

EX75. Tourism 2020 Strategy Update

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Development Services providing an update on the Council's tourism activity since the launch of the Falkirk Area Tourism Strategy 2015 – 2020 and progress toward development of an independent Falkirk Area Tourism Partnership.

The Falkirk Area Tourism Strategy set three key targets:-

- increase visitor expenditure in the Falkirk area by 20% over the next five years to 2020
- increase overnight visitor accommodation (serviced bedrooms and self-catering units) in the Falkirk area by 20% over the next five years to 2020
- develop a Falkirk Area Tourism Partnership to take ownership of, review and implement the strategy.

The Falkirk Area Tourism Partnership operated as an informal body and included the Council, VisitScotland, Falkirk Towns Ltd, Falkirk Community Trust, Scottish Canals, Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway and a number of local businesses. In developing a formal legal structure for the partnership a core working group of tourism businesses was established. Tourism sector businesses were consulted and agreed to progress the establishment of a company limited by guarantee with cooperative articles of association. The group will work to secure external funding opportunities and determine future marketing activities and promotion work.

Decision

The Executive:-

- (1) noted the contents of the report in relation to tourism growth in the Falkirk area, as presented in the 2016 STEAM report;**
- (2) noted the feedback from the initial Visit Scotland Growth Tourism Industry barometer;**
- (3) noted the progress of the Visit Scotland Growth Fund, marketing activity and joint marketing activity undertaken with Visit Scotland;**
- (4) noted that the Falkirk area Tourism Strategy would be updated to include additional activity with the Heritage and Food and Drink sectors, and**
- (5) agreed the proposals for formation of a new Visit Falkirk tourism partnership organisation to take forward marketing activities jointly with key industry partners.**