

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

TO: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE		Subject: LANARKSHIRE TOURISM STRATEGY
From: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT		
Date: 3 SEPTEMBER 1996	Ref: DW/LMcW/REP.071	

Background

Tourism development in Scotland has been bedevilled by a piecemeal approach and poor co-ordination. This problem is being addressed by the development of a range of strategic and local plans for tourism which attempt to prioritise and co-ordinate the tourism product. The process began with the production of the Scottish Tourism Strategic Plan by the Scottish Tourist Board in 1994. A summary account of context for tourism development in Lanarkshire can be found at Appendix 1.

Members will recall that the re-organisation of local government was accompanied by the re-organisation of the country's tourist boards, resulting in the creation of the Greater Glasgow and Clyde Valley Tourist Board (GGCVTB). In order to ensure that the work of the new Board was clearly focused from the outset, a strategy for tourism development in the area was developed in consultation with the former district councils and the local enterprise companies.

The GGCVTB strategy sets the scene, but is by its nature a co-ordinating document. It was always the intention that this strategic overview should be developed at the local level to provide a practical programme to guide tourism development over the next five years. Within the Greater Glasgow and the Clyde Valley area four local strategies and action plans are to be produced by the relevant unitary authorities and local enterprise companies to cover the areas of Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, Dunbartonshire and Glasgow.

It is vital that a local strategy is in place as soon as possible, as funding for projects from the Strathclyde European Partnership will be dependent on the projects being set out in the Lanarkshire Tourism Strategy. The existence of the strategy will also benefit projects applying for funding from a variety of other services, such as lottery monies.

The Lanarkshire Tourism Strategy

Work is now being undertaken by officers of North Lanarkshire Council, South Lanarkshire Council, the Lanarkshire Development Agency and the GGCVTB to produce a tourism strategy for the county.

Nationally, the tourism industry employs 8% of the workforce and accounts for 5% of GDP. It is the section of the economy which has the largest forecast growth to the year 2000. The main aim of the strategy will be to increase the number and quality of employment opportunities within the industry, and ensure the dispersal of the benefits throughout Lanarkshire.

The strategy will seek to maximise the economic benefits and linkages throughout Lanarkshire, with an emphasis on increasing the quality of the product and service. Training and business development will play an important role in the development of the tourism industry.

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It is envisaged that the strategy will be complete by the beginning of November, when a full report will be presented to the Committee.

Recommendation

That the Committee notes the contents of this report.



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APPENDIX A

LANARKSHIRE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY BROAD CONTEXT PAPER

Tourism development in Lanarkshire sits within a range of strategic and local plans for tourism. These have been developed in recent years in an attempt to prioritise and co-ordinate the development of the tourism product within Scotland. In addition to these key documents, satellite papers have been produced by a variety of organisations. For brevity they have been omitted from this paper, but they also contribute to the 'top down' process.

The Scottish Tourist Board Strategic Plan (1994)

The Scottish Tourism Strategic Plan sets out a way forward for the tourism industry at a national level. It identifies weaknesses within the tourism infrastructure and facilities, commercial and otherwise, which must be addressed if the industry is to fulfil its economic potential. Specifically:

- Facilities do not meet the needs of all our target markets. There are shortcomings in accommodation, visitor attractions, sports and recreation, entertainment and facilities for children.
- The standard of facilities and services varies widely and individual businesses often do not make the best use of the resources available to them. For example, Scotland has a poor reputation for catering despite the very high quality of much of Scottish produce.
- The promotion of Scotland itself, and of individual products and places, has been fragmented and is often not as effective as it could be. It should be easier to select and book Scottish holiday packages.
- Many of Scotland's weaknesses have been compounded by poor levels of skill throughout the industry.

The plan considers in more detail the issues of seasonality, marketing, accommodation, visitor attractions, the natural environment, things to do, training, visitor services and transport.

Seasonality

Tourism in Scotland is heavily concentrated into a three-month period. It is one of the highest priorities to extend the season. The industry will look at how some or all of the following might encourage a greater uptake of off-season holidays:

- ◇ special events, especially arts related
- ◇ spring and autumn activities (sporting and non-sporting)
- ◇ entertainment for adults and children
- ◇ extending opening periods for TICs and visitor attractions
- ◇ joint ticketing
- ◇ transport and accommodation discount offers
- ◇ business conferences

Marketing

◆ *United Kingdom*

Although much of Scotland's product is good, the brand image is very weak. UK consumers are less ready to accept those traditional Scottish images which appeal to overseas visitors.

The main objectives of the UK marketing programme will be:

- ◇ to increase overall levels of tourism expenditure, in particular holiday expenditure
- ◇ to increase tourist expenditure outside the main summer period, particularly in the 2nd and 4th quarter
- ◇ to increase the percentage of touring holidays
- ◇ to increase the percentage of activity, cultural and special interest holidays

◆ *Overseas*

Scotland has enjoyed a good brand image overseas and steady growth over recent years. As competition becomes fiercer we must look at marketing our product in a more closely targeted fashion.

The STB's overseas marketing effort will aim to:

- ◇ increase overseas visitors' intention to choose Scotland as a destination
- ◇ increase levels of visitor expenditure
- ◇ increase the spread of visitor expenditure throughout Scotland
- ◇ increase the seasonal spread of visitor expenditure in Scotland

◆ *Business tourism*

Business tourism has a key role to play in increasing yield, combating seasonality and reinforcing broader economic development goals. To date we have missed many opportunities in this area, and we now need to compete in a rapidly developing international marketplace.

The industry must also acknowledge the role of conferences and meetings in the wider economic development of Scotland, by linking conference marketing and development with Scotland's strengths in certain sectors in information technology and medical and scientific services. Lanarkshire would appear to have significant potential here.

Accommodation

With 47,500 employees, accommodation is the largest single element in Scotland's tourism industry. Seasonality, standards of service, training, leisure and conference facilities, entertainment and pricing are amongst the issues which are critical to the future of our accommodation sector.

In general, the need amongst all categories of accommodation is for upgrading and the provision of new conference and leisure facilities, particularly indoor swimming pools. Accommodation providers are in a very competitive market, but collaboration can bring benefits. Alternatively, they could link with private or public sector facility operators to extend the use of the facilities to their guest as part of an all-inclusive, discounted price. Accommodation providers also have the opportunity to exploit the growing demand for activities and special interest holidays by forming links with other tourism operators.

The industry should devote more effort to the family market, paying special attention to children's leisure facilities, meal times, baby-sitting services, entertainment and pricing policies. Hotels in and near the main population centres need to develop specialist facilities and appropriate levels of service for the conference, meetings and incentive travel market.

Visitor attractions

Scotland has around 800 visitor attractions. There is scope for new attractions, but the pressing need in this sector is to renew and upgrade existing ones. Many existing attractions also need long term revenue assistance from central or local government. Seasonality also continues to be a problem.

In general, we are likely to see a slackening of new developments over the next decade. A few themes remain unexploited, but simple duplication of existing facilities should be discouraged. There seems scope for new art galleries with high quality exhibitions of contemporary and historic work, also for attractions based on Scottish themes such as Scottish fauna, Scottish poetry and Scottish sports.

Both public and private sector operators should examine the success of ventures such as distillery visitor centres, which have shown what can be done through better marketing and packaging.

The natural environment

One of the biggest challenges facing the industry involves reconciling further development of tourism with conservation of our most precious resource. Scottish tourism cannot survive without an intact and healthy natural heritage.

There are opportunities to develop and promote more imaginative holiday packages and opportunities based on the natural environment. Demand for so-called 'green' holidays has risen. However, there is a set of defining principles which all operators should adhere to if they plan to embark on 'green tourism' activities and businesses. It is most important that:

- ◇ No part of a project's commercial operation diminishes the environment
- ◇ The project reflects local culture and tradition and incorporates high design standards
- ◇ The project uses local staff, local produce and local skills and crafts
- ◇ The project is managed in a way which is sensitive to the environmental resource it exploits
- ◇ The project's managers monitor the environmental impact and take corrective action if necessary.

Things to do

◆ *Sports and activities*

Activity holidays offer an area of considerable opportunity for Scotland and one where we must expand on our traditional strengths. There appears to be a relatively buoyant activity holiday sector in Scotland and there are good prospects for future growth. However, many activity holiday providers experience the common problems of small businesses, and if the future potential of this sector is to be realised, a number of issues must be addressed:

- ◇ There is a need for more long term planning. Individual businesses should consider new and improved facilities, staff development and training, and marketing and promotion
- ◇ Many activity holidays depend on access to the countryside. The need for a good network of routes for walkers, cyclists and horse riders raises issues of access, management and responsibility for the maintenance of existing routes and the development of new ones
- ◇ Studies suggest that increasing numbers of people are looking for packages which comprise several elements, including a range of activities, tuition and accommodation

◆ *Entertainment, the arts and events*

Market research consistently identifies lack of entertainment, particularly family entertainment, as a major deficiency in our tourism product. Cultural attractions and events can play a valuable role in the promotion of tourism and we need to capitalise on this potential.

Training

If Scotland is to be seen as a world class destination we must offer our visitors world class service. This means a major commitment to training - possibly the single biggest challenge facing the industry. Improved training is necessary for all sectors of the industry. STB plans to address this in the following ways:

- ◇ By establishing human resource development as an integral component of the broader business planning and development process
- ◇ By using quality standards, especially the accommodation sector and visitor attractions inspection schemes, to drive the training effort
- ◇ By promoting best practice and commitment to Investors in People standard
- ◇ By insisting that commitment to training is established in projects that receive financial assistance.

Services

◆ *Visitor services*

Visitors need to have detailed information about Scotland, not only when they get here, but before they leave home. Where there are gaps in information we must make it a priority to address these at national and local levels.

Signposting is another important feature of good visitor service. There is a need for better collaboration between tourism and transport authorities

◆ *Quality assurance*

The industry must work together to help develop quality improvement schemes for other important sectors such as catering and retailing. STB is enthusiastic about the potential for a system of quality guarantees for Scottish food.

◆ *Catering*

Food should be one of Scotland's great strengths. Unfortunately it has been left with an indifferent reputation. Scotland needs catering facilities that suit the range of tastes and budgets of different market sectors, from top quality restaurants to reasonably priced family restaurants at popular tourist destinations and visitor attractions.

◆ *Retailing*

Shopping is a prime tourist activity which accounts for 14 per cent of total tourism revenue. There is a chance to increase visitor spending by providing more distinctive, high quality produce.

Transport

If we are to maximise Scotland's potential as a tourism destination, we must ensure not only that we are accessible to all our major visitor markets, but also that we can offer a first class domestic transport infrastructure.

STCG's strategic transport objectives can be summarised as follows:

- ◇ To encourage consolidation of international and intra-UK transport links and strengthen them further wherever possible
- ◇ To support the provision of good, quick, and reliable inter-urban road links and those steps taken to minimise the intrusion of roads and traffic on the environment
- ◇ To support developments designed to ensure good accessibility to all other parts of Scotland where significant tourism activity is carried out or is to be developed
- ◇ To make information on transport readily available and understandable

Scottish Enterprise Network Strategy and Action Plan for Tourism (1995)

SEN has produced a paper detailing the programmes and projects which will be put in place across the network over the period 1996-2000. It is set in the context of the Scottish Tourism Strategic Plan.

The overall aim of the SEN involvement in tourism is to achieve and sustain an industry which is internationally competitive and which realises its full potential to support jobs and generate wealth in the Scottish economy. The development strategy must be a two-pronged one:

- ◇ it must be founded on the market appeal of Scotland's scenery and environment, history and heritage, and opportunities for sport and recreation
- ◇ it must ensure that tourism businesses provide the facilities and standards of service required to capitalise on these basic tourism advantages

If the overall aim is to be achieved there needs to be:

- ◇ a market driven and co-ordinated approach to tourism development
- ◇ competitive tourism businesses, effectively marketed and offering high standards of facilities and service
- ◇ a quality environment and facilities to enhance visitor appreciation of Scotland's countryside and built heritage
- ◇ full development of opportunities for holidays based on sports and activities
- ◇ visitor attractions and events to present Scotland to the visitor in an effective way
- ◇ good transport links with key markets

There is a close fit between the needs of the tourism industry and the strategic objectives of SEN, particularly in the areas of exports, skills, competitive companies and physical business infrastructure. It is in the area of business development, including human resource development with its close links to service quality, that the SE network has the most substantial and distinctive contribution to make. The network, however, through its broader economic development, and property and environment powers, can also make important contributions to the planning and co-ordination of the overall tourism development process, and to realising the potential of the basic tourism assets.

These objectives have been translated into an action plan as detailed below:

A market-driven and co-ordinated approach to tourism development

- Put in place area tourism strategies covering all LEC areas (by March 1996)
- Put in place LEC tourism action plans in all LECs (by June 1996)
- Implement STEAM (Scottish Tourism Economic Activity Monitor) across the network (by March 1996)
- Produce visitor attractions strategy (by March 1996)
- Produce accommodation sector strategy (by December 1996)
- Undertake tourism 'futures' exercise (by May 1996)

Competitive tourism businesses, effectively marketed and offering high standards of facilities and service

- Put in place, in each LEC area, an integrated package of support for tourism businesses linking business advisory services, support for training and , where appropriate, support for capital investment (by March 1996)
- Implement Scotland-wide initiatives:
 - ◇ network of Tourism Training Associates (to July 1997)
 - ◇ Tourism Business Success (management development) (by December 1997)
 - ◇ core skills programme (short courses) (by June 1996)
 - ◇ Scottish Hospitality Careers Fair (March, annually)
- Identify and put in place measures to address sector targets for IIP and SVQs (by September 1996)
- Support the development of industry consortia and trade associations (continuing)
- Assess the need for a specific effort to encourage or support new ventures (by June 1996)
- Implement a mechanism to support the industry on IT issues (by June 1996)

A quality environment and facilities to enhance visitor appreciation of Scotland's countryside and built heritage

- Implement area initiatives and Tourism Management Programmes at key tourist locations (continuing)
- Support implementation of the 'Paths for all' initiative at tourist locations (from March 1996)
- Put in place an initiative to improve standards of interpretation at tourist locations (by June 1996)

Full development of opportunities for holidays based on sports and activities

- Support the sector to put in place mechanisms to meet the requirements of new Safety and Accreditation legislation (by March 1996)
- Promote the development of a new sector grading scheme (by December 1996)
- Put in place a sector marketing strategy (by March 1996)
- Put in place activity specific development plans for:
 - ◇ cycling (by June 1996)
 - ◇ golf (by September 1996)
- Implement a sector specific business development programme (by October 1996)

Visitor attractions and events to present Scotland to the visitor in an effective way

- Provide specialist consultancy and, if appropriate, financial support to improve interpretation and visitor facilities in key visitor attractions (continuing)
- Support the development of a limited number of new attractions in line with sector strategy (from March 1996)
- Support implementation of Association of Scottish Visitor Attractions business plan (continuing)
- Put in place a rolling programme of annual events (by November 1996)
- Support efforts to attract major international conferences to Scotland (continuing)

Good transport links with key markets

- Establish direct ferry service between Scotland and Europe (by 1997)
- Put in place initiative to promote direct air services between Scotland and Europe, and the USA (by IM arch 1996)
- Put in place initiative to promote low-cost air services between Scotland and the South East of England (by IM arch 1996)

The regional perspective and European funding (1997-99 programme)

Where projects will require European funding to go forward they will need to show evidence of compatibility with the objectives and targets of the Strathclyde European Partnership, as set out in their Western Scotland Programme Document 1997-1999.

The tourism and cultural sector has received support from the Structural Funds through both the Strathclyde IDC, the 1993 Operational Programme and the 1994-1996 programme. This support has principally been aimed at improving the range and quality of tourism infrastructure and visitor attractions in the region.

The experience of the previous Programme suggests that the emphasis should move from developing the tourism infrastructure towards support for business development, training, marketing, and promotion of the tourism and cultural sectors, and towards a commitment to sustainable tourism, in order to safeguard the environmental resource on which tourism depends. A new focus is proposed for this priority which will aim to develop the economic potential of the arts, cultural, film and media sectors in the region.

There should be a greater emphasis on the recent national tourism strategies developed through the Scottish Tourist Board and Scottish Enterprise, and the local area tourism strategies and priorities developed by Area Tourism Boards, local authorities and Local Enterprise Companies.

Three measures are proposed in this Priority for Action:

Measure 3.1 Visitor attractions and cultural facilities

Objectives

- To improve the quality of the tourism product in the region through investment in new visitor attractions and improvements to existing facilities
- To promote the economic benefits to the region of the arts, culture, film and media sectors

Scope

ERDF will support projects which:

- Develop a limited number of new flagship visitor attractions which complement and provide added value to the existing attractions and are capable of attracting visitors from outwith the region and overseas
- Extend the range and quality of facilities at existing visitor attractions with the aim of extending short stay visitors and increasing visitor spend
- Improve and extend the range of conference facilities in the region where there are clearly identified gaps in the market and demonstrable demand
- Improve the environment at existing visitor attractions and centres, for example by improvements to signage and interpretative resources

- Provide training facilities, business centres and other infrastructure to develop the economic benefits of the arts, culture, film and media sectors

Measure 3.2 Marketing and development of the tourism and cultural sector

Objectives

- To advertise and promote Strathclyde as a tourism destination through marketing and promotion initiatives which are complementary and additional to existing schemes
- To support festivals, events and conferences which are capable of attracting additional visitors and improving the region's image
- To promote the economic benefits to the region of the arts, culture, film and media sectors

Scope

ERDF will be available to support projects which:

- Target marketing initiatives at specific sectors, such as short breaks, sporting holidays, arts and culture holidays and business tourism
- Support marketing promotions which link tourism facilities/destinations with a common theme or by geographic area/proximity or through joint promotion between travel, accommodation and activity sectors of the industry
- Support marketing and promotion strategies which are designed to maximise use of tourism infrastructure and facilities in the region to extend the visitor season
- Improve tourism signage and information for visitors
- Support major festivals, events and conferences which are capable of attracting substantial additional visitors from outwith the region, generating economic benefits and improving the image of the region
- Provide business development support to business start-ups and existing S/M culture, film and media sectors
- Utilise the arts and culture and film and media sectors to attract additional visitor spending to the region and to increase the number of jobs in the sector

Measure 3.3 Vocational training for tourism and culture

Objectives

To support training for the existing workforce, emerging/potential workforce and support business start-up in the tourism, arts, culture and media sector

Scope

ESF assistance will be available to support vocational training projects which:

- provide training to ensure that the quality of customer care, the skills of tourism employees and other aspects of tourism are competitive with the rest of Europe
- provide training aimed at improving the management, marketing, and quality of S/M tourism, arts, culture and media industries
- provide training for unemployed beneficiaries to meet skill shortages and job opportunities in the tourism, arts, culture and media industries
- provide training for those interested in starting up tourism businesses
- provide training for staff at visitor attractions and other tourism facilities, including those managed by public sector agencies, aimed at developing skills, and quality and improving visitors' experiences

Greater Glasgow and the Clyde Valley Tourist Board: Area Tourism Strategy (1995)

The GGCVTB Area Tourism Strategy was prepared to provide working guidelines that would inform the new ATB's business plan and marketing strategies, and at the same time provide area-wide background to tourism strategies at LEC level and those to be developed by the new unitary authorities.

An extract from the document detailing the current market situation in the GGCVTB area is appended (Appendix A).

Strengths

- Increasing public sector co-ordination and involvement in tourism
- Diversity of tourism product supply all year round
- Good infrastructure at the macro level
- Good mix and quality of environment (natural and built)
- Airport of international status
- Gateway role of the area/arterial routes and a central strategic location for Scotland and northern England
- Area includes one of the new national gateway TICs and has an excellent TIC network covering strategic locations
- Positive international perceptions of Scotland and friendliness of the people
- Glasgow has a status as the third most popular destination for overseas visitors and its mix of facilities
- SECC has unique conference capacity and exhibition facilities

Weaknesses

- Historic absence of tourism strategy for the whole area
- Lack of common policy regarding the adoption of grading and classification schemes
- Certain parts of the area suffer from weak or poor customer awareness
- Absence of sufficient relevant market/sector information/statistics
- Varying quality of accommodation and other tourism facilities/services
- Absence of a unique major international visitor icon (cf. Edinburgh)
- Poor east/west communication links in the south of the area
- Absence of a major attraction aimed at the children/family market
- Overall lack of co-ordinated signposting and interpretative strategy
- Seasonality in existing demand and supply of certain facilities
- Poorly perceived as an attractive destination for main holidays and longer visits
- Weather patterns deter certain markets (UK markets in particular)
- Perceptions in certain markets in Glasgow and the industrial belt as an area of urban decline suffering from post-industrial malaise
- The area has little in the way of clear 'brand' image when compared to other regions of Scotland

Opportunities

Opportunities exist to increase visitor numbers and their economic impact by: increasing dwell time; extending the season; offering a wider and better quality of spending opportunities and encouraging and fostering targeted marketing to sectors which offer the most strategic potential for the area. These include:

- the short break/activities market
- youth markets of Western Europe
- the 'broader family' market
- discretionary business tourism
- day trip markets
- main holidaymakers from North America and further afield

Threats

- Future adoption of low price and not a quality drive to attract demand
- Failure to sign up tourism supply/providers to ATB/public sector quality/marketing initiatives
- Withdrawal of public sector focus on tourism
- Edinburgh and other areas of Scotland with a stronger image
- Quality of area be allowed to lag behind competitive national/international products
- Failure of the area to secure prominence in national promotional activity
- Failure to address the area's weaknesses and shortfalls
- Glasgow failing to maintain its international air links

The area covered by the GGCVTB offers an exciting, diverse product with a wide range of facilities and attractions, spread over a variety of environments, including rural and urban. This places the new combined area in a better position to attract demand from a wider range of market sectors than was historically the case for the smaller ATBs.

Key strategic aims

- Increase the number and quality of jobs in the tourism sector within the area
- Increase tourism expenditure within the area from high yield markets
- Attract more first time visitors into the area
- Encourage repeat visits and referrals
- Spread economic benefit throughout the area
- Reinforce the importance and reputation of tourism as a key sector within the wider economy

Strategic priorities

- Improve quality and diversity of visitor experience
- Improve market information available for investment and operational decision-making
- Encourage retention within and dispersal throughout the area of tourism demand (including locally generated day visits) by the development of key services and facilities appropriate to market opportunities
- Clear/focused/co-ordinated internal and external marketing effort
- Create sympathetic culture for tourism operations and development
- Influence neighbouring and national strategies and , where appropriate, exploit initiatives and assets
- Extend tourism season by exploiting all relevant markets

Strategic marketing issues

The sectors which are considered to offer the best future potential for the GGCVTB include:

- day trips (local residents, transient tourists, cruise line passengers)
- domestic tourists (independents):
 - ◊ main holidays
 - ◊ short breaks/activities
- overseas tourists (independents):
 - ◊ main holidays
 - ◊ short breaks/activities
- coach tours
- non-discretionary business tourism
- discretionary business tourism (conference and corporate meetings)
- discretionary business tourism (association conferences and exhibitions)

LDA Tourism Strategy (1993)

The paper was not formally adopted and is now out of date. However, it sets out principles and products for consideration.

Strategic principles

- Understanding our markets
- Complete what we have started
- Quality of experience
- Quality of supporting infrastructure
- Effectively targeting markets
- Identify new opportunities

The product

- Developing visitor services throughout the area
- Upgrading and developing Lanarkshire's accommodation base
- Completing the existing visitor attractions in the area, including its shops and restaurants
- Developing the full potential of the area's rural assets, including the Clyde Valley Tourist Route
- Developing the area's management and staff
- Identifying and prioritising new product development opportunities