

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: TOURISM STRATEGY 2015 - 2020
Meeting: EXECUTIVE
Date: 17 JUNE 2014
Author: DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report proposes the creation of a Tourism Strategy. It's purpose would be to identify priorities for developing tourism in the Falkirk area and to engage other partners in a shared approach to developing the sector.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council already recognises the value of a planned approach to tourism. It established an annual Tourism Action Plan in 2009 and the Executive endorsed the 2014 plan in January this year. The Corporate Plan identifies the role of tourism in 'further developing a thriving, sustainable and vibrant economy'. The Single Outcome Agreement cites the Tourism Action Plan as supporting the economic outcomes.
- 2.2 At a national level, the Council has contributed to VisitScotland's National Tourism Infrastructure Plan and the Scottish Tourism Alliance has produced a national strategy for the tourism industry – Tourism Scotland 2020.
- 2.3 For many years, the Council has worked with some of the key attraction operators to undertake collaborative marketing for the area. As well as developing the VisitFalkirk brand, an area guide and exhibiting at VisitScotland Expo, the VisitFalkirk marketing group recently completed a 12 month marketing campaign with funding from the VisitScotland Growth Fund.
- 2.4 Over the last two decades, Falkirk has seen a build up of tourism facilities, the most recent being the opening of Helix Park, the Kelpies and the John Muir Way. The cumulative effect has been a much strengthened tourism offer. A tourism strategy could generate the longer-term thinking and industry co-operation needed to capitalise fully on what has been achieved and to maintain the growth momentum.

3.0 DEVELOPING A TOURISM STRATEGY

- 3.1 It is suggested that a tourism strategy should include the following elements:
- Current profile of tourism sector in Falkirk
 - Market analysis and SWOT analysis
 - Mission Statement / Objectives 2015 - 2020

- Key action areas
 - Product, Infrastructure and Customer Service
 - Marketing
 - Quality of experience
 - Delivery mechanisms
 - Creating investment propositions
 - Collaborative marketing structures
 - Engaging everyone in quality
 - Resources
 - Monitoring and Review – annual report and mid-term review in 2017
- 3.2 It is suggested that the drafting of a tourism strategy and the necessary preparatory work be led by Development Services in-house. An essential element will be consultation across the Council and with partner agencies and tourism operators. Members are asked to consider the formation of a Policy Development Panel to help steer the process and to facilitate consultation and exchange of views.
- 3.3 The proposed timescale is:
- June 2014 – establish Policy Development Panel
 - July – September 2014 – meetings of Policy Development Panel and wider consultation with industry
 - October / November 2014 – draft strategy to the Executive for approval
 - November 2014 – launch of Tourism Strategy
- 3.4 The Tourism Strategy, along with an annual report to the Executive, would replace the current annual Tourism action Plan.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 It is recommended that the Executive:

- i) **agrees that a Tourism Strategy be prepared for the period 2015 – 2020**
- ii) **agrees that a Policy Development Panel be established to help develop the strategy**
- iii) **remits the Director of Development Services to complete a draft strategy for the Executive's approval by November 2014.**

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Director of Development Services

2 June 2014

Contact Officer: Ian White. Ext: 0965.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Falkirk Council Tourism Action Plan 2014
2. Tourism Scotland 2020 strategy
3. National Tourism Infrastructure Plan

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone 01324 590965 and ask for Ian White.