

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development

Housing Environment and Economic Development Committee: 3 June 2009

Subject: West Dunbartonshire Council's Tourism Strategy and Action Plan (2009-2012)

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to provide some additional information to the Committee following the presentation of a report to the meeting on 8 April 2009.
- 1.2** The Committee is asked to approve the Strategy and Action Plan and to authorise the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development in conjunction with the Executive Director of Corporate Services to secure the appropriate funding from within existing revenue budgets.

2. Background

- 2.1** A report on the Tourism Strategy and Action Plan was presented to the Committee on 8 April 2009.
- 2.2** The report was continued by the Committee for further information.
- 2.3** The original report is attached as an appendix.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** A number of issues were raised in relation to the report, the main ones being as follows; the role of VS, linkages with the National Park, the performance of the Tourism Business Sector, funding for the strategy, and links with the Single Outcome Agreement.

Visit Scotland

- 3.2** The focus of VS is to attract visitors to Scotland, to maximise their stay and to encourage recurring visits. They do have a role however in directing visitors around Scotland, particularly by using their network of Tourist Information Centres (TICs). The focus of the Strategy and Action Plan will be to work with VS and other partners to maximise the number of visitors coming to West Dunbartonshire. The Scottish Local Authority Economic Development Group (SLAED) is currently working with VS to develop a robust Service Level Agreement (SLA) as a template for all Local Authorities to measure the services being provided by VS at Local Authority level. Officers will closely monitor our SLA with VS and in particular the performance of our two TICs.

Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park

- 3.3** The Council currently participate in the current National Park Forum and have been involved in joint working such as on the promotion of Homecoming within the area and the development of the payback scheme within the National Park. The Council has also made a financial contribution to a number of projects including the 4Bs. The Strategy highlights the development of a brand that is synonymous with the National Park particularly through developing a greater web presence. The Strategy is supported by National Park Officers who were involved in the stakeholder consultation as part of the development of the Strategy. We will continue to explore opportunities for joint working.

Business Sector Tourism

- 3.4** The Strategy highlights that we will work closely with our key partners to target the tourism and hospitality businesses in West Dunbartonshire and a number of actions are detailed within the Action Plan. The Chamber of Commerce were represented at both stakeholder workshops run by the consultants as part of the development of the Strategy. However, an early meeting will be arranged with the Chamber of Commerce to discuss with them in detail how these actions will be delivered in collaboration with a programme for implementation.

Funding

- 3.5** The Strategy was still in development during the budget preparation exercise for 2009/10, however discussions have taken place between the Chief Executive, the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development and the Head of Finance and ICT to identify a source of funding for the first year Action Plan from existing revenue budgets, at no additional cost to the Council.

SOA

- 3.6** A number of local outcomes have been developed to measure the Council's contribution to national outcome 1. Two of these relate to growing the tourism economy and the Strategy and Action Plan will contribute directly to meeting the targets. The Action Plan will be edited to identify the relevant SOA indicators to which the actions relate and Covalent will be populated as appropriate.

4. Personnel Issues

- 4.1** There are no personnel issues.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** As referred to at paragraph 3.5 above, the anticipated spend on the action plan 2009/10 is in the order of £30,000. This was not provided for in the course of the revenue budget preparation as the Strategy was still in development. However funding has been identified from within existing revenue budgets and there will be no additional costs to the Council.

6. Risk Analysis

- 6.1** There is a risk that the tourism sector within West Dunbartonshire will decline further without Council and other partner intervention particularly in the current economic climate.

7. Conclusions & Officers' Recommendations

- 7.1** The report seeks to address a number of issues which were raised at the Committee at its meeting on 8 April 2009 and the Committee is now asked to:
- (i) acknowledge the work of the partner agencies in contributing to the development of the Tourism and Hospitality Strategy and Action Plan;
 - (ii) to approve the Tourism and Hospitality Strategy and Action Plan (2009-2012); and
 - (iii) to delegate authority to the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development in consultation with the Executive Director of Corporate Services to secure £30,000 from existing revenue budgets of the Council to fund the proposed activities identified in the Action Plan in the first year.

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Appendices: Report to HEED Committee 8 April 2009

Background Papers: West Dunbartonshire Council's Tourism and Hospitality Strategy and Action Plan

Wards Affected: All Wards