

# **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

**CABINET- 15 JUNE 2011**

## **DRAFT AYRSHIRE & ARRAN TOURISM STRATEGY 2011-2016**

### **Report by Depute Chief Executive/ Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services**

#### **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1** To seek Cabinet approval to publish the Draft Ayrshire & Arran Tourism Strategy and to proceed to public consultation.

#### **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** The tourism industry is important to the economy of Ayrshire and Arran, generating around £342 million per year, and there is considerable potential to grow this contribution further through a co-ordinated regional approach.
- 2.2** The Ayrshire Economic Partnership (AEP) has representation from the business community and public sector agencies, involved in economic development in Ayrshire and Arran. The members of the AEP are the three local authorities, Scottish Enterprise, Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry and a representative of the business community from each of the Council areas.
- 2.3** The objective of the AEP is to “focus on issues and clearly identified outputs which will have a positive and lasting economic benefit on Ayrshire”.
- 2.4** The AEP has identified industry sectors which are considered to offer the greatest opportunity and potential for development and enhanced contribution to the wider economy of the area. It has been agreed that there should be a pan-Ayrshire focus on working to support the development of these industries, which includes tourism.
- 2.5** The pan-Ayrshire Tourism Group, which comprises representatives of all three Ayrshire Councils, the tourism industry and VisitScotland, was formed by the AEP to lead on the tourism theme.
- 2.6** The pan-Ayrshire Tourism Group delivered a successful event on 14 February 2011, branded “Love Ayrshire”, to mark the AEP’s signing of a “Statement of Commitment to the Development of Tourism in Ayrshire and Arran”.
- 2.7** This commitment is embraced by each of the 3 local authorities, Scottish Enterprise and the private sector, represented by the Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

**2.8** The commitment of the Ayrshire Economic Partnership (in respect of tourism, in particular) is to work with all of the tourism industry within Ayrshire and Arran and across industry sectors to:

- Focus on key tourism markets
- Agree and deliver an innovative 5 Year Tourism Strategy for our area, with clearly defined outcomes that focus on supporting business growth, creating jobs and improving our communities
- Demonstrate progress by reporting on our performance
- Maximise our resources and thereby the rate of return on our investment
- Deliver a programme of early actions to support the Tourism Industry in Ayrshire and Arran, including:
  - holding development workshops in Ayrshire for the industry during Spring 2011
  - organising and implementing a programme of familiarisation visits to major visitor attractions throughout Ayrshire during Spring 2011
  - promoting Ayrshire & Arran through maximising the representation of our tourism businesses at VisitScotland Expo in Aberdeen in April 2011
  - designing and undertaking a range of focused marketing campaigns and activities to promote Ayrshire & Arran throughout 2011

**2.9** Since February 2011, the group has:

- developed and delivered a number of familiarisation trips for tourism employees to develop product knowledge;
- delivered a public and private sector Ayrshire and Arran presence at the national travel trade show, VisitScotland Expo, to showcase the area and
- organised four industry workshops to gain input from a range of stakeholders to the development of a new Ayrshire & Arran Tourism Strategy.

### **3 DEVELOPMENT OF AYRSHIRE & ARRAN TOURISM STRATEGY**

**3.1** Since February 2011, the pan-Ayrshire Tourism Group has undertaken considerable work to develop a new 5 year tourism strategy for the area, including:

- Preparation of a detailed baseline report on the sector
- Engagement with a range of stakeholders
- Industry workshops facilitated by key individuals from the private sector
- Electronic survey for stakeholders unable to attend workshops

**3.2** This work has fed into the development of a draft strategy for tourism in Ayrshire and Arran, which will provide an agreed vision and objectives for the sector to galvanise efforts to promote the area and grow economic value.

## **4. VISION**

**4.1** The following new vision for tourism in Ayrshire and Arran is proposed:

*“By the end of 2016, Ayrshire and Arran will be the destination of choice within Scotland for visitors seeking experiences around coastline, countryside, natural environment and quality food. Visitors will recognise Ayrshire & Arran for a superb welcome, knowledgeable staff and fantastic experiences.”*

## **5. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

**5.1** The draft strategy document sets out in detail, the background to the tourism industry across Ayrshire and Arran, the policy context and the challenges which the industry faces. It proposes a strategic framework for the achievement of the Ayrshire Economic Partnership’s shared ambition for the development of the tourism industry in the area, based on the following objectives.

**5.2** By the end of 2016 we will have:-

- increased the number of visitors coming to Ayrshire and Arran annually from 3.43 million by 10% to 3.78 million;
- increased the annual spend by visitors from £342 million by 20% to £410 million;
- increased the number of jobs in the sector from 8,880 by 10% to 9,768;
- and improved the built and natural environment for the benefit of both visitors and residents.

**5.3** The Draft Strategy is available on the members’ portal and subject to Cabinet approval it will be tabled at the next meeting of the AEP on 29<sup>th</sup> June to commence the consultation. The Draft Strategy sets out the Strategic and Market Context and base line analysis on our visitors and anticipated future trends. It sets out our offers and future opportunities under the themes of;

- Burns
- Ancestral Tourism
- Golf
- Sailing
- Adventure sports and activities
- Day tips
- Business Tourism
- Weddings
- Young Families
- Heritage
- Islands
- Food and Drink

It then sets out what is required to enable these opportunities to be developed around product knowledge, skills, collaboration and networking, accommodation, information and communications technology, funding, signage, public realm and cleanliness, connectivity and regulation and marketing.

- 5.4 Subject to Cabinet approval of the draft the results of the consultation will be reported back to Cabinet for consideration.

## **6 PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT**

- 6.1 It is proposed that, at a strategic level, performance will be measured directly against the key objectives noted above.
- 6.2 It is anticipated that a range of other measures will be developed through the preparation of an action plan to accompany the new strategy once adopted, and reported through the AEP.

## **7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report.
- 7.2 However, delivery of a new pan-Ayrshire Tourism Strategy may require the re-alignment of resources within Planning and Economic Development to implement a range of discrete projects and initiatives aimed at achieving the objectives of the strategy.

## **8 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 In terms of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, it will be necessary to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment on the Ayrshire and Arran Tourism Strategy.
- 8.2 Following the public consultation process, responses in relation to the Tourism Strategy will be considered and, where appropriate, incorporated before the strategy is formally adopted.

## **9 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The importance and potential of tourism in East Ayrshire is identified in the East Ayrshire Community Plan, in particular through Aim 4 of the Delivering Community Regeneration Action Plan - *to grow tourism and increase visits and participation in cultural and leisure activities.*
- 9.2 Therefore, the Ayrshire and Arran Tourism Strategy as described in this report will directly support the achievement of the objectives of the East Ayrshire Community Plan, and align with the existing East Ayrshire Tourism Strategy 2009-2015.

## **10 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 There are no immediate personnel implications arising from this report.

## **11 RECOMMENDATIONS**

**11.1** It is recommended that Cabinet:

- i) approves the draft "Draft Ayrshire & Arran Tourism Strategy 2011-2016" for public consultation;
- ii) remits the Depute Chief Executive / Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services to make minor textual amendments to the strategy document as necessary before publication, undertake the consultation, and thereafter report back to Cabinet; and
- iii) Otherwise note the contents of the report

**Elizabeth Morton**

**Depute Chief Executive / Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services**

08 June 2011

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### **BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

- 1) Draft Ayrshire & Arran Tourism Strategy 2011- 2016  
**[Available on Members Information Portal]**

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