
To: Economy and Regeneration Policy Board

On: 24 January 2023

Report by: Chief Executive

Heading: Tourism Update

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Renfrewshire Visitor Plan concluded in 2021. There is now an opportunity to develop a new Tourism Action Plan.
 - 1.2 Work has been carried out to consider the key strengths and opportunities of the tourism sector.
 - 1.3 A series of key themes have been identified: Collaboration, Infrastructure, Rural Renfrewshire, Paisley, Events, and Business Tourism.
 - 1.4 Work will continue in the development of these themes to deliver a new industry-led Tourism Action Plan by March 2023.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Board:-
 - (i) Notes the work undertaken and progress to date in engaging industry and key stakeholders around a series of key themes for progression.
 - (ii) Notes the intent to develop a new Tourism Action Plan by March 2023 which will be led by a new tourism industry group, aligned to the Economic Leadership Panel.
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3. Background

- 3.1 The Renfrewshire Visitor Plan came to an end in 2021, with annual reports and a final report previously submitted to the Leadership Board in December 2020.

This plan was produced within the context of a live bid for the 'UK City of Culture 2021'. There is now an opportunity to refresh Renfrewshire's approach to supporting tourism in the context of an 'action' plan that sets out a number of key themes.

- 3.2 Investment in Paisley's cultural infrastructure worth £113m will have a significant impact on the visitor economy in the region, expanding Renfrewshire's tourism product and appeal significantly. The region is also home to a national gateway in the form of Glasgow International Airport. It is vital that Renfrewshire builds on this success to support wider tourism ambitions across the region.

4. Strategic links

- 4.1 Recently the Council have commissioned EKOS to provide an analysis of the growth sectors in Renfrewshire, identifying future opportunities and providing recommendations on which industry sectors should be prioritised and targeted for future investment. This research highlighted that tourism, hospitality and the visitor economy should be a priority growth opportunity for Renfrewshire. Across the region there are assets that have yet to realise their full potential, which in turn can unlock wider growth and investment. The analysis highlighted that there are opportunities to develop a positive impact on tourism image and perception, create new jobs and increase visitor dwell time and spend.
- 4.2 As a key identified growth sector there are opportunities to link outcomes and drivers, and support investment. For example, Ingliston Country Club have just launched their new £500,000 motorhome / RV park, the first in the county. This not only opens a new market but also supports motorhome hire businesses in Paisley by offering clients a first stop/last stop before arriving or leaving via Glasgow Airport.
- 4.3 There are also opportunities to build on the success of Future Paisley. The ongoing partnership supporting Future Paisley has driven forward £113m investment in cultural infrastructure revitalising key assets including Paisley Museum, Paisley Town Hall, and Paisley Arts Centre. It is vital that the new tourism action plan builds on this success, supporting these key assets and linking to the ongoing events programme and wider regional opportunities.
- 4.4 Renfrewshire Council has a strong partnership with VisitScotland, both at a strategic level with the Regional Director as well as through the marketing teams. This has enabled the Council in the past to determine the direction of joint marketing campaigns with VisitScotland. The Council has also been successful in securing funding from VisitScotland for infrastructure development around Castle Semple and RSPB Lochwinnoch within the last three months. Through the development of the tourism action plan we will work with VisitScotland to promote wider Renfrewshire assets and tourism businesses.

- 4.5 Renfrewshire Council are a member of the Scottish Tourism Alliance, who are the coordinating body on the national tourism strategy, Tourism Outlook 2030. The strategy sets out four key priorities that will be considered in developing our tourism action plan:

- Thriving places
- Memorable experiences
- Passionate People
- Diverse businesses

5. Review of current position and future focus

- 5.1 Business Pointer were appointed to undertake a review of the current position of Renfrewshire's tourism economy and support the development of the Renfrewshire Tourism Action Plan.

- 5.2 For phase one, Business Pointer undertook desk research and interviews with key stakeholders as well as workshops and engagement with the Economic Leadership Panel and wider industry. This resulted in a detailed report identifying key areas for future focus as well as noting successes of the previous Renfrewshire Visitor Plan.

- 5.3 Successes included:

- Increasing destination marketing to grow opportunities to see or hear something positive about Renfrewshire, from a baseline of 15m per year in 2017 to 236m by 2019/20.
- Enhancing the visitor experience in Renfrewshire by building capacity and developing a quality product – in particular the award-winning events programme, with the Paisley Halloween Festival winning Best Cultural Event or Festival at the national Scottish Thistle Awards in March 2020, against the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

- 5.4 The report also identified numerous points of consensus around opportunities for future direction:-

- The importance of tourism to the region.
- Paisley as a driver to promote wider Renfrewshire, and also the opportunity to capitalise on the £113m town centre investment.
- Incorporating the rural and outdoor activity assets of the region more cohesively. Our rural areas have “stunning potential” through countryside and the regional parks, green spaces, sports, outdoor activities, the Sustrans routes and long-distance walks and the villages.
- Castle Semple was identified as a key asset that could be a major regional attraction in the future. Castle Semple, together with Paisley, has the potential to create a regional destination offering urban and rural experiences for the benefit of all our towns and villages.
- Build on the success of our existing events programme to heighten profile and reputation.

- Build the green tourism agenda and incorporate the drive to Destination Net Zero in our work with tourism businesses.
- An opportunity to further capitalise on the Glasgow city region through engagement of the City Region Tourism Portfolio. The city region is a significant target market, with over 3.5m people within a 1.5 hour drivetime
- There are opportunities to build on the linkages between Glasgow Airport and the significant capital investment in key buildings. Specifically within the conference market.
- It is crucial that our approach to tourism is driven by the industry, for the industry.

5.5 For phase two, engagement with external stakeholders and the industry via an online survey and workshops resulted in the following thematic areas:-

i) Collaboration

- Public, private and third sectors working together to support tourism across the region.
- A desire for a tourism network that allows operators and organisations to create potential partnerships and opportunities.

ii) Infrastructure

- Whilst the rail links were seen as positive assets there remain opportunities around public transport and active travel provision linking our key tourism destinations.

iii) Rural Renfrewshire

- Outdoor activities and the landscape have been highlighted as assets that present a significant opportunity around product / experience development and promotion.
- Castle Semple and related activities and attractions offer a diverse range of experience that complement the developments in Paisley.

iv) Paisley

- Continuing to build on the strengths of Paisley as a destination in its own right, capitalising on its strong regional appeal, signposting to our other regional destinations, assets and experiences.

v) Events

- Building on our fantastic programme of events to drive additional visitor numbers and highlight further opportunities for the regeneration of our communities.

vi) Business tourism

- Conferences, events and the corporate market are of importance to a number of local organisations and operators and there is an opportunity to grow this sector significantly across the region.

6. Next steps

- 6.1 Following the considerable work that has been undertaken, it is now proposed that officers work with key industry stakeholders to build on the key themes and develop a new tourism action plan by March 2023. This will enable the tourism industry to build on the identified themes and priority actions. This will be developed further through a series of workshops. Once complete the tourism action plan will be brought to board for approval.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – None.

2. **HR & Organisational Development** – None.

3. **Community Planning** –

- **Reshaping our place, our economy and our future:** Renfrewshire Council is working with stakeholders to maximise the opportunities for regeneration and economic recovery/growth.
- **Building strong, safe and resilient communities:** working in partnership with local groups and organisations to achieve positive outcomes.

4. **Legal** – None.

5. **Property/Assets** - None.

6. **Information Technology** – None.

7. **Equality and Human Rights** - The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report.

8. **Health and Safety** – None.

9. **Procurement** – None.

10. **Risks** - None.

11. **Privacy Impact** – None.

12. Cosla Policy Position – Recognising Tourism Outlook 2030.

13. Climate Risk - No identified impacts at present.

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