

ANGUS COUNCIL

INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE 13 OCTOBER 2009

SUBJECT: ANGUS TOURISM STRATEGY 2009 - 2012

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

Abstract: The consultation exercise for the Angus Tourism Strategy 2009-2012 is now complete and the committee is now asked to adopt the final strategy and its associated Action Plan.

1 RECOMMENDATION

1.1 It is recommended that the Committee

- a) approve the final Angus Tourism Strategy 2009-2012 as a comprehensive partnership approach to tourism development within Angus; and
- b) approve its associated Action Plan and the actions therein as a delivery, development and review mechanism.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Committee is referred to Article 26 of the Infrastructure Services Committee of 20 January 2009 when it was agreed:

- (i) to approve the draft Angus Tourism Strategy and Action Plan, as detailed in the Report;
- (ii) to approve that the draft Strategy and Action Plan 2008-2012 be subject to internal consultation across the Council and that a programme of consultation with external agencies take place as detailed in Section 7 of the Report; and
- (iii) to note that the outcomes of the consultation process would be subject to a further Report, in which approval would be sought for the final version of the Strategy and Action Plan prior to publication.

2.2 Tourism in Angus is a mix of coastal, townscape and rural products and has until now been developed on a niche basis. In the last decade 'Carnoustie Country', Angus Glens Walking Festival, Angus in China Initiative, Tartan Day, Ancestral Tourism and other key events have been developed with financial and staff support from Angus Council.

2.3 A number of new tourism initiatives have been added over the last two years including support for Roots Festival, Outdoor Angus, major golf events (International Pairs, Seniors Open 2010) and more fundamentally the publication of a more comprehensive strategy which is the subject of this report. Copies of the final Strategy and Action plan have been placed in the members lounge.

2.4 Developing a more comprehensive approach through the Angus Tourism Strategy 2009 - 2012 is essential for a number of reasons:

- The changes within VisitScotland have resulted in less emphasis on local support with little, if any, regional and local marketing destination development;
- The potential benefits arising from establishment of the Cairngorms National Park;
- The vulnerability of the Angus economy in the current economic climate and the need to target home and overseas markets more effectively and
- The need for a more structured and focussed approach to working with the tourism sector and other public partners to develop the tourism potential of Angus

3. CONSULTATION PROCESS

3.1 The consultation period was intended to be complete by June 2009 however this was extended by the Head of Economic Development, Environmental Health and Consumer Protection for a further month to ensure that more detailed internal and external feedback on the Draft Strategy was achieved

3.2 Consultation was carried out across four key groups:-

a) **Group 1 - Angus Council**

These were specifically divisions currently either, engaged with the provision of tourism products or services, or working with communities presenting events and festivals to encourage visitors to the area. Consultation took the form of a workshop held on 24 June 2009 and invitations were extended to the Community Planning team, PR unit, Cultural Services, Leisure Services, Planning and Transport, IT, Sports and Countryside and Economic Development. Feedback on the Draft Strategy was positive overall and a number of cross-division activities were identified and agreed by departments for inclusion in the final document.

b) **Group 2 - External Agencies and key stakeholders with a strategic responsibility for increasing investment in the area.**

Consultation on this group was carried out by direct mailing and e-mailing of Draft Strategy and Action Plan with attached questionnaire to the chairs of the Angus Economic Development Partnership, Angus & Dundee Tourism Partnership, Angus & Dundee Convention Bureau, Dundee City Council, Scottish Enterprise, Angus Business Associations, Angus Area Community Planning Partnerships, VisitScotland, and Cairngorms National Park Authority.

c) **Group 3 - General public**

This exercise was carried out via two main communication channels – through profile on www.angusahead.com with electronic response form and copy of Draft Strategy, and through the distribution of printed flyers to all Angus ACCESS offices seeking the views and opinions of the public. This was supplemented by a PR campaign in local news publications. A presentation was also given to the bi-annual meeting of Angus Community Councils in June 2009

d) **Group 4 Tourism providers and accommodation sector**

A one day Tourism Conference was held on 24 April 2009 at the Carnoustie Golf Hotel in partnership with the Angus & Dundee Area Tourism Partnership. Invitations were extended to businesses engaged in the tourism sector and key stakeholder organisations. 120 representatives from across Angus and Dundee attended. This gave Angus Council the ideal platform to present their vision for increasing tourism and consult on the Draft Tourism Strategy. Each delegate received a copy of the Draft Strategy and feedback form. The keynote speaker at 'The Working Together' conference was John Swinney MSP, the Scottish Government's Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth, who shared his views

on the Scottish tourist industry. He was joined by several of the most influential people in the Scottish tourist industry, including:

- Peter Lederer CBE, Chairman of Gleneagles and VisitScotland;
- Riddell Graham, Director of Strategic Partnerships, VisitScotland;
- David Adams, Chair of Dundee and Angus Tourism Partnership and General Manager of Glamis Castle
- Paul Easton, Managing Director of Wilderness Scotland, one of Scotland's leading ethical businesses and an award-winning adventure and ecotourism tour operator.
- Willie Cameron, the man at the helm of Loch Ness Marketing and one of the Directors of Highland Feast
- Gillian Harrower of Tourism and Leisure Solutions, which provides consultancy services to tourism, business and public sector agencies
- Stuart French, Carnoustie Country Consultant to Angus Council.

- 3.3 The Angus Tourism Strategy consultation exercise is now complete. A number of key themes have been identified through the consultation and the Draft Strategy has been reviewed accordingly to reflect, where appropriate, the feedback collected. The final Strategy also reflects a renewed timescale from 2009 – 2012. The associated Action Plan has been extended to 2013 to ensure project delays are taken into account. This will be reviewed annually to consider Angus Council priority changes and budget issues.

4 THE NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 The Draft Angus Tourism Strategy identified five key themes

- Business Support and Visitor Services
- Activity Tourism
- Cultural Tourism
- International Reach
- Events

- 4.2 However as a result of feedback on this consultation the Strategy has been amended to establish more cohesion on a thematic basis with the following as key themes:

1. Angus Ahead - as the strategic campaign
2. Food and Drink Tourism (new activity)
3. Golf – more engagement with the sector
4. Activity Tourism – industry led engagement
5. Cultural and Heritage Tourism – cross-Council and industry working
6. Festivals and Events – working in partnership with the community

- 4.3 These themes are more inclusive than in the original document and will allow more effective engagement across all tourism providers and stakeholders in Angus. It also reflects more active cross-council and cross-stakeholder working to provide a focused and dynamic approach to visitor promotion and product development.

- 4.4 Budgets will be a factor for Angus Council over the next four years and recognition of this is reflected in the intention to maximise the use of European and other funding sources to undertake project work.

5 THE ANGUS TOURISM STRATEGY 2009 – 2012

- 5.1 **Theme 1** identifies the strategic projects which underpin tourism promotion i.e. the Angus Ahead area marketing campaign's four key objectives of maximising tourism, increasing investment, promoting the distinct heritage and natural beauty and encouraging a civic pride, locally, nationally and internationally. It also reinforces the greater use of the umbrella 'Angus Brand' to ensure a strong, cohesive image to all promotional and marketing work. Further development of www.angusahead.com is a key priority over this period, to allow it to become a more effective and integrated E-Communications tool, with increased information flow to and from potential visitors, further engagement with tourism providers and additional product marketing. The findings of the Angus Tourism Accommodation Audit also sit under this heading as does business support which proposes a clear path to supporting businesses in the tourism sector. This section also acknowledges the Dundee and Angus Convention Bureau, who work to deliver business tourism to Angus, in partnership with Angus Council. With tourist information provision being delivered by both Angus Council and VisitScotland, this section identifies how the service can be run in partnership to improve the visitor experience and maximise national marketing opportunities.
- 5.2 **Theme 2** establishes Food and Drink Tourism as a new sector for activity. There is no doubt that a major opportunity for Angus is to capitalise upon the county's rich and diverse food industry. This section sets out how Food Tourism can be developed on a regional and international basis with opportunities identified for partnership working with the Angus Farmers Market, speciality producers, farmers, farm shops and retailers to increase trade and investment. The possibility of staging an annual food festival is being actively investigated. Funding will be sought from Europe to develop an East of Scotland Food Trail in partnership with neighbouring local authorities to focus on integrating and showcasing local produce within hotels, restaurants and festivals. It is also intended to establish an Angus Food & Drink industry led networking group.
- 5.3 **Theme 3** Golf is a key niche for Angus and one that has been bringing economic benefit to the area for a number of years under the 'Carnoustie Country' marketing campaign. This section sets out how the golfing sector can become more competitive by working more collaboratively to improve quality, product development and marketing opportunities on a national and international basis. A Carnoustie County golf industry group is under outline consideration.
- 5.4 **Theme 4** Activity Tourism – recognising the work of the Cairngorms National Park, the South Esk Management Plan project and the industry led Outdoor Angus Group, this section demonstrates how Angus can better capitalise on outdoor tourism as a niche product. Angus is also well placed to invest in a "green tourism" badge in the marketing of this specific product segment and particular mention is given to sustainable tourism under this theme.
- 5.5 **Theme 5** Cultural and Heritage Tourism capitalises upon the cultural assets of Angus and links directly to the emerging Heritage Strategy which will recommend changes within the heritage sector. It also acknowledges the Ancestral Tourism sector and how Angus can make the most of the Tayroots campaign after the success of the Tayroots Festival in 2008. It acknowledges the importance of Angus' Pictish heritage and the development of Pictavia for education, children and adults and as a key visitor attraction.
- 5.6 **Theme 6** Events and festivals are becoming increasingly important to Angus as a community method of attracting in more day and short break visitors. Opportunities exist to better link events with accommodation providers to maximise the length of visitor stay in the area and thus increase the economic impact. Events and festivals provide the cultural basis on which tourism is developed and sustained. They encourage a community pride as well as offering a platform for visitors to experience the Angus heritage eg with Tartan Day, which celebrates the Declaration of Arbroath. This section provides a strategic approach to event development.

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications associated with this Report. On an operational basis appropriate approvals will be sought on a project by project basis and reported to Committee as required.

7 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no Human Rights implications arising from this report.

8 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The issues dealt with in this Report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective (as required by legislation). An [equalities impact assessment](#) is not required.

9 SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT

- 9.1 This report contributes to the following local outcome(s) contained within the Single Outcome Agreement for Angus:

- Growth in Tourism in Angus is achieved.
- Sustainable business growth is achieved

10 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA)

- 10.1 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 applies SEA to the proposed Angus Tourism Strategy. The process requires consideration of whether the strategy is likely to have no or minimal strategic effect or is unlikely to have significant environmental effect.
- 10.2 The Head of Economic Development and Environmental & Consumer Protection has concluded that the Angus Tourism Strategy will have no or minimal environmental impact and has notified the SEA Gateway accordingly as required by the aforementioned Act.

11 CONSULTATION

- 11.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Services, Head of Law & Administration and Head of Finance have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

12 CONCLUSION

- 12.1 The Angus Tourism Strategy and Action Plan for 2009 – 2012 brings forward a comprehensive agenda for action that will address the potential growth in what is one of the key priority sectors.
- 12.2 The associated Action Plan provides a clear table of activity with timescales so that it is easy to understand what is to be achieved, how, when and by whom. This creates a more measurable approach to strategy delivery.

- 12.3 This Report demonstrates the importance that Angus Council places in the development of sustainable tourism growth as well as the importance it sets on achieving the national growth targets set out by Scottish Government.

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NOTE

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

ECDEV/DV/MD/FM
28 August 2009