

## Impact case study (REF3)

<b>Institution:</b> University of Northumbria at Newcastle		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 20 (Social Work and Social Policy)		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Creating the Borderlands Initiative: political innovation driving economic development on the Anglo-Scottish Border		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2012 - 2018		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Keith Shaw	Professor	1983 – Present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> August 2013 – December 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>The Borderlands between Scotland and England are home to over 1,000,000 people across 10% of the UK landmass but their economies and business are under-developed. Shaw's research demonstrates how collaborating at a sub-regional level to develop critical local resources can address these needs. His findings led, in 2014, to the creation of a new political and institutional space for economic interventions: The Borderlands Initiative. This initiative enabled local authority areas: Northumberland; Dumfries and Galloway; Cumbria; Carlisle; and Scottish Borders, to create greater sub-regional links in transport, tourism, and economic development, and led, in 2019, to GBP394,000,000 funding from the UK and Scottish Governments through the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal. By early 2020, confirmed projects included GBP31,000,000 in green energy projects, GBP7,000,000 to boost the visitor economy in South Scotland, and GBP65,000,000 for Carlisle Station and environs.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>Shaw's research is the first of its kind to identify the challenges and opportunities within a new, hitherto undefined, 'political space' (the Borderlands) and has focused on designing new policy and institutional approaches requiring cross-border collaboration and buy-in from a wide range of stakeholders. Recent interest in an independent Scotland led to Shaw being approached, due to his expertise on localism and economic partnerships in the North East [R1], to develop new collaborative approaches across the Anglo-Scottish border in the light of a reinvigorated Scotland. Commissioned by public organisations such as <i>The Association of North East Councils</i> and funded by bodies including the ESRC, Shaw's research portfolio of projects involved qualitative data collection via semi-structured interviews and focus groups with over 60 participants drawn from politicians, policymakers, public and private stakeholders, and academics/researchers on both sides of the Border [R2-R4]. In addition, research encompassed the collection of quantitative data on economic change, employment, population, investment, connectivity, and key industrial sectors across the five local authority areas adjacent to the border - Northumberland, Dumfries and Galloway, Cumbria, Carlisle, and Scottish Borders [R3].</p> <p>The research demonstrated that the clearing away of the English regional 'institutional architecture' after 2010 allowed local authorities to consider new flexible place-based approaches to economic development not possible under the old system [R4]. The new circumstances provided opportunities for new forms of political and administrative joint-working and institutional innovation across the Anglo-Scottish Borderlands [R4]. The Anglo-Scottish Borderlands is a geographically remote area, neglected by central government funding, whose inhibited development is also due to a policy framework that serves to foster growth in other areas of the country [R4]. Shaw's research demonstrated that to overcome these shared challenges and maximise the benefits of shared assets, new policies should focus on the sub-regional level where economic, business, and financial activities span regional administrative</p>		

borders [R5]. Prioritising collaboration – rather than competition - across borders for economic and labour market development, transport, energy, forestry, and tourism would allow the Borderlands to work together against external competition, foster local growth, and present a common voice to better secure funding from governments in London and Edinburgh [R5].

Shaw's research demonstrated clear economic and social value of collaboration across the Borderlands region [R6]. He advocated for the creation of a Borderlands Initiative to give a strategic framework to guide such collaborations [R2, R3, R6]. The initiative would: serve to improve cross-border communication; share intelligence; strengthen co-ordination; bring the right people together to collaborate on specific projects; and share good practice [R6]. Shaw proposed that this network should incorporate not only local and national governments and MPs, but also other non-governmental organisations, including Local Enterprise Partnerships, National Park Authorities, and Scottish Enterprise [R6].

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

**R1. Keith Shaw**, and Robinson, F. (2012) 'From 'regionalism' to 'localism': Opportunities and challenges for North East England' *Local Economy* 27 (3): 232-250  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0269094211434468>

**R2. Keith Shaw**, Robinson, F., Blackie, J., and Henderson, G. (2013) *Borderlands: can the North East and Cumbria benefit from Greater Scottish Autonomy?* <http://www-anec.boxmodelstaging.co.uk/file.aspx?id=135f>

**R3. Keith Shaw**, Peck, F., and Mulvey, G. (2015) *Developing the Framework for a Borderlands Strategy*. <https://www.cumbria.ac.uk/media/university-of-cumbria-website/content-assets/public/enterprise/documents/Borderlands-Final-Report-Nov15.pdf>

**R4. Keith Shaw**, Robinson, F., and Blackie, J. (2014) 'Borderlands: Rescaling economic development in Northern England in the context of greater Scottish autonomy' *Local Economy* 29 (4-5): 412-428. ISSN 0269-0942 <https://doi.org/10.1177/0269094214537959>

**R5. Keith Shaw** (2015) 'Take us with you Scotland? Post-Referendum and Post-Election reflections from the North East of England' *Scottish Affairs* 24 (4): 452-462 ISSN 0966-0356.  
<https://doi.org/10.3366/scot.2015.0096>

**R6. Keith Shaw** (2018) 'Northern Lights: an assessment of the political and economic challenges facing North East England in the context of greater Scottish autonomy' *The Journal of Borderlands Studies* 33 (1): 35-52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2016.1270170>

Shaw was PI on each project but worked with Robinson from Durham University, and Henderson from the think tank: Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR). Blackie is a visiting professor at Northumbria University. R2 was written in collaboration with the University of Cumbria.

### Research Funding

**G1.** PI, ESRC Seminar Series, ES/L001446/1, 2013-2015, GBP16,558, 'Close Friends'? *Assessing the impact of greater Scottish autonomy on the North of England*

**G2.** PI, ESRC, 226, 2013, GBP1,548, *Festival of Social Sciences: Bordering change: navigating nationalism and political identity in the border communities of England and Scotland*

**G3.** CI, Joseph Rowntree Charitable Foundation, 2016-2017, GBP20,000, *Who runs the North East now?* (Joint bid from Durham and Northumbria Universities)

**G4.** PI, Association of North East Councils, 2013, GBP15,000, *Borderlands: The Impact on the North East of Greater Scottish Autonomy* (partnered with Durham University and IPPR North)

**G5.** PI, Association of North East Councils/Institute of Local Governance, 2014-2015, GBP25,960, *Developing a Strategic Framework for the Borderlands Initiative*

#### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Informed by Shaw's research, The Borderlands Initiative was created in August 2013 by the five local authorities in the region, as the first step in improving economy and society for the one million-plus people who live in the area (see image below courtesy of <http://www.borderlandsgrowth.com/>). Shaw was appointed to the advisory board and the local councils asserted that his research-led reports [R1, R2] '*provided the basis for the Borderlands Initiative*' and were '*pivotal in developing the concept of a Borderlands Initiative*' and in '*providing a credible starting point from which to engage UK and Scottish Governments, national agencies, private sector and communities*' [E1].

In August 2013, the Scottish Parliament responded to Shaw's July 2013 report [R2] on the Borderlands area and emphasised '*the benefits in tourism, energy, transport, forestry and food outlined in the report*' and agreed '*with Professor Keith Shaw that the economies of the north east of England and Cumbria will benefit from stronger links with a resurgent Scotland*' that '*foster collaboration between key partners and stakeholders to bring huge opportunities*' [E2 p6]. The same month, Scottish ministers declared their support for the proposed *Borderlands Initiative* and highlighted the value to the five Borderland councils of agreeing to '*forge new alliances to improve existing business, tourism and transport links and opportunities*' [E3, p1].

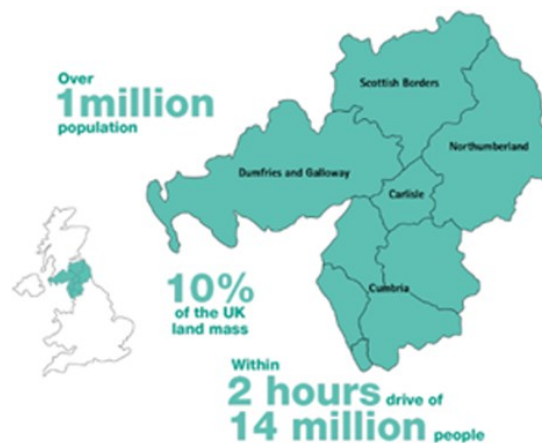


Figure 1. Map depicting the borderlands region

Shaw also advocated for change through the Borderlands Initiative with an engagement programme to build awareness and support. Events included six ESRC events (attended by 80 participants) in 2014-2015 called '*Close Friends? Assessing the Impact of Greater Scottish Autonomy on the North of England.*' These were followed by the 2017 ESRC/UK *In a Changing Europe Seminar Series Award*, called '*Policymakers understanding of the implications of Brexit for economic development and devolved governance on the North of England.*' Participants included politicians, civil servants, and other local government stakeholders.

This growing support for Shaw's approach led to the 'Our Borderlands – Our Future' (OBOF) Scottish Parliament report in March 2015 which directly cited Shaw's work: '*The initiative was launched by the Scottish Government in August 2013, a month after the publication of the Borderlands report authored by academics at Northumbria University*' [E4, p25]. OBOF '*welcome[d] the creation of the Borderlands Initiative as a first step in effective cross-border and collaborative working and recognise[d] its role in delivering major benefits for this economic region*' [E4, p28].

Tom Smyth, Deputy Area Director, Yorkshire, Humber and the North East, for the UK Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) directly cited the '*research undertaken by Professor Shaw*' in '*the development of a coherent economic narrative for the Borderlands region*' and '*the research expanded into how the five disparate local authorities around the Borderlands could strengthen their joint working*' [E5]. BEIS linked Shaw '*to a greater level of political support across a complex geography*' and then quoted the 2017 UK Budget announcement that the '*government will also begin negotiations on a growth deal for the Borderlands*' [E5]. This resolution then appeared in the 2017 Conservative Party manifesto, '*we will bring forward a Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal (BIGD), including all councils on both sides of the border, to help secure prosperity*' [E6, p35], highlighting its increasing prominence in Westminster politics.

The county councils in the Borderlands credited Shaw with providing the impetus and basis that led to the BIGD. Northumberland County Council assert that *'the development of the BIGD continues to gain momentum'* and this *'work has been significantly enhanced and accelerated by the research work you [Shaw] carried out with the Borderlands Initiative Steering Group'* [E7]. Carlisle County Council concur, writing to Shaw that *'the [BIGD] is really gaining momentum now building on the work you did for us'* [E8].

This momentum led to the 2019 UK Spring Budget announcement declaring GBP260,000,000 from the UK Government and GBP85,000,000 from the Scottish Government to provide strategic economic interventions fostering collaboration on the sub-regional level for the council areas of Dumfries and Galloway, Scottish Borders, Northumberland, Cumbria, and Carlisle City [E9, p4]. Scottish Infrastructure Secretary Michael Matheson said this could deliver *'significant and lasting economic benefits'* and the Borderlands Partnership said it would be a *'game changer'* for the area [E9, p5].

In July 2019, a business plan was agreed by the five councils and included an additional GBP45,000,000 from them for shared projects in the Borderlands area – taking the total investment to over GBP390,000,000 [E9, p2]. Jake Berry MP, Minister for the Northern Powerhouse, said, this *'once-in-a-generation deal will deliver unprecedented investment in the Borderland'*, and Scottish Borders Council leader, Shona Haslam, said the benefits would reach *'from coast to coast, covering a huge rural area of Scotland and England'* [E9, p3].

The five Borderlands Council Leaders signed a Collaboration Agreement at the end of January 2020 to coordinate delivery of the BIGD and established, in March 2020, a new Project Management Office with a team of 7 people (headcount: 7) in newly created positions. By June 2020 confirmed projects included GBP31,000,000 in green energy projects and GBP7,000,000 to develop key skills needs to boost the visitor economy in the south of Scotland, GBP19,000,000 for the Biking Innovation Centre in the Scottish Borders, GBP65,000,000 for Carlisle Station and tourist hotspot 'The Citadels', in Cumbria, GBP8,000,000 for a Dairy Innovation Centre in Dumfries and Galloway, GBP10,000,000 to support natural capital innovation across the Borderlands region, and GBP5,000,000 for Alwick Garden in Northumberland [E10, p3]. In November 2020 the UK Government announced that the Borderlands project would be accelerated so that all investment is delivered within ten rather than fifteen years, prompting positive responses from the local councils for extra economic uplift this will create and the greater security and crucial resources for the region to recover from the Covid outbreak [E11].

#### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

Ref.	Source of corroboration	Link to claimed impact
E1	Testimonial – Ewan Green, Head of Economic Development for Dumfries & Galloway September 2009 to June 2017 (now working at Tendring District Council)	Shaw's role in Borderlands inception
E2	Scottish Parliamentary Business: Motion S4M-07355: James Dornan MSP – 5th August 2013 Page 6	Political impact
E3	Guardian article - Scottish ministers seize on English call for borderlands pact	Political impact
E4	HC571 – Our Borderlands, Our Future report, Scottish Parliament	Political impact
E5	Testimonial - Department of BEIS - Tom Smyth, Deputy Area Director, Yorkshire Humber, and the North East	Shaw's role in Borderlands inception and political support

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E6	Conservative Party 2017 manifesto Page 35	Political impact
E7	Testimonial - Northumberland County Council - Janice Rose, Economic and Inclusion Policy Manager	Significance of the Growth Deal
E8	Testimonial - Carlisle City Council - Jane Meek, Corporate Director for Economic Development	Significance of the Growth Deal
E9	BBC report - GBP345,000,000 in spring budget and BBC report – multi-million-pound Borderland goals agreed	Economic Impact of the Growth Deal
E10	Borderlands Newsletter February and June 2020	Borderlands Collaboration Agreement and projects resulting from Growth Deal
E11	Scottish Housing News report - Acceleration of Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal funding announced	Accelerated investment timeline of Borderlands growth deal