure is reduced by £54,000 due to the relinquishment of the Tri Fitness lease.
- Income increases by £238,588, primarily due to the latent demand for premium fitness facilities and membership growth.
- A surplus of £247,053 is projected, significantly improving financial sustainability.
- The payback on capital costs (excluding the interest on any borrowing) would be around 7 years.

Justification: Meeting Latent Demand

The fitness market has demonstrated consistent post-pandemic growth, and demand for structured exercise has outpaced traditional sports hall use.

- Tri Fitness in Galashiels has already established strong demand, and relocating to a modernised Tweedbank site will expand capacity.
- Bowling participation is seasonal and limited to a small user base, whereas fitness services cater to a broader demographic year-round.
- Comparable redevelopments elsewhere have yielded similar income growth, confirming the viability of this approach.

Strategic Benefits

- **Financial Sustainability**
 - Eliminates the financial burden of an underutilised bowling facility.
 - Reduces lease and operational costs associated with Tri Fitness.
 - Enhances revenue potential through fitness memberships, group exercise, and personal training.
- **Operational Efficiency**
 - Optimises the use of existing assets at Tweedbank, increasing facility utilisation.
 - Consolidates fitness provision into a purpose-built environment, enhancing customer experience.
 - Streamlines staffing and maintenance operations, maximising cost efficiency.
- **Community and Health Impact**
 - Expands high-quality fitness access, supporting public health objectives.
 - Encourages increased participation in structured exercise programmes.
 - Creates a fitness hub that complements the existing outdoor sports provision at Tweedbank.

Conclusion

The redevelopment of Tweedbank Bowling Hall into a modern fitness facility presents a compelling financial and strategic opportunity. By consolidating fitness provision at Tweedbank, this project capitalises on latent demand while eliminating inefficient facility use. While this transformation will provide significant long-term benefits, it is essential to manage the transition sensitively, particularly concerning the closure of the bowling hall. The impact on existing bowlers must be acknowledged and mitigated by facilitating alternative access arrangements. Importantly, an alternative indoor bowling facility remains available at Teviotdale Leisure Centre, ensuring that local bowlers retain access to appropriate facilities. The projected £247,053 annual surplus post-development confirms the strong commercial viability of this intervention.

5.9.4 Summary

The redevelopment proposals for Teviotdale Leisure Centre, Gytes Leisure Centre, and Tweedbank Bowling Hall each represent transformational opportunities to enhance financial sustainability, modernise service provision, and increase community engagement in physical activity. The financial models indicate a significant reduction in operational deficits, with some venues achieving surplus positions post-development.

Key strategic benefits include:

- A shift towards revenue-generating, sustainable leisure facilities.
- Enhanced fitness and wellbeing opportunities, aligning with public health priorities.
- Improved operational efficiencies through space optimisation and staffing rationalisation.
- The elimination of underutilised spaces and repurposing of facilities to match current demand.

While these developments present compelling financial and strategic cases, careful transition management is essential. In particular, the closure of Tweedbank Bowling Hall must be handled sensitively, ensuring that existing bowlers are supported in accessing alternative facilities, such as Teviotdale Leisure Centre's indoor bowling provision.

Overall, the proposed redevelopments provide a viable and necessary path toward a more sustainable and effective leisure service in the Borders. By realigning facilities with modern usage patterns and maximising revenue potential, these projects will create lasting benefits for both the community and the financial stability of leisure services in the region.

5.10 Summary

The options outlined in this appraisal present a significant opportunity for Live Borders and the Council to transform the delivery of leisure, sport, and cultural services across the Scottish Borders. The financial analysis demonstrates that through strategic workforce realignment, shared services adoption, commercialisation, targeted pricing strategies, and facility redevelopment,

substantial efficiencies can be achieved, ensuring the long-term sustainability of key services.

A key finding from this appraisal is that while the potential savings and income generation opportunities are substantial, they must be viewed as a collective strategy rather than individual measures. Many options are interdependent, meaning that the full financial and operational benefits can only be realised through coordinated implementation. For example, workforce realignment aligns with changes in service demand, pricing adjustments must consider affordability and market positioning, and facility rationalisation must be paired with reinvestment in high-performing assets.

Additionally, while financial sustainability is a core objective, the options presented also prioritise community impact. The proposals ensure that leisure and cultural services continue to serve residents effectively, with modernised facilities and improved service quality. This transformation will require strong leadership, robust stakeholder engagement, and a clear implementation roadmap to mitigate potential risks, particularly in relation to service transitions and community expectations.

When considering the capital requirements for redevelopment, several funding approaches may be relevant. These include:

- Council Capital Investment and Prudential Borrowing: Spreading repayment over the asset's lifetime.
- External Grants and Funding Bodies: Securing partial project funding through government programmes, charitable foundations, or sport-specific bodies.
- Combined Funding Approach: Blending multiple sources—borrowing, grants, and other contributions—to reduce financial risk and ensure alignment with public-policy objectives.

Ultimately, this options appraisal provides a strategic framework for transformation—one that enables Live Borders and the Council to move towards a financially sustainable, efficient, and community-driven model of service provision. With decisive action and a structured approach to implementation, these proposals will create a sustainable and future-proofed leisure and cultural service for the Scottish Borders, ensuring long-term viability and enhanced value for residents.

6. Recommendations and Implementation Plan

Live Borders is at a critical juncture, requiring a comprehensive transformation to ensure its long-term financial sustainability, operational efficiency, and continued community impact. This transformation is not simply about cost-cutting but about strategically realigning services, optimising assets, and developing a more commercially viable and customer-focused model.

The recommendations outlined in this section build on the findings of the Borders Sporting and Cultural Estate Review Report and focus on addressing key financial and operational challenges. These include declining participation, rising costs, inefficient asset management, and an over-reliance on Council funding.

The following recommendations provide a structured pathway to achieving a leaner, more financially sustainable, and strategically focused organisation that continues to meet the needs of the Scottish Borders community. A phased implementation plan ensures that changes are introduced in a controlled and manageable manner, while a broader transformation programme places these actions within the wider strategic direction for Live Borders.

6.1 Summary of Recommendations

Workforce and Organisational Restructure

- Implement a workforce realignment strategy, reducing inefficiencies and aligning staffing levels with demand.
- Enhance senior leadership capacity, ensuring strategic oversight and a culture of accountability, performance, and commercial acumen.
- Streamline administrative functions, reducing duplication in finance, HR, and governance, while exploring automation and AI-driven solutions.
- Develop a clear training and upskilling strategy to support remaining staff in delivering high-quality services efficiently.

Asset Rationalisation and Facility Investment

- Condition survey data gaps to be addressed with the transfer of maintenance and repairs responsibilities from Live Borders back to the Council in order to inform decisions on rationalisation, consolidation, and future capital investment requirements.

- Implement a rationalisation strategy, consolidating underutilised facilities and prioritising investment in high-impact venues.
- Progress targeted investment projects, including the redevelopment of Teviotdale Leisure Centre, relocating Tri Fitness to Tweedbank Bowling Hall, and repurposing Gytes Leisure Centre sports hall into a large-scale health and fitness facility.
- Enhance energy efficiency and sustainability, reducing operational costs and aligning with the Council's Net Zero agenda.

Strategic Pricing Realignment

- Review and adjust pricing models across all services to reflect market demand, competition, and affordability.
- Implement differentiated pricing strategies to maximise revenue while maintaining accessibility for priority user groups.
- Leverage Live Borders' charitable status to introduce new membership models, discounts, and external funding opportunities.

Commercialisation and Income Growth

- Improve Learn to Swim and other coaching programme utilisation to enhance participation and revenue.
- Introduce targeted corporate partnerships and fundraising strategies to diversify income sources.
- Maximise latent demand for fitness memberships, with a potential to generate £1 million per annum in additional revenue.
- Improve the cultural offer by better integrating, cross-selling, and marketing across key cultural assets, including The Great Tapestry of Scotland.

Technology and Digital Transformation

- Upgrade booking and membership systems, reducing friction and improving operational efficiency.
- Implement AI-driven customer service solutions, including automated responses, chatbots, and self-service kiosks.
- Enhance business intelligence capabilities, leveraging data analytics for more informed decision-making.

Governance and Performance Management

- Strengthen board oversight, ensuring a balance of financial, commercial, and operational expertise.
- Establish clear accountability structures, reinforcing a performance-driven culture.
- Implement key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure success across financial, operational, and social impact areas.
- Revisit the service agreement between the Council and Live Borders to ensure it is fit for purpose, realistic, and outcome-focused.

6.2 Phased Implementation

The sequence of recommendations for Live Borders hinges on an implementation plan that both addresses urgent financial pressures and paves the way for longer-term sustainability. Two key tables provide an overview of these steps:

- A phased roadmap showing how each category of initiatives (Workforce Alignment, Shared Services, Pricing, etc.) progresses from early planning to full deployment.
- A financial breakdown illustrating how these initiatives translate into actual savings across four financial years (2025–26 to 2028–29). This is based on an estimate of how much of the total identified efficiency can realistically be delivered each financial year. See [appendices](#) for phasing table percentages.

Together, they present a clear timeline for action alongside projected efficiency gains, so that Live Borders and its stakeholders can assess both operational milestones and budgetary impacts.

Table 6-1 sets out what must happen and when over a 36-month horizon. It highlights both the chronological milestones—0–6 months, 6–12 months, 12–24 months, and 24–36 months—and the specific actions that should be initiated or refined during each phase. Key insights include:

- **Workforce Alignment and Staff/Demand Analysis**

These begin in the first six months, reflecting the urgency in tackling labour-related costs and ensuring staff levels align with service demand. Ongoing monitoring and adjustments extend throughout the entire period.

- **Shared Services**

Early in the plan, there is an evaluation of whether to adopt shared services with the Council. If the model is deemed viable, the second phase focuses on a Service Level Agreement (SLA), followed by implementation and periodic reviews.

- **Financial and Operational Levers (Pricing, Commercialisation, Latent Demand)**

Pricing changes and commercial strategies (e.g., revised membership models, profit-sharing on event bars) start within the first six months. Over time, these are expanded and refined, particularly in the 12–24-month window, to generate additional revenue.

- **Major Asset Decisions (Rationalisation, Business Cases for Specific Facilities)**

Consultations on facility rationalisation come first, with closures and redevelopments beginning in later phases. The plan concludes with completing major transitions, finalizing a facility portfolio strategy, and reviewing long-term investment outcomes.

This phased approach ensures that the most pressing cost-saving measures and revenue-generating initiatives are pursued first, while capital-intensive or more complex changes are developed over a longer timeframe with thorough public engagement and robust planning.

Table 6-1 Phased Implementation Actions

| Category | 0-6 months | 6-12 months | 12-24 months | 24-36 months |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Workforce Alignment | Review and restructure staffing model | Implement phased workforce reductions | Ongoing monitoring and adjustment | Complete transition to new structure |
| Shared Services | Review benefits and disadvantages of shared services model | If decision made to progress model, develop agreed scope of services and develop SLA | Implement shared services model | Review performance and adapt SLA to meet requirements |
| Staff/Demand Analysis | Implement initial reductions and realignment | Implement initial reductions and realignment | Assess ongoing efficiency improvements | Complete workforce transition |
| Pricing | Implement revised leisure membership model, including new corporate and family packages | Introduce structured non-resident charges for cultural venues and adjust sports hall pricing | Monitor impact on participation and refine pricing strategy | Full implementation of new pricing structure, ensuring affordability and revenue growth |

| | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Commercialisation | Implement revised Learn to Swim pricing model and structured hall hire charges | Introduce profit-sharing arrangements for event bars and new commercial event pricing | Expand corporate memberships and cross-promote cultural attractions | Evaluate commercial success and refine approach |
| Latent Demand | Implement targeted marketing campaigns to support the redevelopments of Teviotdale Leisure Centre, Gytes Leisure Centre, and Tweedbank Bowling Hall transformation | Adjust membership models based on response and facility improvements | Assess success and refine strategy in line with enhanced fitness offerings | Maximise full potential of latent demand by leveraging new facilities and improved service provision |
| Gift Aid Income | Develop strategy, legal and technical framework to deliver this project | Implement phased roll-out | Assess uptake and refine approach | Achieve full-scale implementation |
| Rationalisation or Consolidation | Conduct consultation on proposed rationalisation | Begin closure/consolidation of underutilised sites | Complete major transitions and transfers | Finalise facility portfolio strategy |
| Business Cases Specific Facilities | Begin redevelopment planning, prioritising smaller projects such as Gytes Leisure Centre and TriFitness Tweedbank Bowling Hall relocation | Secure funding and commence phased implementation, with Gytes Leisure Centre and Tweedbank progressing first while Teviotdale Leisure Centre moves into advanced planning stages | Complete smaller capital projects; continue long-term planning and funding strategy for Teviotdale | Review impact and performance post-investment, ensuring continued alignment with strategic objectives |

Table 6-2 converts these planned actions into annualised cost savings or efficiency gains from 2025–26 to 2028–29. Notable points include:

- **Increasing Savings Over Time**

Many categories (e.g., Workforce Alignment, Rationalisation/Consolidation) begin with modest savings in the first year but yield larger financial benefits as implementation gathers momentum.

- **Workforce Alignment**

Savings rise sharply from around £122k in 2025–26 to over £1.3m by 2028–29, reflecting the cumulative impact of phased staff reductions and operational efficiencies.

- **Shared Services**

No immediate savings are listed for 2025–26, but from 2026–27 onwards the model delivers around £287k–£328k per year. This matches the plan’s emphasis on assessing viability before establishing a formal SLA and launching the service arrangement.

- **Pricing, Commercialisation, and Gift Aid**

Some revenue enhancements (e.g., from revised pricing) materialize as early as 2025–26, while others (notably Gift Aid) emerge only from 2027–28 onward, indicating a longer setup timeframe.

- **Rationalisation/Consolidation and Business Cases**

These show stronger gains in later years, underscoring the time needed for consultations, approvals, and facility transformations. Once executed, they can significantly reduce operating costs or boost income.

Overall, total savings escalate from around £233k in 2025–26 to more than £4.2m by 2028–29. This rising trajectory demonstrates how multiple initiatives, implemented gradually, can collectively address Live Borders’ financial challenges.

Table 6-2 Phased efficiencies

| Category | 2025-26 | 2026-27 | 2027-28 | 2028-29 |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|------------|------------|
| Workforce Alignment | £122,166 | £488,663 | £1,242,019 | £1,303,102 |
| Shared Services | £- | £287,000 | £328,000 | £328,000 |
| Staff/Demand Analysis | £51,342 | £169,428 | £200,233 | £205,367 |
| Pricing | £60,000 | £200,000 | £300,000 | £300,000 |

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Commercialisation | £- | £291,240 | £291,240 | £291,240 |
| Gift Aid Income | £- | £- | £180,000 | £180,000 |
| Rationalisation/Consolidation | £- | £236,323 | £620,347 | £708,968 |
| Business Cases – Specific Facilities | £- | £- | £107,959 | £431,838 |
| Business Cases – Specific Facilities | £- | £204,534 | £247,920 | £247,920 |
| Business Cases – Specific Facilities | £- | £- | £241,385 | £263,329 |
| Total | £233,508 | £1,877,187 | £3,759,103 | £4,259,764 |

Taken together, the phased implementation plan and its accompanying financial projections provide a coherent blueprint for Live Borders' transformation. Early actions focus on recalibrating staffing, introducing new pricing models, and potentially embracing shared services. Over the mid-term, deeper changes—such as consolidating underutilised sites, rolling out more advanced commercial strategies, and undertaking major facility redevelopments—are pursued. By the end of the 36-month window, these measures should converge to deliver substantial financial efficiencies, positioning Live Borders on a more sustainable and resilient footing.

6.3 Transformation Programme

Live Borders is at a critical juncture, requiring a fundamental transformation to ensure financial sustainability, operational efficiency, and enhanced community impact. The recommendations and options identified within this report should not be seen as a set of random cost-cutting or income-generating measures but rather as an integral part of an urgent, wider programme of transformation. This transformation is essential to ensuring the survival and long-term financial sustainability of Live Borders.

This plan aligns with the key findings of the Borders Sporting and Cultural Estate Review Report, responding to the challenges of declining participation, increasing costs, inefficient asset management, and a reliance on Council funding. The transformation focuses on streamlining operations, optimising assets, and developing a more commercial and customer-focused approach.

The following workstreams outline the next steps to reshape Live Borders into a leaner, financially viable, and strategically focused organisation that meets the needs of the Scottish Borders community.

6.3.1 Key Workstreams

Workforce and Organisational Restructure

A well-defined organisational structure with strong leadership is vital to driving transformation. Live Borders must ensure it has the right skills and leadership capacity to manage change effectively, fostering a high-performance culture that prioritises customer service and commercial awareness.

Actions and Linkages:

- **Prioritise recruitment of a permanent CEO and senior leadership team** with strategic oversight, commercial expertise, and a track record of transformational change. (Links to Recommendation: Workforce and Organisational Restructure)
- **Implement workforce realignment** based on the staff/demand analysis, identifying inefficiencies and reshaping roles to match operational needs. (Links to Recommendation: Workforce Realignment; Phased Implementation: 0-12 months)

- **Embed a performance-driven culture**, utilising clear KPIs and accountability frameworks to encourage continuous improvement. (Links to Recommendation: Governance and Performance Management)
- **Invest in targeted staff development**, ensuring employees are equipped with the skills to support new services, digital tools, and commercial strategies. (Links to Recommendation: Workforce Training and Upskilling)

Asset Rationalisation and Facility Investment

Live Borders faces rising costs and underutilised assets. The focus is on optimising the estate portfolio, investing in high-potential facilities, and consolidating or repurposing assets that no longer serve the organisation's evolving strategic needs.

Actions and Linkages:

- **Address Condition Survey Data gaps** major sites to inform decisions on closures, refurbishments, or expansions. (Links to Recommendation: Asset Rationalisation)
- **Implement the rationalisation strategy**, including targeted closures of underutilised venues and investment in priority projects such as Teviotdale Leisure Centre, Gytes Leisure Centre, and the Tri Fitness relocation. (Links to Recommendation: Facility Investment; Phased Implementation: 0-24 months)
- **Pursue co-location opportunities** to enhance facility usage and reduce overheads. (Links to Recommendation: Asset Management)
- **Enhance sustainability initiatives**, aligning facilities with the Council's Net Zero agenda. (Links to Recommendation: Energy Efficiency and Sustainability)

Strategic Pricing Realignment

A modernised pricing framework can balance affordability with revenue growth. By employing differentiated pricing and leveraging charitable status, Live Borders can increase commercial viability while maintaining accessibility.

Actions and Linkages:

- **Review existing fee structures**, ensuring alignment with market rates, cost recovery, and community value. (Links to Recommendation: Strategic

Pricing Realignment; Phased Implementation: 0-6 months for initial changes)

- **Introduce dynamic pricing**, offering peak/off-peak rates and targeted concessions for key user groups. (Links to Recommendation: Accessibility and Revenue Enhancement)
- **Leverage charitable status** to create new membership models, discounts, and external funding opportunities. (Links to Recommendation: Charitable Funding; Gift Aid Income)
- **Monitor impact on participation**, using data analytics to adjust pricing strategies over time. (Links to Recommendation: Technology and Digital Transformation)

Commercialisation and Income Growth

Robust commercial strategies are pivotal to reducing reliance on Council funding. By expanding Learn to Swim, exploring corporate partnerships, and refining cultural offerings, Live Borders can capture new markets and maximise existing demand.

Actions and Linkages:

- **Enhance the Learn to Swim programme**, targeting improved participation and revenue. (Links to Recommendation: Commercialisation and Income Growth; Phased Implementation: 0-12 months)
- **Introduce new revenue streams** through profit-sharing event partnerships, venue hire arrangements, and diversified commercial ventures. (Links to Recommendation: Commercial Partnerships)
- **Strengthen the cultural offer**, encouraging cross-selling across attractions like The Great Tapestry of Scotland and local leisure facilities. (Links to Recommendation: Cultural Integration)
- **Unlock latent demand** in fitness memberships, pursuing an ambitious revenue target of £1 million per annum. (Links to Recommendation: Latent Demand; Phased Implementation: 12-36 months)

Marketing, Branding, and Customer Engagement

A stronger brand identity and improved customer experience are cornerstones of sustained growth. Targeted marketing, clear messaging, and a user-friendly digital

platform will help Live Borders broaden its appeal and enhance community engagement.

Actions and Linkages:

- **Develop a modern brand identity**, repositioning Live Borders as a dynamic, customer-focused organisation. (Links to Recommendation: Marketing and Branding)
- **Implement integrated marketing campaigns**, utilising both online channels and local media to boost participation. (Links to Recommendation: Commercialisation; Phased Implementation: 6-12 months)
- **Refine customer journey mapping**, improving everything from booking processes to in-person service experiences. (Links to Recommendation: Technology and Digital Transformation)
- **Use data analytics**, segmenting audiences and personalising communications to maximise engagement. (Links to Recommendation: Technology and Digital Transformation)

Technology and Digital Transformation

Digital solutions can significantly reduce overheads, improve customer access, and drive data-led decision-making. Investing in updated systems and embracing AI-driven tools will allow Live Borders to compete effectively and enhance service delivery.

Actions and Linkages:

- **Upgrade booking and membership systems**, improving operational efficiency and user satisfaction. (Links to Recommendation: Technology Upgrades; Phased Implementation: 0-12 months)
- **Adopt AI solutions**, such as chatbots and automated responses, to reduce administrative tasks and improve customer service. (Links to Recommendation: Digital Transformation)
- **Develop business intelligence capabilities**, enabling real-time tracking of performance indicators and data-driven decision-making. (Links to Recommendation: Governance and Performance Management)
- **Explore virtual and hybrid offerings**, including online fitness classes and digital cultural content. (Links to Recommendation: Commercialisation and Marketing)

Governance and Performance Management

Robust governance underpins all transformation efforts, ensuring accountability, transparency, and results-oriented leadership. Live Borders needs a performance management framework that aligns stakeholders on common goals and actively measures progress.

Actions and Linkages:

- **Strengthen the Board**, ensuring a balanced mix of financial, commercial, and operational skills to provide strategic direction. (Links to Recommendation: Governance and Performance Management)
- **Establish comprehensive KPIs** that track financial sustainability, operational efficiency, and social impact, feeding into transparent reporting cycles. (Links to Recommendation: KPI Implementation)
- **Revisit the service agreement** with the Council, clearly defining roles, outcomes, and expectations. (Links to Recommendation: Governance and Oversight)
- **Ensure continuous stakeholder engagement**, promoting collaboration between the Council, community groups, and funding partners. (Links to Recommendation: Stakeholder Engagement)

6.3.2 Linking Recommendations, Implementation Plan, and Transformation Programme

The core recommendations in Section 6.1, along with their phased rollout in Section 6.2, form the building blocks of Live Borders' future. This transformation programme provides the strategic framework to integrate these building blocks into a cohesive, future-focused agenda.

- **Consistency:** By placing each recommendation within its relevant workstream, Live Borders ensures that day-to-day actions align with broader goals.
- **Clarity:** The Phased Implementation Plan (Section 6.2) offers a clear timeline for tackling priorities, enabling more transparent communication to staff, stakeholders, and the public.
- **Accountability:** Defined targets and performance metrics guarantee that progress is monitored, reported, and adapted as needed.

- **Synergy:** Each workstream reinforces the others; for example, workforce realignment supports technology adoption, while pricing reforms complement asset rationalisation and commercial growth.

6.3.3 Conclusion

Realising this transformation demands a coordinated, well-resourced effort. By working through these interlinked workstreams, Live Borders will emerge as a leaner, more financially stable, and community-centric organisation. The phased approach ensures that changes are introduced methodically, with stakeholder consultation and regular progress reviews however, it will present the Council with significant financial implication. If the transformation does not progress, there is a risk to a damaging blanket cut in services in order to operate within the resources available.

Ultimately, this is about more than boosting efficiency or revenue: it is about empowering Live Borders to flourish as a key cultural and sporting institution, delivering high-quality services that meet the evolving needs of the Scottish Borders. Through disciplined execution of this transformation programme, Live Borders will position itself for sustained success and meaningful community impact.

7. Stakeholder Engagement Summary

Introduction

The stakeholder engagement for Scottish Borders was conducted to gather insights from key stakeholder, partners and industry experts to shape the future direction of leisure, culture, and sport provision. The information sharing aimed to identify strategic priorities, operational challenges, and opportunities for collaboration to ensure a sustainable and community-focused approach.

Engagement sessions were held with representatives from Scottish Borders Council, NHS Borders, educational institutions, national bodies and Live Borders leadership. Discussions focused on financial sustainability, facility rationalisation, service modernisation, commercialisation, health and wellbeing partnerships, and governance structures.

Key Strategic Themes

From the stakeholder sessions, several overarching themes emerged that will inform future strategic direction:

1. Financial Sustainability and Commercialisation

- Live Borders operates with significant financial constraints, requiring urgent action to stabilise its budget.
- There is a pressing need to improve income generation through targeted pricing strategies, corporate sponsorships, and diversified membership models.
- Commercialisation must be embedded in operational decision-making, ensuring revenue-generating services subsidise community-focused activities.
- Investment in modern digital marketing and customer engagement tools could improve membership retention and service uptake.

2. Facility Rationalisation and Service Integration

- The current estate is fragmented and inefficient, with too many aging and underutilised buildings.

- A strategic rationalisation plan is required to consolidate services into fewer, multi-use hubs that align with community needs.
- Greater integration between sports, culture, and community services could improve efficiency and customer experience.
- There is political and community sensitivity around facility closures, requiring a well-communicated and evidence-based approach.

3. Health, Wellbeing, and Social Prescribing

- Live Borders has a key role in preventative health through social prescribing, supporting active aging, and rehabilitation services.
- Stronger partnerships with NHS Borders, the Health & Social Care Partnership (HSCP), and other agencies could unlock funding and improve health outcomes.
- Expanding wellbeing programmes, including prehab (exercise before surgery) and mental health support, presents opportunities for collaboration.
- Access barriers such as cost, transport, and awareness must be addressed to support inclusivity.

4. Community Engagement and Asset-Based Approaches

- A shift towards an asset-based approach, leveraging community strengths, was highlighted as essential for sustainable service delivery.
- Community Asset Transfers (CATs) offer potential for long-term management of local facilities, but clear support structures and governance frameworks are needed.
- Local partnerships should be strengthened to empower communities and develop sustainable service models tailored to local needs.
- Opportunities exist for co-locating facilities with community organisations, schools, and healthcare providers.

5. Governance, Leadership, and Organisational Culture

- There is a recognised need for stronger leadership within Live Borders to drive commercial growth and service transformation.

- A governance review should be undertaken to clarify the roles and responsibilities of Live Borders, Scottish Borders Council, and community stakeholders.
- Organisational culture changes are needed to empower staff, improve decision-making agility, and enhance customer focus.
- A revised Service Level Agreement (SLA) should be developed to ensure clear outcomes, performance expectations and strategic alignment.
- A strengthened performance management framework is required to effectively measure service delivery against organisational goals while demonstrating the broader social value and impact of services.
- Exploring shared HR, finance and IT services between Scottish Borders Council and Live Borders could reduce costs, streamline operations and improve data management.

Digital Transformation and Modernisation

- Inefficiencies in IT and finance systems, including operating across two separate networks, and lack of integrated HR system must be addressed to improve efficiency and service delivery.
- Investment in modernised booking systems, integrated membership models, and digital marketing would improve service accessibility and financial performance.
- Investment in digital and immersive experiences is critical to keeping leisure and cultural venues relevant and engaging, particularly for younger audiences.
- Data-driven decision-making must be prioritised to ensure services are responsive to user demand and market trends.
- The development of a single, streamlined membership offering across leisure, sport, and culture would improve customer experience and retention.

6. Pricing, Accessibility, and Inclusivity

- A revised pricing model should be implemented to ensure sustainability while maintaining affordability for disadvantaged communities.
- Means-tested membership pricing could enhance inclusivity, ensuring those in SIMD 1 and 2 can access services.

- Soft play, swimming, and sports court hire will be incorporated as standard benefits within junior and family membership models to drive long-term engagement.
- Cultural services, including museums, require an admissions pricing model that maximises income while maintaining free access for local residents and voluntary donations.

7. Strategic Partnerships and Funding Opportunities

- Future funding opportunities should be maximised through strategic partnerships, including:
- NHS collaboration for preventative health programmes.
- External investment sources such as social impact bonds and corporate social responsibility (CSR) funding.
- Heritage and cultural funding bodies to support museum sustainability.
- Commercial partnerships with local businesses and tourism operators.

Conclusion and Next Steps

The stakeholder engagement process has highlighted the urgent need for transformation within leisure, sport, and cultural services in the Scottish Borders. The next stage of the process will involve detailed engagement with elected members and the Live Borders Board to review the emerging proposals. This will ensure alignment with strategic priorities, financial sustainability, and community needs. Their input will be critical in shaping final recommendations before progressing to implementation planning. A clear strategic plan should then be developed to address financial sustainability, service integration, governance improvements, and digital transformation.

Moving forward, Live Borders and Scottish Borders Council must work collaboratively to:

- Develop a **Strategic Facilities Plan** that prioritises multi-use hubs and rationalises underperforming assets.
- Strengthen **commercialisation strategies** to enhance revenue while maintaining community benefit.
- Establish **clear governance structures** to improve accountability and decision-making.

- Expand **health and wellbeing partnerships** to deliver meaningful preventative healthcare interventions. There would be an expectation that partners fund/support this whole-system approach to improving Borders health resulting in reduced pressure on partner services such as GP, acute care and social care.
- Improve **customer engagement and inclusivity** through revised pricing, digital accessibility, and targeted outreach.

By aligning with national and regional policy priorities, ensuring financial sustainability, and engaging communities effectively, Live Borders can transform its services to meet future demand while continuing to deliver high-quality, accessible opportunities for residents across the Scottish Borders.

8. Appendices

8.1 Facility Condition Reports

- **A: Good** – Performing well and operating effectively (physical element carries out function totally as new)
- **B: Satisfactory** – Performing adequately but showing minor deterioration (physical element carries out function satisfactorily, may show signs of age)
- **C: Poor** – Showing major defects and/or not operating adequately (physical element does not carry out function effectively without continuous repair, shows signs of age)
- **D: Bad** – Economic life expired and/or risk of failure

| Section | Name | Asset Condition Score | Asset Ceilings Score | Asset Electrical Score | Asset External Areas Score | Asset External Walls, Windows and Doors Score | Asset Fixed Internal Facilities, Furniture and Fittings Score | Asset Floors and Stairs Score | Asset Internal Walls and Doors Score | Asset Mechanical Score | Asset Outdoor Sports Facilities and Permanent Fixed Structures Score | Asset Redecorations Score | Asset Roof Score | Asset Sanitary Services Score |
|---------|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Culture | Abbey Row Community Centre | B | B | C | B | B | B | B | B | C | | B | B | B |
| Culture | Argus Community Centre | B | B | C | B | B | | B | B | B | | | B | B |
| Culture | Borders Textile Towerhouse | B | B | C | B | B | B | B | B | C | | B | B | B |
| Culture | Peebles Burgh Hall | B | B | C | B | B | B | B | B | C | | A | B | B |
| Culture | Peebles Library, Museum and Gallery (Chambers Institution) | B | B | B | B | B | C | B | B | B | | B | B | C |
| Culture | Coldstream Museum | B | B | C | B | B | B | B | B | B | | B | B | B |
| Culture | Melrose Corn Exchange/Ormiston Institute | B | B | C | B | B | B | B | B | B | | B | B | B |
| Culture | Peebles Drill Hall | B | B | C | B | B | B | B | B | C | | B | B | B |
| Culture | Eyemouth Community Centre | B | B | C | B | B | | B | B | C | | B | B | B |
| Culture | Focus Centre | B | B | C | B | B | B | B | B | C | | B | B | C |
| Culture | West Linton Graham Institute | B | B | C | B | B | B | B | B | C | | B | B | B |
| Culture | The Great Tapestry of Scotland | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | B | | A | A | A |

| Section | Name | Asset Condition Score | Asset Ceilings Score | Asset Electrical Score | Asset External Areas Score | Asset External Walls, Windows and Doors Score | Asset Fixed Internal Facilities, Furniture and Fittings Score | Asset Floors and Stairs Score | Asset Internal Walls and Doors Score | Asset Mechanical Score | Asset Outdoor Sports Facilities and Permanent Fixed Structures Score | Asset Redecorations Score | Asset Roof Score | Asset Sanitary Services Score |
|---------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Culture | Halliwell's House Museum | B | B | C | B | B | B | B | B | C | | B | B | B |
| Culture | Hawick Town Hall | B | B | C | B | B | B | B | B | C | | B | B | B |
| Culture | Heart of Hawick | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | C | | B | B | B |
| Culture | Heritage Hub | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | | B | B | B |
| Culture | Jedburgh Castle Jail and Museum | B | B | C | B | B | | B | B | C | | B | B | B |
| Culture | Jedburgh Town Hall | B | B | C | B | B | B | B | B | B | | B | B | B |
| Culture | Jim Clark Motorsport Museum | B | B | A | B | B | B | B | B | B | | B | B | B |
| Culture | Lauder Public Hall | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | | B | B | B |
| Culture | Mary Queen of Scots' Visitor Centre | B | B | B | B | B | | B | B | C | | B | B | B |
| Culture | Innerleithen Memorial Hall | B | B | C | B | B | B | B | B | B | | B | B | B |
| Culture | Newtown Community Wing | B | B | C | B | B | B | B | B | B | | B | B | B |
| Culture | No8 Community Centre | B | B | C | B | B | B | B | B | C | | B | B | B |
| Culture | Old Gala House Hall | B | B | C | B | B | A | B | B | C | | B | B | B |
| Culture | Old Gala House Museum | B | B | C | B | B | A | B | B | C | | B | B | B |
| Culture | Ormiston Institute | B | B | C | B | B | B | B | B | B | | B | B | B |
| Culture | Southfield Community Centre | B | B | C | B | B | B | B | B | C | | B | B | B |
| Culture | St Ronan's Wells Visitor Centre | C | D | C | B | B | D | B | C | B | | D | C | C |
| Culture | Stow Town Hall | B | B | C | B | B | B | B | B | C | | B | B | B |
| Culture | Kelso Tait Hall | B | B | C | B | B | | B | B | C | | B | B | B |
| Culture | Tweedbank Community Centre | B | B | C | B | B | B | B | B | C | | B | B | B |
| Culture | Selkirk Victoria Halls | B | B | C | B | B | B | B | B | C | | B | B | B |
| Culture | Galashiels Volunteer Hall | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | C | | B | B | B |

| Section | Name | Asset Condition Score | Asset Ceilings Score | Asset Electrical Score | Asset External Areas Score | Asset External Walls, Windows and Doors Score | Asset Fixed Internal Facilities, Furniture and Fittings Score | Asset Floors and Stairs Score | Asset Internal Walls and Doors Score | Asset Mechanical Score | Asset Outdoor Sports Facilities and Permanent Fixed Structures Score | Asset Redecorations Score | Asset Roof Score | Asset Sanitary Services Score |
|-------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Culture | Sir Walter Scott's Courtroom | B | B | C | B | B | B | B | B | B | | B | B | B |
| Libraries | Duns Library Contact Centre | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | C | | B | B | B |
| Libraries | Eyemouth Library | B | B | C | B | B | B | B | B | B | | B | B | B |
| Libraries | Galashiels Library | B | B | C | B | B | B | B | B | C | | B | B | B |
| Libraries | Hawick Library | B | B | C | B | B | | B | B | B | | B | B | B |
| Libraries | Melrose Library | B | B | C | B | B | | B | B | C | | B | B | B |
| Libraries | Peebles Library | B | B | B | B | B | C | B | B | B | | B | B | C |
| Libraries | Selkirk Library | B | B | C | B | B | B | B | B | C | | B | B | B |
| Sport and Leisure | Eyemouth Leisure Centre | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | | B | B | B |
| Sport and Leisure | Galashiels Swimming Pool | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | | B | B | B |
| Sport and Leisure | Gytes Leisure Centre | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | B |
| Sport and Leisure | Kelso Swimming Pool | B | B | B | B | B | | B | B | B | | B | B | B |
| Sport and Leisure | Peebles High School | B | B | A | B | B | B | B | B | A | B | B | B | B |
| Sport and Leisure | Peebles Swimming Pool | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | | B | A | B |
| Sport and Leisure | Queens Leisure Centre | B | D | C | B | B | | B | B | C | | | C | B |
| Sport and Leisure | Selkirk Leisure Centre | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | | B | B | B |
| Sport and Leisure | Teviotdale Leisure Centre | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | | B | B | B |
| Sport and Leisure | Tweedbank Bowling Centre | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | | B | B | B |
| Sport and Leisure | Tweedbank Sports Centre | B | B | B | B | B | | B | B | B | B | C | B | B |

8.2 Financial Analysis

8.2.1 FTE Realignment

Contained within Confidential Appendix

8.2.2 Hourly Staff to Demand Analysis

| Venue | Proposed Change | Rationale | Post | Day | Hours | Hourly Rate | Weeks | Total Saving |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------|-------|-------------|-------|--------------|
| Eyemouth Leisure Centre | Reduce Duty Manager Cover | 2 Duty Managers on shift concurrently | Duty Manager | Tuesday | 4 | £14.91 | 52 | £3,101.28 |
| Eyemouth Leisure Centre | Reduce Duty Manager Cover | 3 Duty Managers on shift concurrently | Duty Manager | Wednesday | 3 | £14.91 | 52 | £2,325.96 |
| Eyemouth Leisure Centre | Reduce Duty Manager Cover | 4 Duty Managers on shift concurrently | Duty Manager | Friday | 7 | £14.91 | 52 | £5,427.24 |
| Galashiels Swimming Pool | Reduce Leisure Assistant Cover | 2 hour cross over of leisure assistant staff | Leisure Assistant | Monday | 1.5 | £12.00 | 52 | £936.00 |
| Galashiels Swimming Pool | Reduce Leisure Assistant Cover | 2 hour cross over of leisure assistant staff | Leisure Assistant | Monday | 1.5 | £12.00 | 52 | £936.00 |
| Galashiels Swimming Pool | Reduce Leisure Assistant Cover | 2 hour cross over of leisure assistant staff | Leisure Assistant | Monday | 1.5 | £12.00 | 52 | £936.00 |
| Galashiels Swimming Pool | Reduce Leisure Assistant Cover | 3 hour cross over of leisure assistant staff | Leisure Assistant | Tuesday | 3 | £12.00 | 52 | £1,872.00 |
| Galashiels Swimming Pool | Reduce Leisure Assistant Cover | 3 hour cross over of leisure assistant staff | Leisure Assistant | Tuesday | 3 | £12.00 | 52 | £1,872.00 |

| Venue | Proposed Change | Rationale | Post | Day | Hours | Hourly Rate | Weeks | Total Saving |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------|-------|-------------|-------|--------------|
| Galashiels Swimming Pool | Reduce Leisure Assistant Cover | 3 hour cross over of leisure assistant staff | Leisure Assistant | Tuesday | 3 | £12.00 | 52 | £1,872.00 |
| Galashiels Swimming Pool | Reduce Leisure Assistant Cover | 3 hour cross over of leisure assistant staff | Leisure Assistant | Wednesday | 3 | £12.00 | 52 | £1,872.00 |
| Galashiels Swimming Pool | Reduce Leisure Assistant Cover | 3 hour cross over of leisure assistant staff | Leisure Assistant | Wednesday | 3 | £12.00 | 52 | £1,872.00 |
| Galashiels Swimming Pool | Reduce Leisure Assistant Cover | 3 hour cross over of leisure assistant staff | Leisure Assistant | Wednesday | 3 | £12.00 | 52 | £1,872.00 |
| Galashiels Swimming Pool | Reduce Leisure Assistant Cover | 3 hour cross over of leisure assistant staff | Leisure Assistant | Thursday | 2 | £12.00 | 52 | £1,248.00 |
| Galashiels Swimming Pool | Reduce Leisure Assistant Cover | 3 hour cross over of leisure assistant staff | Leisure Assistant | Thursday | 2 | £12.00 | 52 | £1,248.00 |
| Galashiels Swimming Pool | Reduce Leisure Assistant Cover | 3 hour cross over of leisure assistant staff | Leisure Assistant | Wednesday | 4 | £12.00 | 52 | £2,496.00 |
| Galashiels Swimming Pool | Reduce Leisure Assistant Cover | 3 hour cross over of leisure assistant staff | Leisure Assistant | Wednesday | 4 | £12.00 | 52 | £2,496.00 |
| Galashiels Swimming Pool | Reduce Leisure Assistant Cover | 3 hour cross over of leisure assistant staff | Leisure Assistant | Wednesday | 4 | £12.00 | 52 | £2,496.00 |
| Gytes Leisure Centre | Reduce staff cover to 1 Leisure Assistant or 1 health and fitness advisor and Duty Manager | Scale of facilities and services can operate with 2 core staff, low demand | Leisure Assistant | Monday | 12 | £12.00 | 52 | £7,488.00 |
| Gytes Leisure Centre | Reduce staff cover to 1 Leisure Assistant or 1 health and fitness advisor and Duty Manager | Scale of facilities and services can operate with 2 core staff, low demand | Leisure Assistant | Tuesday | 17 | £12.00 | 52 | £10,608.00 |
| Gytes Leisure Centre | Reduce staff cover to 1 Leisure Assistant or 1 health and fitness advisor and Duty Manager | Scale of facilities and services can operate with 2 core staff, low demand | Leisure Assistant | Wednesday | 9 | £12.00 | 52 | £5,616.00 |
| Gytes Leisure Centre | Reduce staff cover to 1 Leisure Assistant or 1 health and fitness advisor and Duty Manager | Scale of facilities and services can operate with 2 core staff, low demand | Leisure Assistant | Thursday | 4 | £12.00 | 52 | £2,496.00 |
| Gytes Leisure Centre | Reduce staff cover to 1 Leisure Assistant or 1 health and fitness advisor and Duty Manager | Scale of facilities and services can operate with 2 core staff, low demand | Leisure Assistant | Friday | 22 | £12.00 | 52 | £13,728.00 |
| Gytes Leisure Centre | Reduce staff cover to 1 Leisure Assistant or 1 health and fitness advisor and Duty Manager | Scale of facilities and services can operate with 2 core staff, low demand | Leisure Assistant | Saturday | 8 | £12.00 | 52 | £4,992.00 |

| Venue | Proposed Change | Rationale | Post | Day | Hours | Hourly Rate | Weeks | Total Saving |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------|-------|-------------|-------|--------------|
| Gydes Leisure Centre | Reduce staff cover to 1 Leisure Assistant or 1 health and fitness advisor and Duty Manager | Scale of facilities and services can operate with 2 core staff, low demand | Leisure Assistant | Saturday | 3 | £12.00 | 52 | £1,872.00 |
| Kelso Swimming Pool | Reduce Staff Cover to 2 Leisure Attendants when there are 3 swim teachers on, reduces the establishment to 6 instead of 8 | Lessons do not require lifeguard supervision | Leisure Assistant | Monday | 3 | £12.00 | 52 | £1,872.00 |
| Kelso Swimming Pool | Reduce Staff Cover to 2 Leisure Attendants when there are 3 swim teachers on, reduces the establishment to 6 instead of 8 | Lessons do not require lifeguard supervision | Leisure Assistant | Monday | 3 | £12.00 | 52 | £1,872.00 |
| Kelso Swimming Pool | Reduce Staff Cover to 2 Leisure Attendants when there are 3 swim teachers on, reduces the establishment to 6 instead of 8 | Lessons do not require lifeguard supervision | Leisure Assistant | Tuesday | 2 | £12.00 | 52 | £1,248.00 |
| Kelso Swimming Pool | Reduce Staff Cover to 2 Leisure Attendants when there are 3 swim teachers on, reduces the establishment to 6 instead of 8 | Lessons do not require lifeguard supervision | Leisure Assistant | Tuesday | 2 | £12.00 | 52 | £1,248.00 |
| Kelso Swimming Pool | Reduce Staff Cover to 2 Leisure Attendants when there are 3 swim teachers on, reduces the establishment to 6 instead of 8 | Lessons do not require lifeguard supervision | Leisure Assistant | Wednesday | 3 | £12.00 | 52 | £1,872.00 |
| Kelso Swimming Pool | Reduce Staff Cover to 2 Leisure Attendants when there are 3 swim teachers on, reduces the establishment to 6 instead of 8 | Lessons do not require lifeguard supervision | Leisure Assistant | Thursday | 3 | £12.00 | 52 | £1,872.00 |
| Kelso Swimming Pool | Reduce Staff Cover to 2 Leisure Attendants when there are 3 swim teachers on, reduces the establishment to 6 instead of 8 | Lessons do not require lifeguard supervision | Leisure Assistant | Thursday | 3 | £12.00 | 52 | £1,872.00 |
| Peebles High School | Reduce Leisure Assistant Cover to 1 at all times | It operates with 1 at certain times so no requirement for 2 at any time | Leisure Assistant | Tuesday | 3 | £12.00 | 52 | £1,872.00 |
| Peebles Swimming Pool | Reduce establishment to 5 at any one time. | At times there are 6 on shift, most of the time it operates with 5 | Leisure Assistant | Wednesday | 4 | £12.00 | 52 | £2,496.00 |
| Peebles Swimming Pool | Reduce establishment to 5 at any one time. | At times there are 6 on shift, most of the time it operates with 5 | Leisure Assistant | Friday | 7 | £12.00 | 52 | £4,368.00 |
| Teviotdale Leisure Centre | Establishment should be set to 6 | At times, the venue runs with 5 so 6 should be sustainable with current programme | Leisure Assistant | Monday | 6 | £12.00 | 52 | £3,744.00 |
| Teviotdale Leisure Centre | Establishment should be set to 6 | At times, the venue runs with 5 so 6 should be sustainable with current programme | Leisure Assistant | Tuesday | 8 | £12.00 | 52 | £4,992.00 |

| Venue | Proposed Change | Rationale | Post | Day | Hours | Hourly Rate | Weeks | Total Saving |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------|-------|-------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Teviotdale Leisure Centre | Establishment should be set to 6 | At times, the venue runs with 5 so 6 should be sustainable with current programme | Leisure Assistant | Wednesday | 14 | £12.00 | 52 | £8,736.00 |
| Teviotdale Leisure Centre | Establishment should be set to 6 | At times, the venue runs with 5 so 6 should be sustainable with current programme | Leisure Assistant | Thursday | 5 | £12.00 | 52 | £3,120.00 |
| Teviotdale Leisure Centre | Establishment should be set to 6 | At times, the venue runs with 5 so 6 should be sustainable with current programme | Leisure Assistant | Saturday | 9 | £12.00 | 52 | £5,616.00 |
| Teviotdale Leisure Centre | Establishment should be set to 6 | At times, the venue runs with 5 so 6 should be sustainable with current programme | Leisure Assistant | Sunday | 5 | £12.00 | 52 | £3,120.00 |
| Trifitness | Operate with 1 health and fitness advisor plus Manager until 4pm | Demand is relatively low and it operates with 1 at other similar times in terms of demand. Peak demand operating with 3 sometimes | Health and Fitness Advisor | Monday | 11 | £12.40 | 52 | £7,092.80 |
| Trifitness | Operate with 1 health and fitness advisor plus Manager until 4pm | Demand is relatively low and it operates with 1 at other similar times in terms of demand. Peak demand operating with 3 sometimes | Health and Fitness Advisor | Tuesday | 11 | £12.40 | 52 | £7,092.80 |
| Trifitness | Operate with 1 health and fitness advisor plus Manager until 4pm | Demand is relatively low and it operates with 1 at other similar times in terms of demand. Peak demand operating with 3 sometimes | Health and Fitness Advisor | Wednesday | 7 | £12.40 | 52 | £4,513.60 |
| Trifitness | Operate with 1 health and fitness advisor plus Manager until 4pm | Demand is relatively low and it operates with 1 at other similar times in terms of demand. Peak demand operating with 3 sometimes | Health and Fitness Advisor | Thursday | 7 | £12.40 | 52 | £4,513.60 |
| Trifitness | Operate with 1 health and fitness advisor plus Manager until 4pm | Demand is relatively low and it operates with 1 at other similar times in terms of demand. Peak demand operating with 3 sometimes | Health and Fitness Advisor | Friday | 5 | £12.40 | 52 | £3,224.00 |
| Tweedbank Sports Centre | Core operation should be 1 staff not 2 | Demand is low and facility is small and operates with 1 for much of the time | Leisure Assistant | Tuesday | 6 | £12.00 | 52 | £3,744.00 |
| Tweedbank Sports Centre | Core operation should be 1 staff not 2 | Demand is low and facility is small and operates with 1 for much of the time | Leisure Assistant | Wednesday | 4 | £12.00 | 52 | £2,496.00 |
| Tweedbank Sports Centre | Core operation should be 1 staff not 2 | Demand is low and facility is small and operates with 1 for much of the time | Leisure Assistant | Thursday | 11 | £12.00 | 52 | £6,864.00 |
| | | | | | | | Total | £171,139.28 |
| | | | | | | | Employers Costs @ 20% | £34,227.86 |
| | | | | | | | Total efficiency | £205,367.14 |

8.3 Efficiencies Phasing Table

| | 2025-26 | | | | 2026-27 | | | | 2027-28 | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------|----|-----|-----|---------|------|------|------|---------|------|------|------|-------------|
| | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Total |
| Workforce Alignment | | | 10% | 20% | 30% | 30% | 30% | 30% | 75% | 75% | 75% | 80% | 80% |
| Shared Services | | | | 0% | 70% | 70% | 70% | 70% | 80% | 80% | 80% | 80% | 80% |
| Staff/Demand Analysis | | | 50% | 50% | 80% | 80% | 80% | 90% | 90% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Pricing | | | 30% | 30% | 50% | 50% | 50% | 50% | 75% | 75% | 75% | 75% | 75% |
| Commercialisation | | | | 0% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Gift Aid Income | | | | 0% | | | | 0% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Rationalisation/Consolidation | | | | 0% | 10% | 10% | 30% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 60% | 60% |
| Business Cases | | | | | | | | 0% | | | | | |
| Teviotdale | | | | 0% | | | | 0% | | | | 80% | 80% |
| Gytes Leisure Centre | | | | 0% | 80% | 80% | 80% | 90% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Tri Fitness | | | | 0% | | | | 0% | 80% | 80% | 80% | 90% | 90% |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

8.4 Future Health and Fitness Membership Model Example Inclusions and Benefits

Adult Membership £29.99pm

- Unlimited access to gyms
- Unlimited access to virtual and instructor led fitness classes (including water based)
- Unlimited access to swimming pools
- Unlimited sports courts

Family Membership – 2 adults in the same household and unlimited number of children U18 £49.99

- Unlimited access to gyms (14+)
- Unlimited access to virtual and instructor led fitness classes (including water based – 16+)
- Unlimited access to swimming pools (excluding learn to Swim programme)
- Unlimited access to softplay (under 12's)
- Unlimited sports courts

U18 Junior Membership £14.99

- Unlimited gym access (14+)
- Unlimited Adult fitness classes (16+)
- Unlimited junior fitness classes
- Unlimited softplay (under 12's)
- Unlimited sports courts

Corporate membership scheme – 10% discount

Potential Member Benefits

- 10% discount to Live Borders Cafes
- 1 x annual entry into The Great Tapestry of Scotland
- 10% discount at heart of Hawick Cinema

-
- Promote being part of leisure link for holidays and work trips across Scotland
 - Promote press Reader for access to a range of health and fitness magazines free of charge through the library service
 - Discounts for local businesses - establish business partnerships
-

8.5 Stakeholder Consultees

| Information Sharing Group | Organisation/Department | Contact Name | Position |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Live Borders | Live Borders | Jill Franks | Interim Chief Executive |
| | Live Borders | Graeme McMurdo | Strategic Programme Manager |
| | Live Borders | Scott Weir | Head of Sport (Commercial) |
| | Live Borders | Lynne Lauder | Head of Sport (Operations) |
| | Live Borders | Greg Dalglish | Area Manager |
| | Live Borders | Amanda Blacklock | Area Manager |
| | Live Borders | Rob Claridge | Marketing and Communications Manager |
| | Live Borders | Joanne Stephen | Interim Finance Manager |
| | Live Borders | Owen Adams | People Manager |
| | Live Borders | Sheena Milne | ICT and Digital Services Manager |
| | Live Borders | Angela Farmer | Libraries Digital and Resources Manager |
| | Live Borders | Fiona McDonald-Colton | Interim Head of Cultural Services |
| | Live Borders | Sandy Maxwell-Forbes | Centre Director, The Great Tapestry of Scotland |
| | Live Borders | Shona Sinclair | Museum's Curator |
| Stakeholders | Scottish Borders Council | David Robertson | Chief Executive |
| | Scottish Borders Council | Jenni Craig | Director of Resilient Communities |
| | Scottish Borders Council | Suzy Douglas | Director of Finance and Procurement |
| | Scottish Borders Council | Nuala McKinlay | Director of Corporate Governance |
| | Scottish Borders Council | Clair Hepburn | Director People, Performance and Change |
| | Scottish Borders Council | John Curry | Director of Infrastructure and Environment |
| | Scottish Borders Council | Lesley Munro | Director of Education and Children's Services |
| | Scottish Borders Council | Lizzie Turner | Chief Officer Finance and Procurement |

| | | | |
|--|------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | Scottish Borders Council | Ray Cherry | Chief Officer Estates |
| | Scottish Borders Council | Iain Davidson | Employee Relations Manager |
| | Scottish Borders Council | Graeme Murdoch | Active Communities Manager |
| | Scottish Borders Council | Kenny Harrow | Communities and Partnership Manager |
| | Scottish Borders Council | Gillian Jardine | Communities Co-ordinator |
| | Scottish Borders Council | Gillian Young | Customer Advice and Support Manager |
| | NHS Borders | Sohail Bhatti | Director of Public Health |
| | Borders College | Nikki Walker | Head of Sector - Care, Supported Programmes and Sport |
| | sport scotland | Mark Cowan | Head of Facilities |
| | sport scotland | Lesley Nicholson | Partnership Manager |
| | Scottish Library and Information Council | Alison Nolan | Chief Executive |
| | Creative Scotland | Karen Dick * | Head of Place, Partnerships and Communities |
| | South of Scotland Enterprise | Jan Pringle * | Community Development Specialist |
| | Scottish Borders HSCP | Chris Myers * | Joint Director/Chief Officer Scottish Borders Health and Social Care Partnership |

*Didn't respond